

## **EFL LEARNERS' BELIEFS ABOUT READING AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper reports findings from a study that examines Taiwanese EFL college students' beliefs about reading in English as well as the relationships between their beliefs and language proficiency. A total of 297 college freshmen responded to a 9-item questionnaire (the English Reader Belief Questionnaire). The results indicated that three models of beliefs about reading (i.e., transmission, personal engagement, and personal interpretation beliefs) were utilized among Taiwanese college students when reading in English. Participants of this study also varied in their implicit models of reading. Specifically, students from the low-proficiency group tended to view reading more commonly as a process of the transmission of meaning from text, whereas students from the high-proficiency group tended to see reading more commonly as involving personal and affective engagement with text. However, no significant difference was found between the two groups in the category of personal interpretation.

Key Words: reading beliefs, implicit models of reading, language proficiency, L2 reading, EFL reading

### **INTRODUCTION**

The notion of "learner beliefs" has received much attention in the fields of both L1 education and L2 language teaching over the past two decades. Substantial evidence has been accumulated from the L1 research domain indicating that students' beliefs about learning or the nature of knowledge play an important role in text comprehension and academic achievement (Law, Chan, & Sachs, 2008; Schommer, 1990, 1994, 1997). Moreover, college students' beliefs about reading also affect comprehension and the motivation to read (Schraw & Bruning, 1996, 1999; Schraw, 2000). In L2 language teaching, although many

studies have documented how learners' preconceived beliefs about language learning influence learning processes and outcomes (Horwitz, 1987, 1988, 1999; Huang & Tsai, 2003; Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Mohebi & Khodadady, 2011; Wenden, 1987; Yang, 1999), fewer studies have looked into L2 learners' beliefs about reading in particular (Devine, 1988; Kamhi-Stein, 2003; Hsu, 2009, 2012). Even rarer is the documentation of L2 readers' beliefs in an EFL context. To fill this gap, the current study attempts to investigate the reading beliefs of EFL college students in Taiwan and their relationship to language proficiency. Drawing on Schraw and Bruning's (1996) theoretical framework, readers' beliefs, in this paper, are also conceptualized as readers' implicit models of the reading process, which consist of systematic beliefs about their perceptions of their roles as readers.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Learners' Beliefs in L1**

Beliefs about learning or the nature of knowledge have always been a popular strand of research in the field of L1 education. Research into epistemological beliefs has indicated that students with more sophisticated beliefs tended to perform better in academic achievement (Schommer, 1997). More specifically, the less college students believed in simple knowledge, the better they performed on a mastery test and the more accurately they assessed their own understanding (Schommer, 1990). In addition, strong beliefs in quick learning, simple knowledge, and fixed ability hindered learning as well (Schommer, 1994).

With a specific focus on younger learners, Law, Chan, and Sachs (2008) investigated how beliefs about learning are related to children's use of strategies and their reading comprehension in the Chinese cultural context. Their study identified two contrasting types of beliefs about learning, constructivist and reproductive, respectively. While the former emphasized learning as the construction of meaning, the latter stressed the importance of memorization and of the accumulation of factual information. The results of their study indicate that constructivist beliefs contributed to text comprehension over and above the effects of grade, academic achievement and use of strategies. Furthermore, a difference was found between high and low achievers in terms of their beliefs, use of strategies, and comprehension scores.

Related to the notion of constructivist beliefs is Schraw and Bruning's framework of implicit models of reading. Influenced by Rosenblatt's (1994) transactional theory of reading, Schraw and Bruning (1996, 1999) distinguished between two different implicit models of reading, the transmission and the transaction models. The transmission model is characterized by the beliefs that meaning is transmitted from the author and/or text and hence, is independent of the reader, while the transaction model is based on the assumption that meaning is constructed by a transaction between the reader, author, and text. Focusing on college students in the U.S., their studies revealed that those who endorsed a transaction model of reading had a higher recall of an expository essay (Schraw & Bruning, 1996); and, furthermore, beliefs associated with the transaction model increased the motivation to read by strengthening the degree to which readers valued the meaning-construction process and by increasing the use of the number and type of deeper processing strategies (Schraw & Bruning, 1999). In addition to investigating students' reading of expository essays, Schraw (2000) also reported that transaction beliefs facilitated students' construction of the meaning of narrative text, whereas transmission beliefs did not.

