Online Metacognitive Reading Strategies by Internal and External Locus of Control

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study focuses on online metacognitive reading strategies used by 39 Iranian postgraduate students with internal and external locus of control. The students were selected through locus of control questionnaire and it is followed by OSORS questionnaire to measure online metacognitive strategies used by students. The results of study revealed that online metacognitive reading strategies used mostly by internal locus of control students rather than external locus of control students. There were clear interrelationships among types of metacognitive reading strategies used and internal locus of control characteristics. Among three subcategories of metacognitive strategies, students with internal locus of control are more interested to use global strategies, whereas students with external locus of control tend less to use this strategy. Also, there was no significant difference in using problem-solving and supportive strategies used by the students.

KEYWORDS

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Internal and external locus of control, Online Metacognitive Reading Strategies, OSORS

INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of internet in teaching and learning has far outplaces our understanding of how learners’ independency effect online learning progress. Online reading environment gets more popular among learners because of its multiple information and representation environments (Richardson, Maeda, Lv, & Caskurlu, 2017). Getting computers into universities and making texts online are relatively easy but reading the online texts to learn is a greater challenge. Today, the workforce is on the usage of online reading for maximum productivity and creativity. To maximize productivity and creativity from reading online texts, there is a need to be aware of online reading strategies to read online texts. Application of online reading strategies to read for better understanding of the text is always an important issue. Online reading needs skills and strategies to perform efficiently in an online environment. It is important to know reading strategies since researchers believed that this would enable readers to perform reading more efficiently. Moreover, the worth of online reading environment makes most of the universities; teachers and students focus more on new learning environment. In the real experience, most of the students who participated in online reading have found that reading online is very challenging, and some failed to cope with it. New reading strategies which are different from traditional reading strategies are required in order for online readers to generate questions, locate, evaluate, synthesize, and communicate information on the Internet. However, despite the importance of online environment role on reading performance, there is little knowledge about metacognitive reading strategy process employ by the EFL readers to read an online
text. Research into the uses of online reading strategies by postgraduate EFL learners show that students using social skills to develop their reading strategies in an online reading environment (Liu & Tsai, 2008). Students expressed strong and positive perceptions of strategies in an online reading environment (Ibrahim, Ida, Prain & Collet, 2014). When Iranian students participating in an online reading text, many may not understand how to make full use of online reading platform independently as a tool to use for interactional online reading strategies. In online reading environment, learning will occur through navigations. Sometimes nonlinear context of this environment makes students experience disorientations. This type of disorientation can limit learners understanding of the texts they read online (Berge & Collins, 1995; Gay, Trumbull & Mazur, 1991). Such disorientation requires learners’ attitude to complete the task and distract it in the process. On the other hand, learners with high positive attitude are more likely to succeed in completion of online reading tasks (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland, 2005). Readers with internal locus of control are internally motivated to perform independently in an online reading environment but they need to establish new skills and strategies. Online reading environments make an opportunity for adult learners’ learning responsibility and self-direction to feel more comfortable and responsible to navigate their reading, but they challenge more to adapt their reading strategies with online reading environment (Mesgar, Bakar & Amir, 2012). Most studies indicated that students with high positive attitude regarded as having locus of control which is divided to internal and external students (Cappella & Weinstein, 2001; Fehrenbach, 1991; Maguiness, 1999; Rotter, 1990).

They can appropriately connect the given task to their own abilities and efforts to deal with the task and strategies should be used to complete the online reading process. This new reading environment is a challenge for students with internal locus of control to learn new strategies especially when they need to blend their regular reading strategies with online reading strategies. Readers with high positive attitude show different metacognition skills such as flexible planning, continuous monitoring of reading process and critical evaluation of their own cognition (Oliver & Herrington, 2001). Among the reading strategies, researchers considered metacognitive strategy as a procedural, purposeful, willful and facilitative nature. The reader would allocate specific attention to control, monitor, and evaluate the reading process. Metacognitive reading strategies show the way learners think, perform reading and understand the text successfully. Metacognition is defined by Brown (1980) as “deliberate conscious control on cognitive actions” (p.453). Vandergrift (2002) believes that while readers process reading, they employ metacognitive strategies to regulate, direct their language learning activities, and be involved with thinking about their learning process. Metacognitive strategies would help learners to have connection with their cognitive strategies to achieve their goal. Metacognitive strategies are employed by more strategic learners to monitor their comprehension and this makes them more conscious strategy users to achieve higher growth in learning (Akkakoson, 2012). Likewise, high locus of control proposed here can similarly support readers’ metacognitive strategies in an online reading environment. Locus of control refers to social psychology area of study which extend to individuals believe about controlling events and the effect it might have on that event. Rotter (1966) identified the internal-external control as a construct of reinforcement (I-E) which is a degree shows individuals believe that reinforcements are dependent to their behaviors (internality) or their activities are controlled by forces beyond their control, such as luck or chance (externality). Researchers attempts to identify personal variables of locus of control. Lombardo, Fantasia, and Solheim (1975) found that externals are less self-confidence than internals and they perform lower than internals in social developmental tasks. Also, externals orientation on their locus of control is associated with negative personality characteristics. On the other hand, internals’ orientation is dependent to their positive personality characteristics.

As such, it seems necessary to study more about learners with locus of control in online reading environment. This paper describes the students’ characteristic with internal and external locus of control, as well as metacognitive strategies used by these students. The aim of this study is to specify metacognitive online reading strategies used by EFL postgraduate learners who has internal and
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