

Reading Strategies & Attitude During Reading

A Case Study of a University Intermediate Spanish Student

Rebecca Brazzale

Background and Theoretical Framework

In the field of foreign language (FL) education, reading has become an important topic that has proven to be challenging for FL students. Whereas most of the research has focused on English as a Second Language (ESL), research on reading in either the first language (L1) or the second (L2) has shown to be generalizable to many different situations (Eskey, 2005). One specific field of research in L2 reading has been to document the use of specific strategies by the student. As reading has become a regular occurrence in the university FL classroom, several studies have been conducted that attempt to observe these reading strategies. However, few studies have examined the primary aim of this research, which is to explore the role of attitude during the reading process and its interactions with the use of strategies. Therefore, this case study endeavored to record the use of reading strategies by an intermediate FL student and how her attitude correlated with strategy use. As Lee-Thompson (2008) points out, it is “imperative that we as teachers learn what to expect and what needs improvement in our reading curricula” (p. 703). Thus, by observing our students’ reading processes, we can gain a better understanding of how to assist them.

Students’ Use of Reading Strategies

Research on reading has primarily categorized reading strategies into three different categories. “Bottom-up” strategies are described by Eskey (2005) as a process “in which the reader is assumed to decode precisely . . . from left to right, from letters into words, and from words into larger grammatical units in retrieving the writer’s meaning” (p. 564). “Top-down” strategies on the other hand occur when readers “do not decode in precise or sequential fashion but instead attack the text with expectations of meaning developed before and during the process, taking in whole chunks of text” (p. 564.) Finally, “interactive models” suggest that neither one of the previously mentioned types of strategies occurs in isolation, but they instead often occur simultaneously. It has, however, been shown that successful L2 readers often employ more top-down strategies than bottom-up strategies (Lee-Thompson, 2008).

One core principle of this research is that L1 reading strategy-use is often not carried over into the L2 context. Although the nature of this report does not permit for an exhaustive review of literature on this topic, three specific studies will be mentioned. Carrell (1989) distributed a questionnaire to 45 native Spanish speakers studying English and 75 native English-speakers studying Spanish. All participants were

studying their respective language at the university level. It was found that “local” or bottom-up strategies had a more negative correlation with reading performance in the L1, but this was not the case for low-proficiency L2 students of Spanish. In fact, the low-proficiency L2 students experienced more reading success when bottom-up strategies were employed. On the other hand, the native Spanish speakers who were more advanced in English as their L2 reported a correlation between effective reading and “global,” or top-down, strategies. This suggests that lower proficiency in the L2 may require more bottom-up strategies, while higher L2 proficiency does not.

Pookcharoen (2009) used a mixed methods study to investigate similarities and differences in metacognitive reading strategies used by proficient and less-proficient Thai EFL students. Using an Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS) and the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), as well as some think-aloud interviews, the researcher discovered that while less-proficient students used “problem solving” strategies (reading slowly, pausing, skipping sections, etc.), they used more “support” strategies such as taking notes, using reference materials and seeking out materials in their native language. Because “support” strategies are identical to those categorized as “bottom-up,” this study confirms what Carrell (1989) concluded in that less-proficient readers tend to use more bottom-up strategies to attain L2 reading comprehension.

Finally, in another study Ikeda and Takeuchi (2006) analyzed student portfolio entries to determine differences in reading strategy use among EFL students of different proficiency levels. The researchers concluded that students of higher proficiency levels differed in five ways from those of lower proficiency levels: they provided more description of the strategy, understood better the value and purpose of each strategy, and understood better the situations when to best employ each strategy. Furthermore, they tended to combine strategies together and better evaluate the usefulness of each strategy. This, too, demonstrates a significant difference in strategy use between L1 and L2 learners.

In all of these studies, it has been found that there do indeed exist differences between reading in the L1 versus in the L2. Similarly, the research shows that students of lower-proficiency tend to use fewer reading strategies and in less effective ways, but it is still not clear what drives these differences. This provides support for the current research, which analyzed interviews with an intermediate L2 student to explore not only the reading strategies she uses but also the rationale behind her choices. Even though more research is needed to confirm these findings, the research demonstrates that students may naturally employ what strategies suit them best, using different types of strategies at different proficiency levels according to their needs (Carrell, 1989). Still, it is not always clear as to what students think about these strategies, nor how their attitude toward L2 reading can influence their choices.

