Investigating Reading Comprehension Proficiency and Self-Efficacy among Algerian EFL Students within Collaborative Strategic Reading Approach and Attributional Feedback Intervention

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Abstract : It has been shown in the literature that Algerian university students suffer from low levels of reading comprehension proficiency, which hinder their overall proficiency in English. This low level is mainly related to the methodology of teaching reading which is employed by the teacher in the classroom (a teacher-centered environment), as well as students' poor sense of self-efficacy to undertake reading comprehension activities. Arguably, what is needed is an approach necessary for enhancing students' self-beliefs about their abilities to deal with different reading comprehension activities. This can be done by providing them with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning (learners' autonomy). As a result of learning autonomy, learners' beliefs about their abilities to deal with certain language tasks may increase, and hence, their language learning ability. Therefore, this experimental research study attempts to assess the extent to which an integrated approach combining one particular reading approach known as 'collaborative strategic reading' (CSR), and teacher's attributional feedback (on students' reading performance and strategy use) can improve the reading comprehension skill and the sense of self-efficacy of EFL Algerian university students. It also seeks to examine students' main reasons for their successful or unsuccessful achievements in reading comprehension activities, and whether students' attributions for their reading comprehension outcomes can be modified after exposure to the instruction. To obtain the data, different tools including a reading comprehension test, questionnaires, an observation, an interview, and learning logs were used with 105 second year Algerian EFL university students. The sample of the study was divided into three groups; one control group (with no treatment), one experimental group (CSR group) who received a CSR instruction, and a second intervention group (CSR Plus group) who received teacher's attribution feedback in addition to the CSR intervention. Students in the CSR Plus group received the same experiment as the CSR group using the same tools, except that they were asked to keep learning logs, for which teacher's feedback on reading performance and strategy use was provided. The results of this study indicate that the CSR and the attributional feedback intervention was effective in improving students' reading comprehension proficiency and sense of self-efficacy. However, there was not a significant change in students' adaptive and maladaptive attributions for their success and failure d from the pre-test to the post-test phase. Analysis of the perception questionnaire, the interview, and the learning logs shows that students have positive perceptions about the CSR and the attributional feedback instruction. Based on the findings, this study, therefore, seeks to provide EFL teachers in general and Algerian EFL university teachers in particular with pedagogical implications on how to teach reading comprehension to their students to help them achieve well and feel more self-efficacious in reading comprehension activities, and in English language learning more generally.

Keywords : attributions, attributional feedback, collaborative strategic reading, self-efficacy