Abstract

Studies examining learners’ text marking displayed some limitations. First, for the most part these studies measured recall as a learning outcome. Very few studies measured inference and none measured transfer. Second, when describing marked text, these studies mainly used two categories: high and low level sentences, and main and subordinate ideas. This classification is insufficient to explore the relationship between learners’ text marking and expected learning outcomes. Third, studies providing instructions for learners on what and how much to mark geared learners towards one learning outcome; mostly recall, thus missed on capturing the effects of different prompts that direct learners’ expectations to more than one outcome.

This research used nStudy, an online learning tool that allows learners to mark text and logs detailed traces of marking, and provided a detailed description of what and how much learners’ marked, using a set of sentence identifiers, such as terms, explanations, main ideas, consequences...etc., when learners are requested to study for recall and transfer tasks. The study also tested the effect of learners’ marking on learners’ performance on recall and transfer tasks. Moreover, it examined the effect of showing learners examples of kinds of information relevant to answering recall or transfer test questions on learners’ performance.

Findings reveal that recall and transfer prompts do have an effect on learners’ total marking and some of the categories learners choose to mark. Also, marking text related to recall/ transfer questions enhances learners’ performance on these tasks. Moreover, in transfer tasks, marking parts of text unrelated to transfer questions did enhance learners’ performance in those tasks. On the other hand, showing learners’
examples of kinds of information relevant to answering recall and transfer test questions do not have an effect on learners’ marking nor performance on transfer and recall tests. These findings suggest that the goal/reason learners have when they are marking affects their marking as well as their learning.