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Accessing Reading Comprehension Through the Use of Graphic Organisers

**The Case of First Year Licence Students of English at the University of
Kasdi Merbah Ouargla**

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Degree in Linguistics

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Dedication

First, praises and thanks go to the Almighty Allah who has provided me with health and strength to complete this piece of research.

I dedicate this work to the source of happiness and love, my parents.

To my dear brothers and sweet sisters

To my beloved nephews and nieces

To all the members of my family Cherbi and Kouidri

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to study the relationship between the use of graphic organisers and learners' reading comprehension, within a discourse-based approach. 33 First Year English Language Licence students from the University of Kasdi Merbah - Ouargla were involved in this study. The researcher adopted an experimental design: a pre-test, an intervention session, and a post-test. The students were tested prior the intervention to check text comprehension. Next, they received one treatment session. The latter consisted of the correction of the pre-test, focusing on teaching the text structure awareness strategy which resulted in summarising a text in a graphic organiser. Questions on type of text, the intended readership, the author's intention, text organisation and filling in a graphic organiser were included besides True/False sentences. After that, the students had a post-test including the same items included in the pre-test. The scores of the post-test were higher than the ones of the pre-test. Therefore, the results showed a significant improvement in the use of graphic organisers strategy, which proved the efficiency of the suggested approach. As a last step, we conducted a T-test which confirmed our hypothesis that the use of graphic organisers enhances the learners' reading comprehension.

Keywords: *Graphic organisers, reading, reading comprehension.*

List of Abbreviations

BK: Background knowledge

GO: Graphic organiser

GOs: Graphic organisers

RC: Reading comprehension

SD: Standard deviations

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Introduction

Introduction

Undoubtedly, reading is an essential skill that allows students to comprehend and learn from texts. The necessity to read in academic settings motivated the teachers and the researchers to develop a variety of strategies to promote and to assess learners' reading comprehension. Through assessment, the teachers will be able to know to what extent the students comprehend the text. One of the ways to assess the students' comprehension is summarisation, whether in a form of a paragraph or in a graphic organiser (henceforth GOs). The latter is the focus of the current study. This research is based on a discourse-based approach since it emphasises the importance of the linguistic features, the cultural, background and pragmatic knowledge in text comprehension (El Kouti, 2017a, 2017b).

Background to the Study

The significance of the GO in improving reading comprehension (henceforth RC) has been tackled by many researchers. Daniel Willingham (2008) categorised learners into three different types: Those who learn better by looking, others by listening, and the third type prefer to learn by manipulating things – “or visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learners” (Cited in Praveen & Premalatha, 2003, p.155). Thus, teachers select their teaching methods, materials, and strategies based on their students' learning styles. GOs are visual representations of information from a text that depict the relationships between concepts, the text structure, and/or key concepts of the text (Griffin & Tulbert, 1995; Jiang & Grabe, 2007; Kim, Vaughn, Wanzek, & Wei, 2004; Tang, 1992; cited in Miranda, 2011, p. 100). According to Kintsch and Rawson (2005), GOs support and enhance the readers' reading skills as well as comprehension strategies (Cited in Praveen & Premalatha, *ibid*). Moreover, Ciascai (2009) defined GOs as “instruments of representation, illustration and modeling of information” (cited in *ibid*).

From above we realise that the use of GOs in RC is emphasised by many researchers.

Statement of Problem

In language teaching and learning classes, assessment is prominent. Most of the time, teachers assess their students using the same activities such as true/false sentences, filling the gap, multi-choice questions, summarising, and etc. Though summarising is necessary for learners especially university learners, they face difficulties to do it due to text

miscomprehension and failure in identifying the main ideas of the text and distinguishing it from details (El Kouti, 2017a). Besides, the activity of summarising texts in a form of a paragraph takes much time in terms of practice and correction.

Statement of Purpose

This study aims to shed light on the importance of using GOs as a summarisation reading comprehension strategy. This strategy enables students in focusing on the main idea and distinguishing it from supporting ideas. It aims to provide students with other type of summarisation in addition to summarising text in paragraph. Moreover, it seeks to provide the teachers with less subjectivity marking summative activity.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The main question to be asked in this dissertation is the following:

1. Do graphic organisers enhance the students' reading comprehension?

➤ Hypotheses

1. Graphic organisers may enhance the students' reading comprehension.

➤ Null Hypothesis

1. Graphic organisers may not enhance the students' reading comprehension.

Structure of the Thesis

This study consists of three chapters, two theoretical and one practical. The first chapter deals with reading and reading comprehension (henceforth RC) definitions, RC models, factors that influence the second language reading, and finally the RC strategies. The second chapters focuses on reading assessment, its definition and the techniques /the methods that are used for assessment. Additionally, GOs are highlighted as a technique of assessment by tackling their definition, types and uses. The third chapter deals with the methodology and the analysis of the data to prove the validity of the hypothesis.

Significance of the Study

This study attempts to contribute to looking for solutions of RC problems encountered by students. As a reading comprehension strategy and assessment technique, GOs facilitate for teachers the assessment of RC on the part of students.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted during the month of Ramadan and the Covid-19 crisis which means that it was not likely to include so many students. Moreover, it could be not be extended for more than three sessions because of the same reasons.

Definition of Variables

Reading: It is defined as a complex cognitive activity (Grabe, 2006 cited in El Kouti, 2013). This means that it is a complicated and an abstract activity which happens in the brain.

Reading comprehension: It is the main goal of reading. It refers to “a process of creating meaning from the text” (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983; cited in Setiawan, 2019, p. 9).

Graphic organisers: They are “visual representations of information from a text” (Miranda, 2011, p. 100).

Assessment: It refers to “the process of gathering, interpreting and using evidence to make judgments about students’ achievements in education” (Harlen, 2007, p. 11).

Theoretical Part

Chapter One: Research on Second Language Reading

Introduction

1.1. Definition of Reading

1.2. Definition of Reading Comprehension

1.3. Models of reading comprehension

1.3.1. Bottom-up Model

1.3.2. Top-down Model

1.3.3. Interactive Model

1.4. Factors Influencing Second Language Reading

1.4.1. Reader characteristics

1.4.2. Text Characteristics

1.5. Reading Comprehension Strategies

1.5.1. Pre-Reading Strategies

1.5.2. During Reading Strategies

1.5.3. Post Reading Strategies

Conclusion

Introduction

Reading is one of the essential skills in first and second language learning. This skill has been the interest of many scholars. In this chapter, we shall have a look at some reading issues that were emphasised by early researchers mainly: reading and RC definition, reading models (bottom-up, top-down, and interactive), in addition to the factors influencing RC, the reader and the text characteristics, and RC strategies: pre-, during, and after reading strategies.

1.1. Definition of Reading

Since reading is one of the basic skills that are needed in learning languages. Reading has been defined by many scholars such as “Broughton, et al. (1980)” (cited in El Kouti, 2017a). They define reading as “a complex skill that entails a number of sub-skills such as recognising stylised shapes and whether the latter are similar or different, correlating the patterned shapes with formal elements of language (words)” (ibid). According to Hedge (2000), reading is “an interactive, selective and critical process” (ibid). As for Davies (1995), reading is “a mental process in which the reader interacts with the writer who is “distant in space and time” (ibid).

From above, reading refers to a process that takes place in the brain and it requires an interaction between different skills and abilities. It is a task that is used to extract information.

1.2. Definition of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension has been defined by RAND Reading Study Group (2002) as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. It consists of three elements: reader, text, and activity or purpose for reading” (Cited in El Kouti, 2017a, p. 19). Additionally, Irwin (2007) defines comprehension as “an active process to which each reader brings his or her individual attitudes, interests, expectations, skills, and prior knowledge” (ibid).

