

# HOW TO DEVELOP META-COGNITIVE READING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ADULT LITERACY

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## Abstract

The current article is purposed to reveal meta-cognitive reading strategy improve adult learners' reading ability. In addition, literature review will identify the definition of meta-cognition and the importance of meta-cognitive reading strategies for adult learners. Moreover, this literature review will introduce the comparison and contrast between the bottom-up and the top-down reading strategies for adult learners by outstanding authors' ideas in this literature review.

**Key words:** Meta-cognition, bottom – up, top – down, intellectual methods, reading analysis, reading literacy.

## Introduction

Meta-cognitive reading strategy knowledge is an essential aspect in academic field. In order to tackle the obstacles of poor adult learners' reading ability, they should learn meta-cognitive reading strategy skills. Meta-cognitive reading strategy needs paying attention to language learning and teaching. Meta-cognitive reading skill has a beneficial impact for adult learners on acquiring a target language and adults are able to benefit the abilities they utilize their skills for productive conservation in English language. Meta-cognitive reading strategy is one of the active process to help adult learners reading abilities in the sphere of English language field. Oxford (1994) mentioned that meta-cognitive reading strategy intended to create types of useful reading strategies and other characteristics supposed to be important for all adult learners to improve their reading awareness. The current literature review purpose is reveal to meta-cognitive reading strategy improve adult learner reading ability. In addition, literature review will identify the definition of meta-cognition and the importance of meta-cognitive reading strategies for adult learners. Moreover, this literature review will introduce the comparison and contrast between the bottom-up and the top-down reading strategies for adult learners by outstanding authors' ideas in this literature review. In order to accomplish the aim of the current Literature review the specified research questions were discussed:

1. What are the significant aspects of meta-cognitive reading strategies for adult learners to improve reading skills?
2. What are the advantage and disadvantage sides of bottom-up and top-down reading strategies for adult learners in improving reading skill?
3. Which reading strategies are effective for adult learners to enhance reading ability? The bottom-up or the top down meta-cognitive reading strategies?

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

The material was collected by the following groups of research methods: analysis, comparison, included observation, modeling method, continuous sampling method. With the use of modeling method the main characteristics of the phraseological units with zoonym component in the English language has been introduced. The material for this study comprised 200 English phraseological units selected from authoritative English phraseological dictionaries: The Contemporary Dictionary of the English Language. [5.297-300]

The research presented not only relevant aspects on the studies of phraseological units with zoonyms in bilingual school dictionaries, but also attempted to contribute for the lexicographical studies in Brazil. Use and gathering theoretical knowledge on the theme, demonstrating the comparison of equivalences, with distinct traces and register of occurrences in bilingual school dictionaries. Common sense says that the occurrence of phraseological units with zoonyms is vast, and it constitutes one cause to deserve deeper studies and categorizations that may contribute for the advance of Pedagogical Lexicography in Brazil. Some years ago, the search for meanings of a word having as base an obstinate analysis was speculated, handily conducted in many written text pages. Currently, one cannot affirm the ways have changed radically, but present technological tools<sup>11</sup> encourage ways for the search of cultural information<sup>12</sup> to help better phraseological units with zoonyms translations.

### The definitions of meta-cognition.

Meta-cognition is the method of intelligence about procedure of perception. It mentions to the knowledge, preparation and controlling of intellectual development. Flavell (1981) states that meta-cognition points out individuals' ability and indicates to their mental development their wishes and inspirations as well. According to Karbalei (2010, p 116) meta-cognition includes ability observing, adjusting, repeating compiling and determining. In addition, "it reveals chosen concentration, the regulation of preparation and understanding". (Imptiaz, 2004, p35). Meta-cognition shows an important factor for adult learners in reading tasks as it includes mindful ability of the development of description and understanding written information. Anderson (1999) asserted that Meta-cognition in reading is the ability utilized for the improvement of adult learning understanding of the reading texts. Meta-cognition is vital in the procedure of reading as it supports adult learners and they proved that meta-cognitive strategies are essential for the comprehending of the reading reliable materials. According to some teachers opinion that meta-cognition should be used to support adults reading skill and develop the controlling and procedure of adult readers' intellectual capacity.

### The importance of meta-cognitive reading strategies for adult learners.

Mokharti and Reichard stated (2002) that meta-cognitive reading strategy was one of the crucial beneficial aspect that should be highlighted during the process of reading exercises, which promote beneficial meta-cognitive reading strategies for adult learners in English classes. Flavell(1981) asserted that meta-cognitive reading strategies, which assist adult learners to organize intellectual methods. These mental methods are belief of guessing about guessing. Carell (1989) explained meta-cognitive reading strategies allow the adult students to utilize reading strategies better effectively than their ineffective friends did. Brown and Flavell mentioned (1979) experienced adults utilize meta-cognitive strategies excellently whereas the unskillful adult readers cannot use meta-cognitive knowledge rather than adult skilled readers do have. The meta-cognitive reading strategies, which improve self- sufficient adult learners who can know and understand how to use these strategies while they are doing reading tasks and exercises. Salataki and Akyel (2002) mentioned that meta-cognitive reading strategies are emphasized as a profitable approach by English language professors. For this reason, meta-cognitive reading strategies are considered beneficial in English language classes. Abraham and Field (1985) noted top-down and bottom up reading strategies are being taught for adult learners in order to enhance their reading ability at academic places.

