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ESL learners' reading approaches of an academic expository text

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Abstract

The primary purpose of the present study is to explore the reading approaches of ESL learners reading an academic expository text. Through phenomenography, this study aims to identify the variations or different ways in which six ESL learners read an academic expository text. The ability to read effectively is a prominent skill required in any academic or higher learning contexts. However, many first year students, specifically second language learners, who enter institutions of higher learning, are found to be unprepared for the reading demands placed upon them. The sample of this study involved six second-year Bachelor of Arts students, majoring in English Language Studies (ELS) at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Three instruments were used in the collection of data: reading text, in depth interviews and observations. Findings revealed variations that represented the deep and surface approaches of reading an academic expository text. Although changes were recorded with each reading, further research could enhance the representation of students' approaches to reading if analyzed at individual level.

Keyword: reading approaches; deep and surface reading; phenomenography; ESL learners; expository text.

Background of the Study

In any academic or higher learning context, the ability to read is a crucial skill as it requires learners to interact and process information from texts. Through this interaction, readers are required to synthesize, evaluate and interpret the text so as to create meaning

and develop knowledge. However, many first year students, specifically second language learners, who enter institutions of higher learning, are unprepared for the reading demands placed upon them and they encounter difficulties.

There are various factors that contribute to the reading problems of these learners at the tertiary level such as lack of vocabulary knowledge, difficulty level of texts as well as low language proficiency (Faizah Abdul Majid, Zalizan Mohammed Jelas & Norzaini Azman, 2002; Wong Bee Eng & Mardziah Hayati Abdullah, 2003; Nambiar, 2007). Another equally influential factor which is one of the focal points in this study is motivation. According to Dornyei (2002), motivation refers to “why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how long they are going to pursue it (p.8)”.

Most goal theorists conceptualize motivation as goal-oriented behaviour (Heckhausen, 1991; Ames, 1992), whereby learners determine the extent and quality of effort to engage in to complete a learning task. Hence, when second language learners are highly motivated to accomplish a learning task, they will use more strategies (cognitive and metacognitive), be more determined in maintaining effort and are attentive to the task at hand. On the other hand, if learners are unmotivated, then, they will exhibit negative behaviour, feelings, and cognitions that affect their learning process (Gardner & McIntyre, 1991; Benabou & Tirole, 2003). In reference to reading, Lee (2005) pointed out that students nowadays may have a different form of motivation as excelling in examinations is the primary concern since good grades would guarantee entrance into the

university. Thus, we observe students learning about test items and format, rather than the necessary skills required for reading at the university.

Another contributing factor that has been constantly discussed and implied in many second and foreign language reading researches is the use of reading strategies. Reading strategies reveal how the readers interact with the text, conceive the task, attend to textual information and make sense of what they read and the actions they take when comprehension fails. Shuyun and Munby (1996) note that academic reading entails demanding and complex processes that require students to actively employ a repertoire of reading strategies to construct meaning. The type of strategies used by readers lends support to the theoretical position that reading is a problem-solving process. Thus, ESL learners need to be able to choose a variety of strategies to meet the requirements of the various learning tasks. Furthermore, the use of these strategies must be logically connected to solve the reading difficulties encountered. In other words, the strategies that are initiated will be related to what and how other follow-up strategies are employed toward facilitating the process of reading comprehension (Tung-Hsien, 2001).

Schema or knowledge base is another influential contributing factor that these learners bring with them when they approach a text. According to Grabe (2002), second language readers would begin reading in a L2 with an incomplete knowledge base where vocabulary, cognitive abilities and metacognitive strategies are concerned as compared to when they read in their native language (L1). If these learners have difficulty in processing the information that they read from texts due to lack of background

knowledge, then, how they approach reading the text would surely influence their comprehension of the text.

Equally importantly, a reader may not be able to comprehend a reading text if he does not know how information is organized in the text. With reference to textual schema, Nunan (1993) explains that the text does not carry meaning but rather “provides signposts or clues to be utilized by listeners or readers in constructing the original meaning of speakers or writers” (p.257). Several studies have however shown that many readers fail to recognize the way the texts are organized and identify how information is presented (Ahmad Al-Issa, 2006; Noorizah Mohd. Noor, 2006), thus, causing problems in comprehending the text.

