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RACHAPORN NGOENWILAI : AN INVESTIGATION ON SCHEMATIC MAPPING ABILITIES EMPLOYED BY SKILLED AND LESS SKILLED M.5 READERS IN READING ENGLISH TEXTS AS MEASURED BY MODIFIED CLOZE TESTS. THESIS ADVISORS: KANCHANA PRAPPHAL Ph.D., DHANAN CHANTRUPANTH M.A., MAURICE M. BROUGHTON M.A. 92 p. ISBN 974-661-457-6

This study investigated the utilization of schematic mapping abilities in relation to grammatical competence (semantic and syntactic competence) employed by skilled and less skilled readers, and the extent to which the two reader groups utilized those abilities.

The subjects of this study were thirty-nine M.5 students attending the science program at Nongbonwittayakom School in Trat, during the second semester in the 1997 academic year. A modified cloze test in the multiple-choice format consisting of two sub-tests was used as an instrument for the study. The results of the study were :

1. The modified cloze test (MCT) constructed for the study (two cloze tests in the multiple-choice format) could be used as a means to measure students' reading ability, particularly the students at M.5 level, due to the high positive correlation between students' performance on the MCT and on the SRA (a standardized reading test). In addition, the two sub-tests could be used interchangeably since there was a high and significant correlation between students' performance on the First Sub-Test and on the Second Sub-Test.

2. The skilled readers tended to utilize their schematic mapping abilities more than the less skilled readers both in using semantic competence and syntactic competence. Skilled readers seemed to utilize their syntactic competence better than semantic competence. Less skilled readers performed both competences at a low level.

3. Concerning semantic competence, both reader groups performed best on the content words in adjective form section, whereas their greatest problem was the content words in adverb form.

4. In terms of syntactic competence, the greatest problem for both skilled and less skilled readers was with the function words in adverb form. Each group had a different area of highest performance. The highest performance of the former was on the function words in comparative form whereas the highest performance by the latter group was on the function words in preposition form.

There was a statistical difference between the means of all tests performed by skilled readers and less skilled readers at a confidence level of .001. This study indicated that schematic mapping abilities in relation to grammatical competence (semantic and syntactic competence) played a crucial role in reading comprehension. It supported the schema theory that linguistic schema is a considerable factor to reduce difficulties in the reading process.