In sum, RC refers to the process of interacting information in the texts, skills, and previous knowledge in order to make sense of the text.

1.3. Models of Reading

According to Davies (1995), a model is “a formalized, usually visually represented theory of what goes on in the eyes and the mind when readers are comprehending (or miscomprehending) text” (cited in El Kouti, 2017a, p. 23). Since reading was considered as a cognitive (mental) process, a number of researchers focused on how the brain interprets texts.

Consequently, reading specialists argued that readers may use different processes to make sense of texts. The most familiar ones are **bottom-up**, **top-down**, and **interactive models** of reading.

1.3.1. Bottom-up Model

Bottom-up approaches, also called **text-based or data-driven** (Silberstain, 1994, p. 7) are “serial models, where the reader begins with the printed word, recognises graphic stimuli, decodes them to sound, recognises words and decodes meanings” (Alderson, 2000, p. 16). Nunan (1993) stated that in these approaches “The smallest units of language are identified first, and these are ‘chained together’ to form the next highest unit; these units in turn are then chained together to form the next highest unit and so on.” (p. 78-79). He added that:

The bottom-up model assumes that the reader first identifies each letter in a text as it is encountered. These letters are blended together and mentally ‘sounded out’ to enable the reader to identify the words that they make up; words are chained together to form sentences; sentences are linked together into paragraphs; and paragraphs are tied together to form complete texts. Comprehension is thus the final step in a lengthy process of decoding ever larger units of language (p. 79).

From above, the focus in this model is on the readers’ ability to use their linguistic knowledge to recognise words and to decode meaning starting from the smallest units of language (Nunan, *ibid*).

Though this approach provides a logical description of what goes on in the brain, it has been criticised because of many reasons. Among these reasons is the fact that poor readers sometimes can recognise a word, but it is still ambiguous; therefore, they fail to decode the meaning. This led to the emergent of the following approach (Nunan, *ibid*).

1.3.2. Top-down Model

In this view, Goodman defined reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” (Cited in Alderson, 2000; Hudson, 2007). According to Smith (1994, p. 15):

Knowledge of relevant schemes is obviously essential if we are to read any kind of text with comprehension. A child who does not have a scenario about farming is unlikely to understand a story about farming or a reference to farming in a textbook. (Cited in Hudson, 2007, p. 38)

In **top-down, knowledge based, or conceptually driven** processing, the brain makes predictions about the information in the text depending on existing knowledge (Silberstain, 1994).

Moreover, Hudson (ibid) mentioned that Goodman specifies four processes in reading: “predicting, sampling, confirming, and correcting” (p. 37). An explanation was added by Hudson (ibid), “the reader makes guesses about the meaning of the text and samples the print to confirm or disconfirm the guess”.

In sum, the top-down model emphasises the importance of background knowledge (henceforth BK) in predicting the text’s meaning. This model was criticised because it neglected the beginning, young, and less experienced readers. Smith (1978) argued that “as fluent readers recognise words on sight, and then this is how beginning readers should be taught” (cited in Nunan, 1993, p.83).

Since the bottom-up and the top-down models were criticised, an interactive model was emerged.

1.3.3. Interactive Model

The interactive model comes to fulfill the shortcomings of the previous models. It combines both bottom-up and top-down features. This model was developed first by Rumelhart in 1977. In this model, “A final hypothesis about the text is synthesized from multiple knowledge sources interacting continuously and simultaneously” (Alderson 2000, p. 18). This means that readers construct meaning by interacting with different levels of knowledge at the same time and without stopping.

After that, Stanovich (1980) proposed **the interactive compensatory model** in which the interaction occurs when the strength in any level of knowledge and skills seeks to compensate for the weakness in another level (Cited in Alderson, 2000; Hudson, 2007; Nunan, 1993). Thus, the higher-level skills complete the lower-level ones.

In short, the interactive model considers reading as an interactive process since RC requires an interaction of the text and the reader’s BK.

1.4. Factors Influencing Second Language Reading

Since reading is an interactive process, it is affected by several factors mainly reader characteristics and text characteristics.

1.4.1. Reader Characteristics

RC requires the adaptation of the reader characteristics which include his/her BK of language in addition to knowledge of the world.

There are two types of schemata that assist readers in comprehending texts: formal schemata and content schemata. Formal/rhetorical schemata refer to the linguistic knowledge the reader has ; i.e. syntax, lexis, morphology, and semantics besides the rhetorical organisations of texts; nonetheless, students should have the linguistic and syntactic knowledge before the rhetorical knowledge which comes in the second place (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983 cited in El Kouti, 2017b). Carrell and Eisterhold (ibid) argue that knowledge of how texts are structured and how discourse is organised facilitate text comprehension (Cited in El Kouti, ibid). There are several types of *text structure*: definition, description, argumentation, problem-solution, process, classification, cause-effect, problem-solution, comparison-contrast and analysis (ibid). Content schemata refer to the familiarity of the text content to the reader as this facilitates the text comprehension and makes the text better recalled; moreover, content schemata consist of knowledge of both the subject matter -the topic of the text- and of the world besides the cultural knowledge (Cited in El Kouti, ibid).

Concerning cultural knowledge, it is limited to a group of people only, that is to say cultural knowledge differs from one group to another. A number of researchers investigated the influence of cultural knowledge on reading comprehension such as Steffensen *et al.* (1984) Alderson (1979) and Pritchard (1990) (cited in Hudson, 2007). These studies proved that readers with culturally familiar texts could retrieve the full message unlike with culturally unfamiliar ones. As for vocabulary knowledge, it has been considered as the measurement of BK and “the single best predictor of text comprehension” (Alderson, ibid, p. 35). Hudson (ibid) argued that: “There are strong relationships between successful reading and the richness of a reader’s vocabulary store”.

There are other factors that influence the reading process such as the readers’ purpose, motivation, abilities and skills...etc. This variety of knowledge and abilities will provide the readers with several chances to interpret texts (Anthony, Pearson, & Raphael, 1989).

1.4.2. Text Characteristics

As the readers’ features, text characteristics, as well, have a fundamental role in discourse comprehension. Text factors involve the text topic, genre and text organisation.

It is obvious that ambiguous, tedious, complicated, and unfamiliar topics as well as texts with specialised vocabulary and terminology will make the text difficult to understand.

Moreover, early researchers found that narrative texts are easier to process than informational ones (Alderson, 2000) and unfamiliar and complex text structures are harder to process. The writers organise texts in a way that assist readers to distinguish one type from another. The more well-organised the text is, the more coherent it is, and thus the text comprehension will be smoother and easier.

Therefore, there is a significant relationship between text comprehension and familiarity with the text structure, the text content, and the text type.

Comprehension is a result of interaction between both the readers and the text factors. Therefore, the maximum use of each factor will lead to a faster and a more accurate comprehension, and the absence of each one of them may lead to a slower, difficult, and inaccurate understanding (Alderson, *ibid*; Kulesz, 2014).

1.5. Reading Comprehension Strategies

According to Paris et al (1991), there are three types of RC strategies: pre- reading strategies, during reading strategies, and post-reading strategies (Cited in El Kouti, 2013; El Kouti, 2017a; El Kouti & Goui, 2015b).

1.5.1. Pre-Reading Strategies

Some of the pre-reading strategies mentioned in the literature are:

➤ Activating prior knowledge

In this strategy, the readers make use of their BK and activate it in order to interpret the written message. Activating prior knowledge facilitates the recall of information among readers (cited in *ibid*). It means retrieving and directing one's previous knowledge towards a certain text, if the reader BK does not develop or activate then she/he will find difficulties in understanding the text better (Alderson, *ibid*; Setiawan, 2019).