Students’ Attitude and Strategy Use

While many studies have been conducted examining L2 student use of reading strategies, less have mentioned the interaction of student attitude and strategy use. One quantitative study by Yamashita (2004)

investigated the relationship between adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' L1 and L2 attitudes and their performance in L2 extensive reading. In this study, 59 Japanese university students were given an attitude questionnaire and an L2 proficiency test to track their success during their L2 classroom reading assignments. Attitude was defined as being cognitive (personal, evaluative beliefs), affective (feelings and emotions), and conative (action readiness and behavioral intentions). The students were tracked over the period of one semester and were required to finish at least 13 books from a graded reader series. After the data was analyzed quantitatively, the researcher reported that there existed many correlations between L1 and L2 reading attitudes, as well as between their attitudes and L2 proficiency. From her research Yamashita (2004) concludes that "1) anxiety in reading is higher in L2 than in L1, [and] 2) comfort in reading is higher in L1 than in L2" (p. 10). While this study does not discuss direct correlation between attitude and reading strategy use, the results of this study have led to the hypothesis for the current research that attitude during L2 reading may lead to the use of certain strategies, such as glossing and dictionary use.

In conclusion, the research connecting attitude with reading strategy use is scarce compared to research that simply catalogues students' strategy use. Furthermore, studies comparing attitude and strategy use tend to be quantitative. Therefore, this qualitative research attempts to bridge this gap by not only observing which reading strategies are chosen by an L2 student, but also why those strategies are preferred according to the student's attitude towards L2 reading.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

What types of strategies does an intermediate foreign language student employ during a reading task?

To what extent is the student's attitude related to her strategy use?

Methodology

Rationale for a Case Study

Reading has become an important element of foreign language teaching, yet due to its primarily subconscious and internal nature, it is more difficult to analyze as an outside observer. Because of this, the case study format was employed which, as Ruiz-Funes (1999) points out, allows for "a deep understanding and a rich account of complex processes," such as reading, that other research designs do not illustrate (p. 47). Furthermore, it is considered a "valuable tool for in-depth analysis to explore individual differences" among readers. (p. 47.)

In the present study, the case is an undergraduate student who completes a reading assignment assigned by her university Spanish instructor for class (University Spanish 3). This student demonstrates many characteristics of an individual with a positive attitude towards reading and a heightened understanding of

the reading process, as well as the challenges associated with reading in a foreign language. A more detailed profile of this individual is presented in the Background Information section.

Participant Selection

From a pool of 25 students in one university level third-semester class taught by the author, students were extended the invitation to participate in the case study. An extra-credit incentive was offered to increase interest. From the pool of those who volunteered, one student was randomly selected. No consideration was given to the students' performance in the course, nor was the selection based on students' perceived reading abilities. The participant is referred to as Melissa; her real name is not used in order to protect her identity.

Reading Selection Used in the Study

The reading selection used in this study (Appendix A) was an out-of-class reading assignment given towards the middle of the semester. The source text was a selection from the short story "El doble seis" by Alina Romero, found in a university Spanish textbook. The reading consisted of approximately two pages. The reading was done outside of class; however, both pre-reading and post-reading activities and discussions took place in class.

Stimulated –Recall Interview

For this qualitative study, I collected data using three sources: a reading log, a stimulated-recall interview, and the participant's notes written directly in the reading text. In addition, the student participated in a background information interview, which was held before the study was conducted. The initial interview was held to gather information about the participant's educational background, her experience with Spanish both in and out of the academic setting, as well as her experiences in general with reading in both English and Spanish.

A recall protocol was used for this study because not only does it allow for an open-ended format, but it also avoids stimulating the reader's comprehension or thinking process (Gascoigne, 2002). Furthermore, it "allows misunderstandings or gaps in comprehension to surface" (p. 556).

Reading Log

Following the model presented in the case study of Ruiz-Funes (1999), the participant was asked to keep a detailed log while reading, recording both her thoughts and feelings during the task. The directions given to the participant were taken directly from Ruiz-Funes (1999) and were as follows. The reading log has been included in Appendix B:

Immediately after you finish reading the assigned material, please write down all you can remember doing and thinking while performing the reading task. Be as specific as you can, especially in relation to what you did to understand the

text, what problems you encountered, and what you did to solve those problems. Please note that all the information that you can provide is of value for the study. (p. 48)

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, both the initial interview and the stimulated-recall interview were transcribed into typed manuscripts. While interjections, pauses, and stutters were not included, transcriptions included as much detail as possible. Quotes mentioned below, however, were transcribed directly. After the data were transcribed, ideas were coded and patterns were identified. Patterns were coded by color and grouped into logical categories. It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to identify strategies as being clearly distinct from another. (Lee-Thompson, 2008). Many of these strategies overlap, making it difficult to identify specific categories. Appendix C shows the categories examined in the analysis.

