

行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 成果報告

跨文化討論區之閱讀策略研究 研究成果報告(精簡版)

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公開資訊：本計畫涉及專利或其他智慧財產權，2年後可公開查詢

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中文摘要： 過往的研究甚少針對運用網路英文輔助教學所涉及的跨文化溝通及英文閱讀策略等方面進行深入探究；因此，本研究藉由建置的網路互動溝通平台，結合英文閱讀課程，探討台灣大學生在跨文化互動溝通平台中參與學術、文化與生活等層面議題討論的情形，並針對學生將英文閱讀課程中所學習之閱讀策略，實際運用於網路討論區中理解文章的成效，進行深入的了解與分析。本研究之初步研究成果顯示：(一)台灣學生藉由參與網路互動平台與課堂中閱讀策略訓練對其後設認知策略使用頻率有顯著的增加。學生在英檢中高級閱讀測驗的成績也有顯著的進步。(二)台灣大學生在閱讀討論區文本之時，最常使用網路閱讀策略為利用網路輔助閱讀工具(例如字典或翻譯工具)來幫助閱讀理解力等。(三)對網路互動平台中討論設計與整體使用之看法，學生持正面與肯定的態度。(四)在運用網路討論區進行跨文化互動溝通的過程中，學生所面臨之困難與挑戰主要源自於英文寫作、搜尋瀏覽與摘要網路文章資料、小組溝通和互動模式等。本文最後則對網路閱讀策略教學的未來提供相關研究方向和建議。

英文摘要： Relatively few research studies were conducted to investigate students' uses of reading strategies in cross-cultural online discussion forum. Therefore, the current research investigated Taiwanese university EFL students' use of online reading strategies during their comprehension process of reading online written responses from students of the other cultures ; furthermore, to investigate the impact of reading strategy training on facilitation of reading comprehension of the students' cross-cultural communication experience. Findings from the research indicated that EFL university students' use of metacognitive strategies had a significant increase as they took part in cross-cultural discussion and reading strategy training. Post-test scores of the high-intermediate GEPT reading test also improved at a significant level. In addition, students ranked summary writing training as the most effective reading strategy in assisting them to complete cross-cultural discussion postings. With regard to online reading strategy use as EFL students read online postings, using reference materials (e.g. online dictionary) was ranked with the highest frequency. In terms of the design and overall online activity, participating students held a supportive and positive attitude. Major difficulties and challenges students encountered stemmed from English writing, searching, locating, summarizing and communicating with others online. The paper concludes with pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research.

INTRODUCTION

As the rapid advancement of technology enhances innovation and creativity, the era of e-learning has also brought about a turning point for language learning. Various and abundant authentic language materials can be easily accessed online within a finger click. With the worldwide information searching engines at hand, time and space are no longer constraints as they are in traditional classroom setting. Contrary to the traditional mode of teacher-centered, transmission approach of language learning, the information and communication technology has shifted the learning into more learner-centered, interactive, dynamic, and constructive paradigm (Lau, 2006). However, for beginning and even intermediate language learners, reading authentic materials online often leads to reading frustrations that might be attributed to the limited linguistic knowledge, unfamiliarity with the topic, and textual knowledge in the target language (Carrell, 1983; Taylor & Beach, 1984).

As a result, many collaborative research projects were lunched, conducted, and explored by language experts, teaching practitioners and technology professionals in Taiwan. Moreover, numerous language learning websites are designed, developed, and implemented to enhance learners' comprehensible input and to engage learners' interests in reading by offering a wide variety of interesting text across various reading levels (Liou et al., 2003). Among the well-known public, free online reading website during the past decade, *The Candle Project for Reading* (<http://elearning.eng.ntnu.edu.tw/CANDLE/>) has continuously provided Taiwanese college English language learners very useful online reading tools and authentic English text based on students' language proficiency since 2002. Tracking mechanisms and designs of the interfaces for the teachers and students are both very user-friendly. Students taking part in those voluntary online reading websites responded positively toward the design and effectiveness of the language tools as well as the learning motivation and knowledge gains from the online reading experiences (Chen, 2004; Liou et al., 2003; Murray, 2005; Sun, 2003). It also includes useful practices of effective reading strategies, such as skimming, finding topic sentence, identifying main idea, and so on. However, to what extent do those learners use those acquired reading strategies while in actual reading process still requires further studies and investigations.