Schraw and Bruning's studies are particularly influential in the case of the present study mainly because their distinction of readers' implicit models of reading offers valuable insights about the role of readers' beliefs and also suggests an alternative perspective for the investigation of readers' beliefs. However, since their studies were conducted in a first language context, it is not clear whether the same arguments can be extended to a second or foreign language setting. For this reason, the present study examines students' beliefs about reading based on a framework derived from Schraw and Bruning's (1996) implicit models of reading. The English reading models/beliefs of Taiwanese EFL college students are investigated. The findings from the study are expected to shed some light on instruction in reading in English in Taiwan or in other similar contexts where English is taught as a foreign language.

#### **Learners' Beliefs in L2**

In the domain of second language teaching, research has shown that learners often hold certain beliefs about language learning and their preconceived beliefs have the potential to influence the learning

processes (Horwitz, 1987, 1988, 1999; Wenden, 1987), the choice of learning strategies (Yang, 1999), as well as the learning outcomes (Mantle-Bromley, 1995). Additionally, learners at different levels of proficiency tend to have different beliefs about language learning (Huang & Tsai, 2003).

In contrast to the multitude of studies on learner beliefs about language learning, few studies have examined learners' beliefs about L2 reading. One of the earliest attempts was Devine's case study of two ESL readers (1988). Devine investigated learners' internalized models of reading and their relations to reading behaviors. The results of her study showed that the two learners, one identified as sound-centered and the other as meaning-centered, had quite distinct reading behaviors. The sound-centered learner in her study appeared to over-rely on the grapho-phonetic cueing system to the extent of sacrificing the comprehension of meanings in the text. In a similar vein, Kamhi-Stein (2003) investigated the reading beliefs of four under-prepared L2 college readers of Spanish and English in the U.S.. The findings of the study revealed that readers who viewed reading as a process of the construction of meaning tended to be more multi-strategic, while those who viewed reading as primarily word-centered tended to be logo-centric during reading. Both Devine and Kamhi-Stein's studies provide evidence that L2 readers' beliefs are related to the ways in which they process text.

More recently, Hsu (2009), drawing on Schraw and Bruning's (1996) distinction of the transaction and transmission models of reading, conducted a cross-linguistic study to examine the relationship between readers' beliefs and their use of reading strategies in L1 and L2. Focusing on a large group of Taiwanese college students, Hsu found a close relationship between the students' reading models and their use of reading strategies in both L1 and L2; specifically, there was a tendency for readers with transaction beliefs to process the text at a higher level. In addition, Hsu's study also revealed that Schraw and Bruning's construct of transaction beliefs should be further divided. Based on the results of factor analyses, two different dimensions of the transaction model were identified and labeled as Transaction I—Reader Interpretation and Transaction II—Reader Engagement. In other words, Hsu identified three different models of reading, the transmission, the reader interpretation, and the reader engagement models.

In short, although the findings of the above-mentioned studies

indicate that L2 readers' beliefs are related to their reading behavior and use of strategies, the relationship between L2 learners' language proficiency and their reading beliefs remains relatively unexplored. Therefore, as a follow-up to Hsu's (2009) original study, the present study attempts to find out what reading beliefs Taiwanese college students have when reading in a foreign language and whether there are differences in belief patterns among high- and low-proficiency students. Two specific research questions are addressed in this study:

1. What reading models/beliefs do the students bring to reading in English?
2. Is there any difference among high- and low-proficiency students in the patterns of belief they bring to reading in English?

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

A total of 297 college freshmen in Taiwan participated in this study. Due to administrative constraints, the study utilized convenience sampling. The participants were all non-English majors enrolled in the Freshman English course at two universities in Taipei (i.e., Universities A and B). They were divided into two proficiency groups (high- and low-achievers) according to the university which they attended. The high-achiever group contained 133 students from University A, a national university in Taipei with a reputation of being one of the top universities in the country. The low-achiever group contained 164 students from University B, a private and less prestigious university with a focus on vocational training of the students. As a result, the participants recruited from the two schools were very different in terms of their academic achievement including English proficiency. Further information about the levels of the English proficiency of the two groups of students is reported below.

The level of the English proficiency of the high-achiever group was obtained through students' responses to the background questionnaire concerning their English scores in the College Entrance Exam taken in the year of 2010. Based on a scale of 0 to 15, the 113 participants from the high-proficiency group received rankings ranging from Levels 12 to

15 for their performance on the English test. According to the statistics reported by the College Entrance Exam Center in Taiwan for the year of 2010, the number of students who scored above Level 12 accounted for the top 17% percent of the whole population pool, indicating a relatively high level of proficiency in English among the participants at this level.

