英文閱讀策略對於閱讀成效之影響

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摘要

我國工商界正積極發展國際化、全球化，對於英語人才的需求非常迫切。因此，良好的英文閱讀能力對於每一個學生是不可或缺的，它也是提升個人就業競爭能力的重要技能之一。本研究之重點為探討國內技職學生在英文閱讀中採用哪些學習策略及其對於閱讀成效之影響，以提供教師教學及學生學習時之參考。研究對象為北台灣一所技術學院四技一、二年級的學生，研究方法為採用敘述性統計、變異數分析、相關性分析及迴歸分析等統計分析方法。探討的項目包括：(1)學生常使用的英文閱讀策略有那些？(2) 日間部與進修部學生之英文閱讀策略有何不同？(3)不同性別及學習成效的學生，其英文閱讀策略使用狀況有何不同？(4)英文閱讀策略使用程度與閱讀成效關係如何？(5)利用閱讀策略使用狀況建立英文閱讀成效之預測模式。

The Effect of English Reading Strategy Use on Reading Proficiency

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Abstract

It is in urgent need of English talented person due to the internationalization and globalization of markets. Good English reading ability will be necessary for students to promote their employment competition ability. The purpose of this study was to investigate what reading strategies were adopted by technical college students and to provide the teachers and students with a more effective teaching and studying method. The participants were four-year technical college students with English major. Statistic analysis methods, such as descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, bivariate correlation analysis, and regression analysis were adopted. The author investigated the following subjects. (1) What strategies did students prefer during reading? (2) Did the strategy use of night school students differ from that of day school students? (3) Did gender and reading proficiency play an important role in reading strategy use? (4) What were the correlations between strategy uses and reading proficiency? (5) Establish the prediction model of reading proficiency by reading strategy uses.

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is "a complex behavior which involves conscious and unconscious use of various strategies to build a model of the meaning which the writer is assumed to have intended" (Mikulecky, 1990, p. 2). It is also an important skill to acquire knowledge in each discipline. Technical college students not only need to acquire knowledge and theories from English books, but also need to read other English materials for the absorption of new information. It is estimated that over 70% of the internet information was presented in English. Good English reading ability is helpful to effectively obtain the current information.

Many studies on reading comprehension have tried to find out possible ways to help students read English successfully. However, there are many factors such as text type, environment, student's intelligence, learning motivation, and teaching method affect the reading proficiency of a second language. One of the most important factors is reading strategy. Reading strategies indicate how readers conceive of a task, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they don't understand. From the previous studies, it demonstrates that there is a close relationship between reading strategy use and reading performance. The reading strategies used by efficient and inefficient learners are different [Singhal, 2001]. With effective study strategies, the learners gain better achievement [Ley & Young, 1998; 吳訓生, 民89]. The students' awareness of reading strategies would predict their reading scores [Hare, 1979]. Some researchers also found that structured reading strategies can act as learning guidance [Bereiter & Bird, 1985; 鄒美華, 民92]. Therefore, besides student's diligence, identifying the reading strategies of good readers and teaching the "good" reading strategies to poor readers is worthy of investigation.

The study on English learning strategies had caught the attention of many researchers in Taiwan recently. Many studies have shown the influence of reading strategies on EFL learners in Taiwan. Most of the participants are students of the elementary school, senior high school, junior high school and university (Hung, 2001; 陳雅文,民92; Lin, 2005). This study aimed to understand the reading strategy use of technical college students and to establish a model to predict the reading proficiency by reading strategy use. The author expected the results of this research were helpful for teachers and students in teaching and learning English.

2. Literature Review

The reading strategies consist of a whole range of strategies including skimming and scanning, contextual guessing, reading for meaning, utilizing background knowledge, recognizing text structure, and so forth. There are different classifications of learning strategies. Rubin (1981) identifies six general strategies that might contribute directly to language learning. They are clarification, guessing, deductive reasoning, practice, memorization, and monitoring. O'Malley & Chamot (1990) adopted the three-category learning strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategies. Several subcategories are under each main category. Another popular taxonomy of learning strategies that has been used in many studies is Oxford's (1990) language learning strategy classification. She divided learning strategies into six categories: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Shih (1991) and Baker-Gonzalize & Blau (1995) suggested three stages of reading strategy use: before reading, while reading, and after reading.