Background information about Melissa

Melissa is a fifth year university student studying English education. English is her native language, but Spanish was required as part of her major and also fulfills a university general education requirement. She chose Spanish because in her view, Spanish is the “second most common language” spoken in the United States. In high school, Melissa took two years of Spanish and one year of German. As she contemplated her university foreign language requirement, she considered taking German, but instead chose Spanish because she felt that she had a more solid foundation in that language. She took the university’s Foundational Spanish 1 and 2 twice (BYU SPAN 101/102), followed by University Spanish 1 (BYU SPAN 105). Due to an impending graduation timeline, she skipped Spanish 2 and enrolled directly into Spanish 3 (BYU SPAN 205), qualifying herself with a sufficient score on the university’s placement exam. She has traveled to Europe, but not to any Spanish-speaking countries. Her sister served a Spanish-speaking religious mission and married a native Spanish speaker. Melissa now has two Spanish-speaking nieces, whom she sees with some frequency.

Melissa feels she is a good reader and has always preferred reading to writing. She primarily reads literature and academic articles for her university studies and currently does not find much time to read for pleasure. For her English teaching degree, she is currently taking a teaching reading course. In this course, she has studied student motivation and is very aware of the role affect plays in students’ interest in reading. In her comment below, it is clear that Melissa has grasped a pedagogical understanding of the relationship between attitude and reading:

In one of my English classes right now we’re studying why students don’t like to read, and we were told that only some of the kids will actually read the books, and we were shocked and said “What do you mean that they won’t read them? I always read them. You’ve got to be kidding me!” . . . They talk a lot about the struggling readers, and you have to go back to the basics. And just because they hate reading doesn’t mean that they do necessarily; it just means that their

vocabulary is really low and they're not understanding what they're reading.
(Stimulated Recall-interview, oral)

Because her overall attitude toward reading is positive, Melissa feels like the readings in Spanish are more “fun” than the grammar exercises. She enjoys learning about English grammar, but finds Spanish grammar frustrating. “I enjoy reading a lot more, no matter what the language isI've taken an English grammar class, and I loved that, whereas [with] the Spanish grammar portion, I get frustrated easily. I just feel so lost” (Stimulated Recall-interview, oral).

Melissa attempts to use the strategies she has learned in her English methodology class when reading in Spanish. For example, she states that for her, it is not helpful to keep reading if she does not understand. Melissa skipped the second semester Spanish course, and because of this, has experienced a “big jump” between the readings from her first semester to this semester. In Melissa's own words, the readings in the first semester class were “short things,” while the readings this semester contain several pages.

Still, Melissa states that for the most part the readings in her third semester class have gone “really well.” She mentions having some trouble with specific details or questions, and she feels like poetry is more difficult than the other readings. “I might not be ready for poetry in Spanish,” she confides (Stimulated Recall-interview, oral). Throughout all of her comments, Melissa expresses a predominantly positive attitude towards both reading in general as well as reading in Spanish. Thus, it may appear that her positive attitude would positively affect her reading strategy use. Still, as will be discussed below, external factors, such as classroom assessment, classroom anxiety, and the transfer of L1 reading expectations onto the L2 literature often challenge her positive attitude and affect her strategy use.

Findings and Discussion

In general, Melissa demonstrated a preference for bottom-up strategy use. Specifically, she demonstrated a heavy reliance on dictionary use. In addition, she revealed a need to reread texts frequently as well as to sometimes skip sections of text when she lacked comprehension. It was also found that her attitude toward reading with each of these strategies depended greatly on her classroom motivations.

Reading Strategies

In general, Melissa feels like there is a significant difference between reading in her L1 and L2:

. . . For me there's definite differences [when reading in English versus reading in Spanish]. It's a lot easier [to read in English] . . . I don't have to study it to make sure I'm understanding the plot . . . Whereas, like with Spanish I set aside a much bigger chunk of time, and . . . if I were to not do the reading in Spanish . . . the quizzes would just go really bad . . . But in my other [English] classes if I miss the reading, sometimes you can wing it, because . . . you just understand the culture . . . (Stimulated Recall-interview, oral)

As Melissa states, there are many differences between her approaches when reading in the L1 versus in the L2. This indicates that as an L2 learner, Melissa may be in need of different and more frequent reading instruction that does not exist in an L1 literature course. Although she is an excellent reader in the L1, difficulties in understanding both linguistic and cultural subtleties require additional reading support in the L2 classroom that may not be needed in other contexts.