As for the English ability of the 167 low-achievers, these students were not only from a less prestigious university focusing on a vocational track but were placed into the lowest proficiency group for the Freshman English course offered by the university based on their English scores of the entrance exam in the year of 2009. Moreover, according to the results of the practice General English Proficiency Test, a locally developed standardized test, administered by the university in the same year, none of the participants from this group were able to pass the Beginning Level, suggesting a very limited English ability of these students.

#### **Instrument**

This study used the English Reader Belief Questionnaire (See Appendix) to examine Taiwanese college students' beliefs about reading in English. This 9-item questionnaire was developed by Hsu (2009), who adapted Schraw and Bruning's (1996; 1999) 12-item Reader Belief Inventory (RBI) and field-tested it on a large group of Taiwanese college students ( $n=652$ ). Based on the results obtained from a series of factor analyses, Hsu identified three different models of reading, the transmission, the reader interpretation, and the reader engagement models. The conceptual dimensions of the questionnaire are related to the notions of "constructivist beliefs about learning" vs. "reproductive beliefs about learning", "learning as meaning construction" vs. "learning as memorization of factual information", and "reading as meaning transaction/construction" vs. "reading as knowledge transmission". However, instead of the dichotomous models of beliefs, as previously mentioned, Hsu proposed that the construct of transaction beliefs of reading or that the notion of reading as the construction of meaning should be further divided. Specifically, she found that there are two distinctive aspects of the construction of meaning: one pertaining to the importance of personal interpretation or private sense of meaning and the other to the importance of the emotive and affective domain of meaning.

The questionnaire, written in Chinese to avoid the problem of differences in students' reading abilities in English, consists of three key

dimensions reflecting the notions of reading as a process of involving *transmission of meaning from text*, *personal interpretation of text*, and *personal engagement with text*, respectively. To exemplify, the statement “When reading in English, I think good readers remember exactly what the book says” reflects a transmission view of reading, the statement “When reading in English, I like to interpret what I read in my own unique way” emphasizes the importance of personal interpretation in the construction of meaning, and the statement “When reading in English, I often get totally absorbed in what I’m reading” indicates a tendency to engage with text at a more personal level. In sum, the questionnaire consists of nine items presented on a 5-point Likert rating scale, with responses ranging from 1= “completely disagree” to 5= “completely agree”.

#### **Procedure**

Students’ beliefs about reading in English were collected by administration of the English Reader Belief Questionnaire in this study. The measurement questionnaire along with a demographic survey was administered to all participants in their Freshmen English class at the beginning of the second semester. With the help of the classroom instructors, students were informed of the purpose of the survey and of the fact that none of the questions in it had a right or wrong answer. All of the students were able to complete the questionnaire and background information sheet within approximately ten minutes.

## **RESULTS**

### **Students’ Beliefs about Reading**

#### *Factor analysis and reliability*

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine the construct validity of the questionnaire. The results of factor analysis using the Principal Component method with oblique rotation suggested that three factors be retained with eigenvalues greater than 1. The first factor, labeled “belief of personal engagement”, reflects students’ view of reading as involving personal emotive interactions with text. The second factor, labeled “transmission belief”, reflects students’ understanding of

reading as a process of the transmitting of meaning from text. The third factor, labeled “belief of personal interpretation” reflects students’ view of reading as involving personal interpretation in the construction of meaning. The three-factor pattern of the questionnaire obtained in the current study is consistent with Hsu’s (2009) findings, providing support to the three-component model of learners’ beliefs about reading.

Table 1 shows the rotated factor loadings for the questionnaire. The first factor accounted for 33.06% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 2.98, the second factor for 17.62% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.59, and the third factor 13.32% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.20. Internal consistency estimates of reliability (coefficient  $\alpha$ ) were .73 for the overall scale, .79 for the “belief of personal engagement” subscale (items 1, 2, 4, 6), .60 for the “transmission belief” subscale (items 3, 5, 9), and .68 for the “belief of personal interpretation” subscale (items 7, 8). Overall, the English Reader Belief Questionnaire reached an acceptable level of reliability. However, one thing worth noting is that the coefficient values reported here seem particularly low on the subscales of transmission and personal interpretation. This could possibly result from the small number of items (i.e., less than three items) included in each of the two categories.



