

DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS THROUGH RECIPROCAL TEACHING OF COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES TO ESL LEARNERS'

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Abstract: Reading is one of the most important activities in any language teaching and learning classroom. Reading is an interactive process involving the utilization of both real-world and linguistic knowledge (Nunan, 2004; Khalily & Seyvanzadeh, 2008). Presently the importance of reading in developing writing skills, few competent readers in ESL contexts develops into competent writers. Since students are not aware that reading can assist them in writing, this study examined the effect of reciprocal teaching - which focuses on four reading comprehension strategies, namely summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting-on improving ESL students at EFL-University students' writing ability. Assessment was made based on an evaluation sheet including five criteria (content, macro structure, micro structure, and language range and complexity, and language errors) for evaluating the compositions. In this study, true-experimental design was used to study two classes of 104 randomly selected Graduation learners. The pre-test inter-rater reliability for the two raters who rated the students' compositions was 0.95 and the post test inter-rater reliability was 0.97. The results of the independent samples t-test supported the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching of comprehension strategies in develop the learners' writing skills. Since teaching comprehension strategies seems to have facilitated the process of writing, its application can be suggested to reinforce ESL students' writing ability. The findings of this study imply that students will get motivated to read more if they realize the importance of reading is developing their writing performance.

Keywords: Reciprocal Teaching Strategies, Reading Comprehension, Writing Ability, ESL Learners.

Introduction: According to Durukan (2011), reading and writing skills are important from the first phase of education. Writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. The difficulty lies both in generating thoughts and ideas and translating these ideas into readable text. Second language writers must pay attention not only to higher level skills of planning and organizing but also to lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Not only should what one writes be clear in its meaning, it should also make sense beyond the level of the statement; it should make sense as a text. Cohesion and coherence are two characteristics of a well written text. Cohesion refers to surface level signals that reflect the discourse organization of the text and the intended purposes of the writer. These signals include repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, paraphrase/restate, anaphora, transition markers, substitution, ellipsis, parallelism, and other lexical relations that link parts of the text (Grabe, 2009). Coherence refers to whatever links the meanings of utterances in a discourse or of the sentences in a text.

When we read, we read background knowledge and skills to comprehend what someone else has written (Chastain, 1988). Krashen (1984) believes that a great deal of self-motivated reading leads to writing competence. According to Gregg and Steinberg (1980) and Anderson, Spiro, and Montague (1977), both in constructivist theory and in research, reading and writing are meaning generating activities. It is usually assumed that reading and writing are like two

sides of the same coin and a good reader makes a good piece of writing. So, writing can be developed by given efficient reading.

According to Palincsar (1986), five requirements are to be satisfied to teach the four strategies (summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting) to students successfully. These requirements are: 1. Teachers need to make these strategies explicit by modeling them for the students. 2. Teachers should not teach these strategies in isolation from the context in which they are used. 3. Teachers should make students aware of the reasons and situations they should use particular strategies. 4. Teachers should give feedback to their students about their success regardless of their level of performance. 5. Teachers should ensure that students can use these strategies spontaneously and transfer the comprehension responsibility to the students gradually.

- Does reciprocal teaching of reading comprehension have any effect on improving ESL learners' writing ability?

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design was used to study two classes of 104 randomly selected Graduation learners.

Literary Reviews: Langer, J., & Applebee, A. (1986). Reading and writing instruction: toward a theory of teaching and learning, Review of Research in Education. This research has given successful instructions to develop skills.

Stricklin, K. (2011). Hands-on reciprocal teaching: A comprehension technique. The Reading Teacher

This research also brought the conclusion for teacher's instructions and techniques to succeed to develop in skills.

Methodology: Research Design and Subjects: In this study, true-experimental design was used to study two classes of 104 randomly selected learners. A total number of 150 female students at the Graduation level from EFL-University, Hyderabad. The participants answered the Preliminary English Test (PET). They were ranked based on their scores. After omitting the extreme scores, 104 students whose scores were one standard deviation around the mean in normal curve were randomly assigned to two groups of 52 subjects. Only those two subjects with similar scores were randomly assigned to the experimental and control group each time to select homogenous groups. Due to time constraint limitations, it was not possible to have more than two groups. The subjects were between fifteen to twenty three years old. The following diagram summarizes the design. The dotted line represents equivalent groups. In this diagram GA and GB stand for experimental and control groups, respectively. T₁ stands for the test before applying the treatment. T₂ stands for the test after the treatment and X stands for treatment.

GAT₁X T₂

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GBT₁T₂

Instruments The subjects sat for three tests in this study. The PET (the Preliminary English Test) was used for the placement test. This standardized test consisted of 35 questions related to two skills of reading and writing in which the first 5 questions had three choices, the next 15 questions had two choices (correct or incorrect), and the last 15 questions had 4 choices. The mean score and standard deviation of which was 20 and 16.1 respectively. The first composition written by the subjects before the intervention was considered as pre-test and the second composition after the treatment was used as posttest. Raters were supposed to assign the particular score related to the met criteria in the subjects' compositions (excellent to good: 9- 10, fair to poor: 5-6, good to average: 7-8, very poor: 1- 4). The final score in each composition was the sum of the scores assigned to five mentioned domains. Reliability for the two raters who rated the students'

compositions on the pre-test was 0.95 meaning that the two raters enjoyed statistically significant inter-rater reliability. Since this study was conducted under the supervision of a supervisor and an advisor, its validity was taken for granted. Methodology applied as below mentioned.

- Reading
- Identifying the topic
- Identifying supporting points or examples
- Identifying words and phrases appropriate to the context
- Identifying the relationships between sentences and paragraphs
- Understanding academic vocabulary
- Comprehending explicit and implicit information
- Following a logical or chronological sequence of events.

Procedure this study was implemented in four phases: placement test, pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The independent variable was the impact of teaching four reading comprehension strategies: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. The dependent variable was the improvement of ESL learners' writing ability.

The researcher began by teaching and modeling the four comprehension strategies. At first she led the passage. As the subjects became more proficient with the strategies, she gradually faded out and allowed them to assume leadership. The researcher taught and modeled the predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing strategies explicitly as a way to improve the students' comprehension skills. Once students were able to apply all four strategies, they were encouraged to annotate examples of all four strategies in the margins. Then, they shared their annotations and constructed their own meaning of the text. They added commentary to their annotations to improve their understanding of the text. The researcher circulated the classroom to guide the students' discussion. Also asked follow-up questions to enrich their activities

Conclusion: This study investigated the effect of reciprocal teaching of reading comprehension on the writing performance among students at the Graduation level at EFL-University Hyderabad in India. Primary data were collected by conducting a placement test, a pretest, and a post-test. The result of the independent samples t-test analysis from the post-test administration indicated that the experimental group had a better performance than the control group. This suggests that comprehension strategy instruction through reciprocal teaching be useful for the improvement of writing ability. The findings of this study confirm the effectiveness of instruction through four comprehension strategies which are in line with the previous studies (Krashen, 2004; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994; Pearson & Fielding 1991; Palincsar & Brown, 1985). Since writing is such a skill that requires attention to higher level skills of planning, meaning and organizing (Richards &

Renandya, 2002), improving these higher level skills can improve writing. As reciprocal teaching emphasizes on four strategies- namely summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting- and these strategies are dealing with planning, meaning and organizing and help learners not to wander off or miss the meaning of the text (Bruer, 1993), its

implementing can improve writing ability indirectly. According to Krashen (2004) vocabulary building and better writing style. And as Harris (2000) mentioned reciprocal teaching is supposed to enhance students' writing skills. Since understanding the printed text is the result of the interaction between the writer and reader.

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