Online asynchronous discussion forum provides useful, authentic virtual platform to study English language learners' uses and reactions toward reading strategy use. While seeking to integrate technology into language learning instruction, teachers should cautiously take the following components into considerations: content, language, language learning strategies, accessibility, language learning goals, and

design and navigation of the information on the Web (Carlisle, 2000; Chen, 2004; Chen, 2006; Huang, 2006; Murray, 2005). Grabe (2007) suggest L2 reading teachers should follow the following developmental goals while establishing an integrated curriculum framework: (1) promoting word recognition skills; (2) building a large recognition vocabulary; (3) practicing comprehension skills; (4) building awareness of discourse structure; (5) promoting strategic reading; (6) practicing reading fluency; (7) promoting motivation for reading; (8) combining language and content learning. This means that while studying English language learners' uses of reading strategies, teachers also need to consider the overall design of the reading curriculum to best meet needs and interests of the English language learners as well as preparing students with useful reading strategies to take part in online reading and cross-cultural communication experience.

Therefore, the following research questions were proposed:

(1) Does the reading strategy training help students in their reading comprehension on the discussion forum? (2) When reading online written responses, what online reading strategies do Taiwanese students use? (3) What are students' perceptions and opinions toward the design of cross-cultural communication activity and discussion forum? (4) What are the challenges and difficulties students encounter during the cross-cultural communication experience?

This research project is significant and beneficial in the following perspectives: online reading and cross-cultural research, authentic and interactive learning context for student participants of English language learners in Taiwan, and international collaborative project. Research on online reading strategy use in Taiwan is still sparse, not to mention that this research combines the authentic cross-cultural communicative component that fosters and motivates English language learners to engage in language learning in context. Through this research, freshman student participants of the researcher's class will be given an opportunity to engage in online discussion forum, designed in an authentic communication, learner-centered context. By engaging in reading and learning tasks, English language learners will not only interact with native English speakers but also become more aware of the comprehension process as students prepare to read and respond to postings written by native English speakers. The international collaborative research opens ways for researchers across countries to develop patterns as well as chances of future cooperative works. With the development of this project, learning is further extended in the virtual classroom. English language learners in Taiwan as well as native English speakers will be able to discuss topics without the constraints of space and time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Evolved from the structural approach of learning in which mastery of discrete skills were the primary goals, socio-cognitive orientation of network-based language teaching emphasizes on the social and cognitive aspects of meaning-making process. In other words, language learners' "use" the target language and also "involve" in authentic, purposeful discourse with others (Kern & Warschaure, 2000). How can teachers effectively implement this new electronic medium of literacy into already-existing curriculum? Warschauer (2000) summarizes four essential components to carry out electronic learning activities: (1) learner-centered, in which learners are empowered with control of their own learning; (2) authentic communication, with rhetorical appropriateness; (3) making a difference, relevant to cultural or social context; (4) providing opportunity for expressing self and evolving identity (p. 57).

In other words, while integrating electronic medium into existing curriculum, electronic learning activities should be relevant, and linked to an overarching language learning objectives as language learners have anticipated at the beginning of learning. In Warschauer's (2000) ethnographic study recruited majority students of Native Hawaiian ancestry and desires to learn Hawaiian, the experienced teacher, Kapili Manaole setted up goals that students would be able to read, write and communicate online related to essences of Hawaiian culture. Among those participating students in Meskill and Ranglova's study (2000), ninety two percent reported "very enthusiastic" of taking part in online discussion and readings in social-collaborative language learning context. As a result, reading and writing upon relevant and meaningful topics did, in fact, contribute to the success of computer-mediated online discussion. Those results echo Fulwiler's statements that "while some of us who assign these personal notebooks might argue about what they should be called...we would not disagree about their purpose and value: writing helps your students learn things better" (Fulwiler, cited by Joyce 1997).

