

HPEN7005 (ELTE): Assignment 2 research proposal

A Study on EFL Polytechnic Postgraduates' Metacognitive Reading Strategies in Academic Journal Paper Reading

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Reading academic journal articles is crucial for graduate students to attain their academic literacy. Subramanyam (2013) claims that journal articles assist readers not only in comprehending the present status of their study area, but also in realising what research is worth conducting, which in turn aids in the development of the reader's own research interests and directions. However, past studies have indicated that many Chinese graduate students lack adequate direction and preparation and are unable to read academic journal articles (e.g., Cao et al., 2010; Campbell, 2002; Chen, 2017; Wen, 2008). This presents a difficulty in the creation of reading techniques. Reading strategies need to be purposefully trained in order to address such issues. (Cao et al., 2010). This research is going to study EFL polytechnic postgraduates' metacognitive reading strategies in academic journal paper reading, in the following eight parts: aims, rationale and main conceptual themes, evidence intending to collect, research methods, settings, ethical issues, methods of data analysis, and the timetable for the research.

1. Aims of the research

The study's research objectives are threefold.

Firstly, This research aims to shed light on how postgraduates from polytechnic institutions approach reading from a metacognitive perspective.

The second goal is to examine how metacognitive reading methods affect Chinese polytechnic graduate students' comprehension of academic journal articles written in English.

The research also looks at how other variables may affect metacognitive reading

methods among Chinese polytechnic graduate students when they read scholarly papers written in English, thereby providing educators and graduate students with insight into how to teach students to make better use of metacognitive reading strategies and so boost their reading abilities.

The study will investigate these aims by responding to the following three research questions:

1. When reading academic journal articles written in English, how do EFL postgraduates from polytechnic institutions use metacognitive reading strategies?
2. How does the adoption of metacognitive reading methods relate to reading ability among EFL postgraduates at polytechnic institutions?
3. What variables may affect metacognitive reading strategy utilisation among EFL postgraduates at polytechnic institutions?

2. Rationale and Main Conceptual Themes

2.1 Rationale

First, research on metacognitive reading strategies will be bolstered by this study. In Japan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, EFL research is prevalent in the reading of English-language journal by postgraduate students, but in China, only a small number of researchers are investigating this topic. Furthermore, it will extend the study of metacognitive reading strategies to the genre of academic journal articles, particularly polytechnic English-related journal articles, since the majority of English academic journal articles read by polytechnic postgraduate students may be related to their own major. There has been a rise in the popularity of English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) programmes in recent years. This is mostly due to the expanding multidisciplinary nature of many university degrees (Hyland, 2006). The study of the metacognitive reading strategies employed by polytechnic postgraduates when reading English academic journal articles will enrich students' and educators' cognition and knowledge of polytechnic English-related English academic journal articles, thereby assisting postgraduates in acquiring knowledge in the field of related research and educators in teaching ESAP.

Second, the current research will enhance our understanding of the metacognitive reading strategies employed by Chinese polytechnic postgraduates when reading academic journal articles written in English. By doing so, educators can help polytechnic graduate students become active in their reading and then become strategic readers, which will significantly enhance students' academic achievement and provide a firm foundation for their future development.

2.2 Main Conceptual Themes

This part is expounded from two aspects. Theories related to metacognitive reading strategies are explained and presented, and previous investigations about the reading of English academic journal articles are reviewed.

2.2.1 Metacognitive Reading Strategies

Often described as "cognition about cognition" (Flavell, 1976), the words "metacognition" and "metacognitive awareness" were first proposed by Flavell in the field of cognitive psychology (Schmitt, 2005), and in learning theories in the instructional sciences. It involves the capacity to comprehend and regulate one's own cognitive processes (Carrell, 1998; Hudson, 2007). Researchers and educators in the realm of EFL reading increasingly acknowledge the importance of metacognition to students' success. For instance, based on their research into metacognition, Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) created a framework for classifying reading techniques, on the basis of which the MARS (Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies) questionnaire was created. Since this survey can only be used to evaluate the metacognitive knowledge of academic reading methods among sixth through twelfth grade L1 English readers, Mokhtari and Sheorey (2004) carefully examined each item of the MARS questionnaire and redesigned it as the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) questionnaire. The SORS survey was developed primarily to evaluate the extent to which adults and older teenagers use metacognitive reading methods while perusing scholarly texts.

