THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP ENGLISH ESSAY AND LETTER WRITING SKILLS

Nargiza Khodjakulova
University of the Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi,
nargiza.khodjaqulova.tuit@gmail.com

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Khodjakulova Nargiza

Lecturer of the University of the Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi, Tashkent

E-mail address: nargiza.khodjaqulova.tuit@gmail.com

Abstract: In the digital advanced technology age, online writing has become an important issue for research in the educational field. People write even if they socialise or look for some information in the Internet. This study reports on an investigation into the effect of explicit teaching of online metacognitive strategies on writing comprehension. This study was carried out on 30 female intermediate level EFL school teachers, who received 12 hours of instructive facilitation on essay and letter writing by a language teaching online Moodle platfom (www.skillsup) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The participants were assigned into the experimental and control groups. Before giving the instruction, the Online Survey of Writing Strategies (OSOWS) was administered in order to find out the online writing strategies used by EFL learners. In the experimental group, the researcher explicitly taught online metacognitive strategies through modeling whereas the method used for the control group was implicit and moodle platform-based. A pre-test post-test design was followed and the data were collected through online essay and letter writing tests. The results revealed that online essay and letter writing comprehension by the experimental group improved significantly. The findings show that explicit teaching of online metacognitive strategies could be beneficial in EFL intermediate classes.

Key words: online metacognitive strategies, online essay and letter writing, Online Survey of Writing Strategies (OSOWS)

INTRODUCTION

Andragogy second language learning is a lifelong challenge. As a result, strategies for developing greater autonomy and self-regulation in language learners have gained increasing popularity in research and in classrooms; whole issues of academic journals, such as *Language Learning & Technology* (2011), have taken up this theme in recent years. In the field of second language (L2) writing, strategies for self-regulation are particularly important to not just for furthering acquisition but to specific steps in the writing process, such as self-editing (Ferris, 1995). Navigating the writing process is already a demanding task which requires extensive linguistic and metacognitive capacities (Schoonen, Gelderen, Glopper, Hulstijn, Simis, Snellings, & Stevenson, 2003); for second language writers, it is considerably more demanding, as general L2 fluency affects L2 writing fluency in particular (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001). The additional mental capacity required to address the linguistic aspects of L2 writing may greatly affect an L2 writer's ability to fully utilize the metacognitive processes necessary to the writing process (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; McCutchen, 2000). Therefore, further development of metacognitive awareness, knowledge and strategies have clear benefits to L2 learning and writing.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Metacognition has been defined as "any knowledge or cognitive activity that takes as its object, or regulates, any aspect of cognitive activity" (Flavell, 2004, p. 275). Schmidt (2001) attributes metacognition to a third level of "consciousness as awareness." This occurs when, having noticed some aspect of the environment, we can analyze it and compare it to what we have noticed on other occasions. We can reflect on the objects of consciousness and attempt to comprehend their significance, and we can experience insight and understanding. All of this mental activity—what we commonly think of as *thinking*—goes on within consciousness (Schmidt, 2001, p. 132).

Flavell (1979) identified three distinctive components of metacognitive knowledge: *person knowledge*, *task knowledge*, and *strategic knowledge*. Person knowledge refers to what the individual knows about themselves as a learner, task knowledge refers to what the individual knows about the demands of the task they are attempting, and strategic knowledge refers to the knowledge that the individual has about strategies that may be useful for the task as well as when to use said strategies. Metacognitive strategies differ from cognitive strategies in that metacognitive strategies function to monitor the use of cognitive strategies, which are used to solve specific problems (Chien, 2006). In spite of individual differences that may result from cognitive diversity or circumstance, knowledge of cognition seems to increase with age and experience; adults and older children are more able than young children to accurately monitor and evaluate their cognitive processes (Flavell, 1979).
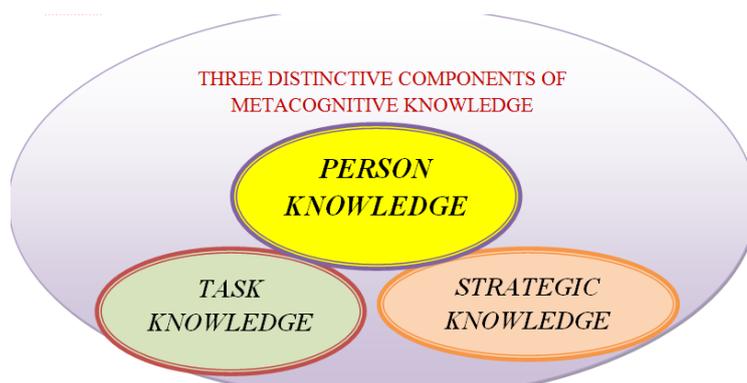
During this Survey among school teachers and writing this research work, we have explored what is Metacognition and how it functions online. Some examples of Metacognition have been given so that it would be easier to understand it.

Metacognition is an awareness of one's own learning. It's often referred to as thinking about thinking. It means understanding the goals of the learning process, figuring out the best strategies for learning, and then assessing whether the desired outcome is being met. Metacognition is

often the term used with students as they are actively involved in the continuous learning process. There are 3 main metacognition phases: Planning -Monitoring - Evaluation - and they are all held together with Reflection.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In our investigation we asked school teachers to write a problem solution essay. Unfortunately, not all of them have succeeded in writing essays. They simply did not know how to start, the structure, requered grammar and lexic competence

Then we asked them to follow these 3 main metacognition phases. School teachers were asked not to move to simply get on with a first chapter; instead, they should plan out and draft the outline of the essay. Then they need to monitor their progress as they go. We told them it is possible to track it by writing down what progress they are making - for example, how many words they are writing in each paragraph.

