

META-ANALYSIS OF READING STRATEGY USAGE IN ESL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract:

Purpose of the study: To create awareness among the practitioners including students as well as teachers regarding the application of reading strategies to compensate the lack of proficiency in terms of reading. It also aims at assessing the existing model of teaching reading in institutions and achievement rate of strategy intervention for second language learners.

Methodology: Meta-analysis method has been used to do this study, where the articles and thesis related to the reading strategies were downloaded from Scopus and ProQuest databases.

Main Findings: The study found that however, problem solving, and global strategies are playing significant role in reading comprehension, supporting strategies serves the base. Therefore, ESL students require systematic training from the basic (i.e supporting strategies)

Applications of this study: The study can be applied in terms of research as well as teaching and learning. Future research can be done on the level-based strategy intervention and its effects. Teachers can use this idea to define techniques to teach reading strategies based on level of the learners and students can test their proficiency and use this as a guide to self-learning process.

Novelty/Originality of this study: Most of the research works on reading strategies concentrated on the applications of strategies and its effectiveness in the reading process. Yet, the differences in the reading strategy deployment based on the levels of the learners are neglected. Hence, present study classified the strategies according to the proficiency and grade levels of students.

Keywords: Classification of strategies, ESL, Reading Skill, Reading Strategies, Teacher's role.

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of the term ELT (English language teaching) is to teach basic language skills. Among these skills listening and speaking are termed as recognition skills and reading, and writing are productive skills. Since reading is a decoding process, students are expected to know the exact pronunciation of textual words, to recognize graphic marks and to comprehend the text after reading. So, they need reading strategies to facilitate their reading skills. Reading strategies help the students to read the text more efficiently in short time. There are many distinctive types of language learning strategies listed out by the proponents of the field (Rubin, 1981 & O'Malley et. al, 1985). As such there are three important forms of reading strategies which are widely focused in an academic reading setting. They are cognitive, Supportive and Metacognitive reading strategies (Sheorey & Mokhtari 2001). Cognitive reading strategies are actions carried out by the reader at the time of reading and Metacognitive strategies are its advanced versions which monitors the cognitive process of every individual and supportive strategies are aid used by readers during the prior mentioned activities (i.e Cognitive and metacognitive). Hence, students are always likely to have proper guidance in terms of strategy usage. Beforehand, teachers want to be aware of certain techniques to teach reading strategies to the students. It helps students to learn how to use strategy in a situation when they stammer to understand the text. Strategy is an inventive and multilevel process for teaching students to improve the learning process by self. In the same way, reading strategies are particular actions or techniques as a part of self-learning [1]. So, Strategies instruction ought to be mandatory in ESL classrooms. On a note the present review article highlights the strategy intervention programs around the globe in ESL context and consider the techniques and outcomes through strategy intervention. The study found that so far, the emphasis has been given on strategies application, intervention, outcome and learning methods and differences from one place to another. Whereas learning ability of the learners in each stage is been neglected. Their zone of learning a strategy as per level and context have been ignored. With this note the

study suggested to have some clarity regarding the teaching process as per level and suggested to maintain some criteria over it. It has also given an idea of classifications of some activity-based strategies which are suitable and learnable for the learners from different level by means of age as well as proficiency. In addition, this review paper focused keenly on,

- The role of the teacher in creating awareness among the students to use strategies while reading.
- To stress the need for a strategy intervention to enhance the self-learning of students.
- To find the gaps in implementing supportive strategies comparing to problem-solving and global strategy.

READING STRATEGY

Strategies are defined as methods which are adopted by the learners to acquire target language. Learners have ample options in selecting suitable techniques to facilitate their reading according to the situation. It also helps them for independent language learning which creates learner-centred learning and add on some responsibility [2]. Reading strategies are reader's goal-directed actions in interpreting a text [3]. Research on this particular field emerged not only for the reason it is related to student's usage but also the way it associated with comprehension[4]. Further, it reveals that it is mostly employed by students of all level based on their ability and essentiality. Three common activity-oriented strategies are being used by the student while reading. Unlike cognitive, metacognitive and supportive these strategies refer to certain actions which directly involves with minute process of reading. They are, Problem-solving strategy, Global strategy and Supportive strategy.