➤ Skimming

It is a reading method where the readers read the whole passage for the sake of getting the main idea (El Kouti, *ibid*; El Kouti & Goui, *ibid*). According to Liao (2011), skimming is a reading strategy in which the readers read the passage quickly and look through the whole passage to get the main ideas in the same respect, Nuttall (1996) stated that “skimming means glancing rapidly through a text to determine its gist” (As cited in Setiawan, *ibid*, p. 6).

➤ **Scanning**

It is a selective reading strategy where the readers quickly search for a particular piece of information (El Kouti, 2013; El Kouti, 2017a; El Kouti & Goui, 2015b). Yusuf *et al* (2007) stated: “the readers quickly look for specific information such as dates, years, names, paces, among others” (p. 6). In this vein, Nutall (1996) asserted that scanning means “glancing rapidly through a text to search for a specific piece of information. So when scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to do so” (p.17).

1.5.2. During Reading Strategies

The following are some of the during-reading strategies.

➤ **Inferencing**

It is one of the main during-reading strategies that is considered as an effective key to text comprehension. Students infer the author’s intended meaning using semantic and pragmatic meanings of words, expressions, sentences, and etc (El Kouti, *ibid*; El Kouti & Goui, *ibid*).

➤ **Predicting**

This strategy deals with the guesses that the reader makes to get the meaning of the text. Readers may use this strategy before and during reading to make assumptions about what the text is about (*ibid*). The students predicts information provided in the text using the title of the text before they read, then during reading the student will check their predictions if they are right, and they make other predictions if they were wrong (Tankersley, 2003; Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007).

➤ **Using text structure awareness**

Recognising text structure helps readers in comprehending texts. Silberstein (1994) stated that the students’ ability to analyse how information is structured in a text and their ability to recognise the functions of linguistic features will facilitate the text comprehension (cited in El Kouti, *ibid*; El Kouti & Goui, *ibid*).

1.5.3. Post Reading Strategies

Two main post-reading strategies are:

➤ **Summarising**

Summarising is one of the effective reading comprehension strategies that involves condensing the length of a text into a concise form. In this strategy, the writer restates and select only the main ideas of text and write it in his/her own words (Asad et al., 2016 ; Klingner et al., 2007). This strategy reflects better comprehension of texts (El Kouti, 2013; El Kouti, 2017a; El Kouti & Goui, 2015b).

➤ **Using graphic organisers**

GOs are representations, images or models such as Venn diagrams, KWL charts, matrices used to process the information in a text. In other words, a graphic organiser helps readers in recognising text organisation and focusing on main ideas and their relations with supporting details (El Kouti, *ibid*; El Kouti & Goui, *ibid*); that is, the readers organise information in the text and promote the RC process (Praveen & Premalatha, 2013).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we looked at some definitions and perspectives towards reading and RC. Next, we dealt with the models that described what happens in the human brain while reading. After that, we tackled some reader and text features that influence RC. Finally, we mentioned the most reading strategies used by readers before, while, and after reading. We conclude that reading is an interactive process; thus, a variety of factors, skills, abilities, knowledge and strategies are needed in this process of reading.

Chapter Two: Reading Assessment and Graphic Organisers

Introduction

2.1. Assessment Definition

2.2. Reading Assessment

2.3. Graphic Organisers

2.3.1. Definition of Graphic Organisers

2.3.2. Types of Graphic Organisers

2.3.3. The Use of Graphic Organisers

Conclusion

Introduction

The need to read in foreign languages specially the English language has been a central aim of all learners, teachers, and researchers in academic settings. This necessity motivates the teachers to focus on all aspects of language, mainly the reading skill. Thus, many teachers seek to assess their learners after reading. This chapter is divided into two sections: the first one is about reading assessment, and the second one is about GOs.

2.1. Definition of Assessment

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005, p. 75), assessment is "the act of judging or forming an opinion about sb [somebody] /sth [something]". The notion of assessment has been defined by many scholars, according to Harlen, Gipps, Broadfoot, Nuttal (1992) "Assessment in education is the process of gathering, interpreting, recording, and using information about pupils' responses to an educational task" (Cited in Iseni, 2011, p. 61). Furthermore, Maria Arias Cordova says that "assessment is generally used to refer to all activities teachers use to help students learn and to gauge student progress" (Cited in Iseni, *ibid*). Therefore, it refers to the process of evaluating the learning progress and the teaching methods and materials.

2.2. Reading Assessment

Reading assessment plays an essential role in educational setting. The traditional approach of assessing reading comprehension "took the form of providing students with a text followed by questions (Nuttall, 1982 cited in El Kouti, 2017a, p. 324). It seems that the aim was to test rather than to teach (*ibid*). The process of assessment aims to determine what the learners' weaknesses, strengths, abilities, skills are and what they need to know as well as the teaching process shortcomings in order to fill in the learning and the teaching gaps (Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007).

➤ Techniques and methods of assessment

A variety of methods and techniques can be used to assess the students' comprehension, abilities and progress. Alderson (2000, p. 203) stated that "there is no one 'best method' for testing reading. No single test method can fulfil all the varied purposes for which we might test". He mentioned the following activities, tests and tasks:

- The cloze test and gap-filling tests
- Multiple-choice techniques
- Matching techniques

- Ordering tasks
- Dichotomous items
- Editing tests
- The C-test
- the cloze elide test
- Short-answer tests
- Summary tests

(ibid, p. 207-232)

Concerning the latter, summary tests, they can be done in a form of a paragraph or a graphic organizer (As cited in El Kouti, 2013, 2017a; El Kouti & Goui, 2015b).

2.3. Graphic Organisers

GOs have been used in instructional settings to facilitate teaching and learning. They are very effective in checking the students' text comprehension. (Praveen & Premalatha, 2013).

2.3.1. Definition of Graphic Organisers

GOs have been defined by many researchers. McShane (2005, p. 83) defined GOs as “diagrams or charts that visually represent the relationship of ideas and information. Most often they are used to illustrate the organization and structure of a text” (Cited in El Kouti & Goui, 2015a, p. 488).

2.3.2. Types of Graphic Organisers

The selection of the type of GOs is dependent on the text structure or the rhetorical pattern of organisation used by authors.

➤ Using Text structure Awareness

Text structure awareness is one of the reading comprehension strategies that assist learners to understand how the text is text is structure and ideas are organised (Grabe, 2009 as cited in El Kouti, ibid; El Kouti & Goui, ibid). According to Carrell (1992), text structure refers to “how the ideas in a text are structured to convey message to a reader” (as cited in Hudson, 2007, p. 179). Many researchers have called for raising readers' awareness of text structure through exposing them to different text structures and tasks such as filling in graphic organisers (El Kouti, 2017a). Early researchers have focused on two main types which are narrative texts and expository texts. In this study the focus will be on the expository texts.

Expository texts, also called informational texts, are concerned with bringing information to readers (El Kouti, 2017a; El Kouti, Goui, 2015a). According to Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983, p. 254) “discourse strategies associated with rhetorical forms, text structures such as *argument, definition, classification, illustration, and procedural descriptions*, are used by experienced readers to organise the text they are reading” (Cited in Hudson, 2007, p. 184). Grabe (2009) mentioned the following patterns: description, definition, sequence, procedure, problem-solution, cause- effect, and compare- contrast (cited in El Kouti, *ibid*; El Kouti & Goui, *ibid*). To this end, students should be aware of the signal words and cues to distinguish the different types of organisation and the related graphic organisers.