Glossing. As Melissa read the text, she translated a total of 31 single words and seven short phrases. As Melissa states, Google Translate is a tool that she consistently uses while reading. In her own words, “Google Translate doesn’t do big phrases very good,” so she uses it primarily for single words. As she glosses the words, she writes the English translation above the text, and then goes back to read the text, using the English glosses as guides. Evidence of this can be seen in Appendix A. Melissa reports that she primarily looks up verbs in the infinitive form and then tries to figure out the tense from the ending. Sometimes, the tense endings are confusing to Melissa, causing her to lose track of the subject for each verb as she reads.

The text itself provides many glossed words, which are written to the side of the Spanish text. Still, sometimes Melissa finds these to be more confusing than helpful: “I find it funny . . . that . . . they give you another Spanish word Sometimes I get confused when they change lines [when the text’s glosses flow onto the next line] . . . that they just ran out of space Sometimes they confuse me more” (Stimulated Recall-interview, oral). These statements are interesting because they demonstrate that the text’s attempt to aid the student are seen as more confusing than simply looking up a word in the dictionary. Furthermore, the organization of the text’s glosses is unclear to Melissa, causing her reading to be interrupted by moments of confusion due to the layout of the page.

Just as Carrell (1989) and Pookcharoen (2009) have indicated, Melissa, an intermediate L2 learner, tends to use the bottom-up strategy of using reference materials almost excessively. This indicates a possibility that Melissa’s comprehension is somewhat lacking, which requires different strategy use than when approaching an L1 text. Still, it appears that Melissa is often unsatisfied with the reference materials because she does not have a strong enough linguistic foundation in the L2 to successfully interpret the information provided.

Rereading. Because of her experiences in her English reading methodology course, Melissa has adopted some reading strategies that she has tried to incorporate during her Spanish reading tasks. One of these strategies is the use of rereading. Throughout the semester, Melissa starts by reading the assigned texts once through, reading the first paragraph and then the second, followed by a reread of the first two paragraphs with the third paragraph added. In the current study, Melissa followed this pattern by rereading the first and last couple of paragraphs after she had completed the story. In her reading log she states that she “didn’t learn much [more] than the first time.” In the middle section of the story, however, Melissa reports feeling confident and understanding the text, and therefore she did not need to reread that portion (see Appendix B). These statements are interesting, because they, too, express Melissa’s dissatisfaction with this strategy. Although she reports using this strategy frequently, she also claims that it does not

always help her. This presents the question of why Melissa chooses a strategy that does not appear to be useful, especially when she often reported not having sufficient time for her readings.

Continuing to read despite lack of comprehension. Melissa expressed several times that she decided to continue reading despite being unable to understand a certain portion of the text. Evidence of this can be seen in Appendix A, where Melissa has put parentheses around a word with a question mark written above. In these situations, Melissa writes parentheses to indicate that she does not understand the word, but continues to read. A question mark indicates that after rereading, Melissa is still unsure about the word's definition. Melissa confesses that her preference is to not to continue reading until she "for sure" understands the meaning. In her own words, "reading the little bits and not the whole" works better for her. Still, "for the sake of [her] patience," Melissa is often compelled to continue reading. This is the first instance where we see Melissa's attitude affecting her choice of reading strategy. Although she views the previous strategies, glossing and rereading, as positive strategies, she is often constrained by her own fatigue, which results in her pressing forward despite her not understanding. This argues that there is more to Melissa's strategy use than her need for comprehension.

Attitude

Because Melissa has studied reading pedagogy for her teaching degree, she is very aware of the role that attitude plays during the reading process. Several times during both the interviews and the reading log, Melissa mentions specific attitudes and how the reading of the text affected those attitudes. As stated in the theoretical framework, these attitudes will be categorized into cognitive (personal, evaluative beliefs) and affective (feelings and emotions) (Yamashita, 2004).