Recent studies related to CMC explored the effects of various electronic communication medium, such as weblogs (Lin, 2007), using email to facilitate cross-cultural communication (Chen, 2007), video-conferencing (Shi, 2007), homepage design (Yang & Chen, 2006) and so on. As a whole, findings from those computer-mediated communication (CMC) research with Taiwanese learners include: increased confidence and motivation in language learning, improved ability in reading and writing abilities, facilitation of meaning-making process and critical thinking skills, encouragement and supports for idea sharing and information exchange, reduction of language learning anxiety and emotional supports from peers, broadened perspectives through peer interactions; and equal opportunity for class participation

without the constraints of time and space (Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007; Lin, 2007; Yang & Chen, 2006). However, none of the above studies have done a study on Taiwanese college students' uses of reading strategies on the cross-cultural communication platform.

PARTICIPANTS

After evaluating students' engagement, class size, and performance on the online discussion forum of sophomore and freshman students during the fall semester of 2010, the researcher considered that sophomore English-major students would be more appropriate for the current research study. Forty-eight students enrolled in an elective 2-credit Guided Reading course took part on the cross-cultural discussion forum during the spring semester of 2011. Hence, EFL students were divided into 8 groups, each with about six students. Corresponding thirty students from Purdue University were divided into three to four students in each group. Data of the three registered EFL students missing over 80% of the course was removed from the current study.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

During the spring semester, EFL students were required to complete at least 6 online postings, including replies to their US counterparts. The first one was self-introduction and followed by "Rosa Parks", a topic on race and equality mentioned in our textbook. The instructor considered this to be a good opportunity to start cross-cultural discussion since most of EFL students were not familiar with Rosa Parks. EFL students were to first search online articles on Rosa Parks, then, write a short summary on her, followed by personal reflections or questions they had while reading online articles. Related links on Rosa Parks were provided as references for EFL students on course outline in Moodle, a free course management system. The other postings were of students' choices of topic, depending on decision made by each group. In other words, within each group, they need to have the same topics for cross-cultural discussion. It should be noted that students of Purdue University were not required to follow the above guidelines strictly.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 560 postings were collected on the cross-cultural discussion forum, 358 postings (mean = 7.96) from EFL students and 202 postings (mean = 6.73) from

Purdue students. The highest number of postings were made by a Purdue student (26 postings), followed by a Taiwanese EFL students (20 postings). With respect to the completion rate of EFL students' online postings, 100% (45) completion rate of the self-introduction, followed by 91% (41) completion rate on Rosa Parks, and 84% (38) on the third topic of their choice. EFL students were encouraged to carry on the discussion with their group members even after the end of the third posting. However, on the fourth and fifth postings, twenty-seven (60%) and twenty-two (49%) students continued to take part in online discussion with their peers.

The current study sought to integrate cross-cultural communication into the existing reading curriculum to facilitate English learning and motivation for college students. Findings from online reading strategy survey ($p < .05$) and post-test scores of high-intermediate GEPT reading test ($p < .001$) showed a significant difference. Moreover, EFL students reported of using more metacognitive strategies as they read online to accomplish postings for example, having a reading purpose in mind, choosing what to read closely and what to ignore. Similar to findings in other research, reading strategy training facilitates reading comprehension (Chen, 2006; Shang, 2007; Sun 2003).

Practices of online reading and summary writing did increase students' awareness of reading comprehension. Since summary writing was important to reading, EFL students were asked to first initiate a summary posting of online articles with their reactions or questions to Purdue students. The intention of creating an authentic online learning community was achieved to some extents. In the online discussion forum, students write for an audience, with a specific purpose in mind, unlike practice writing on paper. Interactions among peers and oversea students in the forum made English learning become meaningful and purposeful. Consistent with previous research with EFL university students in Taiwan, university students in this study also confirmed on the strengths that online discussion forum as effective in idea sharing that fosters social-cultural interaction and offered doors to practice English (Chen, 2009; Chou et al., 2008; Wang, 2009). On the other hand, EFL students were reading authentic online postings as well as searching and locating information to answer questions from Purdue students. For example, when Taiwanese students were asked about a leader who has a similar impact as Rosa Parks did or observe gender inequality issue in modern society, the learning became relevant to their life. Numerous high-level questions raised from the postings were observed, particularly from Purdue students. It should be noted that few students' online postings showed that a large portion was copied and paste directly into the posting without paraphrasing or quotation marks although students were informed of the concept of plagiarism at the beginning of the semester. Hence, specific criterion on plagiarism

should be added to the online posting assessment. Furthermore, summary writing, although with guided practice in class, is still considered the most difficult for EFL students. Indeed, summary writing takes time to develop, not a one time through process. It is a continuing process and requires many practices.

