

Individual Paper Session 8
Syntax and Lexicon/Vocabulary
Tuesday, July 4
3:15-3:45pm

EFL Learners' Reflective Practice in Learning Contextual Analysis for Word Inferencing

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Most of the literature on teaching context clues and contextual analysis deals with what and how to teach and assesses what was learned quantitatively, while the learners remain a silent body in the classroom. This paper reports on learners' reactions toward learning of contextual analysis for word meaning.

Two classes of Taiwanese first-year students in a technical college received a semester-long contextual instruction and kept their learning journals every two weeks. By examining the learners' learning reflections, this study investigated their voices on the benefits and limitations of contextual analysis for solving unknown words.

These findings suggest that most learners reported their development on (1) reading speed, (2) reading comprehension, (3) confidence and sense of achievement in reading English, and (4) awareness of clues surrounding the unknown words, and (5) problem-solving ability on answering test questions. The major themes pertaining to the limitations in learning the context clues and contextual analysis include (1) insufficient vocabulary size (2) misuse of the context clues (3) insufficient textual clues.

The factors motivated the students to learn contextual strategies are: selecting appropriate materials with interesting topics for word guessing; and encouraging cooperative learning on guessing and learning. Those impedes learning include insufficient practice and low learning motivation. Some characteristics of a meaningful instructional program are also presented and discussed.