Effectiveness of Morphological and Grammatical Clues to Enhance the Lexical Inferencing Ability during Reading Comprehension in English

Hasitha Sewwandi Nawarathna

University of Kelaniya

<hasitha.sv96@gmail.com>

Abstract - Encountering unknown words while reading is a common problem faced by learners in the English as a Second Language (ESL) context. Lexical Inferencing or guessing the meaning of unknown words is an important strategy to deal with unfamiliar words. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness of two linguistic clues; morphological and grammatical clues to enhance the Lexical Inferencing ability during reading comprehension in English. Morphological clues refer to the knowledge of affixes and roots while grammatical clues refer to the knowledge of speech parts, syntactic relationships among words within a sentence such as word order and conjunction relationship. It intends to find out the extent to which providing instruction on these enhances the Lexical Inferencing ability and between morphological and grammatical clues, which is more effective in making successful guesses. This study was conducted with 50 A/L students in Sri Lanka. The experimental group received explicit strategy instruction while the control group received regular reading comprehension instruction. A pre-test and a post-test, semi-structured interviews, a strategy coding scheme, and retrospective think-aloud protocols were used to gather data in this mixed-method embedded design study. The findings revealed that instruction sessions had a significant impact on lexical Inferencing and combining both types of clues was more productive. Hence, implication is that explicit strategy instruction on morphological and grammatical clues can be recommended to teach and include in ESL textbooks to improve Lexical Inferencing ability during reading comprehension in English.

Keywords: Lexical Inferencing, Morphology, Grammar