

Enhancing Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension of Iraqi Students through Metacognitive Strategies

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Abstract:

This study designed to help students to provide better answers in the examination, comprehend and understand texts in a more effective way. Moreover, it is useful for teachers to know about the reading strategies and being able to teach students how to use it, to plan lessons and apply effective methods of teaching reading for enhancing students' vocabulary ability, reading comprehension performance and comprehending the text. The sample of the study consisted of ten students of sixth grade secondary school studying in Iraq. The objective of the study determine the metacognitive strategies that lead to an increase in reading comprehension performance and impact vocabulary ability to comprehend the text .In addition, this case study has been investigated whether they use the metacognitive strategies by using reading comprehension test and questionnaires. The data collected from (SPSS) packages the statistical package for social science. The data shown most students in this study are moderate -users of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. Teaching the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) strategies will help students comprehend and understand texts in a more effective way and provide better answer in the examination, furthermore, will be useful for teacher to prepare their lessons.

Key words: The Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) strategies, reading comprehension, text, vocabulary

1. Introduction

Reading is defined as the interaction between the reader and text need to take scientific approach; Reader builds meaning through an active process includes the reader Anderson (2004) understand the meaning and purpose of the writer. reading is not only decoding words because reading without thinking and interaction do not grow the ability to categorize interpretation , analysis, criticism and comprehension Goodman (1997).

Reading for Anderson (2004) “as a process of readers' combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning to comprehension”. On other hand Anderson (2004) refers to reading Strategy as the ability of the reader to utilize a wide assortment of perusing techniques to achieve a reason for reading. Great reader knows what to do

when they experience troubles. The reader background information integrates with the content to make the meaning as in figure 1.

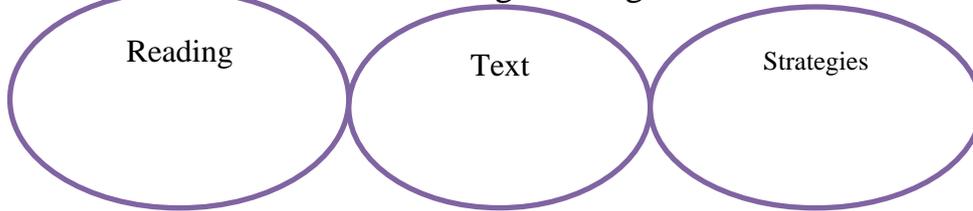


Figure 1 reading define by Anderson

Comprehension is the essence of reading and underpins all reading processes. The speed and fluency of reading depend on the reader's consolidation of skills. "Reading comprehension is defined as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction with written language."

Nelson, Smith, Taylor, Dodd, and Reavis (1991) highlighted comprehension issues by surveying students using a reading passage together with a reading process evaluation. There are two primary issues in reading comprehension. First, poor comprehension skills can lead to difficulties in decoding, which negatively affect understanding. Second, students may not know how to read for comprehension; they may struggle to monitor their understanding or fail to focus on the meaning as they read.

In terms of reading strategies, Anderson (2004) defined reading Strategic as the ability of the reader to use a wide variety of reading strategies to fulfil a reason for reading. Great readers know what to do when they experience troubles. The reader's background knowledge integrates with the text to create the meaning. The texts and strategies, combined, define the act of reading.

On other hand, Pritchard (1990) defines it as deliberate actions that "readers take voluntarily to develop and understanding of what they read" and many researchers have categorized a lot of so called "good reading strategies" that "should be adopted" to enhance readers' comprehension of texts and train less-efficient readers to use "good strategies" as they read.

For Mohammadi, Heidari, and Niry (2012) in their study mentioned metacognitive awareness "is the readers' awareness of strategies during the reading process which is the skill that the second language reader requires while reading in order to make them better readers."

On the other hand, Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) demonstrate metacognitive reading methodology awareness stock (MARSI) kind of methodologies and the recurrence of strategies utilized by students to upgrade

compelling reading comprehension and in this way recognized between global, issue fathoming and support strategies.

Considers on metacognitive awareness of reading techniques have appeared diverse degree of awareness i.e. (Global reading strategies), (Support reading strategies) and (Problem Solving perusing strategies) reading methodologies. The (MARSI) metacognitive mindfulness reading techniques stock incorporates 30 articulations approximately procedures understudies report utilize whereas reading scholarly or school related materials such as content books, library materials, and magazine articles. The primary factor (GRS) contained 13 items and spoken to by a set of reading procedures situated toward a global investigation of content such as, "I choose what to study closely and what to ignore". These strategies are considered as generalized purposefulness reading strategies pointed at setting arrange for the reading act like for illustration: setting the reason for reading and making forecasts around reading substance. The moment calculate (PS) contained 8 items allude to techniques utilized when the content is troublesome to read. The third figure (SRS) contained 9 items relate to utilize of materials other than the content to assist the reader get it what is being studied, like lexicons or other materials.