Table 1  
*Rotated Factor Loadings of the English Reader Belief Questionnaire*

| Items  | Factor Loadings                     |                            |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
|  | Factor I:<br>Personal<br>Engagement | Factor II:<br>Transmission | Factor III:<br>Personal<br>Interpretation |
| 1 When reading in English, I often get totally absorbed in what I'm reading.                                   | .83                                 |                            |   |
| 2 When reading in English, I often have strong emotional responses to what I read.                             | .79                                 |                            |   |
| 3 When reading in English, I think good readers remember exactly what the book says.                           |                                     | .78                        |   |
| 4 When reading in English, I focus on what the book really means rather than what the book actually says.      | .79                                 |                            |   |
| 5 When reading in English, I think readers should not stray far from the author's intended meaning.            |                                     | .75                        |   |
| 6 When reading in English, I like to imagine I am living through the experience myself when I read.            | .71                                 |                            |   |
| 7 When reading in English, I like to interpret what I read in my own unique way.                               |                                     |                            | .87                                       |
| 8 When reading in English, I like to form my own interpretation of what I read, even if the book is technical. |                                     |                            | .88                                       |
| 9 When reading in English, I think people should agree on what a book means.                                   |                                     | .68                        |   |

Note: N = 297; Factor loadings less than .40 in absolute value were blanked out.

Notice that although items 4 and 9 both focus on the meaning of the content of a book, they assume two very different underlying roles of a reader and were also found to load in different factors in the present scale. Item 9, grouped under the transmission model, states that people should agree on what the content of a book means. It implies that meaning lies in the text and is largely independent of the reader; therefore, every reader should have the same interpretation regarding the meaning of a book. Such view is very different from the more active and critical role of a reader as assumed in Item 4, which states that ‘I focus on what the book really means rather than what the book actually says.’

### *Paired-samples t-test<sup>1</sup>*

To examine whether differences existed regarding students’ beliefs about reading by type of belief, a series of paired-samples t-tests were conducted. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the students’ scores on beliefs about reading. The mean score for each type of belief was calculated based on students’ average responses to the statements and divided by the number of items in each category, with a highest possible score of five to a lowest one of one.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Beliefs about Reading for the Three Types of Belief

|      | Transmission | Personal Engagement | Personal Interpretation |
|------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Mean | 2.83         | 3.20                | 3.27                    |
| SD   | .68          | .74                 | .78                     |

As can be seen from Table 2, differences can be observed among the mean scores of the three belief categories, with those for personal interpretation beliefs being the highest and those for transmission beliefs being the lowest. The results of the paired-samples t-tests showed that

<sup>1</sup> A One-Way Repeated Measures ANOVA was first performed to examine the possible differences among the three types of belief, which yielded a significant result (  $F(2, 568)=29.56, p<.001$ ). Paired-samples t-tests were used as Post Hoc tests to further examine the differences between the types of belief.

there were significant differences between the transmission and personal engagement beliefs ( $df=286$ ,  $t=-6.84$ ,  $p=.00$ ) as well as between the transmission and personal interpretation beliefs ( $df=287$ ,  $t=-8.24$ ,  $p=.00$ ); however, no significant difference was found between the categories of personal engagement and personal interpretation ( $df=288$ ,  $t=1.234$ ,  $p=.22$ ). These results indicate that students tend to more commonly report the beliefs of personal engagement and personal interpretation than transmission beliefs when reading in English.

### Differences in Beliefs about Reading among High- and Low- proficiency Students

#### *Independent-samples t-test*

To examine whether differences existed among high- and low-proficiency students concerning their beliefs about reading, a series of independent-samples t-tests were performed. Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of beliefs about reading for the two proficiency groups. In a similar vein, each group of students' (*the high- and low-proficiency groups*) average responses to the statements were calculated by the three belief categories, with a highest possible mean score of five and a lowest one of one.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Beliefs about Reading for the two Proficiency Groups

|      | Transmission    |                | Personal Engagement |                | Personal Interpretation |                |
|------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|
|      | High<br>(n=131) | Low<br>(n=159) | High<br>(n=133)     | Low<br>(n=159) | High<br>(n=132)         | Low<br>(n=159) |
| Mean | 2.61            | 3.01           | 3.54                | 2.92           | 3.30                    | 3.25           |
| SD   | .68             | .63            | .58                 | .73            | .72                     | .83            |

The results of the independent-samples t-tests showed that there were significant differences between groups in the two belief categories: transmission beliefs ( $df=288$ ,  $t=5.18$ ,  $p=.00$ ) and personal engagement beliefs ( $df=289$ ,  $t=-.788$ ,  $p=.00$ ); no significant difference between groups, however, was found for the category of personal interpretation ( $df=290$ ,  $t=-.528$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Specifically, less proficient learners ( $M=3.01$ ,