Cognitive attitudes. One example of the influence of cognitive attitudes on strategy use reveals the influence assessment has on strategy use. When asked how motivation influenced her reading strategies, Melissa responded that as a student, grades are important, and she therefore puts more effort into graded assignments. Even though she feels like she should "learn for the sake of learning," she often asks herself, "Is it worth staying up for, or is it just worth skimming?" This statement indicates that Melissa feels like skimming is being "a bad student" and that she should not do it. Although skimming is a top-down, or global, strategy, which is often considered a helpful strategy when trying to understand a text, Melissa primarily views it as a lack of effort. Because her academic attitude often results in thorough completion of assignments, Melissa has labeled this strategy as being negative.

This perspective is also evident when Melissa's grades are not attached. In these circumstances she does not look up as many words and reads faster. In previous classes, she felt that the test questions were less specific, so she wasn't prepared for the quizzes in her current class. In other words, the quizzes motivate her to read in more detail:

As a student . . . grades are important, and I definitely put more effort into reading assignments that are graded or that I have a quiz on . . . as opposed to "read this

assignment for class” . . . just because . . . is that worth staying up for or is it worth skimming? Then I have to sit down and focus on it whereas other assignments . . . I’m just like “oh, I’ll skim that in the time I have before class,” which is being a really bad student. I shouldn’t admit that. (Stimulated Recall-interview, oral)

This expresses that when Melissa feels like a grade is attached, she will look up more words and look for more details. This is a consequence of the detailed nature of the quizzes given in class, which are quite different from the main ideas asked for in Melissa’s previous Spanish classes. In addition, the open discussions in Melissa’s class motivate her to look for more examples. “[I]n order to not be completely lost in class as well, or [to] have something intelligent to say in class . . . , I have to read a lot more for detail to understand and think into the text . . . ‘cause our discussions . . . go deeper into the text” (Stimulated Recall-interview, oral).

In all of these examples, we see that Melissa’s attitude towards class assessment has a tremendous impact on her strategy use. In many instances, her evaluation of a specific strategy is entirely based on the type of assessment given, which prevents her from successfully estimating the true comprehension value of each strategy. For example, it is interesting that Melissa associates the skill of skimming as one of a “bad student.” Skimming, a top-down process, has been shown to enhance global understanding of the text. Still, in this instance, Melissa views this strategy as the result of a lack of effort, or a last effort before all motivation has been exhausted. Instead of viewing skimming as one strategy that can be used in addition to other strategies, she views it as a negative result of her feeling rushed to complete the assignment. Thus we see that her attitude towards classroom assessments has significantly altered her perspective of this reading strategy.

Affective attitudes. Melissa’s affect, or feelings and emotions, was shown in both the reading log and stimulated-recall interview as having a clear effect on her use of reading strategies. As is demonstrated by Melissa’s comments, there appears to be some connection between Melissa’s positive affect and her use of top-down strategies in the following examples. Significant portions are in italics:

I struggled with the first paragraph. I couldn’t figure out who was who’s twin and such, but I continued reading, . . . *[and] by the end and through context clues I wasn’t as frustrated as I started to piece it together. The rest of the reading went a lot better.*

Where the niece is talking about how bad her aunt had changed . . . I felt like I really understood the meaning . . . I felt really good about my understanding . . . , what’s she explicitly saying and what she’s implying . . . I felt like I understood the underlying meaning of the author. *And that’s when I felt the best, looking past the text and into the tone.* (Stimulated Recall-interview, oral)

In these examples, Melissa reports using the top down strategies of using context clues and “looking past the text and into the tone,” which seem to correlate with her feeling more positive about the L2 text. Furthermore, in one instance when Melissa is feeling confident, she reports avoiding the common bottom-up strategy of rereading, which she previously explained as a favorite strategy:

I reread the first couple and last couple paragraphs again after I finished the story, but didn't learn much more than the first time. *I felt confident during the middle part of the story that I was understanding it fine, and didn't need to reread a whole lot.* (Stimulated Recall-interview, oral)

In these instances Melissa uses a global approach and analyzes whole chunks of texts, which is related to her feeling more confident. Thus, it appears that top-down strategies are more associated with attitudes of confidence, whereas bottom-up strategies are more connected to feelings of assessment anxiety.