In the following phases they also need to evaluate their work. They could do that by reviewing their week's work each weekend to be sure that they are happy with the quality of their work. In the end, they need to be able to reflect on these steps as this will give them the ability to make adjustments to this process if needed. With these strategies we tried to instruct school teachers but school teachers can instruct, teach and facilitate school children in order to improve school children's writing competence. To increase the Metacognition, adult learners can use Questioning, Revising and Assessing methods to ensure that they are on the right track. Here, we can see two essays by school teachers, essay 1 had been written before taking the course "Skillsup" on writing, essay 2 was written after taking the course "Skillsup" on writing.

Essay 1.

As far as I am concerned, there are a lot of problems in the world. Every problem is so important for everybody. Such as: nowadays, we are producing more and more rubbish day by day. It is not useful for people's health.

To tell the truth, more consuming produce more waste. Government and businesses encourage consuming because it leads to high profits and development of state economy. The problem of garbage is very complicated. As we can see, the government is not interested in reducing consumption. Thus, the responsibility has to be taken by individuals and non-governmental organizations. Certain laws, regulating the percentage of packaging material per tonna of the product should be established. Moreover, interesting programs, involving people to participate can be developed.

Companies should make goods that last longer. They should not use so much packaging. Governments should be stricter, about waste produced by companies. They should put legal limits on the packaging. Consumers should avoid buying over-packaged products. We should recycle and reuse useful materials. There are collection banks for paper, glass and plastic bottles. Households can use several rubbish bins to separate waste. Recycling saves energy and raw materials. We should recycle as much as possible.

In my conculation, everyone should become concerned about the future of human beings and our planet. If we do not wish to be buried in rubbish, we should think twice before buying things we do not need.

Essay 2.

In order to solve traffic problems, government should tax private car owners heavily and use the money to improve public transportation. What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a solution?

Some people are considering that to reduce congestion taxes should be imposed to private car owners and authority must use money to develop public transportation. Obtaining regular transport system is one of the main benefits of it, in contrast, business of producing private cars is a drawback.

At first, it is claimed that if the government tax for car`s owners and pay attention public transportation financially, cities` roads can be organized and without any traffic jam. Action of them goes regularly and properly.

On the other hand, development of producing private cars might be sizeable damaged if there will be taxes for driving cars. As a result, the number of consumers for buying private cars will decrease immediately. So some people cannot effort to pay the taxes frequently.

In short, it can be said that works for decreasing traffic jam of government with imposing taxes has ups and also downs as well.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I can say that metacognition has been linked to improved learning outcomes. So if the adult learners spend more time planning they are likely that they will complete the task or achieve the goal quicker. It makes sense that individuals who are strategic in their learning are more successful than those who do not reflect on the learning process.

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APPENDIX A:

METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS INVENTORY (MAI)

(Schraw & Dennison, 1994)

Check True or False as appropriate. Use the Scoring Guide after completing the inventory.

	True	False
1. I ask myself periodically if I am meeting my goals.		
2. I consider several alternatives to a problem before I answer.		
3. I try to use strategies that have worked in the past.		
4. I pace myself while learning in order to have enough time.		
5. I understand my intellectual strengths and weaknesses.		
6. I think about what I really need to learn before I begin a task		
7. I know how well I did once I finish a test.		

8. I set specific goals before I begin a task.		
9. I slow down when I encounter important information.		
10. I know what kind of information is most important to learn.		
11. I ask myself if I have considered all options when solving a problem.		
12. I am good at organizing information.		
13. I consciously focus my attention on important information.		
14. I have a specific purpose for each strategy I use.		
15. I learn best when I know something about the topic.		
16. I know what the teacher expects me to learn.		
17. I am good at remembering information.		
18. I use different learning strategies depending on the situation.		
19. I ask myself if there was an easier way to do things after I finish a task.		
20. I have control over how well I learn.		
21. I periodically review to help me understand important relationships.		
22. I ask myself questions about the material before I begin.		
23. I think of several ways to solve a problem and choose the best one.		
24. I summarize what I've learned after I finish.		
25. I ask others for help when I don't understand something.		
26. I can motivate myself to learn when I need to		
27. I am aware of what strategies I use when I study.		
28. I find myself analyzing the usefulness of strategies while I study.		
29. I use my intellectual strengths to compensate for my weaknesses.		
30. I focus on the meaning and significance of new information.		
31. I create my own examples to make information more meaningful.		
32. I am a good judge of how well I understand something.		

33. I find myself using helpful learning strategies automatically.		
34. I find myself pausing regularly to check my comprehension.		
35. I know when each strategy I use will be most effective.		
36. I ask myself how well I accomplish my goals once I'm finished.		
37. I draw pictures or diagrams to help me understand while learning.		
38. I ask myself if I have considered all options after I solve a problem.		
39. I try to translate new information into my own words.		
40. I change strategies when I fail to understand.		
41. I use the organizational structure of the text to help me learn.		
42. I read instructions carefully before I begin a task.		
43. I ask myself if what I'm reading is related to what I already know.		
44. I reevaluate my assumptions when I get confused.		
45. I organize my time to best accomplish my goals.		
46. I learn more when I am interested in the topic.		
47. I try to break studying down into smaller steps.		
48. I focus on overall meaning rather than specifics.		
49. I ask myself questions about how well I am doing while I am learning something new.		
50. I ask myself if I learned as much as I could have once I finish a task.		
51. I stop and go back over new information that is not clear.		
52. I stop and reread when I get confused.		