Narrative text type based on perception in time, Narration is the telling of a story; the succession of events is given in chronological order. The fundamental reason of story is to engage, to pick up and hold readers' interest. In any case stories can moreover be composed to educate or advise. Stories grouping individuals, characters in time and put but contrast from describes in that through the sequencing, the stories set up one or more issues, which must inevitably discover a way to be settled. The common structure or fundamental arrange of account content is known as the "story grammar".

Reading known as the interaction between reader and content has to be highlighted, that most of the comprehension exercises of viable readers take put at the metacognitive level, reading comprehension stands for the aptitudes or methods that understudies take after to get it writings in their books or other study materials and extricate the most thoughts of the material.

Snow (2002) characterizes the terms reading comprehension as handle of at the same time extricating and developing meaning through interaction and association with composed language as highlighted by later inquire about on the reading strategies utilized by effective and less fruitful readers. Analysts have started to recognize the critical part of metacognitive awareness in reading comprehension (Carrell, Gajdusek, & Wise, 1998; Hudson, 2007).

Metacognitive awareness was to begin with characterized by Flavell (1979) as one ability to get it, control, and controls his possess cognitive prepare to maximize learning. Such awareness this concept of reading awareness has advertised incredible insights as to how learners oversee their cognitive exercises to attain comprehension some time recently, amid, and after reading Wenden (1998). It must take into consideration how understudies take after a few techniques in arrange to comprehend writings in perfect way the most perfect; way these methodologies are called reading strategies or comprehension techniques. Understudies within the test (i.e., secondary school Iraqi students) don't allow much significance to the reading strategies in spite of the fact that they may utilize them off-hand (without taking note) when they examined a content Al-Qatrani (2012).

Subsequently, there's a point to be considered as this crossroads that reading comprehension in English can be risky for Iraqi understudies as the instruction framework does require reading in English for all Iraqi students. In line with the primary objective of this study the research questions:

- Is there any awareness of using reading strategies?
- Which reading strategies more effect on reading comprehension performance?

2. Methodes

2.1 Sample

The sample who participated in this study was ten of secondary school students female in sixth grade in Iraqi. With the objective of this study chosen this sample due to students associated with secondary school thus might offer assistance to them to discover a reasonable strategy to comprehend text. **Table 1** shows the sample of students.

Table 1 samples

student	Age
10	17-19

2.2 Instruments

2.1 Interview:

Interview in general “face to face” and “one to one” in which the information collected from the questions that were inquired by the questioner to the interviewee through meeting Griffiee (2005).

The first portion of information collected from meet will give clarification around instructed English in course, which kind of writings students incline toward and comprehend, what know approximately reading strategies and

how educate reading. Depends on these the analyst will get ready a meet questions.

Meet information regularly take the frame of words and concepts that can be coded for substance by somebody called a rate. Another hand moment rate can see at the same substance and code it. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) offer the equation: unwavering quality raises to the number of rates assertions separated by that number of assertions also the number of differences. It is at that point conceivable to compare the compatibility of the two rates and in this way this work out alludes to as rates understanding and unwavering quality can be decided.

2.2 Test

Related to the aim of this study, questions about the passage were made up will be test students' ability to comprehend the text.

The reading passage used in this study narrative in nature. Take from steps to understanding, oxford. The procedures of test one passage narrative followed by five questions techniques and true , false Griffiee (2005).

2.3 Data Collection

Corresponding to the research question the procedures for data collection were as follows, the participated were ten of sixth grade secondary school students. The researcher asked students to answer the reading comprehension test then answer the questions in 50 minutes, after test 15 minutes for checklist, and 15 minutes for questionnaires. Furthermore, the interview was recorded, time was ten minute and language utilized in meet was English and Arabic language, after that examination.

2.4 Data Analysis

The design of this study consider a case study, the data will be analysed for NO.1 to NO.10 by using the statistical packages for social science (SPSS). It is chosen as it is a test and checklist of questionnaire (MARSI).

The data analysis for interview method by GHUMA (2011) which analyses the sentence of the meet as significant units, after that composed an outline for the replying the interview questions. This included their opinions about the reading books and which kind of books prefer and speak English at home. After that the researcher wrote a comparison between the response of the interviews to show the common points they emphasized on and their different views concerning reading, text and strategies.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Reading comprehension test

In this consider, we analyzed the scores of 6th review students gotten from the reading comprehension test containing account content sorts. In analyzing the scores, the cruel and standard deviation methods were utilize measurable investigation was conducted utilizing (SPSS) computer program.