Problem-solving strategies involve aspects like recapturing the content, visualizing the concept, paying closer attention to the text, re-reading and so on. Global strategies concentrate on background knowledge, having the purpose of reading, selection of content, using illustrations to increase understanding, skimming the text and so. Finally, supportive strategies involve techniques like using dictionaries, summarizing the content, underlining the information, self-questioning, discussing while reading [5]. Apart from these

strategies, there are few more strategies like top down, bottom up strategy, top-level structure strategy and no top-level structure strategy.

The examined research outputs exposed the anticipated outcomes as of now. Among which some of the researchers acclaimed the use of problem-solving strategies in general. [6], observes the effects of gender, reading anxiety and language learning experience in applying reading strategies. The findings revealed that a problem-solving strategy is the most frequently used strategy. Female students show much interest in adopting problem-solving strategy than male. It is consistent with some of the other studies related to gender and reading strategy use [7]. Further, the high anxiety group implemented the problem-solving strategy in reading comparing to lower level anxiety people. An attempt with research shows that there is a significant gender difference in the use of reading strategies [8]. In their research work, [8] stated that females are good in using strategies than male but only with the exception in top-down strategy.

Whenever students attempted to apply strategies while reading, they succeed in comprehending the text more efficiently. Moreover, students are using some of the strategies unconsciously. Instead, if they are aware of using strategies, that will be helpful for them to comprehend the text. Results of an experimental study [9] proved that there is a tendency among students to use problem-solving skills which have a mean of 3.59 following that global strategy holds mean value of 3.18 and supportive strategy as 3.17. The result is similar to the results of Nisbet & Huang [1]. They have also stated that students are capable of using strategies in different occurrence level while reading based on their necessities.

Maarof & Yaacob (2011) had given a new dimension to the existing studies as they assessed the differentiation in terms of mother tongue and target language. They found the least differences which is actually noteworthy as following,

Strategies have been used in common (i.e L₁ & L₂)

- Skimming the text
- Changing the speed of reading
- Self-encouraging to read the tricky part of the text
- Close attention to the text
- Discussion with friends
- Clarifying doubts with teachers

Strategies use only in L₁ process

- Notes taking
- Illustrating the content in mind
- Using reference texts like dictionaries
- Briefing the text according to our understanding

As a breakthrough it is agreed that L₁ strategies are somewhat influencing in the L₂ process, which assured that strategies are transferable and equal for all aspect of language learning process in as many contexts. It also registered that there is no gender difference among students while employing global strategies. With consistent to the above discussed studies girls are again holding good position as they are good in vocabulary recognition however on contrast, boys are good at paraphrasing. Similarly, Brantmeier (2000) used global and local strategies in his research and found that comprehension is the only difference between male and female student's reading process and there is no significant difference among gender in the use of reading strategies.

TEACHING READING STRATEGY AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS

English language teacher plays an important role in developing the second language skills of the non-native learners. Modern Language Association of America has framed a qualification criterion of seven levels. They are,

- Aural understanding
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Language Analysis
- Culture
- Professional Preparation

Among these, three levels of excellence fall into reading as ability to read difficult materials easily, ability to read with immediate comprehension of the text, ability to grasp the meaning of content like simple, nontechnical prose except for some words (Verghese,1989). Teachers hold primary importance and responsibility in starting strategy intervention from the primary level itself. They have to support the students to understand the new concepts, scaffold them in adapting new method of study, maintaining the class with enthusiasm. Effective teachers are always aware of students needs and they will teach according to that. (Rosenshine, 1995 and Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2005). Further, there had been many studies conducted to see the effectiveness of this strategy instruction. Nevertheless, it paves way for the student to develop self-learning.

Carrell and his fellow researchers (Carrell, Pharis & Liberto, 1989) presented a study which deals with the effect of strategy training to develop the reading skill with the aid of semantic mapping and ETR (experience, text, relationship). They have improved the readability of students and their scores in post-test session. Strategy instruction proves to be effective while comparing the scores of pre and post-test (Karen A. Carrier, 2003 and Dadour & Robbins, 1996). Moreover, a study conducted by Mallory Clarke (2003) dealt with the issues of using reading strategies on both side that is student and teacher. In an experimental study she has classified students based on their test performances as below level, nearer to grade level and expert readers. In case of expert readers and nearer level the result of using strategies was good but in case of below levels the remedial process had undergone to find out their problem as they stated clearly. Some of the learners affected by the learning disability and the rest escaped the session when they are asked to do comprehension or reading exercises. Few have some emotional problem while reading. But one sort of people stated that they are influenced by their own culture where the words are pronounced and used differently according to the context. Soon she switches over to gain the feedback of teacher as who expressed the common problem as the curriculum and traditional classroom set up.

