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The Effect of Applying the Reciprocal Teaching Method in Improving ESP Learners' Reading Comprehension Achievement
The Case of First Year Master Students of Tourism and Hospitality Marketing, Department of Commercial Sciences, Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University of Jijel

تأثير تطبيق طريقة التدريس المتبادل في تحسين تحصيل القراءة لدى طلبة اللغة الانجليزية لأغراض معينة
دراسة حالة طلبة السنة الأولى ماستر تسويق سياحي وفندقي قسم العلوم التجارية، جامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى بجيجل

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Abstract :

The present study aims at investigating the effect of the reciprocal teaching method in improving ESP learners' reading comprehension achievement. The participants of the study included 50 students enrolled in tourism and hospitality marketing studies at the Department of Commercial Sciences, University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel.

To meet the aim of the study, the data were gathered through a pre-test and a post-test with an experimental group (n=25) and a control group (n=25). The results of the reading comprehension pretest-posttest revealed that the reciprocal teaching method is useful for improving ESP learners' reading comprehension ability.

Keywords: ESP Learners; Reciprocal Teaching Method; Reading Comprehension; Tourism and Hospitality Marketing.

ملخص:

يهدف هدا البحث لدراسة تأثير أسلوب التدريس المتبادل في تحسين تحصيل القراءة لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض معينة. أجريت الدراسة بمشاركة 50 طالبا في السنة الأولى ماستر تسويق سياحي وفندقي بقسم العلوم التجارية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحي بجيجل.

لتحقيق هدف الدراسة تم جمع البيانات من خلال الاختبار القبلي والبعدي مع المجموعة التجريبية (ن=25) والمجموعة الضابطة (ن=25). أظهر تحليل نتائج الاختبار القبلي والبعدي لفهم القراءة أن أسلوب التدريس المتبادل مفيد لتحسين قدرة فهم القراءة لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض معينة.

كلمات مفتاحية: طلبة ESP، طريقة التدريس التبادلية، فهم القراءة، تسويق سياحي وفندقي.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four language skills that is considered as a receptive skill since it involves responding to text rather than producing it. The reading skill is an important and required ability, especially in ESP. ESP learners need to read, understand, collect knowledge and thus achieve academic as well as professional success. "Reading, arguably the most essential skill for success in all educational contexts, remains a skill

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of paramount importance as we create assessments of general language ability." [1] Accordingly, Reading is a very important skill because it offers learners vocabulary items they need and provides them with the knowledge that will be used in their professional settings.

Reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension; the text presents letters, words, sentences and paragraphs that encode meaning, and the reader uses knowledge, skills and strategies to determine what that meaning is. [2] Because reading is of paramount importance, its teaching is not an easy task. [3] Teaching reading skills to non-native speakers of English entails specific problems and difficulties at all instructional stages. [4] Hence, in learning to read in a foreign language, students obviously need assistance.

2. Literature Review

While the reading skill has gained more attention in the English classroom than other language skills, the students' reading comprehension performance is still far from expectations. [5] In ESL / EFL context, learners are trained with the knowledge of ESP by having to read many academic texts in English;

however, many of them are unable to acquire such knowledge due to difficulties in understanding those texts. [6] Moreover, various researchers have pointed out that ESP learners experience difficulties in dealing with ESP texts due to the lack of reading strategy knowledge and the required reading strategies. [7] In addition to, learners still face some problems when they read ESP texts, which prevent them from being effective in their ESP learning process. [8] Therefore, Teachers should apply suitable strategies and approaches to help students understand English reading texts and develop improved reading skills.

For these reasons, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of the reciprocal teaching strategy on ESP learners' reading comprehension skills. In other words, the current study investigates whether teaching reading through the Reciprocal Teaching Method (RTM) has any effect on the reading comprehension effectiveness of tourism and hospitality marketing students. Furthermore, the present research is carried out to find out whether there is any significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the Experimental Group (EG) who have been taught

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reading based on the RTM and Control Group(CG) who have been taught reading through the traditional method. From the above, this study is based on the hypothesis: "The application of the reciprocal teaching method in teaching reading may improve ESP learners' reading comprehension." From this point of view, we approach the study by trying to answer the following research questions:

1. Does teaching reading comprehension through the reciprocal teaching method enhance the English reading comprehension achievement of ESP learners'?

2. Is there any significant difference in the reading comprehension of ESP learners taught through RTM and those who are taught in the traditional method?