SD=.63) tended to view reading as meaning transmission more frequently than their more proficient counterparts ( $M=2.61$ ,  $SD=.68$ ). On the other hand, high-proficiency students ( $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=.58$ ) tended to report viewing reading more commonly as involving personal engagement with a text than low-proficiency students ( $M=2.92$ ,  $SD=.73$ ). As for the category of personal interpretation, learners from the two proficiency groups shared a rather similar view (high achievers:  $M=3.30$ ,  $SD=.72$ ; low achievers:  $M=3.25$ ,  $SD=.83$ ) in that the construction of a private sense of meaning is considered important.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study investigated Taiwanese EFL college students' beliefs about reading in English and assessed the relationships between their beliefs and level of language proficiency. The first research question examined what reading models/beliefs the students bring to reading in English. In other words, the current study looked into whether the three belief models (i.e., transmission, personal engagement, and personal interpretation) can be identified among EFL college students from Taiwan. Consistent with Hsu's (2009) research, the findings of this study suggest that the three models of beliefs about reading can be found among Taiwanese college students when reading in English. Transmission beliefs relate to an emphasis on the importance of transmitting the author's intended meaning through the decoding or memorization of messages presented in text; beliefs of personal engagement focus on readers' personal reactions or emotional responses during the construction of meaning; and beliefs of personal interpretation focus on the importance of readers' own interpretation of a text based on their own personal goals, purposes, or experiences within a particular context (Schraw & Bruning, 1996). Additionally, the current study also suggests that students tend to more commonly apply the beliefs of personal engagement and personal interpretation than transmission beliefs when reading in English. Similar to other research on L2 reading beliefs, the current findings indicate that L2 readers often hold certain beliefs about reading and they also vary in their implicit models of reading (Devine, 1988; Kamhi-Stein, 2003).

The second research question of this study investigated whether EFL college students with different levels of English proficiency may differ in their implicit beliefs about reading. The findings indicate that students

from the low-proficiency group often view reading more commonly as a process of the transmission of meaning from text, whereas students from the high-proficiency group tend to see reading more commonly as involving personal and affective engagement with text. These findings support research on beliefs about learning in the L1 educational field (Chan & Sachs, 2001; Law et al., 2008) indicating that high achievers not only reported more constructivist views of learning but also were less likely to consider learning as reproduction of knowledge and memorization than low achievers. Additionally, the finding that high-achievers' stronger belief on the importance of having personal engagement with text seems to point to the possibility that the reading performance of EFL readers is related to affective factors. It appears that while more proficient readers tend to emphasize the emotional aspect of the experience of reading, less proficient readers are more inclined to mostly focus on cognitive aspect alone.

Moreover, the results of the current research are also consistent with studies on L2 learners' beliefs suggesting that learners' beliefs about language learning are related to their learning outcomes and proficiency levels (Huang & Tsai, 2003; Mantle-Bromley, 1995). In addition to the learning outcomes, the current findings also lend support to Schraw and Bruning's (1996; 1999) and Schraw's (2000) studies on reading beliefs and text comprehension. In general, their studies revealed that American college students who scored high on a transaction model of reading had a higher recall of text than those who scored high on a transmission model. The findings of this study seem to indirectly support the link between transaction beliefs and better comprehension of text.

Despite these valuable findings pertaining to EFL learners' beliefs about reading, this study has a number of limitations that point to areas for future research. First, this study utilized a self-reporting questionnaire to investigate students' beliefs about reading. The use of other research methods such as various forms of interview will be helpful to more deeply examine students' beliefs about reading and allow for the possibility of probing into the relations between beliefs and other contextual factors. Another problem with the present study is also related to the use of a questionnaire. Although the instrument, the English Reader Belief Questionnaire, in general had an acceptable level of internal consistency (coefficient  $\alpha = .73$ ), the relatively low reliability for the transmission belief subscale was undesirable. For the future use of this instrument, researchers should seek ways to enhance the reliability

level of the scale such as by revising or increasing the number of the items on the transmission subscale in particular.

The third limitation of the present study has to do with the data concerning the level of the participants' proficiency in English. Since there was a lack of information about students' language performance on the same (or comparable) standardized language test, the distinction between the high- and low-proficiency groups in the study was made primarily based on the university which they attended. Findings from the study should therefore be interpreted with caution.