A possible explanation of why such variations have surfaced would lead to the argument that students differ in the way they go about learning, otherwise known as approach to learning (Entwistle, 1988; Ramsden, 1992; Marton & Saljo, 1997). The concept approach to learning, introduced by Marton and Saljo (1975), describes ‘the qualitative differences in how students approach reading an academic text. In their pioneer research, they identified two different levels of processing which they labeled deep-level processing and surface-level processing based on aspects of text on which the students’ attention were focused. Marton and Saljo explain:

In the case of surface level processing, the student direct his attention towards learning the text itself (the sign), i.e. he has a “reproductive” conception of learning which means that he is more or less forced to keep to a rote-learning strategy. In the case of deep-level processing, on the other hand, the student is directed towards the intentional content of the learning material (what is signified), i.e., he is directed towards comprehending what the author wants to say about, for instance, a certain scientific problem or principle (7-8).

The terms deep approach and surface approach to learning were subsequently adopted to recognize that the occurrence of these different levels of processing were dependent on the students' distinctive intentions. Based on their findings, Marton and Saljo (1997) concluded that:

We had been looking for an answer to the question of why the students had arrived at these qualitatively different ways of understanding the text as a whole. What we found was that the students who did not get the point failed to do so simply because they were not looking for it. The main difference we found in the process of learning concerned whether the students focused on the text in itself or on what the text was about: the author's intention, the main point, the conclusion to be draw (43).

Students adopting a deep approach to learning would transform and restructure their knowledge to understand and interpret the new material (Chalmers & Fuller, 1996; Biggs, 1993). Based on the intention of maximum engagement in the task, these students would employ strategies involving high cognitive abilities, such as checking evidence, examining logic and argument as well as looking for underlying principles and ideas (Entwistle, 1997). Students adopting the surface approach to learning portray intentions, which are extrinsic to the real purpose of the task (Chalmers & Fuller, 1996). To meet the demands or requirements of the task, these surface learners memorize or reproduce material so that less time and effort is employed in completing the task (Biggs, 1993). As a result, they encounter difficulties in making sense and produce a superficial level of understanding of the material.

These differences of approaches to learning resulting in qualitatively different learning outcomes reflect the differing quality of learning that is evident in higher

education. If learning in the university is seen as developing the capabilities of its students (Bowden & Marton, 1998), then based on the studies reviewed above, many students are not accomplishing their goals upon graduation from higher education. The reading scenario presented is often seen in learners' transition from school into the university. Most university lecturers and tutors are unaware of these transitions and they tend to assume that these learners have the required skills and strategies for independent reading and learning. However, the true picture reveals that these learners demonstrate very little or superficial understanding of the task as well as focus on the acquisition of information or product, thus reflecting a superficial reading of text. As a result, these students are unable to cope with the academic demands and encounter reading difficulties as they progress in their studies. Without proper guidance and assistance, these students may fail to adjust accordingly, or may continue to adjust inappropriately to the demands of academic learning in higher institutions.

The primary purpose of the present study is to explore the reading approaches of ESL learners reading an academic expository text. Through phenomenography, this study will describe six ESL students' approaches of reading an academic expository text within a Malaysian ESL educational context. In this way, not only are teachers and researchers able to understand better how students read, but students too are given the opportunity to have a better understanding as well as an awareness of how they themselves approach reading, and this may help improve their quality of the reading process.

Theoretical Framework

Phenomenography has evolved into a distinct research specialization which focuses on describing qualitatively different ways in which people experience, understand and conceptualize various kinds of phenomenon in the world around them (Limberg, 1999). Thus the objective of phenomenographers is to explore the various ways that people experience, perceive, understand, conceptualize or think about a phenomenon in the world around them. To shed further light on the variations that occur between these experiences, Marton and Booth (1997) suggest a structure of awareness. The theory suggests that awareness is made up of three overlapping areas: the margin, the thematic field and the theme. When an individual is experiencing a particular phenomenon in a given context, there are certain aspects of the phenomenon that the individual will be aware of. These aspects are said to be present in awareness and form the thematic field. Out of the various aspects that make up the thematic field, some related aspects will emerge and become the focus of awareness. These related aspects are the theme of awareness.