The results in **Table 2** shown the scores of the students on the reading comprehension test revealed the effects of reading strategies with text on reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Table 2 the scores of reading comprehension test

	Test			Score
	Narrative			9-10

Table 3 appears the exhibitions of the students on story writings. The normal score of the members on the story content (*Mean* = 5.600) using (MARSİ)

Table 3 the students' Performance on the Test

Test	Mean	Standard Deviation
Text	5.600	2.485

3.2 Reading Strategies Items used in MARSİ Questionnaire

The data showed use global reading strategies help students comprehend and understand reading passage . The data analysis to explain the frequency of usage of reading strategies of participated in this study .

As shown in **Table 4** indicate that forth global strategies most used by students

“6” I use tables, figure, and picture in text to increase my understanding.

“13” I take an overall view of the text to see what it is about before reading it.

“4” When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore. And

“5” I use my prior knowledge to help me understand what read.

That mean these most strategies help students to understand and comprehend text, followed by the lower usage of strategies as it shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4 Global-Reading Strategies Items

QUESTIONS	No. of times chosen
1. I have a purpose in mind when I read.	8
2. I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.	6
3. I review the text to know about its length, organization and main idea.	4
4. When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	9
5. I use my prior knowledge to help me understand what read.	9
6. I use tables, figure, and picture in text to increase my understanding.	10
7. I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading.	5
8. I use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information.	3
9. I check my understanding when I come across new information.	8
10. I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.	5
11. I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.	6
12. I critically analyse and evaluate the information presented in the text.	8
13. I take an overall view of the text to see what it is about before reading it.	10

On other hand, **Table 5** indicates that two problem solving reading strategies most usage by students to solving problem when text is difficult.

“18” When text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.

“15” When the text becomes difficult, I pay close attention to what I am reading.

followed by

“14” I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.

“20” I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading.

Table 5 PROB Reading Strategies Items

QUESTIONS	No. of times chosen
14. I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.	8
15. When the text becomes difficult, I pay close attention to what I am reading.	9
16. I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	2
17. When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	8
18. When text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.	10
19.	
20. I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading.	8
21. I read slowly and carefully to make me sure I understand what I am reading.	7
22. I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading.	6

For support reading strategies as shown in **Table 6** , students use most these reading strategies to understand text,

“23”I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read

“27”When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.

And

“28” I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.

Table 6 SUP Reading Strategies Items

QUESTIONS	No. of times chosen
23.I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	9
24.I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.	8
25.I paraphrase (restate ideas in my words) to better understand what I read.	3
26.I use reference materials (e.g., a dictionary) to help me understand what I read.	5
27.When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	9
28.I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	8
29.I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.	6
30.When reading, I translate from English into my native language.	7
31.When reading, I think about information in both English and my mother tongue.	4

3.2 Interviews

A semi-structured meet was conducted to inspire an in-depth understanding of the members in this consider. The meet contained five questions as appeared in **Table 7**. Arabic and English language were utilized amid the meet for way better understanding. The interviews were recorded and interpreted into English.

By recording the interviews, the members were educated that the meet would not influence their score, that there was no right or off-base answers which anything answers they given would not influence their record.

Another hand, the interview time for each participant depended on the amount of information. The average time each participant lasted was 10 minutes. The researcher coded students as follows (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, and S10) as following the sampling method stated previously. Data elicited from the interviews were qualitative analysis. Lists are necessary information extracted from the interview responses.

Table 7 Interviews

Questions	participant	Factor	Theme
1. Do you like reading?			
a. Like.	S4,S7,S10,S 6,S3, and S8	Book, Journals	Reading
b. Don't like.	S2,S1,S 5,and S9		
2. Which kind of text is interesting?	S3,S8,S6,S5,S1,S2, and S9	Story Adventures	Text type
	S10, S7, S4	Another types	
3. Is background knowledge important with text.?	S1,S4,S8,S5,S7,S9, S2	Vocabulary Information	Background knowledge
4. Do you prefer reading passage with picture?	S1,S3,S8,S5,S10,S9		
5. How any times reading passages?			
a. Three times and more	S3,S8,S2,S5,S10		Time factor
b. One time	S7, S4,S9,S6,S1		Time factor

Question No.1 Six out of the 10 students detailed that like reading and 4 don't like in reading

Question No.2 deals with the interestingness of story, and 7 out of the 10 students detailed that story writings were more curiously. S8 : “Narrative texts are more interesting because they are often about interesting stories.”

In reaction to Question 3, seven students said that background information played an critical part in their understanding writings and discover troublesome vocabulary. Three students thought background was vital in their understanding of story writings.

S1: “I think background is important for understanding texts. Without it, I have no idea what the writer means.”

Question 4: “picture in reading passage” six of ten students prefer picture that help them to guess the topic

Question 5: appeared that the time they went through reading content. A few students understand that they examined three times and more.

S4: “Normally I read story faster because the language and the text structure are often easy.”