The presence of assessment anxiety is also evident when Melissa explains her guilt of not looking up as many words in a difficult passage. This appears to be the result of her academic fatigue, which in turn prevented her from using reference materials. Still, to a certain degree she laments her unwillingness to look up more words: I wasn't pressed for time . . . *but it could have been a combination of being sick of reading and not understanding it . . . and if you notice that I don't have as many words translated, . . . [and] I was frustrated* (Stimulated Recall-interview, oral). Throughout the interviews, Melissa consistently correlated looking up unknown words as a sign of her working towards comprehension and a good grade. This statement, however, shows that when she was fatigued, she did not gloss as many words, which was also related to her feeling more frustrated. While more evidence is needed, this could communicate that first, when Melissa is frustrated, she seems to focus more on looking up words, which is a bottom-up strategy; and second, she feels a type of academic guilt when she realizes that she is not looking up as many words as she feels is necessary to be a good student. Thus, in Melissa's case, bottom-up strategies are used when she is feeling less secure with her comprehension, while top-down strategies are implemented when her confidence is high. Still, Melissa only recognizes bottom-up strategies as evidence of her academic diligence, while top-down strategies are somewhat absent from her conscious awareness of strategy use.

Conclusion

In summary, this case study has attempted to examine the relationship between the use of reading strategies and attitude in an intermediate Spanish student. It appears that Melissa uses both bottom-up and top-down strategies throughout her L2 reading task. However, it also seems that she is consciously aware of strategies such as rereading and glossing, but is less aware of what she herself brings to the text through top-down methods. This appears to agree with the findings of Ikeda and Takeuchi (2006), who stated that lower proficient L2 students are often less able to understand their strategy use and when those strategies should be implemented. As with many L2 students, the stress of academic work appears to be influencing her use of more bottom-up strategies, and in her mind, these types of strategies are more effective in understanding the text. As Yamashita (2004) suggested, Melissa's attitudes differ during L2 texts than what she reports during her L1 reading. Still, when Melissa expresses positive attitudes, top-down strategies appear to be employed more readily, although she is not always observant of her own strategy use in these instances.

Limitations of the Study

This case study was the researcher's first attempt at conducting any type of recall interview, and was therefore approached as a pilot study. Because of this, the researcher acknowledges that there are many limitations to this study. Furthermore, the researcher was the participant's teacher, which could have influenced the data analysis. Finally, there was only one rater of the data, putting the reliability of the results into question. Thus, this study attempts only to describe the experience of one individual and how cognitive and affective factors interact during the reading process, acting as a catalyst for further thesis research.

Implications for Language Pedagogy

As illustrated by Melissa's comments, the pressures of academic study, especially those found in a foreign language classroom, greatly dictate student behaviors. Melissa appreciates the importance of reading in her Spanish class, yet she feels the effects of stress and fatigue, which influence her reading strategies. Instructors in the Intermediate FL classroom should take into account these factors and provide shorter chunks of reading over a longer period of time to minimize fatigue and allow for more strategy practice. Furthermore, they should also consider establishing a realistic expectation of how much of the text the intermediate student will actually understand. Explicit instruction of top-down reading strategies; such as scanning, skimming, identifying the main idea and making connections between paragraphs; may be necessary in order for the intermediate student to better understand and utilize these strategies. Upon analyzing her reading log, bottom-up strategies such as recognizing cognates, word endings such as *-mente* and *-ado/-ido* may also be useful linguistic strategies. Finally, effective use of online translators and dictionaries, as well as their appropriate purpose, should be explained to intermediate FL students so that it does not become a crutch during their progress towards FL reading proficiency.

Suggestions for Future Research

Although no definitive conclusions can be made from this case study, it does become apparent that intermediate L2 students may employ bottom-up strategies first during a reading task, whereas top-down strategies appear to be less deliberate. Furthermore, top-down strategies may be understood by the student as more of a consequence of comprehension and not an actual strategy. This communicates that FL students may need to be directed in purposefully using top-down strategies to increase comprehension, which may increase their positive attitudes towards reading. Further research might want to investigate the relationship between top-down strategies and reading attitudes, exploring the connection of these two and whether top-down strategies are either a cause or a product of positive affect.

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Appendix A

Melissa's Textbook

¡Así lo expresamos!

365



Páginas

Alina Romero (1952-, Cuba)

Alina Romero nació en Cuba. Se graduó como ingeniera geofísica de la Universidad de La Habana en 1976. En 1995 se mudó a España con sus hijos, y allí ejerció la profesión de vendedora de bienes raíces. Hoy Alina Romero vive en Nueva York y se dedica a escribir, su ocupación preferida.



► Antes de leer

11-46 Estrategias de lectura: Los recuerdos. Los recuerdos de una persona representan lo que conserva en la memoria de un tiempo pasado. La narración de recuerdos suele ser en primera persona, e incluye las impresiones más vividas del/de la narrador/a. En *El doble seis*, lee sobre el recuerdo que una joven tiene de su tía. Mientras se desarrolla el cuento, observa cómo cambia el comportamiento del personaje central. Trata de descubrir la razón del cambio.

