Transfers and Variations of L1 Reading Strategies on L2 Reading

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Kim, Eunjeo. 2009. Transfers and Variations of L1 Reading Strategies on L2 Reading. The Journal of Studies in Language 262, 223-246. A major concern of this paper investigates if there are automatic transfer and variations of L1 reading strategies from L1 reading to L2 reading according to the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (LIH), or if the implementation of reading strategies is necessary to enhance reading skills after the critical linguistic threshold as in the Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis (LTH). This paper focuses on strategy patterns to determine if intentional implementation of reading strategies can be helpful for L2 reading comprehension. Also, EFL reading process has also been examined in terms of meta-cognitive awareness of reading strategies by using "think-aloud" techniques in groups of Korean university students. The results of this research show that there is a very high awareness of some strategies both in the experimental groups and the control group. The strategies they used were categorized into three types. First is Intentional and Carefully Planned Strategies (ICPS) in which reading strategies are non-automatically transferred if there are no specific instructions. Those strategies were mainly used by experimental groups. The second was Strategies Working Directly with Texts (SWDT). These strategies were not only those transferred from L1 reading strategies but also their variations that were mixed with L2 reading instruction or developed in their own way. The third was Strategies for a Basic Support Mechanism (SBSM). Those strategies were found in both groups but found more in the control groups. These findings confirm that the instruction of reading strategy is fundamentally related to the patterns of strategy use and carefully implemented reading strategies develop the students’ reading strategy use awareness. (Dankook University)

Key words: Automatic transfer, Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, the Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis, Intentional and Carefully Planned Strategies (ICPS), Strategies Working Directly with Texts (SWDT), Strategies for a Basic Support Mechanism (SBSM).
1. Introduction

Studies on reading strategies in a second language (L2) have directed the attention of reading researchers to the important role that reading strategies play in reading. Reading strategy researchers have focused on the kind of strategies L2 readers may utilize. Some major findings are:

First, the automatic transfer of L1 reading strategies in reading process was found: Goodman & Flores (1979) suggest that L1 reading strategies automatically transfer to L2 reading regardless of the learners' knowledge in L2, as in the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (LI H).

Second, strategies activated in lower-level processes in L2 settings: Clarke (1980) introduced the idea that the limited L2 proficiency interrupts their more effective high-level L1 reading method and lowers the low-level decoding skills as depicted by the Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis (LTH). However, there are some reading strategies lower-level students used when they had instructions given during previous classes of experimental groups. These empirical studies provide ample evidence for the advantages of implementation of reading strategies for L2 readers to enhance their reading comprehension and active reading involvement.

Third, strategies activated in higher-level processes in L2 settings: Both the readers' L1 reading ability and L2 language proficiency of the readers contribute to L2 reading comprehension (Carrell, 1991; Bossers, 1992) and that research supports both LIH and LTH (Bernhardt &

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1) The Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (LIH) predicts that cognitive and linguistic development in L2 is partially a function of the level of cognitive development in L1 (Cummins, 1981). The LIH claims that there is a dimension of language proficiency that is interdependent across language so that this aspect can be transferred across linguistic systems. It proposes that L1 reading ability transfers to L2 reading.

2) According to the Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995), L2 learners should first gain a certain amount of control over L2, or in other words, cross a critical linguistic threshold, before applying their L1 reading skills to L2 reading. This "certain amount" is referred to as a "language ceiling" by Clark, or a "threshold level of linguistic competence" by Cummins (1979). So, L1 reading ability transfers to L2 reading only when learners attain a certain level of L2 proficiency.