In this study, we refer to readers' metacognitive awareness and perceived usage of reading methods as their "metacognitive reading strategy use". In the SORS questionnaire, Global Reading Strategies (GLOB), Problem-Solving Strategies

(PROB), and Support Strategies (SUP) are the three categories of reading strategies identified by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2004). This system of organising reading techniques is more targeted and manageable than others. Therefore, current researchers tend to adopt the categorization of GLOB, PROB and SUP in L2 academic reading studies. This classification is also used as a reference in the present study.

2.2.2 English Journal Article Reading Strategies

Academic reading, which is typically discipline-specific, refers to the perusal of a text as part of academic coursework (Sengupta, 2002). Grabe and Stoller (2002) further explained in their research that by doing academic reading, readers have to not only collect information from different sources, such as professional books and monographs, but also form their own opinions by comparing different contents. Therefore, when reading academic materials, in addition to figuring out the basic contents of the text, the most important objective for readers is to develop their critical thinking.

However, after teaching postgraduate students for many years, Wen (2008) noticed that when reading literature, many students were not able to differentiate between the author's opinion and the quoted one. Campbell (2002) also pointed out that many graduate students read English academic journal articles the same way they read newspapers. Moreover, they are not good at summarising and concluding the academic journal articles after reading (Chen, 2017). This is a problem in the cultivation of reading strategies. Researchers and educators can correct such problems by giving learners' purposeful training of reading strategies (Cao et al., 2010). Reading strategies are crucial for improving students' English academic journal article reading proficiency, however, few students have realised their importance, and many are not able to properly use these strategies (Chen, 2017; Chen, 2020; Thuy, 2020). Besides, little research has been focused on graduate students' metacognitive reading strategies in English academic journal article reading from the students' perspective.

3. Evidence to Collect

Based on research questions, the responses to questionnaires, responses to interviews, the reading texts of English academic journal articles, and the participants' self-reflective logs will be collected to examine the factors and performance of Chinese EFL polytechnic postgraduates. Especially mentioned here are the participants' self-reflective logs. This study will ask participants to record metacognitive reading strategies in their reflective logs or diaries. They do not need to record specific metacognitive reading strategies, but they must record the process of reading English journal papers, including pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities, as well as what problems they encountered and how they resolved them while reading English journal papers.

4. Research Methods

This study is going to employ a mixed-methods approach. A questionnaire on polytechnic postgraduate students' reading of English academic journal articles, and information gathering will include self-reflective logs and semi-structured interviews. The participants in this study will be recruited from three grades of polytechnic postgraduate students at a university in Yunnan Province, the south-western part of China. A total of more than 100 students will participate in the study.

The questionnaire was the principal research tool in this investigation. Because, compared to other instruments, this quantitative approach is quicker and easier to handle for groups with many members (Dornyei, 2007). This study's survey questionnaire will be based on the work of Mokhtari and Sheorey (2004). To be more precise, it would be a modified variant of the questionnaire developed by Chen (2020), which was based on Mokhtari and Sheorey's SORS questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire was to ascertain the metacognitive reading methods adopted by graduate students at Chinese polytechnics when reading scholarly publications written in English. A Pilot study will also be conducted to examine the problems and guarantee the questionnaire's quality.

This study will use interviews to investigate aspects of the reading environment that could affect the use of metacognitive techniques among polytechnic postgraduate students. Generally, the questions in the interview will be mainly centred around the

following aspects: participants' perceptions towards English academic journal article reading; relevant problems during their reading of English academic journal articles; the reasons why they employ or do not employ certain metacognitive reading strategies; their attitudes and motivations towards English academic journal article reading. Regarding the factors that led to their adoption or rejection of certain metacognitive reading techniques, the interview queries for each participant will be slightly different based on their questionnaire responses.

