

原著

Reading a Paragraph: How Japanese College Students Comprehend and Recall an English Paragraph

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Abstract

Reading comprehension has been understood as an interactive process. One can read and comprehend a text by combining two kinds of information: one's background knowledge and what is written in the text. So-called schema theory is a theory of how one's background knowledge works when one is in the process of reading. Two kinds of schema (any reader's prior background knowledge) are postulated: a content schema and a formal schema. The former, or background knowledge relative to the content domain of the text, is reported by a lot of researchers of first/second language acquisition to have a facilitative effect on reading comprehension. However, how the latter, or background knowledge relative to the formal, rhetorical structures of different types of text, does influence reading comprehension is not well documented. In this study, even for Japanese college students, who usually have not been taught the formal, rhetorical structures of English texts, a formal schema is shown to play a role in their reading comprehension.

要約

スキーマ理論は、読解過程において読み手の持つ背景知識がどのように関与しているかを解明しようとするものであり、近年、言語習得(母語及び外国語)の研究分野において活発に議論されている。一般的にスキーマは、内容スキーマ・形式スキーマの二種類に分けられる。本論は、テキストの構成に関する背景知識である形式スキーマが、文レベルの翻訳を中心とした英語読解の訓練しか受けていない平均的な大学生の英文の読解過程において、どのような役割をはたしているかを論じたものである。