S2: “Firstly; I read the text carefully and put underline each difficult and new vocabulary”

4. Conclusion

According to the results of this study, found how the reading strategies importance with text and how effect on Iraqi students’ reading comprehension performance and vocabulary ability.

The findings are useful in enhancing Iraqi students reading comprehension performance and vocabulary ability. The English language curriculum in Iraq should be enriched with story writing texts due to affects in reading comprehension and how attractive students when read text.

The distribution of the respondents according to how often they use metacognitive awareness of reading strategies indicates that majority of the Iraqi students are aware of their reading strategies when they read the text.

Majority of the respondents analysed, are moderate metacognitive strategy-users. The most participants in this study are moderate users of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies.

Use strategy- users of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies would be related to the students’ achievement, background and age. The low strategies users would be the poor readers because most of the researcher had proved positive correlation between the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and achievement , good reader are able to be more aware of their strategies and monitor their comprehension but poor reader employ less strategies and weak control their comprehension monitoring. Therefore it is the teachers’ task to enhance the students’ metacognitive awareness so that they would be at least the moderate strategies- user.

According to high strategy- users of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies would be the good readers who used the global strategies and support strategies frequently.

Moreover, these results can be used to develop and enhance methods of teaching reading comprehension, with the role of teachers to provide reading instructions through use of the strategies to determine their students’

metacognitive awareness when reading the text. For Mokharti and Sheorey (2002) focus on the role of teachers to increase the students' awareness of their comprehension process so that increase level of performance of students.

5. Recommendation

The current study highlighted on a numbers of implications for pedagogical and for Iraqi students.

a) In view of the results, content sort contrasts may be more consideration within the EFL reading classroom. Wealthy openings ought to be given for the understudies so that they can have satisfactory encounter with distinctive sorts of writings Olson and Fazio (2003) .

b) The students can be considered an indication of how text types can influence on reading comprehension in the Iraqi context.

c) The study showed that the students were aware of reading strategies but they did not use these strategies. They were more inclined to paying more importance to memorizing the text to get good marks in the examinations rather than to understand the text, so one implication is to find a way to make the students use these reading strategies. Reading strategies instruction should be included in the syllabus of English language teaching. Students of foreign language must helped by teaching them these reading strategies and guiding them on how to use them effectively. Teachers can discuss these strategies in the classroom and do the strategies checklist ticking. The important point here is that there should be explicit instruction and modelling by the teachers.

d) Students probably want to memorize texts to do well in the examinations because teachers generally do not give important to student's comprehension but rather writing something to correspond with the study materials as Dagher (2000) said "these language tests may not reflect the comprehension of the learners in an accurate way because they are mainly memory test rather than comprehension test". Teachers should design the examination questions to test students understanding and require them to do deep thinking and processing of the materials rather than memorization and the best reading strategies that help them to do this task are the problem.

e) Teachers should also set tasks on extensive reading so that students do not just read for examination. According to Bell (2001) A reading program must be more extensive, based on graded reading, and is more useful and helpful to the progress of reading speed than traditional reading lessons based on the close study of short texts. When the students read texts outside the

examination genre, it is hoped that they become more interest in reading and use reading strategies to get the most out of their texts.

f) Teachers should attend training courses on how to teach students to use reading strategies. If this is not included in teacher education programs and professional development courses, teachers will not be able to use pedagogical approaches that emphasize (MARSI) and use of reading strategies in the classroom.

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تحسين مفردات الطلاب العراقيين وفهمهم للقراءة من خلال استراتيجيات ما وراء المعرفية
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مستخلص البحث:

تطوير القراءة الاستيعابية و المعاني للطلاب العراقيين من خلال استراتيجيات القراءة صممت هذه الدراسة لمساعدة الطلاب على فهم النص والمفردات بطريقة اكثر فعالية وتقديم اجابات افضل في الامتحان علاوة على ذلك من المفيد معرفة المدرسين لاستراتيجيات القراءة لتعليم الطلاب كيفية استخدامها والتخطيط للدروس وتطبيق اساليب فعالة لتدريس القراءة من اجل تطوير قدرة الطلاب على القراءة وفهم النص والمفردات. شارك في هذه الدراسة عشر طالبات من الصف السادس في المرحل الثانوية في العراق. هدف الدراسة معرفة اذا كان طلاب يستخدمون استراتيجيات (MARSI) من خلال الاختبار والاستبيان وتحليل البيانات من خلال نظام (SPSS) الاحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية. وظهرت النتائج ان الطلاب هم متوسطي الاستخدام للاستراتيجيات وهذه الاستراتيجيات تقدر تساعد الطلاب الاخرين على فهم النص وتقديم اجابات افضل في الامتحان.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيا القراءة المعرفية (MARSI) – النص – القراءة الاستيعابية -المفردات