2.1 Factors Influencing Learning Strategy Use

A lot of studies revealed that many factors affect students' English learning strategy use. Based on the subject of this study, three factors on the learning strategy use, especially reading strategy use, were reviewed as follows: school system, gender, and proficiency level.

School System

There were few studies on learning strategy use by night school students. 梁麗珍&賴靜惠(民 92) investigated the relationship between learning motivation and learning strategies of night school students in junior colleges. They indicated that gender and age have an effect upon learning strategies, and learning strategies are influenced by the learning motivation. Chen (2008) investigated the relationship between English learning motivation and reading proficiency. Two hundred and thirty university freshman English majors participated in the study. The results revealed that there is a significant and positive correlation between learning motivation and reading proficiency for both day school and night school students. The higher the motivation the learners have, the better the students are in their English reading proficiency. 吳鴻松(民 98) investigated the motivational orientation in learning and learning satisfaction of adult students of a university of science and technology. He found that the items of learning motivation and learning satisfaction have significant and positive correlation.

Gender

Bugel (1996) found that sex-based differences appear to be obvious in reading habits. Females do better on questions about human relations, education, care, art, and philosophy; males do better on economic and technological topics, politics, sports, and violence. Hung (2001) investigated the frequency and types of reading strategies used by senior high school students in reading English narrative and expository materials. She indicated that there is a significant difference by gender in reading comprehension ability. Female students are better than male students. But, there is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of overall strategy use. Kuo (2002) investigated the proficiency and gender differences in reading strategies used toward the reading comprehension tests of the Basic Competence Test. He stated that there is no difference between male and female junior high school students in reading strategy use. Poole (2005) also found very few strategic differences, both genders using strategies with medium or high frequency. Ho (2007) investigated the EFL reading strategies used by vocational high school students. The results demonstrated that there are significant differences in gender regarding EFL reading strategy use. Shih (2009) explored the effects of gender differences, extensive reading habits and English achievement on reading strategy use of sophomores. She found no evidence of a difference between males and females in relation to their reading strategy use. Cheng (2009) probed the overall and specific types of reading strategy use among EFL college students. Two of the findings are: (1) There are no significant differences between male and female learners in their overall and specific types of strategy use. (2) Significant gender effects are found in the use of individual strategies; females significantly employ more underlining, highlighting and notation strategies than males do while reading.

Proficiency Level

Skilled readers know how to use effective strategies to facilitate the functioning of various cognitive processes and construct meaningful understanding of the text, but poor readers simply read the text word by word without using any strategies (Lau & Chan, 2003). In some first language studies, the use of various strategies has been found to be effective in improving

students' reading comprehension (Baker & Brown, 1984). In the second language studies, various studies in the area of reading strategies have shown that younger and less proficient students use fewer strategies and use them less effectively in their reading comprehension (Garner, 1987). The successful readers keep the meaning of the passage in mind while they are reading and have a positive self-concept as a reader. Anderson (1991) investigated the differences in reading strategy use by adult second language learners. The results revealed that both high and low scored readers appear to be using the same kinds of strategies while answering the comprehension questions; however, high scoring students seem to be applying strategies more effectively and appropriately. Vandergrift (1999) concluded that the learning strategies used by successful and less successful learners are different, and that the former make better use of metacognitive strategies including planning for learning, monitoring the process and self-evaluating learning after the tasks.