➤ **Signalling Words**

Each pattern of organisation has its signal words. Concerning the definition pattern, for example, the author uses verbs such as “to be”, “to mean”, “to be defined as”, “to refer to”, and so on. As for the descriptive type, readers find adjectives, features, characteristics, etc. Raymond (1993) gave examples about signal words of some patterns such as:

- *Collection*: (grouping) and, in addition, also, include, moreover, first, second, at the same moment; (sequence) before, after, later, finally, last, etc.
- *Description*: for example, which was one, this particular, for instance, specifically, such as, attributes of, namely, properties of, characteristics are, etc.
- *Causation*: as a result, because, since, for the purpose of, caused, led to, consequent, thus, in order to, this is why, if/then, the reason, so, therefore, etc.
- *Problem-solution*: (problem) problem, question, perplexity, puzzle, query, need, to prevent the trouble, (solution) solution, answer, response, etc.
- *Comparison*: not everyone, but, in contrast, all but, instead, act like, however, in comparison, on the one hand, on the other hand, whereas, unlike, etc.

(As cited in Hudson, 2007, p. 197)

➤ **Graphic Organisers**

According to Grabe (2009), there are several types of GOs that correspond specific patterns of organisation (Cited in El Kouti & Goui, *ibid*, p. 488-491), as follows:

1) Definitions

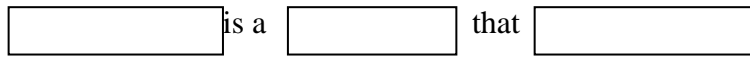
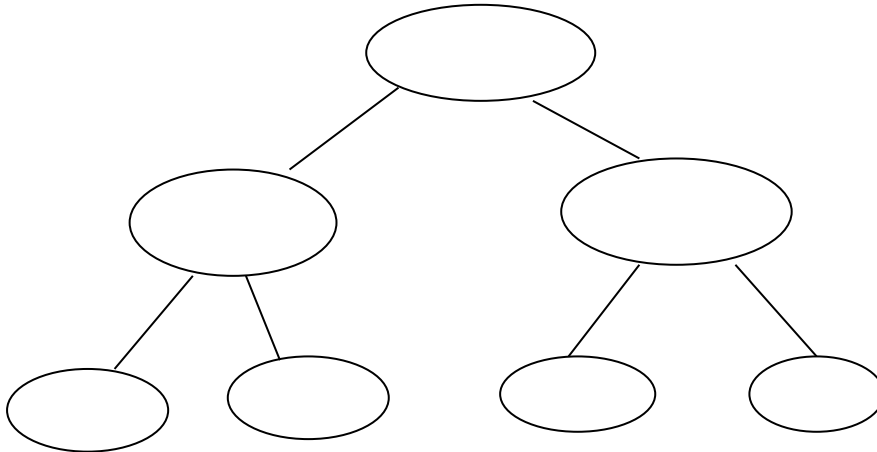


Figure 2.1. Definitions graphic organiser (in El Kouti, 2017a; El Kouti & Goui, 2015a)

2) Description / classification



Or

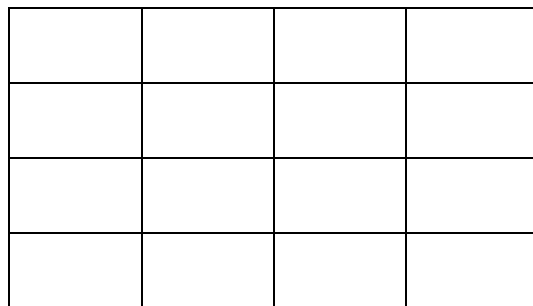


Figure 2.2. Description/Classification graphic organiser (ibid)

3) Compare-Contrast

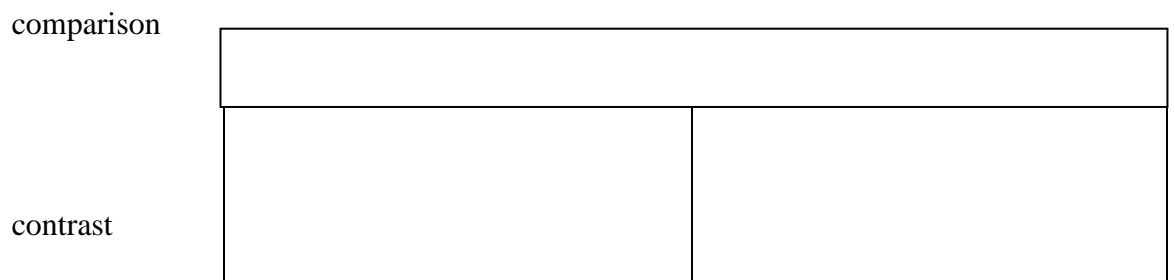


Figure 2.3. Compare-contrast graphic organiser (ibid)

4) Cause-Effect

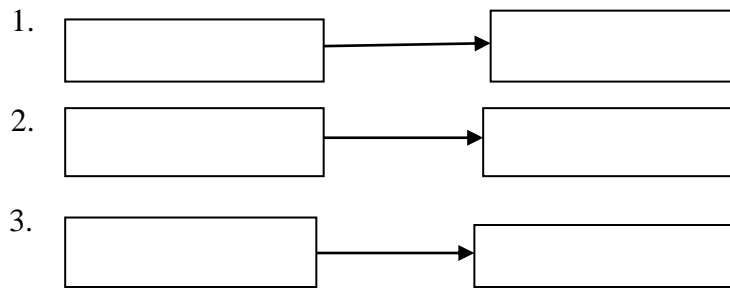


Figure 2.4. Cause-effect graphic organiser (in El Kouti, 2017a; El Kouti & Goui, 2015a)

5) Process / Sequence

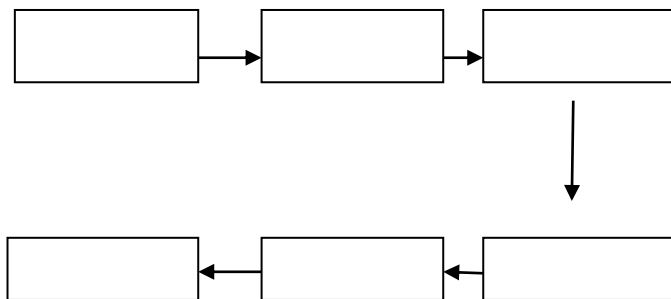


Figure 2.5. Process/Sequence graphic organiser (ibid)

6) Problem-Solution

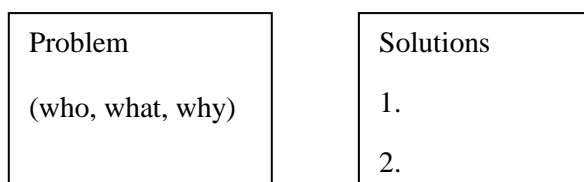


Figure 2.6. Problem-solution graphic organiser (ibid)

7) Argument

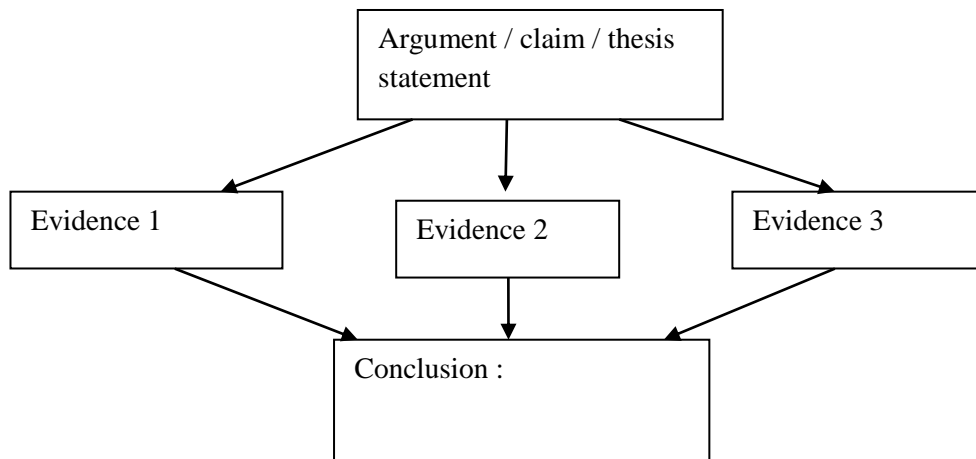


Figure 2.7. Argument graphic organiser (in El Kouti, 2017a; El Kouti & Goui, 2015a)