In this study, EFL students' reliance on using reference materials (such as online dictionary) as one major reading strategy was also reported from other studies with EFL students in Taiwan (Chen, 2006; Huang, 2006; Huang & Chern, 2006). Students remarked in the interviews that the postings in the forum were easy to read in general, so they did not have to use the online dictionary or translation tool as often as they search and read online articles. It means that it requires more efforts for students to use reading strategies as they tour the webpages, shift in reading, rereading, and comparing across multiple online sources to summary writing. Think-aloud online reading protocols from two students showed that the high-intermediate EFL student used more online reading strategies than the low-intermediate student based on Zawilinski's (2007) taxonomy of online reading comprehension strategies. The findings were in line with previous research on print text reading strategy use and its relationship to language proficiency.

The theme on group dynamics emerged across the data. Assigned students into small groups did help foster better communication than one-thread discussion as in the pilot study (Chou et al., 2008). Although the level of interaction and its relationship to level of critical thinking was not examined, a high number of postings and frequent responses between the respondents seemed to play a major role in the success of online discussion. Take group five for example, enthusiasm and genuine attitudes led discussion become stimulating, engaging and inspiring. On the other hand, due to the high absences of students in some groups, group discussions went on their separate ways. It means that each group member had different topics for discussion. So, postings turned into many independent postings without a coherent theme. In addition, students' learning attitude also has an impact in determining the successfulness of the activity. Like Wang's (2009) Taiwanese EFL students, a few students perceived this cross-cultural discussion was just like an assignment to be turned in. So, in some of their postings, they procrastinated in their online postings or did not bother to reply or read other's responses once they finished their postings. One student wrote that "It's just my homework" on the posting. In summary, some EFL students considered online posting as an assignment to be completed without taking a step further in taking active roles in online discussion (Chen, 2009; Wong, 2009).

The concern on time constraint was another theme frequently mentioned. Due to the waiting time for the approval of Institutional Review Board (IRB) in fall semester and difference in academic calendars between two universities, the time for the

cross-cultural discussion was shortened to less than 6 weeks. Therefore, the deadline for each posting and reply might have been more intensive for EFL students in Taiwan who had an average of 17 to 20 credits a semester. The time spent in online reading and writing was also considered to be time-consuming for some students. So, it was suggested that a general topic and more appropriate links be provided for students to help save time and guide them to locate articles that are at their reading levels. Students considered providing the instant links on the entry page of the discussion forum such as Voice of America, BBC news as useful resources and should be continued for future classes.

LIMITATION

Limitations in this study are as follows. First, the time constraint of the cross-cultural discussion may have interfered the results and perceptions of the effectiveness of the research. It is suggested that future research should take into consideration of the IRB approval and extend the research into a longer time frame. Second, a small sample size of forty-five EFL students and thirty Purdue students were recruited. So depending on EFL students' language proficiency and engagement in the online discussion forum, findings from the current research cannot be overgeneralized to other populations. In addition, due to the small number of surveys collected from Purdue students, the results may be differed if all the surveys were returned. Third, the use of high-intermediate GEPT reading test, online reading strategy survey, and think-aloud protocols from two students may not be sufficient to reflect students' actual use of online reading strategies and effect of reading comprehension. Additional instruments could be used to validate the improvement in online reading comprehension such as summary writing.