In recent decade, Kuo (2002) detected the differences in reading strategy use between high and low proficiency groups. He found that high proficiency group use more interactive processing strategy than low proficiency group does. According to the Shen's study (2003), the most frequently used strategy is translating for both proficient and less proficient readers. Wu (2005) found that the university students' English language proficiency affects their reading strategy use. More proficient readers use more reading strategies than less proficient readers do. Huang, Chen, and Lin (2006) constructed a web-based reading program to explore the online strategy use among EFL learners of different language proficiencies. The findings ascertained that the high group and the low group differ not only in their use of strategy types, but also in their strategy use sequences. The high group uses strategies more effectively. Chiu (2007) indicated that high-achievers use more strategies than low-achievers do. The cognitive strategies are used most frequently by college English majors and high-achievers tend to use more memory strategies than low-achievers do.

2.2 Relationship between Learning Strategy Use and Learning Proficiency

Research showed that there is a close relationship between reading strategies and reading performance. Hare (1979) found that students' awareness of reading strategies would predict their reading scores. The students with higher scores are more conscious of reading strategies than lower ones do. Purpura (1997) analyzed the relationships between learner' cognitive and metacognitive strategy use and second language test performance. The findings showed that there are positive correlations among these variables. Ho (1999) investigated the relationships between the use of English learning strategies and factors such as motivation and proficiency among Taiwan technological university students. He indicated that motivation/attitude, effort, and English proficiency in combination predict forty-seven percent of variance in memory strategy use and sixty percent of the variance in cognitive strategy use. According to the Hung's results (2004), the reading strategy use correlates positively with learners' reading proficiency. Lee (2006) also indicated that English proficiency is significantly associated with reading strategy use; more proficient readers make greater use of reading strategies than less proficient readers do. Hsu (2008) investigated English reading strategies adopted by airline service major college students. The more content schemata the participant uses in taking English reading test, the better performance he/she can achieve ($r = 0.874$). Shih (2009) found that there is a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.545$) between overall reading strategy use and English achievement.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants were 155 freshmen or sophomores of four-year technical college students from northern Taiwan in 2009. Among 155 participants, fifty-eight were males and ninety-seven were females. Eight four students were from day school, while seventy one students were from night school. All of these participants were English major in the department of applied foreign languages.

3.2 Instrument

The instrument consisted of two parts. Part I was a personal information questionnaire including gender, studying time after class, abroad experiences, and parents' education etc. Part II was a reading strategy questionnaire in Chinese which was revised based on the previous studies (Mckeachie, 1987; Heilman, 1990; 程炳林, 民 90; 陳雅文, 民 92). This part consisted of 32 items with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1 point) to "strongly agree" (5 points). It was divided into three categories: cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy, and social/affective strategy. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach alpha) was analyzed to show how well a group of items measured the same concept.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The participants answered the questionnaires during "Reading and Discussion in English" class and the researcher was the instructor of these classes. The researcher gave a brief explanation on the purpose of the survey and guidelines on marking before students answered questionnaires. Students were informed to ask questions any time during the fill-out process. The returned questionnaires were screened to check if they were answered unmindfully or incompletely before data analysis. One hundred and fifty respondents were valid. In addition, the learning proficiency was evaluated by students' scores of "Reading and Discussion in English" class.

The researcher adopted SPSS 15.0 statistical package to compute collected data. Mean value and standard deviation of each reading strategy item were analyzed by descriptive statistics. And then, the researcher ranked all items based on their scores. A three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) method was used to reveal the main and interaction effects of three independent variables (school system, gender, and proficiency level) on reading strategy use by the participants. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to understand the correlation between reading strategy uses and reading proficiency. The probability level of significance for ANOVA, correlation analysis, and regression analysis was set at 0.05.

4. Results and Discussion

The reading strategies were divided into three categories in this study. Cognitive strategies refer to process information, summarizing, and recognition. Metacognitive strategies concern higher-order planning, monitoring, evaluating, and comprehension. Social and affective strategies involve interaction with others or self-assurance. The internal consistency reliability of each group of reading strategy questionnaire was analyzed firstly. Cronbach alpha values were 0.89, 0.78 and 0.68 for cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective strategy, respectively. The overall Cronbach alpha reliability was 0.93. This questionnaire showed a good internal consistency to evaluate student's reading strategy use.

