

Abstract

Researchers in second language acquisition have been studying what reading strategies EFL readers employ in reading a second language and how teachers can help EFL students become better readers. This current research project attempts to investigate the existing reading strategies and problems facing Chinese college students in the course of their reading as well as to examine how reading strategy instruction affects students' views and use of the reading strategies and their reading comprehension performance in the Chinese context.

This study is a small-scale action research project. It was a six-week reading strategy instruction project conducted with the freshmen in one class at Fujian Hwanan Women's College. The data were collected through tests, questionnaires and interviews carried out before and after the instruction. Before the instruction, I gained an insight into the current situation of reading instruction and students' reading strategies and reading problems by means of analysis of test and questionnaire from all subjects and in-depth interviews with six chosen subjects at top, average and low levels respectively. During the reading strategy instruction, I adopted the method of teacher modeling and students' group work to make the students aware of and use a range of reading strategies especially some top-down strategies. This approach to reading instruction not only helps the students achieve better understanding of texts, the result of which would improve their scores in reading comprehension test, but also

builds up the students' confidence in independent reading and hopefully would enable them to read more outside class. After the instruction, the survey with the same procedure and content as the one prior to the instruction was administered to the subjects, from which I collected the data that enabled me to analyze the impact of my reading instruction project.

Results from the survey indicates that Chinese college students need to be given reading strategy instruction so as to be made aware of the full range of reading strategies available to them toward becoming more efficient readers. Among the major findings of my study is the discovery that the reading strategy instruction does have potential in enhancing students' use and views of reading strategies and their reading comprehension performance. These insights allow me to recommend that reading teachers should act as facilitator and adviser in class and explore how to maximize this potential of reading strategy instruction in their context by taking into account of more factors such as students' motivation and learning styles.