Thus, this study was conducted using an Experimental Design; the data were collected from the two groups, control and experimental group, accordingly. This Experimental design was adopted to show the effect of the treatment on the experimental group in contrast with the control group that was not administered the treatment. A proficiency test of English developed by Cambridge Michigan ECCE was administered to the participants to assess and determine that the two groups were homogeneous before conducting the experiment and exposing the EG to the treatment.[9] The Reading Comprehension post-test is the same as the pre-test and it is divided in two main sections: 1) General English and, 2) Specific English. The general English section included a reading comprehension passage followed by five multiple-choice items.[10] The specific section contained two parts: part one contains a reading comprehension passages followed by five multiple-choice items, and part two includes ten situations (11–20) and twelve texts (a–l) and learners decide which text suits best with which situation.[11]

Many studies have been conducted to investigate EFL/ESP learners' reading comprehension level and how to improve their reading abilities. In an experimental study[12] on how applying intensive reading strategy training in an ESP classroom improves ESP readers' reading comprehension level, the collected data indicate that applying intensive reading training and frequency of testing improve

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students' reading skills. Moreover, a research project conducted to investigate the impact of teaching reading strategies on reading comprehension improvement of ESP readers.[13] The findings of the study reveal that reading strategy training was more effective in improving reading ability of ESP readers than traditional methods of reading instruction.

Using the RTM has been proved to be effective to improve learners' reading comprehension achievement.[14] In a study of students of a primary school in the Konya province in 2014-2015, students were exposed over 11-week period to expository texts teaching developed based on the RT strategy. [15] The results of the study revealed that expository text comprehension skills of experimental group students, on who RT strategy was implemented, developed more than control group students, on who teaching process projected in the curriculum was implemented, at a statistically significant level.

Moreover, in a research project undertaken by [16] to explore the benefit that the use of the four strategies of RT might provide to a class taught by a pre-service teacher, the findings suggest that the students

in the experimental group performed as the students from the control group in terms of comprehension of the quality of the prepared readings. Moreover, the study indicates that RT strategies, which are intended to develop the skills of reading comprehension, can be extended to readings in subjects such as HSIE. As such, the RT process can be extended to all other subject areas that include subject-specific text, such as Science, Technology, and History.

3. Reading Comprehension and the Reciprocal Teaching Method

Many researchers and scholars in the field of language teaching and learning identify different types of reading. Urquhart and Weir as cited in [17] identify the following types of reading: 1) search reading - locating information on predetermined topics; 2) skimming - reading for gist; 3) scanning - reading selectively to achieve very specific reading goals; 4) careful reading - reader attempts to handle majority of information in the text and to build up a macrostructure. The reader may choose the kind of reading according to the perceived demands of the learning task. Besides, [18] identifies four types of reading by performance

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namely perceptive, selective, interactive and extensive.

Extensive reading and intensive reading are two main approaches that are used to develop the reading skill. Extensive reading is carried out to achieve a general understanding of a text.[19] Moreover, extensive reading is defined as an "Approach to teaching and learning in which learners read large quantities of materials that are within their linguistic competence." [20] In extensive reading, learners read long texts, articles and books within their level of competence usually out of the classroom and concentrate on meaning. [21] On the other hand, intensive reading involves learners reading in detail with specific learning aims and tasks. It refers to reading carefully for an exact understanding of text.

Understanding the content of a particular text requires readers to follow a definite process. The reader, during the reading process, can use the bottom-up model, top-down model, or the interactive model. The bottom-up model of reading refers to the readers' use of their recognition of letters, words and sentences as separate entities and then words in context in order to understand the whole text.[22] Unlike the Bottom-up Model, the top-down model of reading process is meaning-driven in which the reader uses his/her prior knowledge to make predictions and build hypotheses about the text.[23] In this sense, Top-down model emphasizes understanding of the whole text by using the readers' prior knowledge. In the Interactive model of reading process, bottom-up and top-down models of reading are integrated to understand the reading comprehension process.

In addition, research in the field of second and foreign language learning proves that what makes good or low-level language learner is their ability to apply techniques and tools for approaching various tasks and activities.[24] These techniques are referred to as language learning strategies. Learning strategies are "Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations." [25] These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval or use of the new language. [26] Moreover, a strategy is "the mental and communicative procedures learners use in order to learn and use language."[27] In brief,

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Strategy refers to techniques, tools, thoughts and operations individuals or learners use consciously or subconsciously to learn successfully and easily.

Proficient and confident readers employ a number of strategies to achieve comprehension of a text. Reading comprehension strategies are conscious actions employed by readers to improve their understanding of the textual content. Readers may use reading strategies to make purposeful and deliberate plans to improve comprehension of reading and to solve misunderstandings. Palincsar and Brown used the term reciprocal teaching to refer to "a set of learning conditions in which children 'first experience a particular set of cognitive activities in the presence of experts, and only gradually come to perform these functions by themselves'…"[28]. Besides, reciprocal teaching's objectives are for students to learn the strategies of reading comprehension, learn how and when to use the strategies and become self-directed in the use of these strategies.[29]

The steps of reciprocal teaching are as follows: 1) Predict. Throughout the reading process, students draw inferences and use proof from the text. 2) Question. Students ask questions to understand the text, and answer them. 3) Clarify. Students know and apply the skills of grade level phonics and word processing to decipher terms in texts. To confirm or self-correct, they also use context, they often use the context for clarification or self-correction, and reread when necessary. 4) Summarize; in paragraphs and in multi-paragraph texts, students may recognize key ideas and information.[30]