8) For / Against

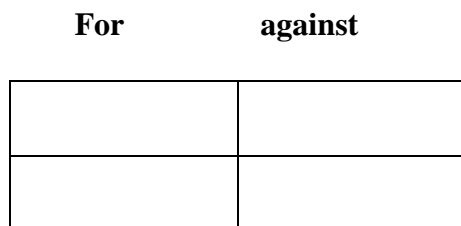


Figure 2.8. For/Against graphic organiser (ibid)

2.3.3. The Use of Graphic Organisers

GOs are used in teaching and learning for some purposes. They can be used while reading to check the comprehension progress. Moreover, they can be used after reading as a post-reading strategy to assess the students' comprehension when teachers ask students to summarise the text in GOs (Cited in Praveen & Premalatha, 2013). Learners can use them in organising and summarising the information within lessons, texts, and articles in visual manner.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we focused on the reading assessment in which we provided some definitions of assessment according to different researchers. Then, we stated some methods, techniques, strategies, tasks, and activities for assessment. Next, we went deeply into GOs as

learning and teaching strategy and as an assessment tool, which is the focus of this study. As for GOs, we exposed some definitions and types related to some text structures and some signalling words, and finally GOs' use.

Practical Part

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Introduction

3.1. Method

3.2. The sample

3.3. Tools of Research

3.4. Data Analysis

3.4.1. Pre-Test

3.4.1.1. Pre-Test Analysis

3.4.1.2. Interpretation

3.4.2. Intervention session

3.4.3. Post-Test

3.4.3.1. Post-Test Analysis

3.4.3.2. Interpretation

3.4.4. Comparison of the Post-Test and the Pre-Test's Results

3.4.5. T-Test

3.4.6. Pedagogical Implications

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter introduces the experimental design and research methodology used in this study in order to test the research hypothesis. The aim of this study is to assess the students' comprehension of a text through summarising the texts in a GO. This methodology focuses on enabling students to summarise texts in a GO instead of a paragraph. First of all, we describe the method, the sample, and the tools of research. Next, we describe, analyse and interpret the pre-test results, the intervention session, and the post-test results.

3.1. Method

In order to investigate the hypothesis, we have selected an experimental design that relies on a pre-test/a post-test approach. In other words, there will be a pre-test, an intervention session, and a post-test.

3.2. The sample

The sample in this study are 33 English-as-a-foreign-language students, out of 305 students in First-Year- Licence class at the University of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla. They have been studying English for about seven years before joining the university. They have been taught through different approaches mainly the Competency- Based Approach.

3.3. Tools of Research

The students were exposed to a pre-test, an intervention session, and a post-test. This experiment focused mainly on the use of GOs as a summarisation task for checking the students' comprehension of texts (paragraphs).

3.4. Data Analysis

3.4.1. Pre-Test

The pre-test was designed according to the objectives assigned to this study. The test consisted of a definition paragraph followed by eight (8) items. The pre-test was administered in order to see to what extent the students can use GOs to summarise texts before the intervention. The results of the pre-test are shown in Table 3.1. below:

Table3.1: Pre-test Items with Correct and Incorrect Answers

Pre-test items	Correct answers	Incorrect answers
Type of text	90.91%	9.09%
Pattern of organisation	51.52%	48.48%
Example showing the pattern of organisation	45.45%	54.55%
Topic sentence	45.45%	54.55%
Readership	72.73%	27.27%
Author's intention	21.21%	78.79%
True/false	78.79%	21.21%
Graphic organiser	6.06%	93.94%

3.4.1.1. Pre-Test Analysis

Concerning the first (1) item (see Table 3.1.above) that is about the type of the text, the majority of the subjects (90.91%) got the correct answer. Item two (2) dealt with the pattern of organisation, and 51.52% of the subjects answered correctly. With regard to item three (3), 45.45 % of the students could give an example of the pattern of organisation. Item four (4) was about the topic sentence and 45.45 % of the students also answered correctly. For the item five (5) which is about the readership, 72.73 % of the subjects answered the question correctly. As for the item six (6) (the author's intention), only 21.21% of the students had correct answers. Item 7 dealt with (T/F) sentences. 78.79% of the subjects got the correct answers. Concerning the last item which is summarising the text in a graphic organiser, only 6.06% of the subjects could answer.

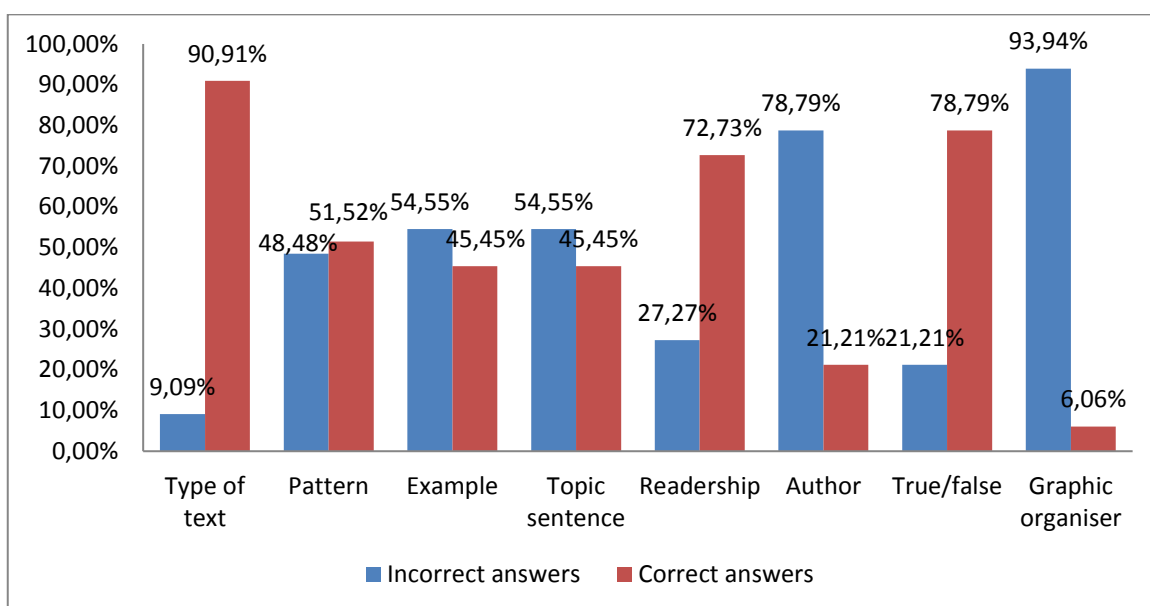


Figure 3.1. Pre-test Items with Correct and Incorrect Answers

3.4.1.2. Interpretation

From above, the subjects are not aware enough of the pattern of organisation and extracting an example about it, the topic sentence, what is the author’s intention, in addition to the deficiency to summarise the text in a graphic organiser. These results show that the students lack awareness of the pattern of organisation and the text structure that help them in comprehending the text as well as using the GO.