At the same time, there will be other aspects not associated with the phenomenon that receive less attention. For example, given a context where an individual is reading in a coffee shop, there may be some noise from people placing orders or having conversations. These aspects are not related to the reading phenomenon, thus will not be focused by the individual. These non-related aspects are identified as the margin of awareness. Hence, experiencing a whole phenomenon would involve individuals discerning several aspects of that whole simultaneously (theme/thematic), while other

parts are neglected (margin). In relating this idea to reading, the structure of awareness will determine the aspects that are focused on, hence bringing about a different thematic field or themes. More importantly, different aspects or relationships between the aspects and the reading experience are discerned in different ways. In other words, the aspects in the reading process that the reader is able to discern will become the focus of awareness (theme) because they are closely related to the reader. These aspects are the focal points of the study. Following this, the researcher will describe the characteristics portrayed by the ESL subjects as well as to determine any changes in their approaches of reading the text twice.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the six ESL students when reading an academic expository text for the first time?
2. What are the characteristics of the six ESL students when re reading the academic expository text for the second time?
3. What differences in the characteristics of the six ESL students can be identified between the two readings of the text?

Methodology

The sample of this study involved six second-year Bachelor of Arts students, majoring in English Language Studies (ELS) at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). The

selection of the sample for this study was based on purposeful sampling, which according to Patton (1990) lies in “selecting information-rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance of the study in depth” (52). Three instruments were used in the collection of data: reading text, in - depth interviews and observations.

The reading text chosen for this study was an academic expository text. The main reason for this selection was that students were constantly in contact with texts of this nature during their course of study at the university. Three expository texts were first identified and then given to a panel of evaluators to determine the suitability of the texts. Three evaluators were identified and approached individually for their assistance in assessing the three expository texts. These evaluators are members of teaching staff at the Language Centre, U.K.M, all of whom possess extensive teaching experiences between 10-15 years at tertiary level, including teaching ESL courses and the current second year B.A.ELS students. Merriam et.al. (2002) cite the use of peer review as a form of triangulation that “remains a principal strategy to ensure validity and reliability” (p.26).

Following this, each panel was given an evaluation packet, which consisted of: 1) a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and the evaluators’ roles to ensure clarity of what they are expected to do and how to go about it; 2) three expository texts; 3) evaluation forms; 4) descriptors for criteria of text selection. The criteria identified were based on a review of literature on text evaluation and assessment as well as feedback from fellow colleagues and researchers. Four criteria were identified as relevant to the purpose of the present study: content, language, organization and length of text

(Feathers, 1994; Nuttal, 1996; Barchers, 1998). For scoring purposes, descriptors for the scale were coded using numbers ranging from 1 to 5 (Likert scale) and placed in descending order as follows: 5 – Very Good, 4 – Good, 3 – Fair, 2 – Poor and 1 – Very Poor.

Merriam et. al (2002) stress that those engaging in a phenomenographic study would use “its own tools or inquiry techniques that differentiate it from other types of qualitative inquiry” (p.7). Data was collected using an in-depth interview method while observations played a supporting role to gain an in-depth understanding of the case. These interviews aimed to assist the students in describing their actions, thoughts and feelings after reading the expository text. Examples of questions used in the interviews included asking the subjects to describe how they read the text as well as the strategies used while reading the text. The interviews were conducted after the text was read. The participants proposed a day and time when they were available for the interview. Each of the six subjects was interviewed separately on different days. All interview sessions were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy by a second individual.

The phenomenographical procedure outlined by Marton (1988) served as a guide in analyzing the transcribed interviews. The analysis of the interview transcripts was initiated by reading and re-reading each subject’s transcript of the first reading. The purpose of this careful, rigorous reading was to identify and separate the statements into those aspects outlined by the research questions posed. This sorting of the statements into different sets would enable the researcher to organize her data as well as certify that all the variations are accounted for. As Marton and Saljo (1997) explain:

The first phase is a kind of selection procedure based on criteria of relevance. Comments, which seemed in any way relevant to our enquiry were identified and marked. The meaning of the comment could occasionally lie in the words themselves, but in general, the interpretation had to be made in relation to the context within which that comment had been made. (41)

This process of data analysis is a form of rigorous qualitative analyses, involving different stages of analyzing data, but with a common aim – describing variations in students’ approaches toward reading an academic expository text. Throughout the procedure, cross validation of data was repeatedly conducted where the researcher constantly went back and forth between the context and the unit of analysis in each phase. This approach of ‘iterative procedure’ ensures that all units of analysis are scrutinized and accounted for. Through this the researcher was able to develop the characteristics (categories of description) that described the subjects’ approaches of reading the academic expository text. Each category was then exemplified by appropriate quotes. The same procedure was applied with the analysis of the second reading.