The researcher adopted a semi-structured interview because compared with other types of interviews, a semi-structured interview is more flexible (Dörnyei, 2007). As a result, this study would have more opportunities to investigate the specific reasons why readers employed particular metacognitive reading strategies and other factors that may influence polytechnic graduate students' metacognitive reading strategy use. The interview will be conducted in Chinese in consideration of the possibility that participants would feel more secure speaking their native language and to reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings during the interview.

5. Research Settings

The context of this study is in the Chinese EFL teaching and learning environment. Therefore, this study will take place at the polytechnic university in Yunnan Province, the south-western part of China. The participants will be the polytechnic postgraduate students with individual differences (gender, age, grades, research areas, etc.). Furthermore, the abilities referred in English academic journal reading will be understanding and analysing basic contents, identifying information, and adopting critical thinking.

6. Ethical issues

Combined with the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA document, 2018) and the classroom discussion, this study will provide informed consent before the study, avoid deception during the whole process of the study, try to stay away from any form of emotional or bodily pain, as well as injuries, preserve the anonymity of the participants, provide comments and suggestions to the participants, and so on.

7. Data Analysis

To investigate the research questions thoroughly and comprehensively, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies will be used to analyse the collected data. Students' responses will be inputted into SPSS and calculated. Three grading levels of reading strategy usage were used (with reference to Oxford and Nyikos, 1989): low, medium, and high levels. Reliability and validity will also be examined by SPSS.

To begin, we will conduct a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post hoc comparisons to see whether there are statistically significant variations in participants' reported technique usage when reading English scholarly journal articles.

In addition, the data obtained from the self-reflective logs and interview will be analysed by Nvivo through the method of qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2014). Schreier (2014) explained that content analysis can help researchers effectively process and classify the interview data. Researchers who adopt such a method mainly need to pay more attention to details correlated to research questions.

8. Timetable of the Research

Since this is a 12-month project, it will be broken up into seven distinct stages. The initial phase is the planning part, during which the researchers of this study will focus on a literature study. They must read the literate materials associated with this research, such as metacognitive reading strategies, academic journal reading in English, and Chinese postgraduate education. When perusing the literature, researchers must also anticipate the problems and solutions with which they may be confronted, identify the research gap, and then formulate the research questions and research methods. This would take three months.

After that, based on the literature review, this study requires to adapt the questionnaire and semi-structured interview to its particular context, which is a critical but time-consuming stage. So the time in this stage would be two months.

In order to ensure the quality of the questionnaire, we will first perform a pilot research to investigate the existing issues. The pilot study will be carried out mainly to check whether there are options that are obscure and might hinder participants' comprehension. Moreover, the time needed to complete the questionnaire was also

calculated during the pilot study. After receiving feedback from the pilot participants, the questionnaire will also be sent to experts who specialise in foreign language reading strategies for further advice. Eventually, adaptations will be made to the initial one in response to the feedback from the tested questionnaire and the suggestions from experts. This stage will take two months.

It will take a month to collect the responses of the questionnaire, the self-reflective logs, and the recording of the interview. Most of the interviews will be conducted face-to-face. For those that would not be available during that period of time, the interviews were conducted through We Chat, a popular instant chatting tool. The entire interview will be recorded for further data analysis.

After the data is collected, the researcher of this study coordinates with the teachers and classmates of the graduate students (participants are excluded) to input the data into SPSS and Nvivo. A month will be required to complete this energy-intensive procedure.

Two months will be required to analyse the collected data, and one month will be required to complete the research report. And, if possible, to compose a journal article for publication.

All in all, this study is an empirical one with a major focus on Chinese EFL polytechnic postgraduate students' metacognitive reading strategies use for reading English academic journal articles. In particular, it will examine the distribution of polytechnic graduate students' metacognitive reading practises, elements that may impact the metacognitive reading strategies of polytechnic postgraduate students, and how the students' reading abilities relate to those methods. The hope is that this research will generate new data and ideas for the EFL polytechnic postgraduate education.

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