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English Medium Instruction in Qatari Independent Schools: An Intervention to Improve Qatari Middle-Schoolers' Strategies for Reading EFL Science Materials

This presentation reports findings from an intervention study to improve adolescent English learners' use of reading strategies for comprehending science material. The study was conducted in Qatari preparatory schools where the language of instruction for science classes has recently switched from English to Arabic, but a new course dubbed "Scientific English" has been initiated to promote the learning of English scientific vocabulary. Baseline information was collected on reading demands, instructional practices, and student strategy use on a bilingual reading comprehension task. Data include analyses of three curricular genres, 24 classroom observations, 101 teacher surveys, 45 verbal protocols of learners performing the comprehension task, and over 800 self-reports of strategy use on the comprehension task. Data were collected across 12 preparatory schools (6 male, 6 female). In this presentation I introduce the study and its research goals and analyzes the implications of curricular reading demands for strategy use (Oxford, 2011), comparing two textbooks (English and Scientific English) and one activity genre. Results of the analysis are compared with reading difficulties encountered by the students completing the verbal protocols.