The researcher then compared the characteristics of approaches to reading of each subject over the two reading sessions to identify the variations that emerged over the reading period. Next, the researcher employed two independent evaluators to examine the categories of description. This form of evaluation procedure is a form of testing to see if another person classifies the statements made by the sample study in the same way as the researcher does. Using multiple forms of data collection and triangulating the evidence gathered increases the reliability and internal validity of the data (Merriam, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Results of Study

First Reading of Text

In the first reading of the text, the researcher discovered several prominent categories demonstrated by the deep readers, as presented in the following table.

Table 1. Categories of Reading Approaches

CATEGORIES	APPROACH
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intrinsic motivation• Interacting actively with the text• Using various strategies in identifying key words and main points	DEEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extrinsic motivation• Poor application of strategy use• Focus on identifying gist of each paragraph• Text anxiety	SURFACE

One category identified is the intrinsic motivation of reading the text. These deep readers were more concerned with the information or knowledge that they would gain from reading the text. They also attempted to assess how this information could be put to use for future purposes such as in their writing assignments. Hence, this would suggest that these readers' motivation of reading was for personal improvement rather than expecting external rewards such as getting good grades for examinations, as the following extracts suggest:

...there's a bit of it relevance..so I really treat it like..I'm going to gain something from the text so I really read it like..this is one of my reading material(A1/22-25)

...based on my last experience..maybe I can..I have some ideas on this two (code switching and interference) terms (a bit) so I relate my past, I mean past knowledge with this one..just connect (E1/178-181)

...I can relate to the text because, I know like..I know three languages..I use all three languages and every, every day.. I mix them up, code-switching...(D1/19-21)

Another strategy used was the advance organizers that they drew to help with organizing information leading to a better understanding of the linking between points and ideas. It was interesting to note that only the deep readers were discovered to utilize such frameworks in their readings, as the following extract reveal:

...sometimes I do summarization because I do it in rangka (framework). I don't really like learn it in paragraph so I just make it into rangka..because rangka (framework) is much more easier to see..this one a bit difficult to see..so I transform this wording into a rangka (framework) (E1/333-337)

...uh..the notes are basically..main ideas..some of it..I'll link one idea to another idea. So, you can see a lot of arrows going down all sorts of things because its like the first idea contributes to the second idea...(A1/111-115)

....yeah. The, the paragraph. The, the things concernlah what I don't understand. Hm.....and then..(st. giggles..) (R : what?..)..is eh, eh, if I don't understand it, sometimes I just leave it..I just leave it and then go through others and then I get back to it. but then, it's like you say take the time, take the time go through it so, okay, just go through it (D1/L.261-264)

The monitoring and evaluating of information as they read suggest that these subjects are applying strategies which include having a purpose in mind or using aids such as tables and figures to monitor their reading. These strategies have been considered to be vital for successful leaning in a second language (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

The surface readers on the other hand were greatly affected by the anxiety and apprehension that they experienced when they approached reading the text. In fact, based on the researcher's analysis and observations, almost all (five out of the six subjects)

mentioned this fear when they approached a text that is lengthy and wordy' The following quotations reflected their experiences:

...this passage is quite, very..uh..thick. I not sure whether I going to understand or not, but I just try to read it first, then only I can decide whether I can understand or I don't understand (C1/40-41)

...I find the text..mm..fo example, like too many wordings and too factual, I guess (E1/16-17)

...I hope its not that much, I mean..not too many wordslah..(B1/70)..it's quite long..(B1/79)

...I was thinking so many things...okay first, is it going to be difficult (D1/63-65)

This was their first reaction and impression of the text even before they started reading the text. According to Krashen's (1982) filter hypothesis, students would put up the filter if threatened in any way. In this case, having a high filter would affect their reading as well as understanding of the text. Reading long passages can be a daunting task resulting in readers having a negative perception of the text. Based on this assumption, they would approach reading with a set mind that the text is difficult. Having such negative perceptions of the text would greatly affect their purpose or motive of reading, which consequently would influence how they read the text.