3.4.2. Intervention session

Due to the lack of time, the intervention was only in one-hour session. In order to gain time, the teacher decided to correct the pre-test, and considered the correction as a teaching and learning session at the same time. The intervention aimed to help students learn from their mistakes and learn about the definition text structure and its corresponding GO.

The teacher started with the first question. The students answered with (The type of the text is a paragraph). Then, she asked them why they chose a paragraph. The majority of students were unable to justify. This made the teacher notice that they needed to know about the characteristics of a paragraph. Consequently, the teacher explained the topic sentence, the supporting details, and concluding sentence, and etc of a paragraph.

The teacher, after that, moved to the pattern of organisation of the paragraph. The students answered with a definition because the paragraph starts with a definition of *Courage*.

Afterwards, the teacher added some details about the types of pattern of organisation and their signal words.

Since the students recognised what the topic sentence was, they easily answered the third question. Moving from question three to question four, the teacher listened to their opinions concerning the readership of the texts, and selected the appropriate ones.

As for question five, some students were able to extract the intended meaning. The students, then, answered *True/False* sentences with ease because they are familiar with this kind of questions.

The last question was the most important one in the test as it is the focus of the current study. In the first and the second questions, the teacher explained how to choose the suitable graphic organiser based on the paragraph's pattern of organisation.

In short, the teacher defined the graphic organiser then she added that the choice of the graphic organiser depends on the type the pattern of organisation. Since the text was a definition paragraph, she drew the definition graphic organiser on the board, and finally the students summarised the text in a GO.

3.4.3. Post-Test

In order to examine the effectiveness of the intervention session, it was essential to test the students again with a post-test.

The selected text (*Anger*) was adapted from *Read & Write BALL at UKI*. The text type and the tasks in the post-test were similar to the ones in the pre-test.

3.4.3.1. Post-Test Analysis

After the correction, it was noticed that the scores of students were higher than the ones of the pre-test in that the investigated items improved to a great extent taking into account the very short time of the tuition. Concerning the first question, 93.94% of the subjects could answer about the type of the text question. 87.88% of the students could identify the question of the pattern of organisation and extract the example. As for the question four (4), 66.67% of the students could recognise the topic sentence compared to 45.45% in the pre-test. With regard to item five (5), 84.85% of students answered correctly compared to 72.73% in the pre-test. For the sixth question, 42.42% of the students could extract the intended meaning correctly compared to 21.21% in the pre-test. As for *the true/false* sentences, most of the students answered the question (96.97%). Concerning the last question, there was a great

progress in summarising the text in a graphic organiser, from 6.06% in the pre-test to 63.64% in the pos-test. The following table summarises the correct and incorrect answers:

Table3.2: Post- test Items with Correct and Incorrect Answers.

Post test items	Correct answers	Incorrect answers
Type of text	93.94%	6.06%
The pattern of organisation	87.88%	12.12%
Example of the pattern	87.88%	12.12%
Topic sentence	66.67%	33.33%
Readership	84.85%	15.15%
Author's intention	42.42%	57.58%
True/false	96.97%	3.03%
Graphic organiser	63.64%	36.36%

3.4.3.2. Interpretation

Despite the short duration of the treatment, there was a noticeable improvement in the use of the graphic organiser. Before the intervention session, the students were unaware of what the graphic organiser is, what its types are, and how to deal with it. Actually, the post-test's results showed the effectiveness of the treatment on the students' performance. Due to that, the students became aware of the way of summarising the texts in graphic organiser.

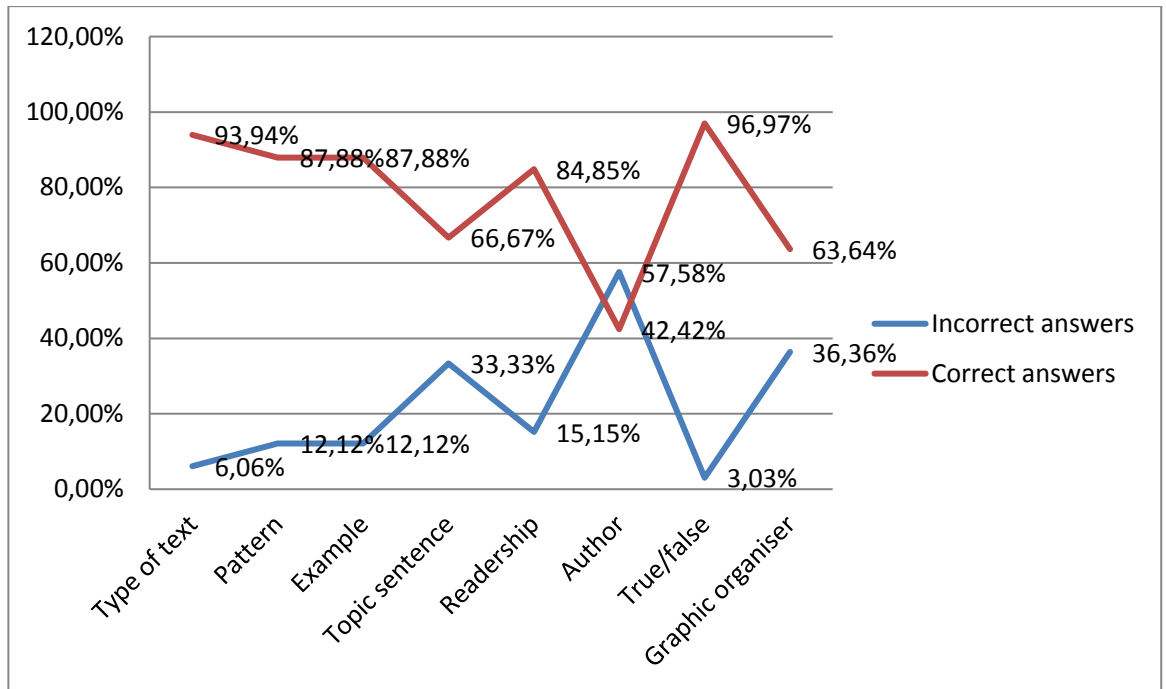


Figure 3.2. Post- test Items with Correct and Incorrect Answers.

3.4.4. Comparison of the Post-Test and the Pre-Test's Results

From the previous tables, the questions asked in the pre-test were successfully tackled in the post-test as shown in the table below:

Table 3.3. The comparison of the pre-test and the post-test results.

The examined items	Pre-test	Post-test
Type of text	90.91%	93.94%
Pattern of organisation	51.52%	87.88%
Example showing the pattern of organisation	45.45%	87.88%
Topic sentence	45.45%	66.67%
The readership	72.73%	84.85%
Author's intention	21.21%	42.42%
True/false	78.79%	96.97%
Graphic organiser	6.06%	63.64%

By comparing the pre-test and post-test, the results showed increase in the post-test. The intervention session was efficient in that it assisted the subjects in being aware of the use of a GO to summarise the paragraph. Figure 3.1.below shows the comparison of both tests.