11-47 Las adicciones. De las siguientes adicciones, ¿cuáles les parecen más peligrosas? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles son las más obvias? ¿Qué cambios de personalidad o de comportamiento se notan en una persona adicta?

- las bebidas alcohólicas
- el cigarrillo
- el juego (*gambling*)
- las drogas

► A leer

11-48 Tía Mary y el dominó. Mientras lees este cuento, apunta cómo se manifiesta la adicción de la tía Mary al dominó. En tu opinión, ¿habría sido posible evitarla?

El doble seis

A Mary le gustaba el juego de dominó, la dominó, decía mi padre, alzando un dedo como un político como para abarcar todo el universo alrededor de nosotros. Mary era su hermana gemela y desde que empujó, cosa que ocurrió prematuramente, comenzó a reunirse con un grupo de señoras de más edad y una vez a la semana, si mal no recuerdo, los jueves por la tarde, jugaban dominó.

Todos en la familia votan con buenos ojos que mi tía querría salir a excursiones y se alternara con sus nuevas amistades. Aún no había cumplido los cuarenta y se conservaba bella, por lo que era absolutamente necesario que continuara viviendo, incluso, secretamente solíamos con que encontrara de nuevo el amor.

*It controlled her / raising
to include / twin
she became a widow
if... if my memory doesn't
kill me / was friendly*

reflect / godfather / she
 resigned / far certain 10
 with her heart in her mouth
 gestures
 vulgar expressions / shocking
 he... she hit (mother's) shoulder
 suddenly told her 15
 he... chided her 20
 asombrados / godmother
 I was crazy about her / spoiler
 blessing / ohia... she smiled 25
 away / little devil
 no... they hadn't noticed that
 her skirt was inside out /
 perturbado / lock / key 30
 they didn't skip on
 the final blow / I complained
 annoyed / You're too big for
 such foolishness / BMW
 play on St. Lazarus (Lázaro),
 whom Christ raised from the
 dead; also popular in
 santaria / she winked

Meses después de su tragedia, pudo cobrar^(le insurance) el seguro de vida de mi padrino^{passed to a son} y pidió la renuncia^{en la} en la oficina para la que trabajaba desde muy joven. No sabíamos a ciencia cierta^{en la} cuán grande era la cantidad de dinero que había entrado en su cuenta, porque ya por entonces su contactos con nosotros se habían espaciado y los encuentros entre ella y mi padre dejaban a mamá con el credo en la boca^{en la boca}. Mary, una mujer alta y elegante, siempre perfumada, de voz dulce y ademanes^{suaves} suaves, se había acostado^{se acostó} con unos dicharachos^{chocantes}, que en su boca resultaban chocantes^{chocantes}. Recuerdo que en una de sus visitas le conté a mi madre de un amigo que había muerto de repente y al terminar, le golpeó el hombro^{and} y con voz alta le espetó^{le espetó}:

—La vida es una basofa, por eso yo vivo el presente, mañana ya veremos...
 Miré a mi mamá y sus ojos expresaban más que asombro, angustia.
 Papá le hizo una reconvención^{reconvención}:

—Mary, por Dios, qué frases son esas...
 —Es la verdad, pero qué vas a saber tú, que además de viejo, eres aburrido... por eso no vengo por aquí en esta casa hace falta ¡ALEGRÍA!— y se encaminó a la salida.
 Todos estábamos helados^{helados}. Me cogió de su brazo y la acompañé hasta la puerta. Era mi madrina^{madrina} y tenía delirio con ella^{delirio} porque había sido mi principal consentidora^{consentidora}.

—Hasta mañana, tía. Dame tu bendición^{bendición}. —le dije abrazándola... ohia rara^{ohia rara}.
 —Dios te haga una diablita^{diablita}, porque los angelitos van al cielo y de diablo puedes ir a todas partes como tu tía. —Dicho esto se echó a reír a carcajadas, golpeando el suelo con el pie, y así salió a la calle. De regreso al comedor pude escuchar a mis padres decididos a acercarse más a ella... los pobres, no habían reparado en que andaba con la falda al revés^{al revés}. A los dos días entró papá por la puerta demudado^{demudado} y nos dijo:

—Imagínense que cambió la cerradura^{cerradura} de la puerta de la que yo tenía llave^{llave}.