The subjects were also greatly affected by examinations and assessments in that their sole purpose in reading a text was basically to be able to answer questions – hence portraying an extrinsic motive of reading, as the following extracts reveal:

...because you ask me to read so I just read..but I know maybe you going to ask me a question so just to make sure whether which one is important for me, then when you ask questions so that I can answer (C1/53-55)

...firstly because you asked me to..secondly because of my course..thirdly..for my knowledge(F1/40-41)

...if you ask any question about the text and then if I cannot answer then, so I have to remember some things, I have to really understand the text, so I could answer it (B1/101-102)

Motivation can be considered as the most essential component within the reading process as it starts with the purpose or motive of reading a text that would help the reader to be actively involved in the reading process. However, if readers started with an extrinsic motivation, they will be unable to interact actively with the text as their focus is to produce correct answers for any questions asked. Although extrinsically motivated learners have also succeeded in their studies the question remains whether we are engaging our students in real and meaningful learning (Lee, 2005; Pandian, 2006). If students are involved in their learning process rather than learning to regurgitate information for examination purposes, then they will most probably be more motivated and responsible to become better learners.

Finally, the analysis also revealed that these surface readers employed a poor application of strategies when reading the text. The subjects were discovered to read paragraph by paragraph and focusing on identifying the main points in each paragraph, without linking the ideas between paragraphs. In addition, an extensive use of underlining and highlighting was employed to accommodate their incompetence of identifying the main points. Further investigation of the supportive strategies used revealed that these learners were unsure of which that were underlined referred to main and supporting ideas. Thus, to avoid missing any stated main idea, they resorted to underlining most of the sentences as the following extracts suggest:

...I just read and then which I think is important or I don't understand I just ..uhm..put a line ..that all(C1/80-81)

...the important things..uh..what I think important in the text like who code-switch, why they code-switch..I just underline (C1/130-131)

...if the reasons take a long sentence then I just underline they all (B1/245)

As a result, it might seem impossible for these subjects to identify the writer's argument in the text if they read in a linear fashion. They might only be able to identify the gist or the main idea that is presented in each paragraph but yet are unable to link the ideas together as they are focusing on the main idea of each paragraph and not the text as a whole. The following section presents the analysis of the second interview.

Second Reading of Text

Based on the analysis of the interview data, the following deep and surface categories were identified:

Table 2. Categories of Reading Approaches

CATEGORIES	APPROACH
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intrinsic motivation• Employ metacognitive strategies• Identify the link between paragraphs• Rereading/recall strategies	DEEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety of text• Extrinsic motivation• Unsure of strategy use• Segregates paragraph• Lack textual schema	SURFACE

The intrinsic motivation was developed further in the second reading of the text. One of the deep readers identified a concrete purpose of reading as seen in the following:

S: Hm. One thing is I'm more prepared in reading the text because I'll ready have enough idea what is it about. So, it's sort of like when you are more prepared at it, it's sort of like you what you are already expected from the text and then you ...eh...and then sort of like okay this time around you have a more eh, concrete purpose of reading the text. Where else it's still hazy for the, when the first time you read the text. And the second time you now have the purpose of reading the text and you actually will be able to fulfill your purpose of reading the text (A2/L.704-710)

The extract above implies that subject A already knew what to expect in her second reading of the text. Thus, she felt prepared because she already had an idea of the text.

Subject B however, attempted to improve her understanding of certain theories in the text. Not only was she concerned about what the theory referred to but she also scanned for other relevant theories which she might have missed in her previous reading. The analysis further points that subject B was intrinsically motivated in her reading of this text because she demonstrated effort to focus on parts of the text that she had problems with.

R: Uhm...mmm..what were you looking for, what were you focusing on that time, yang you kata looking for something that you missed out right?

S: For example, uh, for like this page... ah no, uhm..this pages.