CONCLUSION

The research study brought some insights into the design of cross-cultural discussion forum and the use of online reading strategies of EFL university students in Taiwan. Cross-cultural discussion can be stimulating and interesting for students if attention is paid carefully to the group dynamics, topic selection, and curriculum design. Much is yet left to be explored in the area of online reading research. For example, how proficient and skilled EFL students search, locate, evaluate various online sources to enhance their online comprehension? Moreover, how can teachers prepare students of the future generation to efficiently acquire and read abundant online resources? How do students take part in online learning community besides the

online discussion forum? How will communication and learning take place in different types of learning community? In this era of digital technology, abundant resources are within a finger click of a mouse. How can one efficiently access, evaluate, synthesize and communicate the information will continue to be an essential skill and focus of research studies in this competitive global village for future generations.

SELF-EAVLAUTION

The current project is now completed. The proposed reading curriculum provided positive effects in students' learning and reading comprehension outcomes. In addition, through this collaborative project, findings and suggestions from this research shed light into future design of online discussion and approaches of how to best utilize and integrate cross-cultural communication into existing reading curriculum. Furthermore, the project opened door for collaborating with oversea scholars in cross-cultural research.

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國科會補助計畫衍生研發成果推廣資料表

日期:2011/10/29

國科會補助計畫	計畫名稱: 跨文化討論區之閱讀策略研究
	計畫主持人: 陳怡君
	計畫編號: 99-2410-H-034-046- 學門領域: 英語能力研究
無研發成果推廣資料	

99 年度專題研究計畫研究成果彙整表

計畫主持人：陳怡君		計畫編號：99-2410-H-034-046-				計畫名稱：跨文化討論區之閱讀策略研究	
成果項目		量化			單位	備註（質化說明：如數個計畫共同成果、成果列為該期刊之封面故事...等）	
		實際已達成數（被接受或已發表）	預期總達成數（含實際已達成數）	本計畫實際貢獻百分比			
國內	論文著作	期刊論文	0	1	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	0	1	100%		
		專書	0	0	100%		
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力（本國籍）	碩士生	3	3	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		
國外	論文著作	期刊論文	0	0	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	0	0	100%		
		專書	0	0	100%		章/本
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力（外國籍）	碩士生	0	0	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		

<p>其他成果 (無法以量化表達之成果如辦理學術活動、獲得獎項、重要國際合作、研究成果國際影響力及其他協助產業技術發展之具體效益事項等，請以文字敘述填列。)</p>	<p>因此研究為一跨國合作專題，擬和國外學者籌畫共同發表於國際期刊。</p>
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	成果項目	量化	名稱或內容性質簡述
科 教 處 計 畫 加 填 項 目	測驗工具(含質性與量性)	0	
	課程/模組	0	
	電腦及網路系統或工具	0	
	教材	0	
	舉辦之活動/競賽	0	
	研討會/工作坊	0	
	電子報、網站	0	
	計畫成果推廣之參與(閱聽)人數	0	

國科會補助專題研究計畫成果報告自評表

請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況、研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）、是否適合在學術期刊發表或申請專利、主要發現或其他有關價值等，作一綜合評估。

1. 請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況作一綜合評估

達成目標

未達成目標（請說明，以 100 字為限）

實驗失敗

因故實驗中斷

其他原因

說明：

2. 研究成果在學術期刊發表或申請專利等情形：

論文： 已發表 未發表之文稿 撰寫中 無

專利： 已獲得 申請中 無

技轉： 已技轉 洽談中 無

其他：（以 100 字為限）

3. 請依學術成就、技術創新、社會影響等方面，評估研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）（以 500 字為限）

近年來，網路輔助學習模式已由最初的機械性個人演練單一模式，逐漸發展成較有互動性、社交性、甚至是跨文化的溝通模式，希望藉以增進學習者的學習興趣與成效。本研究藉由建置的網路互動溝通平台，結合英文閱讀課程，利用網路溝通平台的方式，實際與以英語為母語的國外大學生進行網路溝通及對談，將語文學習與生活實用性相互結合，並將跨文化的溝通模式融入於英語課程中，使英語學習更具有互動性與實用性的價值。

藉由本研究之初步研究成果，可為日後英文閱讀課程提供一個嶄新的學習模式，包含：網路互動平台、閱讀策略、及跨文化溝通學習，藉由國際合作學習的方式，落實「從做中學」的英文教育，除提升學生的英文溝通及閱讀能力外，亦可間接增進學生的國際觀。