

# Learning Paragraph Structure with Online Annotations: An Interactive Approach to Enhancing EFL Reading Comprehension

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## Abstract

An important element of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) reading instruction is helping students to recognize paragraph elements and to comprehend the main idea of a paragraph. This study proposed an interactive approach and constructed an online annotation system, Paragraph Annotator, to assist EFL students in learning paragraph structure. It allows readers to analyze paragraphs of text on web pages by noting any paragraph element (topic sentence, controlling idea, or supporting details) in the paragraph. In addition, users can use annotation tools to add their personal ideas to the highlighted element. An experiment was conducted to evaluate the effect of Paragraph Annotator on reading comprehension for EFL students. The results reveal that students using Paragraph Annotator had significantly better performance in both the Cued Recall Test and the Free Recall Test. Most notably, the effects of the system were more evident when tested with the Free Recall Test, when students were not provided with any cues. Participants using the system responded positively to Paragraph Annotator, with respect to perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude to use, and intention to use. Limitations and opportunities for future research are also discussed.

Keyword : Paragraph structure; Reading comprehension; Online annotation; Computer-assisted language learning