Table 1 showed mean values and standard deviations of each reading strategy use. The items of reading strategy were ranked according to the mean value. A strategy item with mean score higher than 3.5 was regarded as the strategy with high frequency of usage (Oxford, 1990). The top seven strategy uses belonged to high frequency of usage and they were distributed into three categories of strategy. In the overall thirty-two learning strategies, the most often used strategy item was "I usually choose good circumstances to concentrate on

reading." The second one was "I frequently check if I understand the contents."

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the reading strategy use

Rank	Item	Strategy Category	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	I choose good circumstances to concentrate on reading.	Social/Affective	3.77	0.86
2	I frequently check if I understand the contents.	Metacognitive	3.75	1.04
3	If I have difficulty in understanding the meaning of the article, I read it carefully.	Metacognitive	3.62	0.86
4	Due to the context, I understand the difficult words or sentences in the article.	Cognitive	3.61	0.98
5	I speculate the content according to the title or drawing of the article.	Cognitive	3.57	0.94
6	I remind myself by underlining the words or phrases I don't understand.	Cognitive	3.56	1.02
7	I usually underline the important part of the article.	Cognitive	3.55	1.12
8	I imagine the image and sound described in the article.	Cognitive	3.47	0.99
9	I make use of my concept and living experience to ponder over the article.	Cognitive	3.47	0.94
10	When I read, I think about the questions of the article.	Cognitive	3.43	0.94
11	I recall the key point when I read a long paragraph.	Metacognitive	3.43	0.91
12	I ignore unimportant sentence or paragraph after getting the main idea.	Metacognitive	3.42	0.94
13	I use my own words to clarify the meaning of the article.	Cognitive	3.39	0.88
14	The beginning or ending of the article helps me understand the story.	Cognitive	3.39	0.92
15	Reconsidering the difficult part helps me understand the article.	Metacognitive	3.39	0.87
16	I adjust my reading habit according to the content.	Metacognitive	3.37	0.98
17	The title of the article helps me find out the key to the content.	Metacognitive	3.37	0.91
18	I try my best to understand the unfamiliar part of the article.	Social/Affective	3.29	0.80
19	I take notes to better understand the article.	Cognitive	3.25	1.01
20	I usually ask teachers or classmates to help me when I don't understand.	Social/Affective	3.25	0.90
21	I can find out what the author wants to reveal to the reader according to the article.	Cognitive	3.24	0.93
22	According to the importance, I read in order.	Metacognitive	3.17	0.92
23	I use familiar words to interpret abstract words.	Cognitive	3.11	0.96
24	I usually concentrate my attention on reading.	Social/Affective	3.10	0.78
25	I can tell you what the main idea is.	Cognitive	3.09	0.98
26	I choose the right way to read because of different purposes.	Metacognitive	2.98	1.01

27	I list and recite some important words or sentences.	Cognitive	2.96	0.95
28	I ask myself about what happens in the article.	Cognitive	2.96	0.93
29	I call on my friends to study together.	Social/Affective	2.81	0.93
30	I interpret each paragraph by a short sentence.	Cognitive	2.77	1.00
31	I marked the words that I don't know.	Cognitive	2.70	0.93
32	I collect data to understand the article.	Cognitive	2.63	0.94

Table 2 showed the descriptive statistics of the use of three strategy categories. The mean value of three strategy categories were 3.39, 3.24, and 3.23 for metacognitive, social/affective, and cognitive strategy use, respectively, and that of overall strategy use was 3.28. It revealed that four-year technical college students using reading strategies with medium frequency. The most often used one was metacognitive strategy category which was significantly higher than social/affective strategy category ($t = 3.47$, $p = 0.001$) and cognitive strategy category ($t = 5.42$, $p = 0.000$).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the use of three reading strategy categories

Rank	Strategy Category	Number of Items	Number of Participants	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Metacognitive	9	150	3.39	0.56
2	Social/Affective	5	150	3.24	0.57
3	Cognitive	18	150	3.23	0.56