### **The advantage side of bottom-up reading strategy.**

Many researchers pointed out the advantages of bottom-up meta-cognitive reading strategy for adult readers to increase their reading literacy. Gough mentioned (1972) the bottom-up reading strategy pays attention to more text and instructors. Adult readers start reading by comprehending the meaning of the words and systematically they enhance the meaning of each sentences, and finally finishing with understanding of the texts. In this reading strategy, all reading procedure is focused on only to words and adult students create meaning from different kind of texts by noticing every given words. According to VanDuzer (1999), adult readers who uses top-down reading strategy become experienced and superior readers. Additionally, Pressley noted ( 2000) that the perfect reader who are master or good at identifying the meaning of the words become high-level readers whose ability is enhanced by their understanding ability and knowledge. For this reason, this top-down reading strategy is useful for memory ability in the brain for understanding of reading texts and exercises.

### **The disadvantage side of bottom up reading strategy.**

However, some authors criticized this bottom up reading strategy that readers should translate a piece-by-piece reading passages with little conclusion from their personal background awareness. In addition Grabe and Stoller noted ( 2002 p. 32) the procedure of the understanding meaning of the text word-by-word produce slow result and spending much time and hard work in reading analysis and examining of the text. Van Duzer mentioned (1999) the reason is that readers' memory is exhausted, and readers are not able to remember what they read while they are doing last parts of the reading text. Overall, adult readers can recognize every word individually without organizing texts into a connecting identifying the meaning of the reading tasks. Without analyzing the texts, any adult learners cannot comprehend critical guessing. For this reason, many researchers are contradictory ideas about bottom – up reading strategy that is not beneficial for adult readers to improve their reading ability and their understanding and comprehension skills. Grabe, and Eskey, ( 2005) mentioned that after finding out the restriction and usefulness of bottom – up reading strategy for adult learners, the top-down reading strategy was created for adult learners to enhance reading ability. According to Skudiene, (2002) bottom-up reading strategy should not be appropriate for high-level learners, because advanced level adult learners are able to translate the meaning of the words and reading texts effectively, clearly and naturally.

### **The benefits of the top-down reading strategy.**

Most of investigators found out the beneficial factors of top down meta-cognitive reading strategy. Eskey (2005) explained that the top-down reading strategy was also called “from intelligence to idea and concentrated to all reading skill and ability. As we can see other advantage of this strategy, Aebersold and Field ( 1997) pointed out that all contexts have no idea and understanding of the meaning of this text in the top-down reading strategy however adult readers who create the significant of meaning of the texts by utilizing to texts in their prior and earlier awareness of knowledge. According to Smith (2004) who is master at top-down reading strategy, mentioned that any adult reader represents an important aspect of this strategy by utilizing vocabulary while translating meaning of the texts. Cohen, (1990) stated that the top-down reading strategy is also named the sample of texts. It means that, it is not essential for any adult learners to read and understand the completely new words and sentences in the reading passages or read the reading texts attentively. In addition, few essential vocabularies support adult readers to identify the reading texts very fast and effectively. According to Ahmadi, Hairul, and Pourhossein (2012), the top-down reading strategy highlighted reading abilities like guessing and concluding together with expecting from reading contexts. The top-down reading strategy influences on adult learners' reading knowledge in order to enhance the significant of meaning, recognizing meaning from the context and taking important ideas from reading texts.

## The drawbacks of top-down reading strategy.

However, some researchers have disadvantage sides of top-down reading strategy, which was difficult for adult readers to understand the meaning of the text. Jay (2003) mentioned that top-down strategy is problematic strategy for adult learners, which directed to contradictory side: from superior level to low class ordered classification. Likewise, the top-down strategy neglects achievable problems that adult readers can come across some various reading materials, which is unexpected to them. For the bottom-up strategy it was contradicted for its problem to highlight the adult readers' factor in the development on reading skill, whereas the top-down reading strategy focused on the adult prior background knowledge and neglects the significance of the reading contexts. Moreover, the weakness of the top-down reading strategies which directed to the danger of the effective reading strategy". (Ahmadi, Hairul, & Pourhossein, 2012; Eskey, 1986). Carrell and Eisterhold argued that top-down reading strategy is not appropriate for beginner levels. In order to utilize top down reading strategy, adult learners must know 4000 words. According to Weber (1984), a top-down reading strategy is suitable for high proficiency adult readers. Because they know enough vocabulary to translate text and do reading tasks accurately and effectively.

## Data collection

The data collection began by asking interview questions to the subject as the first part of the research. These interview questions contained general information of the research subject, and the set of data originally completed in the form of a questionnaire was also recorded orally by the subject. The script is given in Appendix 1 to prove learner profile.

