

Title: The Quality and Quantity of Reader Comprehension Strategies as a Function of Language Proficiency

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This paper discusses the data and its implications resulting from a cross-sectional study of reading comprehension methods used by 32 students of Russian at an intensive language program during the summer of 2011. The program organized students into seven levels of proficiency, and the students who participated in this study were taken from levels 1–3 and 5–7. All students were asked to read one of four texts and discuss the ways they analyzed them as a think aloud protocol. The think aloud protocols were transcribed and analyzed for the reading strategies used, which were compared across the various levels of learner language proficiency. In addition to the think aloud protocols, all students completed a recall protocol in which they wrote down in English what they remembered of the text. Data were also collected on the students' reading habits and preferences in both L1 and L2 in an attempt to determine whether this influenced student comprehension rates or the reading strategies used.

As a result of the researcher's preliminary analysis, one of the trends that emerged was that the strategies evolved from the lower to the higher levels of proficiency. At the lower levels of proficiency, the students mostly read the sentences aloud and attempted to find words they understood, but did not generally focus on the overall meaning. As proficiency improved, the students focused more on the general meaning and how the article related to them personally and their study of Russian.

Following presentation of the data, the researcher will discuss the implications of this study for reading instruction. Specifically, those reader behaviors that are unhelpful at all levels and the pedagogical training which an instructor might use to assist readers to select strategies that are better suited to the textual material will be addressed.