Reciprocal Teaching has many advantages. It "Provides explicit teaching through direct instruction that can make obvious what will the students do in reading learning process."[31] It is a sharing of an active comprehension because it involves reciprocal dialogue (one of an important factor in Reciprocal Teaching) which is based on the premise that group participation and dialogue that can aid learning as well as promoting conceptual change. [32] Furthermore, reciprocal teaching not only helps the students to comprehend a text but it can be use in solving mathematics problems. [33] In short, this strategy can be considered as a good strategy to enhance students' comprehension because it can be applied in any

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school subjects. A model of reciprocal teaching strategy for the teaching of reading can be developed into pre, while, and post reading activities.[34]

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to test the hypothesis provided, the means of the control group (CG) and experimental group (EG) achievement were compared before and after applying the treatment on the EG, in addition to measuring the effect that treatment has on learners' reading comprehension performance. Table 1 below shows the mean scores and standard deviation of the pre-test of both groups to check whether they are different in terms of their reading comprehension performance before they receive the treatment.

Table (1): Students' reading comprehension performance in the pre-test

Group	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Control Group (CG)	25	8.0400	3.23368
Experimental Group (EG)	25	8.2400	3.09946

In Table 1, the control and experimental groups are compared in terms of the mean, which in control group is 8.04 while in the experimental group is 8.24, and their standard deviation, which is 3.23 for the control group and 3.09 for the experimental group. Based on the t-test for the independent samples test, there is no significant difference between the two groups before the intervention occurred.

Table (2): Students' reading comprehension performance in the post-test

Group	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Control Group (CG)	25	8.3200	2.82430
Experimental Group (EG)	25	10.8000	2.67706

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An independent t-test was used to compare the means of the CG and EG in the post-test in order to measure the effect of the treatment on the EG. It is clear that the EG performed better than the CG, by comparing the means of both groups, which in control group is 8.32 while in the experimental group is 10.80 their standard deviation, which is 2.82 the control group and 2.67 for the experimental group. Therefore, the obtained scores of the post-test from the control and experimental groups seem to be different.

Table (3): Post-test independent samples test

| | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
	F	Sig.	t	df				Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.006	.938	-3.186	48	.003	-2.48000	.77829	-4.04485	-.91515
Equal variances not assumed			-3.186	47.863	.003	-2.48000	.77829	-4.04497	-.91503

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Table 3 summarizes the t-test statistics in post-test. The table shows that the significance in Levine's Table is .93 and it is more than .05 (p>. 05), so the variances are equal. Based on the amount of significance in the t-test table which is .003 and it is less than the meaningful level of .05 (p<. 05). Hence, the assumed hypothesis, which states that the application of the RTM may improve ESP learners' reading comprehension, is confirmed. In other words, it can be deducted that the reciprocal teaching method enhances ESP learners' reading comprehension since there is a meaningful difference between the obtained scores of the control and experimental groups in post-test. The experimental group which has been taught through the reciprocal teaching method has gained a higher mean in post-test than the control group, which has been taught through the traditional method.

3. CONCLUSION

This study aims at investigating the impact of the Reciprocal Teaching Method (RTM) on the English reading ability of tourism and hospitality marketing learners of English in the department of Commercial Sciences at the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. The results of the study highlighted the effectiveness of the reciprocal teaching strategy in improving tourism and hospitality marketing students' reading comprehension performance. The results of the scores of the CG and EG in pre-test reading comprehension revealed that there is no significant difference in the learners' English reading comprehension level. After the treatment both groups were taught based on two different methods of teaching reading, the results of descriptive statistics showed that the experimental group performed better in post-test reading comprehension than the Control group.

Moreover, the Analysis of the data resulted in significant findings and indicated that the RT strategy is appropriate for ESP readers as it helps them to develop not only Low Order Thinking (LOTs) skills namely remembering, understanding and applying but also high order thinking (HOTs) skills and strategies that includes analysis, evaluation and creation. [35] Therefore, teaching reading to ESP learners using the RTM has a positive effect on improving learners' reading

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comprehension ability. A curriculum emphasizing higher order thinking skills will better prepare students for the challenges of adult working and daily life and advanced academic study.[36]

Under the light of the foregoing reported results and discussion, some pedagogical implications and suggestions are to be put forward. First, teachers should use the RTM in order to encourage their learners develop as well as apply the reading strategies necessary to approach different reading tasks and activities, and also develop problem-solving strategies to help them deal with problems and difficulties they may encounter in their academic setting as well as applying them in their professional setting. Furthermore, teaching and learning materials developers as well as course designers should provide the ESP learners with texts not just being filled with technical terms without opportunities to use these terms in realistic situations, especially in their future workplace.

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