R: Yah page five, I see, that you spent quite a lot of time, why, why, was this? Was it a difficult page for you?

S: It was like, uh there's, I highlighted theories here, so there's only one I was looking like if, if, there's anymore theories from uh other uh linguists, so I didn't find any so I just, I just took a few...if I missed out anything. (B2/L.286-296).

The identification of key words and main ideas was another category discovered in the deep subjects' approach to reading the text. In addition, this category can be seen

as linking two others: linking ideas between paragraphs and replaying of key words to enhance memory. The following extract depicts this category:

S: Yup. Especially with long text because, because some people that read it the whole text then only they started reading it the second time..(R: Yes.)... but when it's a long text, if you think you can fool yourself into reading it the second time, you will be very much tired in doing so you know, so its like I read it by paragraph by paragraph and then after that if after one paragraph I get a glance through, then the second time I read it I'll just highlight those main points and then after that I'll go to the next paragraph, and when I read the next paragraph, I'll try to link it with the first paragraph so there's a sort of like unity in reading it. Because if it's a long text and you read it and you expect to glance through the you read it for the first through, for the first time, and then the second time when you read it again, it'll be a tiring process and you won't absorb more than you read it in the first time so it's advisable at least for me to go paragraph by paragraph (A2/79-89)

R: and this were the ones you were, this were the points that you were not aware of previously, it's only now that you, now that you've, you...you understand that better

S: yeah. Because ahm..I think I know what this guys are saying you know. Ehm..and then only like. He suggest that, and then number of theories, and then I was like connecting the words, okay this guys are telling the theories, what they come out so far, not I. I, haven't been establish yet, so I was just putting theories and then since it's long, just bracket his points and then the elaborations. (D2/L.239-246).

A further analysis of the re-reading technique revealed that there were several steps employed by these readers. The first reading of the paragraph focused on glancing what the paragraph was about. The second reading was more focused where the readers attempted to identify the main points in the paragraph. A similar approach was employed for the remaining paragraphs in the text. However, when reading the following paragraphs, the reader would attempt to link the points identified with those in the previous paragraphs. These actions indicated that there was constant monitoring of the points presented in the text. Through re-reading and linking of ideas or points, these

readers were seen as checking and confirming as well as keeping track of the ideas presented by the author.

Another strategy employed was the strategy of recalling. As in the extract below subject D would bracket the main ideas in each paragraph no matter how many times she read the text. This approach to reading can be seen as the subject's strategy of recalling. By bracketing and identifying the points, she was actually confirming the points that she identified in her previous reading. Thus, through recalling and focusing on the bracketed points, she was able to increase her reading speed.

S: (that I did last week) hmm... I don't know it's habit..(R: Sorry)..I don't know may be it's a habit. If it's like main points okay I understood this paragraph I just bracket all the main points, the key words. So it doesn't matter how many times I have read it..

R: you still do the same thing..(S: yeah)..you would still bracket the main points..(S: yeah)..you say it's a habit but do you think there is another reason why you do that, repeatedly?

S: if it's like, ah.....for assignment or for an exam then, it will be the same thing. Eh...it like, okay if I had to go through the, the text once one more time, so I just look at the main points, the things I have bracketed, so it gives me an idea, what the paragraph is about. So, if I just recognize the word, the, the words that I have bracketed okay then this part move. Like that (D2/L.76-88).

There was also another type of recalling strategy which involved re-writing as the following extract revealed:

S: Yah. Should be ah because we've been reading the text all over again, and at the same time you write, and these act, you know this two combinations should, should like make you understand more. Then the highlighting it, yah maybe it's a good way to understand further and to memorize.

R: Memorize for what purpose?

S: For exam purposes. Ah memorize.

R: Is that right?

S: Yah. (E2/L.557-567).

The extract above revealed that the subject wrote notes and highlighted the points to understand the text better. In addition, she re-typed the notes into the computer. This implied that the writing and re-writing of notes enhances subject E's memory of points.