In addition to issues pertaining to the classification of reader groups, this study is also limited in terms of the impact of reading purposes. Although there are various types of purposes for reading such as reading for an exam or for pleasure, the current study did not take them into consideration. Since the participants in this study were all college freshmen in Taiwan, most of their reading experiences in English are related to test-preparation or confined to academic reading. It is, therefore, still unclear and worth future investigation as to how different reading purposes may influence students' beliefs about reading in English. Finally, research has found close links between the beliefs of EFL readers and use of reading strategies (Devine, 1988; Hsu, 2009, 2012; Kamhi-Stein, 2003) as well as the metacognitive knowledge of reading strategies of EFL readers and EFL proficiency (Zhang, 2001; Zhang & Wu, 2009). In this study, the close relationship between the belief models of EFL readers and their level of proficiency was also found. Future studies using a wider range of methods may further investigate the many aspects of the relationships between reading beliefs, strategy use, and the level of the proficiency of EFL learners.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study set out to investigate Taiwanese EFL college students' beliefs about reading in English as well as the relationships between their beliefs and level of language proficiency. The results indicated that the three models of beliefs about reading (i.e., the transmission, personal engagement, and personal interpretation beliefs) can be found among Taiwanese college students when reading in English. Participants of this study also varied in their implicit models of reading. More specifically, students from the low-proficiency group tended to view reading more commonly as a process of the transmission of meaning from text,

whereas students from the high-proficiency group tended to see reading more commonly as involving personal and affective engagement with text. However, no significant difference was found between the two groups for the category of personal interpretation.

Pedagogically, the findings of this study highlight the importance of raising students' awareness about the types of beliefs they bring to reading in English. Such awareness might be particularly important for less proficient readers since it was found that they tended to more frequently view reading as mere decoding or memorization of information than did their more proficient counterparts. Since previous research has shown that constructivist beliefs were related to text comprehension (Law et al., 2008) and L2 readers' beliefs were related to their reading behavior and use of strategies (Devine, 1988; Kamhi-Stein, 2003; Hsu, 2009), it seems that the preconceived beliefs these less proficient readers have about reading in English may have a negative effect on their reading performance.

It is therefore suggested that reading teachers should help students examine and reflect on their beliefs. In particular, L2 reading instructors may explicitly discuss students' beliefs about reading during regular class time or may incorporate such discussion as part of instruction in strategies. The explicit discussion of reading beliefs may be expected to lead to personal reflection by the students on the role of the reader in the reading process. As pointed out by Schraw and Bruning (1996), classroom discussion of beliefs has been rare even with the current instructional emphasis on constructive reading. In addition, students should also be encouraged to explore the possible linkage between their own beliefs about reading and their ways of approaching texts. It is believed that such discussion will not only help students gain better control over their own reading process but also help teachers diagnose the possible sources of students' reading problems or their difficulties in the use of strategies.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A. The English Reader Belief Questionnaire

Directions: Listed below are statements about what people believe concerning reading in English. Note that there is no right or wrong answer for each statement. Please circle the number (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Five numbers follow each statement (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), and each number means the following:

- 1 = completely disagree
- 2 = disagree
- 3 = somewhat agree
- 4 = agree
- 5 = completely agree

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. When reading in English, I often get totally absorbed in what I'm reading.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. When reading in English, I often have strong emotional responses to what I read.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. When reading in English, I think good readers remember exactly what the book says.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. When reading in English, I focus on what the book really means rather than what the book actually says.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. When reading in English, I think readers should not stray far from the author's intended meaning.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. When reading in English, I like to imagine I am living through the experience myself when I read.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. When reading in English, I like to interpret what I read in my own unique way.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. When reading in English, I like to form my own interpretation of what I read, even if the book is technical. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. When reading in English, I think people should agree on what a book means.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**英語學習者的閱讀信念與語言能力之探究**

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本篇研究報告主旨為檢視臺灣大學生的英語閱讀信念模式，以及探討他們的閱讀信念和英語能力之間的關係。研究參與者為297位來自兩所不同學校的大一新生，研究方法採問卷調查，研究工具為英語閱讀信念量表及背景資料問卷。研究結果顯示臺灣大學生在閱讀英語時，會採用三個閱讀信念模式，分別為知識傳遞模式、自我投入模式、自我解讀模式。此外，學生的英語閱讀信念模式會隨語言能力高低有所不同，低成就的學生比較常採用知識傳遞的閱讀模式，而高成就的學生比較容易採用自我情感投入的閱讀模式。然而在針對第三類閱讀信念——自我解讀模式，這兩組學生的表現則並無顯著不同。

關鍵詞：閱讀信念、潛在的閱讀模式、語言能力、第二語閱讀、英語教學