This first part of the study is mainly devoted to a set of general information about the research subject, history of language learning, strengths and weaknesses. It is possible to learn from her how her interest in learning English arose in the process of obtaining interview. It was clear from her response that there was ample environment for language learning in her family environment as well and that family members had achieved visible results. It is also possible to know from her answers that this subject completely changed her field after graduating from college, in which she developed a desire to learning a new field, namely English. She also started learning English at the age of 19 and has now reached intermediate level. She also said that her weakest point in English is that her listening skills. Until then, she had mainly prepared for university entrance exams and paid little attention to listening skills, mainly mastering grammar rules and increasing vocabulary. 'I'm a first-year student at the university now and I'm preparing for the IELTS exam and it is a big problem for me because I have not practiced listening skills much,' she said. According to the student's words, getting the whole meaning while listening is the most difficult thing for her. She said she is currently performing listening tasks by repeating over and over again and is not using any other strategic methods. Thus, besides reading books that were published in English she always tries to acquire new things by watching English movies and by listening English songs.

The second observation is devoted to know her current level of listening skill. To do this, I gave her a pre-selected broadcast, which was taken from the BBC six minute English program, which was intended non-academic but for intermediate level learners with enough vocabulary and comprehension to get the meaning. Once she heard the broadcast, I asked her to re-stick all the information she could understand, both orally and in writing. You can see the script and her answer in Appendix 2.

The results of this task show that the listening skill of the research subject is not very good. Because she could hardly understand the main meaning of the radio broadcast and could only retell 10% of the information in the broadcast. I assume that the research subject has sufficient vocabulary to understand the general meaning of the radio broadcasting, but she has fears and hesitations that she will not be able to understand that it is because in the first place due to ignorance of listening strategies and methods, not using them during listening, and lack of listening comprehension. And this fear and lack of necessary knowledge remains an obstacle in the perception of information in the research subject. And these barriers are causing the high affective filter in her input process.

Prior to the third follow-up process, the research subject was given a detailed explanation of the Meta-cognitive learning strategy. First of all according to the prior purposes of human listening skill the types of listening were introduced to her. Listening for gist is mainly aimed at understanding the general meaning, no details are required, and the emphasis is on the overall meaning. Listening for specific information is aimed at finding specific information that is requested in advance during listening, and this requires the listener to be careful during the hearing. Listening for details, in this type of listening we cannot miss anything because we do not know exactly what information is needed to complete the task. After explaining the types of listening in this way, an attempt was made to give her a broad and comprehensive understanding of what a Meta-cognitive learning strategy is, what to focus on, and its stages. Many examples of meta-cognitive learning strategies and previous research samples, after reviewing their results, seemed to provide a solution to the barriers that currently exist on her listening comprehension. I then gave her one of the listening tests on the IELTS exam and told her that before she could work, she would assess the situation i.e. the test status, its level, to determine if it was appropriate for her level or not. I then asked her to choose one of the listening strategies that would fit this test (given the necessary information and insight in advance) and complete the task based on that. You can see the script and her answer sheet in Appendix 3.

According to the test results of the second and third observations, a significant change in the responses of the research subject was observed. Based on the while-listening activity based method for listening for specific information, the subject solved a portion of the multiple-choice testing from the IELTS test and she found 4 correct answers out of 6. By performing the task based on a meta-cognitive learning strategy based on a certain style, the previous barriers in her listening skills have been significantly reduced and she says she hopes that listening tasks through these new skills will no longer be an obstacle for her.

## Conclusion

The current article noticed that the significance of meta-cognitive reading strategy for adults to improve reading skills is very important in English language. Meta-cognitive reading strategies are one of the significant aspects for adult learner to acquire these strategies and less enjoyable for instructors to discuss in the English classes. Some adult learners have problems with creating idea from context. For this, reason investigators researched in the sphere of meta-cognitive reading strategies. During the research, I learned from this article, which was called, Impacts meta-cognitive on learning reading strategy on adult reading ability proficiency, (Ahmadi, M. R., Hairul, N. I., & Pourhossein, A. G. (2012). As a result, I understood that meta-cognitive reading strategy is fundamental aspects to help adult learners' reading skills. Investigation presented meta-cognitive reading strategies support the understanding of adults' reading ability. After findings and researching all data, I have known that two meta-cognitive effective reading strategies are fundamentally important and beneficial for adult learners to enhance reading proficiency. In addition, I learned from this article called, the importance of top-down reading strategy for advanced level learners' . (Skudiene 2002). This reading strategy is only for high-level learners due to vocabulary skill and quick finding meaning of the texts. I am going to summarize about the influence of Bottom-up and Top-down reading strategies for adults to improve reading skills.

- 1) Unskillful adult readers cannot use two reading strategies, which are bottom up and top down reading strategies while finding meaning or reading texts.
- 2) Adult high-level readers who use meta-cognitive reading strategies in their reading tasks and exercises are favorable rather than readers who do not utilize this strategy in reading texts.
- 3) Both effective and unskillful readers can use bottom-up and top down strategies, which are involved in the meta-cognitive reading strategies but high proficiency adult learners comprehend attentively to identify and understand the reading contexts sufficiently and accurately. (Using top down and bottom up strategies). Both meta-cognitive reading strategies are equally important for adult learners to enhance reading literacy.

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