On the other hand, the surface readers' fear of answering the researcher's questions was even more pronounced in the second reading as we see in the following extract:

S: ahh I think the last time I didn't really concentrate the topic because first time right so I just read through the question and also not so tough I guess the second time I open my eyes and try to ahh understand more so when I read for the second time I noticed that ahh..some things that parts I don't understand..and I didn't realize when I'm reading for the first time..like maybe when I read it and just didn't like zoom what it was trying to say the thing but I cannot remember..the thing I can remember was the text was 'code-switching'.. and it's basic but when I'm reading for the second time I can really know a bit in detail the same passage..(C2/L.24-31).

The analysis reveals that the subject could not focus or concentrate during the first reading of the text. The researcher's interpretation is that the subject was attempting to familiarize herself with the topic of the text, thus the only thing she could remember was code switching. There is some evidence of her trying to monitor her reading and understanding the text (employing metacognitive strategies) as the following extract reveals:

*S: because er when I reading for the first time I didn't notice all this words maybe I ignore it but when I read it for the second time I feel that it's kind of giving explanation umm in deep so[in detail] ahh in detail and when I reading reading the other paragraph
It's kind of it said some sort of it doesn't really jump from the first paragraph and the second paragraph its talking something it's like it has the continuous I..I can see the linking I guess so because..*

R: but you're still not sure you feel not quite sure
S: not quite sure about what
R: you say you can you can see the linking
S :ya it has the linking it has the continuously throughout the passage lah so and then I like really concentrate and I wanted to know more about the article so I like err try to understand each paragraph is (C2/L.703-718).

As the extract above shows, the subjects did attempt to identify the relationship between the points in the text, but they were still unsure of how the points linked together. They concentrated on understanding the individual points in each paragraph. In this session the subjects also demonstrated an extrinsic motivation to reading, as revealed in the following extract:

S: Because you ask me to read so I just read it...(R: Yah, right, right)..but I knowlah maybe you going to ask me a question so just uh to make sure whether which one is important for me, then when you ask questions so that I can answer.
R: Mmm....so when I told you that I was going to ask questions so in that sense..
S: I tried to uh, understand, tried to understand the text better. So I don't, I don't just read it for what you ask cause I have to answer right so I try to understand the text first so that I can answer your questions. (C2/L.53-60).

S: yeah I focused..on..on the code-switching..and the language interference and the connection between it..the previous answer..I don't quote the connection..but I think it is a matter of connection..but I think in this text..both of it support each other..so that is why..(F2/L.270-273).

Although the approach to reading the text for the second time was different, the surface readers still encountered problems with certain parts of the text, as the following discussion reveals:

S: ya briefly the the in front one the the first to fourth pages to fifth pages .the behind one like giving examples
R: in this text .in this text or do you think it applies to all texts?[hmm]for this text .okay.alright

S: there are some in fifth...sixth..pages that I think is not for me lah I don't think so its very major because I don't underline anything it's like I just read only ..because most of the time I underline the points the strategy huh something like that only (C2/L.339-347).

The statement above again shows that the subjects lacked textual knowledge. They were ignorant as to how information was presented in such a text. Hence they assumed that the last pages of the text consisted of examples, which were identified as unimportant. At other times the subject could identify that the text discussed two main ideas. Hence, in reading the text for the second time, the focus was on information related to two main ideas, for example looking for definitions, advantageous and disadvantageous, as the following extract reveals:

S:...divide lah..under the code-switching..put the definition..maybe I can put the..uhmm...what..you call this..(st flip page to see..)..aaa..the reason..of code-switching..and bla..bla..bla...and the language interference..what is the pros..and cons..the ideas..and everything about it...

R: so you went through the text..paragraph..looking at anything that has connection..any key word to the title ni...

S: yeah..something like that..(F2/L.208-216).

Comparison of categories between the two readings

When comparing the changes that occurred between the categories in the first and second reading, the researcher discovered several similarities and differences. The categories interpreted as different were seen as extensions to those categories discovered in the first interview. One similar category within the deep approach was intrinsic motivation where the subjects were discovered to maintain their interest and positive attitudes toward reading the text. They commented that the information gained from the text could be used

for future purposes such as incorporating the ideas into their essay writing. Another similar category was the linking of ideas and forming of framework. The subjects still used these organizers in helping them to organize a large amount of information so that they were able to understand the ideas presented in the text. At the same time, they were also able to follow the linking of ideas and how the author presented his points and arguments on the topic. Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) further stress that “the many procedures (strategies) used by skilled readers are appropriately and opportunistically coordinated, with the reader using the processes needed to meet the current reading goals, confronting the demands of reading at the moment, and preparing for demands that are likely in the future” (79-80). More significantly, the employment of different strategies identifies these readers as being selectively attentive in confirming their understanding of the text.