Many factors affected the reading strategy use of students. The author investigated the role of school system, gender, and proficiency level in reading strategy use in this study. Tables 3 listed the outcome of ANOVA analysis. The main effect of three sources was discussed firstly. With respect to the school system, the night school students have significantly higher mean value of reading strategy use ($F = 4.83$, $p = 0.03$). In general, night school students were elder. They also have working experience and stronger cognitive ability, so they were more familiar with EFL reading strategy uses. Compared to the author's previous study (Hsu, 2006), the overall reading strategy use of the present study was higher.

Table 3 also showed the main effect of gender. There was no significant difference between male and female students in terms of overall strategy use ($F = 0.31$, $p = 0.58$). The phenomenon was consistent with the results of previous studies (Hung, 2001; Cheng, 2009). But females used reading strategies slightly often than males did.

The participants could be divided into three groups based on their reading proficiency. Those who were in the top thirty-three percent were rated as "effective learner" while those in the bottom thirty-three percent were rated as "ineffective learner." From Table 3 we found that the effective learners adopted reading strategies more frequently than ineffective learners did. It existed significant difference in terms of overall reading strategy use ($F = 59.91$, $p = 0.000$) for different proficiency levels. Anderson (1991) and Deegan (1995) indicated that high achievers tend to use a wider range of strategies and use strategies more frequently than low achievers do. The results of the present study were consistent with the results of Anderson and Deegan's research.

The interactive effect of school system, gender, and proficiency level on the overall reading strategy use could be revealed by three-way ANOVA analysis as shown in Table 3. All the four kinds of interactive effects were no significant.

Table 3. Three-way ANOVA of overall reading strategy use by school system, gender, and reading proficiency

Source	Level	Mean	SS	F	p
School System	Day	3.21	0.57	4.83	0.030*
	Night	3.36			
Gender	Male	3.23	0.04	0.31	0.580
	Female	3.30			
Proficiency Level	Low	2.79	14.2	59.91	0.000***
	High	3.72			
Interaction:					
School System * Gender	-	-	0.08	0.69	0.409
School System * Proficiency			0.07	0.30	0.741
Gender * Proficiency			0.01	0.05	0.950
School System * Gender * Proficiency			0.04	0.16	0.854
Error			16.39	-	-

* $p < 0.05$
*** $p < 0.001$.

Could the reading proficiency be predicted by the frequency of the reading strategy use? It could be revealed by the regression analysis. Before the regression analysis the bivariate correlation between reading strategy use and proficiency were checked, and the results were listed in Table 6. All of the cognitive strategy use ($r = 0.79$, $p = 0.000$), metacognitive strategy use ($r = 0.70$, $p = 0.000$), social/affective strategy use ($r = 0.66$, $p = 0.000$), and overall strategy use ($r = 0.81$, $p = 0.000$) were significantly correlated to the reading proficiency. In addition, three categories were highly correlated to each other. The correlation coefficient between overall strategy use and reading proficiency was as high as 0.84.

Table 4. Bivariate correlations between variables

Variable	Cognitive Strategies	Metacognitive Strategies	Social/Affective Strategies	Overall Strategies	Proficiency
Cognitive Strategies	1.00	0.79**	0.65**	0.97**	0.79**
Metacognitive Strategies	0.79**	1.00	0.57**	0.89**	0.70**
Social/Affective Strategies	0.65**	0.57**	1.00	0.75**	0.66**
Overall Strategies	0.97**	0.89**	0.75**	1.00	0.81**
Proficiency	0.79**	0.70**	0.66**	0.81**	1.00

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$.

