

The Effects of Pre-reading Activities on ESP Reading Comprehension

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Abstract—The present study intended to investigate the effects of pre-reading activities on reading comprehension of L2 learners of science and technology majors. In this respect the following research question was under consideration: Will comprehension be facilitated if students are instructed through restoring to pre-reading activities? To carry out this research, participants were selected on the basis of Michigan Test of English Proficiency, and were assigned into control and experimental groups. Members of each group were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental and Control groups. Data analysis conducted through T-test statistical procedures. The findings revealed that better comprehension can be gained through restoring to pre-reading activities. In fact, experimental group which was exposed to pre-reading activities gained considerable abilities in comprehension than control group. Results of this study revealed that giving prior information through restoring to pre-reading activities might become a useful tool for teachers of ESP to facilitate the learner's reading comprehension ability. Some implications have been drawn for ESP material designers too. The computation and analysis of the T-test, provided us with empirical answers for the research question posed, and the effectiveness of employment of pre-reading activities in ESP reading comprehension ability was confirmed.

Index Terms—pre-reading activities, ESP, reading comprehension

I. INTRODUCTION

Studies of pre-reading activities for native speakers have demonstrated the facilitative effects of activating reader's prior knowledge relevant to understanding of the new text (Mayer, 1994). Not only do pre-reading activities prepare native speakers for the concepts that follow, but making the reading task easier and connecting the new concept more meaningfully to prior knowledge, pre-reading activities make reading a more enjoyable task (Hansen, 1981) Pre-reading activities are thus intended to activate appropriate knowledge structures or provide knowledge that the reader lacks. The present study intends to investigate the effects of pre-reading activities on comprehension of engineering students. It is hypothesized that employing the pre-reading activities would significantly improve student's ability in comprehension. For the realization of this objective two groups of participants were employed and put in the two experimental and Control groups. The comparison of mean scores made by subjects of the two groups provided evidence to the effect that whether the difference between teaching strategies, if any, were due to experimental treatment or sampling error. This study is an attempt to arrive at an empirical answer to the following research question and hypotheses:

RQ: Will comprehension be facilitated if students are instructed through restoring to pre-reading activities?

The results of this study paved the way for acceptance of the belief that giving related information of the text through restoring to pre-reading activities can have large impact on reading comprehension. So we will come up with some guidelines for ESP teachers and syllabus designers regarding reading pedagogy in the final section of the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A good deal of the current research in the field of EFL reading is embedded in a Psycholinguistics framework (Goodman, 1970, Coady, 1979). In this view, the reader is seen as an active processor of information, one who selects only the most productive cues from the printed page. One way of facilitating a reader's interaction with a text for triggering and building background knowledge is through pre-reading activities (Hudson, 1982). Pre-reading activities provide orientation to content and context. They vary with the nature of the text, the reader's purpose and context of situation (Wallace, 1992).

A. Importance of Reading

Most scholars would agree that reading is one of the most important skills for educational and professional success (Alderson, 1984). In highlighting the importance of reading comprehension Rivers (1981:147) stated that "reading is

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