

2014-2015 'An Investigation of the Reading and Test-Taking Strategies for the TOEFL Junior Standard Reading Test: Evidence from Retrospective Think-Aloud Protocols'. TOEFL Young Students Research Program 2015, Educational Testing Service (ETS), USA

Since the 1980s, there has been a call for the development of language tests that provide a better fit between “the tester’s *presumptions* about what is being tested and the *actual* processes that the test taker goes through” (Cohen, 1984: 70). Motivated by such calls, the main aim of the proposed research is to empirically investigate the effect specific reading and test-taking strategies have on the nature and product of reading comprehension, in the context of language testing with specific reference to the TOEFL Junior Standard Reading Comprehension Test. In the present study, 50 EFL students aged 11 and 12 years from a Greek Primary State school, after a rigorous training, will take part (in individual sessions) in retrospective verbal protocols reporting (in their native language) on the test-taking and reading strategies they have used in order to complete each set of reading questions included in the TOEFL Junior Standard Reading Comprehension Test. The proposed research is envisaged to shed light on: a) the reading and test-taking strategies used by young EFL learners when answering specific reading tasks of the TOEFL Junior Standard Reading Test, b) the extent to which successful young EFL readers differentiate themselves from less successful ones in terms of their reading strategies, c) the statistically significant relationships, if any, between young EFL learners’ reading and test-taking strategies and their scores in the TOEFL Junior Standard Reading Test and d) the differences in strategy use and performance levels among EFL students from different backgrounds. The research is expected to enhance the construct validity of the TOEFL Junior Standard Reading Test. The empirical data collected and analyzed for the purposes of the project will evaluate the test design with the aim of fairly reflecting the language competence of the test-takers to handle the language task being evaluated and guard against cases where the selection of the right answers is done for the wrong reasons.