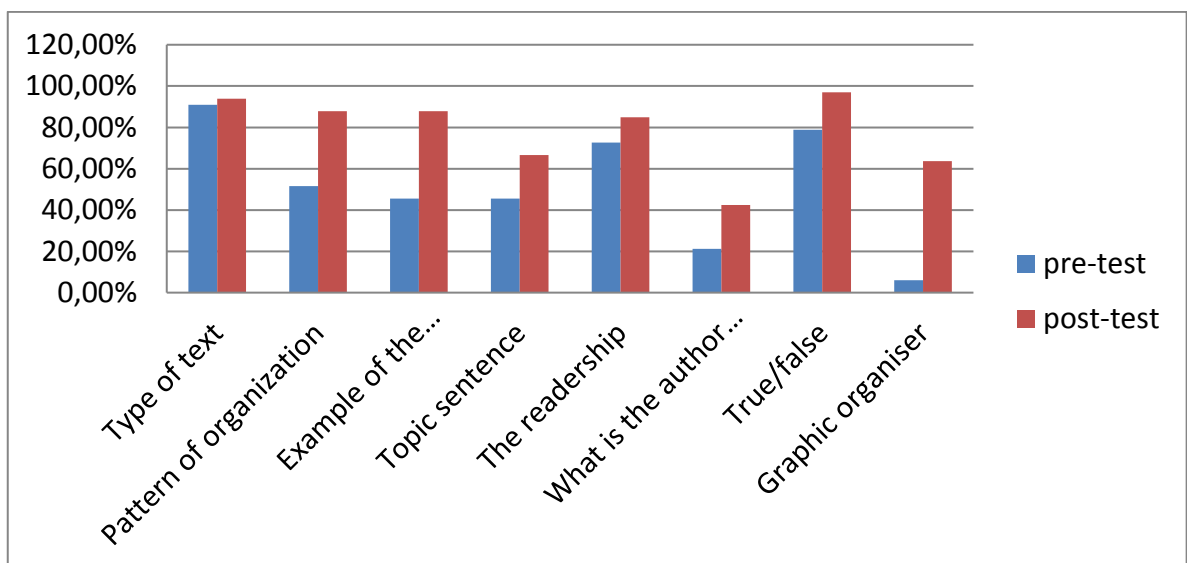


Figure 3.3. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test's results.

A considerable improvement is observed in the use of the GO, pattern of organisation and example as well as the topic sentence. This result is proved by the calculation of both means and standard deviations (henceforth SD) using an SPSS programme as follows:

3.4.5. T-Test

The t-test is a statistical test that helps in drawing conclusions from the data of the experiment, and is used to confirm the significance or non-significance of the findings (El Kouti, 2013, 2017a). The T-test is calculated using SPSS.

Conducting a T-test produces two tables: the first one is about the paired sample statistics, and the second one is about the paired samples test as follows:

Table 3.4. Paired Samples Statistics

Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 pre-test scores	8,7348	33	3,41123	,59382
post-test scores	14,5758	33	3,63387	,63258

From the table above, we notice that the mean in the post-test scores shifted from 8.73 to 14.57 in the post-test scores. The latter have considerably increased; therefore, this proves the efficiency of the intervention session. As for the SD, it has been noticed that it has decreased in the post-test (3.63) rather than (3.41) in the pre-test, which confirms the hypothesis set at the beginning of the dissertation.

The following table shows the statistical differences between the scores of pre-test and post-test $t(33) = -7.658$, $Sig = 0.000$. In other words, teaching GOs strategy had a significant impact on RC.

Table 3.5. Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pre-test scores - Post-test scores	-5,84091	4,38161	,76274	-7,39456	-4,28726	-7,658	32	,000

Since Sig is $0.000 < 0.05$, it means that the result is significant. Thus, we admit the hypothesis that says that GOs enhance learners' RC, and we reject the hypothesis that assumes that GOs do not enhance learners' RC. As seen above, the "t" value is -7.658 which means that our results could not have arisen arbitrarily.

3.4.6. Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions

According to El Kouti (2017a), text structure and text organisation recognition and awareness help readers in comprehending texts. In this dissertation, we shed light on the effectiveness of both the text structure awareness and the GOs strategies in promoting and assessing RC. In classrooms, teachers need to apply several kinds of methods and tasks to assess their students before, during, and after reading instruction. Teachers might use GOs as an assessment tool as used in this study and for many purposes. Since students have different learning strategies, teachers should use multi types of activities in order to suit all the learning styles of students.

Students should be trained to use different post- reading strategies such as GOs. They need to be familiar with this strategy because it facilitates organising and identifying the important ideas in paragraphs. They will find it easier and faster than summarising the text in a paragraph.

In line with the results of the research, the researcher tried to come up with some constructive suggestions. They are intended to create better English teaching and learning process as well as reading assessment. The suggestions are as follows:

- Learners in their curricular need to be familiar with summarising their lessons, large article, and texts in GOs.
- GOs can be used to explain presentations in order to draw attention.
- Teachers need to use them as an assessment and summative activity, because they are less subjective in marking and they take less time in correcting than summarising in a form of paragraph.
- The teacher's choice of the type of summarisation should be dependent on the purpose of assessment, in other words, his/her choice is based on what does the teacher want to measure? What are the objectives behind the assessment?

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on investigating the relationship between the use of GOs and text comprehension. The pre-test was administered to test the students' performance before the treatment. As for the intervention session, it focused on teaching GOs and their relation with pattern of organisation. Finally, the post-test was adopted to test the students' performance after the treatment. The results confirmed the hypothesis set at the beginning and rejected the null hypothesis, in that most of the post-test scores were higher than the ones of the pre-test (see Appendix C, and Appendix D). The students showed an improvement in comprehending the text which appeared in their use of GOs. To sum, the use of Gos is very efficient in promoting the text comprehension since their effect observed after one session.

Conclusion

The major aim of this study was to find answers to the research question. Accordingly, the objective behind this work was to explore the relationship between the use of GOs and learners' RC within a discourse-based approach. This study proved the hypothesis which stated that GOs enhance the learner's RC empirically. The results indicate that the students after one session of invention were able to extract the topic sentence and the main ideas from the text, answer comprehension questions and activities, decipher the readership and summarise the paragraph in a GO after recognising the pattern of organisation.

In this study, the experimental approach was effective in answering the research question. A pre-test and a post-test design was used to test the efficiency of the intervention session. The conclusion that can be drawn from this experiment is that teaching GOs improve RC as could be seen from the scores of pre-test and post-test. The post-test had higher scores than the pre-test. Moreover, GOs facilitate and make the process of extracting the main idea quick as well as the summarisation process in addition to the assessment process. Therefore, they are very helpful and useful in the learning and teaching settings.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The pre- test

Name: Class: Group:

Pre-Test

Courage

Courage is the quality of being brave when you are facing something that is dangerous or that you fear. For example, a soldier who goes into battle shows courage. However, you don't have to be a soldier or a paramedic to be courageous. You can display courage in everyday situation, too. For instance, a shy person who is afraid of speaking in public shows courage when he or she gives a speech at school or at work. A teenager who resists peer pressure to smoke, drink, or try drugs shows courage. To give another example, my friend Angela, who is terrified of flying, recently took her first airplane flight. As she walked onto the plane, she was trembling with fear, but she didn't give in to her fright. To me, Angela entering that airplane was as brave as a soldier entering battle.

I. Answer the following questions:

1) What type of text is it?

- A paragraph
- A dialogue
- An essay

2) a - Is the text:

- Definition
- Descriptive
- Narrative

b - Give an example.

.....
.....

What is the topic sentence of the text?

.....
.....

3) To whom is the text written in your opinion?

.....

II. Comprehension:

1) What is the author doing in this text?

.....
.....

2) Answer with ***True*** or ***False*** and correct the false sentences:

- You have to be a soldier or a paramedic to be courageous.

.....

- A shy person shows courage when he or she speaks in public.

.....

- A teenager who does not resist peer pressure to smoke, drink, or try drugs is not courageous.

.....

- Angela was brave because she gave in to her fright.

.....

3) Summarise the text in a graphic organiser.

Appendix B: Post- test

Post-Test

Name:..... Class:..... Group:.....