Pronto descubrimos el motivo de su alejamiento: el juego de dominó. Participaba en campeonatos que se celebraban en cualquier parte del país. Ella y sus amigas alquilaban un autobús y no escatimaban^{escatimaban} distancia ni las detenía el estado del tiempo. Para ellas no existían Navidades ni celebraciones. El golpe de gracia^{golpe de gracia} fue que olvidó mi cumpleaños y cuando le reclamé^{reclamé} llorando, me respondió molesta^{molesta}:

—Estás muy zángana para esa bobería^{bobería}, pero vas a ver en un par de semanas la nave espacial que te voy a parquear delante de la casa: (un be eme dobleve), plateado, para que vayas a la universidad, eso si el viejo San Lazarito Pérez^{San Lazarito Pérez} me da una manito. —Me guiñó un ojo^{guiñó un ojo} y siguió su camino.



¡Así lo expresamos!

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Pero pasó un año y cuando volví a ver a mi tía Mary, casi no podía reconocerla: su voz se había vuelto ronca^{ronca}, sus maneras bruscas, fumaba como una chimenea y bebía como un cosaco^{cosaco} el pelo, a fuerza de no peinarse, era un hido^{hido} de gallinas atado^{atado} con un cordón de zapatos. Había que ver a la que fue la mujer más fina y delicada de mi mundo, virándose con^{con} el doble blanco y gritando:

—¡Ahí tienes pa'que^{pa'que} me respetes...!

Así la encontramos en una esquina de la Calle 8 de Miami, porque un amigo común nos contó^{contó} que la había visto merodeando^{merodeando} por allí: "sucía", sentada en la acera con una botella de ron peleón^{peleón} entre las piernas, esperando su turno para entrar en el juego de dominó..."

La reconocí por su sonrisa, pero no quiso volver a casa.

La joven sacudió^{sacudió} la cabeza como para ahuyentar^{ahuyentar} algún pensamiento, miró el reloj, iban a dar las cuatro de la madrugada; se volcó^{volcó} de nuevo sobre el plano^{plano} al que daba los toques finales. Era su primer trabajo como arquitecta, el proyecto de un panteón^{panteón} cuya puerta era una inmensa masa de mármol blanco y negro simulando la ficha del doble seis.

hoarse / as a result of
 nest / tied
 playing
 para que

proving / dirty / cheap rum

shook / to scare away
 inclined / the blueprint

Appendix B

Melissa's Reading Log

Okay, I ended up doing the reading before class, so I was sitting at a desk with a computer and only had an online translator as help.

I started as I usually do when I begin Spanish reading. I usually don't have any music on; however, I have had Spanish music on when I read Spanish and that is not a problem, but having English music playing when I try to read Spanish is really difficult.

I struggled with the first paragraph. I couldn't figure out who was who's twin and such, but I continued reading, and I still am not sure who the twins are! The second paragraph wasn't much better as I was still confused as to who was the widow or the twin and such, but by the end and through context clues I wasn't as frustrated as I started to piece it together. The rest of the reading went a lot better. I was continually looking up infinitives to understand what was happening or the other words as well, and, as I would find them I wrote them above the word. The story became much more interesting after the first couple paragraphs, so I found myself more absorbed in figuring out for sure what was being said. There seemed to be a couple cliché phrases that when translated directly didn't make sense (*el credo en la boca, tenia delirio con ella*). I returned back to my original confusion on the last couple paragraphs. It might have been that I was tired of reading or thought I was more proficient than I am because I didn't feel like I needed as many words translated, yet, I wasn't understanding any better than the paragraphs where I translated a lot. I reread the first couple and last couple paragraphs again after I finished the story, but didn't learn much than the first time. I felt confident during the middle part of the story that I was understanding it fine, and didn't need to reread a whole lot.

Words I needed to look up:

decia	incluso	perturbado
alzando	secretamente	alejamiento
dedo	sonabamos	cualquier
alrededor	encontrara	alquilaban
mary era su hermana gemela	el seguro de vida	distancia ni las detenia
veian	renuncia	el estado del tiempo
querida	pidio	las detenia
saliera	cuan	la nave
cumplido	cantidad	plateado
no habia cumplido	entrado	reconocerla
aun	asombro	cosaco
cuarenta	colgue	peinarse
se conservaba bella	demudado	

Appendix C

Reading Strategies analyzed

Glossing from Spanish to English.

Rereading a portion of the text.

Continuing to read despite a lack of comprehension.