Four sets of predictors were conducted to predict the students' reading proficiency by multiple linear regression analysis. The first model included cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategy use as predictors. The second model entered cognitive strategy use as predictor. The third model entered overall strategy use as predictor. The fourth model entered the top five strategy uses as predictors. In order to increase the resolution of prediction, the original reading proficiency scores rather than proficiency levels were adopted in this analysis. Tables 5-7 provided the results of the regression analyses. The regression model 1 with three

strategy category uses was significant (R^2 = 0.67, p = .000). These predictors accounts for 67% of the variance of proficiency. However, the results of bivariate correlation analysis showed that any two of these predictors was highly correlated. Only one of these predictors was recommended to enter the regression equation. Therefore, the regression model 2 was conducted only with cognitive strategy category use. It was also significant and the predictor accounted for 62% of the variance of proficiency (R^2 = 0.62, p = .000). The regression model 3 with overall strategy category use was significant (R^2 = 0.66, p = .000). This predictor accounted for 66% of the variance of proficiency. In regression model 4, the result of T-test of regression coefficient showed the predictor "the third strategy use" was insignificant (p = 0.355). It meant that regression model 4 was unsuitable. As a result, the recommended regression equation was model 3: Proficiency = 5.77 + 21.64*(Overall strategy use).

Table 5. Results of regression analyses for three sets of predictors (model summary)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.82[a]	0.67	0.66	7.95
2	0.79[b]	0.62	0.62	8.50
3	0.81[c]	0.66	0.66	8.00
4	0.67[d]	0.45	0.43	10.37

[a] Predictors: (constant), cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategy uses
[b] Predictors: (constant), cognitive strategy use
[c] Predictors: (constant), overall strategy use
[d] Predictors: (constant), top five strategy uses

Table 6. Results of regression analyses for three sets of predictors (coefficients [a])

Model	B	Standardized Coefficient, β	t	p
1. Constant	4.67	-	1.07	0.288
Cognitive Strategies	11.97	0.49	5.79	0.000
Metacognitive Strategy Use	4.07	0.17	2.12	0.036
Social/Affective Strategy Use	6.04	0.25	3.99	0.000
2. Constant	14.80	-	3.64	0.000
Cognitive Strategy Use	19.16	0.79	15.45	0.000
3. Constant	5.77	-	1.37	0.174
Overall Strategy Use	21.64	0.81	16.98	0.000
4. Constant	28.21	-	5.61	0.000
The First Strategy Use	3.13	0.20	2.76	0.007
The Second Strategy Use	3.38	0.26	3.34	0.001
The Third Strategy Use	1.12	0.07	0.93	0.355
The Fourth Strategy Use	3.84	0.27	3.31	0.001
The Fifth Strategy Use	1.72	0.12	1.72	0.088

[a] Dependent variable: reading proficiency

Table 7. Results of regression analyses for three sets of predictors (ANOVA [d])

Model	SS	df	F	p
1. Regression	18685	3	98.48	0.000[a]
Residual	9234	146		
Total	27919	149		
2. Regression	17233	1	238.68	0.000[b]
Residual	10686	148		
Total	27919	149		
3. Regression	18446	1	288.19	0.000[c]
Residual	9473	148		
Total	27919	149		
4. Regression	12499	5	23.25	0.000[d]
Residual	15376	143		
Total	27875	148		

[a] Predictors: (constant), cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategy uses
[b] Predictors: (constant), cognitive strategy use
[c] Predictors: (constant), overall strategy use
[d] Dependent variable: top five strategy uses

5. Conclusions

This paper investigated the English reading strategy use of four-year technical college students in northern Taiwan. According to the results, the following conclusions were drawn.

Among three reading strategy categories, “metacognitive strategies” were the most often adopted. The night school participants were more familiar with reading strategy use than day school ones did. Also, females applied reading strategies more often. The effective learners tended to use strategies more frequently than ineffective learners did. The technical college students adopted ”I choose good circumstances to concentrate on reading.” and “I often check if I understand the contents.” strategies more frequently. The cognitive strategy use, metacognitive strategy use, and social/affective strategy use, overall strategy use, and reading proficiency of the students were significantly correlated to each other. Finally, the regression model with overall strategy use as predictor was recommended to predict reading proficiency. The predictor accounted for 66% of the variance of proficiency.

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