Anger

Anger is having a feeling of hatred toward someone or something. It is one of our basic emotions and can be most dangerous if it is not carefully controlled. A person can become angry when he cannot fulfill some basic need or desire that is important to him. For example, a child may become angry when he cannot play outside with his friends. An adult may become angry when he does not receive a raise in pay that he expected.

I. Answer the following questions:

1) a- What type of text is it?

- A paragraph
- A dialogue
- An essay

b- Justify?

.....
.....
.....

2) a- Is the text:

- Definition
- Descriptive
- Narrative

b - Give an example.

.....
.....
.....

3) What is the topic sentence of the text?

.....
.....

4) To whom is the text written in your opinion?

.....

II.Comprehension:

1) What is the author doing in this text?

.....
.....

2) Answer with **True** or **False** and correct the false sentences.

1. Anger can be dangerous if it is not carefully controlled.

.....

2. A child may become angry when he can play outside with his friends.

.....

3. An adult may become angry when he does not receive a raise in pay that he expected.

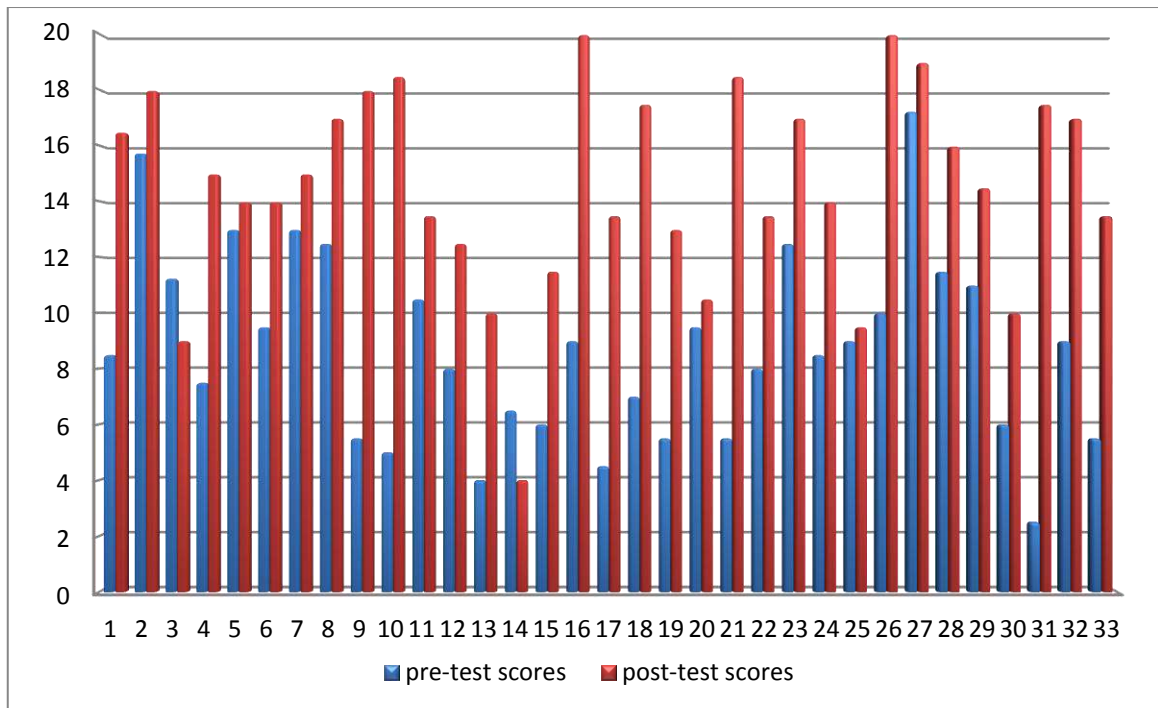
.....

3) Summarise the text in a graphic organiser.

Appendix C: Students' scores

Students	pre-test scores	post-test scores
1	8.5	16.5
2	15.75	18
3	11.25	9
4	7.5	15
5	13	14
6	9.5	14
7	13	15
8	12.5	17
9	5.5	18
10	5	18.5
11	10.5	13.5
12	8	12.5
13	4	10
14	6.5	4
15	6	11.5
16	9	20
17	4.5	13.5
18	7	17.5
19	5.5	13
20	9.5	10.5
21	5.5	18.5
22	8	13.5
23	12.5	17
24	8.5	14
25	9	9.5
26	10	20
27	17.25	19
28	11.5	16
29	11	14.5
30	6	10
31	2.5	17.5
32	9	17
33	5.5	13.5

Appendix D: A Graph for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores Comparison



ملخص

تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى دراسة العلاقة بين استخدام منظمي الرسوم البيانية و فهم القراءة لدى المتعلمين، ضمن المنهج القائم على الخطاب. وشارك في هذه الدراسة 33 من طلاب السنة الأولى ليسانس لغة انجليزية بجامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة. وإعتمد الباحث تصميما تجريبيا؛ اختبارا قبلي، حصة معالجة واختبارا بعدي. تم توزيع اختبار قبلي على الطلاب للتحقق من فهمهم للنص من خلال الإجابة على أسئلة الفهم. تلقى الطلبة بعد ذلك حصة معالجة واحدة. وتضمن المحتوى تصحيح الاختبار القبلي مع التركيز على تدريس إستراتيجية الوعي ببنية النص الذي أدى إلى تلخيص النصوص في منظمي الرسوم البيانية. و شملت أيضا أسئلة الفهم، صحيح / خطأ و أسئلة متعددة الاختيارات. بعد ذلك، كان لدى الطلاب اختبار بعدي نفس العناصر كما في الاختبار القبلي. وكانت درجات الاختبار البعدي أعلى من درجات الاختبار القبلي. وأظهرت النتائج تحسنا ملحوظا في استخدام منظم الرسوم البيانية، مما أثبت كفاءة النهج المقترح. أجرينا كخطوة أخيرة، اختبار T الذي أكد فرضيتنا التي تنص على أن استخدام منظمي الرسوم البيانية يعزز فهم القراءة بالنسبة لهؤلاء الطلبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية : القراءة، منظمي الرسوم البيانية، الفهم القراءة.

Résumé

Cette thèse vise à étudier le rapport entre l'utilisation des organisateurs graphiques et la compréhension de lecture des étudiants, dans une approche basée sur le discours. 33 étudiants de la première année licence langue anglaise de l'université Kasdi Merbah Ouargla ont été impliqués dans cette étude. Le chercheur a adopté un plan d'expérience ; un pré-test, une session d'intervention, et un post-test. Un pré-test a été distribué aux étudiants pour vérifier la compréhension des étudiants d'un texte en répondant à des questions de compréhension. Après, les sujets ont reçu une session de traitement. L'intervention a compris la correction du pré-test, en se concentrant sur l'enseignement de la stratégie de sensibilisation à la structure des textes qui a abouti à résumer les textes dans les organisateurs graphiques. Les questions de compréhension, vrai/faux et des questions à choix multiples ont été également incluses. Après cela, les sujets ont eu un post-test comprenant les mêmes éléments que dans le pré-test. Les scores du post-test étaient plus élevés que ceux du pré-test. Par conséquent, les résultats ont montré une amélioration significative dans l'utilisation de la stratégie des organisateurs graphiques, qui a prouvé l'efficacité de l'approche suggérée. Nous avons mené, en dernière étape, un test T qui a confirmé notre hypothèse selon laquelle l'utilisation des organisateurs graphiques favorise la compréhension de la lecture des apprenants de la première année licence langue anglaise de l'université Kasdi Merbah Ouargla.

Mots clés : Organismes graphiques, lecture, compréhension de lecture.