However, the researcher discovered a different category that emerged in the deep approach in reference to reading strategies. The analysis revealed that the deep subjects planned their reading strategies (metacognitive) when approaching the text. They concentrated on problematic points or pages to enhance their understanding of the text. In addition, they also maintained the drawing of diagrams or frameworks to help process information. Using these arrows and drawings they were able to identify the main points and link them between the paragraphs. As a result, these readers were then able to keep track of the points or arguments presented by the writer. This is similar to previous findings (Hartman, 2001; Singhal, 2001) that these deep readers execute strategic knowledge of knowing which, why and how reading strategies are to be employed. In

addition, they reflect management strategies by monitoring, evaluating and revising their strategies when reading the text.

Simultaneously, in their written notes, these subjects were found to edit by elaborating and adding new notes. In other words, in the second interview, they would summarize the points instead of copying word for word from the text. The notes were new additions and not repeated notes from the previous reading.

Similarly, several similarities and differences within the surface categories were also discovered when comparing the two interviews. The similar categories were, text anxiety and extrinsic motivation toward approaching the text. A possible reason for students to experience anxiety may be due to insufficient exposure to reading materials. If students feel anxious when they approach a text, then the quality of their reading would definitely be affected. The findings of this study are consistent with researches that reveal that anxiety can impede language learning and achievement (Krashen, 1993; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; 1993). A pertinent point to highlight is that these readers feel anxious even before they actually start reading the text. Due to unknown words or length of the text, the students have a negative perception of the text, thus increasing their anxiety level. Furthermore, these readers were observed as not quite prepared when informed that they would read the same text. They commented that they were not focused in their first reading, hence were not quite sure what the text was about. Thus to accommodate their incompetence in the previous reading, they took the initiative to read better in the second reading. The reading strategies that these subjects employed were similar to their previous reading where they would divide paragraphs and identify the main points in

each paragraph. However, this time, they were more concerned with remembering the main points or gist of each paragraph by concentrating on the ‘number’ of main points available. They did not consider any attempt at linking the main ideas or points between the paragraphs. It was also discovered that their application of certain techniques such as underlining and highlighting were haphazard. These surface readers commented that they were unsure of their actions and due to the subjects’ fear of missing out on important points they still resorted to underlining whole sentences. As a result, problems in identifying the main ideas still persisted.

At the end of the second interview session, the subjects were asked their experiences of reading the text for the second time. Most responded by acknowledging that they understood the text better in the second reading. Some of the subjects mentioned that they did not quite understand what they read in their first reading and could only recall the word code switching. More importantly, they were aware that they had missed certain points in their first reading, as one reader commented:

S:yah because this time I'm reading..I notice that I didn't underline this[the last time around] when I was emm.... I didn't notice that this are the[key points] yes this is the most important than the previous one maybe the previous one I don't really understand the passage maybe that's what I could say coz when I read this one like I really can open my eyes and see that there are more important points that I can see emm in their talking..C2/84-87).

Despite constant reminders by the researcher that there was no time limit to read the text, there were some who commented that they were in a hurry to finish reading the first time. This data revealed that the way readers approached a text the second time is influenced by how it was read the first time. In other words, if students experienced

problems in their first reading, then these problems would still persist and be carried forward when they approach the text the second time.

Conclusion

Findings of this study have revealed that there are variations in the reading approaches of the six second year BA ELS subjects. In reference to the categories of description, they reflected the themes that became the focal point of the subjects when they approached reading the text each time. Hence, these categories could be further described as qualitative differences or variations that were placed hierarchically to represent the deep and surface approaches of reading an academic expository text. More interestingly, in comparison to findings of previous studies (Marton and Booth, 1997), the researcher discovered similar as well as different categories to emerge in each of the two reading sessions. Although changes were recorded in each reading, further research could enhance the representation of students' approaches to reading if analyzed at individual level.

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