Strategic instruction is often considered as the participatory work. Because when students involve themselves in strategic learning then only, they can gain the acquisition of language. In a study undergone by [14] proved that high proficiency students use cognitive academic language learning approach (CALLA). In this study they have given two stages of training program namely metacognitive knowledge and cultivation of self-regulation. In case of metacognition it is purely awareness based interactional and orientation instruction among small group. However, the next stage focused solely on self-reflection. The only important factor in accomplishing this strategy is student's trust on others during learning process. Therefore, the study reveals that the pedagogical initiatives that incorporated in strategy instruction are suitable for language learning.

Teaching reading strategies mainly concerned four aspects namely,

- Summarizing,
- Questioning,
- Clarifying,
- Predicting

The existing studies assured the effectiveness of reading strategies. Yet creamy layer students (high proficiency) not considered for the experimentation. The major stakeholders of these kind of studies are low proficiency and intermediate level students. Similarly, technology-based strategy instruction study has been conducted with three model as follows.

- Interactive study guide
- Contacts session.
- Technology enhanced features.

Through interactive study guide students gain knowledge through tasks and encouragement, in contact session they learn additional information and in technological enhanced features students confront digital learning content also.

CLASSIFICATION OF STRATEGIES BASED ON THE LEVELS OF LEARNERS

The classification of learning strategies also exerted influence on the categorization of reading strategies. Paris, Wasik & Turner (1996) has classified strategies based on the stages while reading as,

- Pre-reading strategies

- During reading strategies
- After reading strategies

Hence, it is further classified based on what should be taught for the particular level of learners. In that basic strategies were classified for primary and tertiary level students. Primary learners are usually elementary school students of 3-5 class, who has been learning the basics. For those students, teacher must give confidence to learn. By providing the strategies they can cultivate the further ability to acquire the language skills. Through strategies they develop interest among the subject, idea about the content of study and it will retain for long time even after the certain reading task. In contrast the tertiary

learners used to learn everything in simple step. They just need the assistance of teacher to proceed in right path. Since, the tertiary learners have to read on their own in higher education level, knowing the strategies will enhance their self-learning. The following tabular column shows the classification of strategies based on the levels. Usually in classes students are involved to learn everything in collaborative task with group participation. Therefore, the classification was done on Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, by adhering concept learning is conceivable through interface with culture, social context and with people. All these techniques have some unique differences.

Table I: Classification of strategies based on the levels of learners

LEARNER'S LEVEL		PRIMARY LEARNERS	TERTIARY LEARNERS
READING STRATEGIES	PRE-READING STRATEGIES	Possible sentences	KWHL Chart
		SQR3	Knowledge testing
		Word splash	Expectation outline
		Book Discussion	Directed Reading-Thinking Activity
		Focused mini lesson	Story elements
STRATEGIES DURING READING	Supporting strategy	Using reference materials	Self-questioning
		Read aloud to for better understanding	Tracing to find relationship
		Underline or highlight important points	Discussion with friends
	Global strategy	Think about what you know	Having purpose in mind
		Skimming	Identifying the content which fits for the purpose of reading
		Using tables, pictures for clear understanding	Critically analyzing and evaluating the content
		Guessing the concept	Being conscious about what to read and what not to read
		Using typographical aids like bold face and italics	Checking understanding whenever there is a conflict in understanding
	Problem-solving strategy	Reading slowly but carefully	Adjusting reading speed
		Giving pause while reading for better understanding	Summarizing to reflect important information
		Guessing meaning of the words	Close attention to see the text difference
	AFTER READING STRATEGIES	Summarizing - Nate the gate	Research fair
Answer questions in writing		Learning logs	
Mapmaker		Biography	
Adjective-it is		Write into	
Sequencing		Poetry connection	

Pre-Reading Strategies

Pre-reading strategies are just like a preparation before reading. In primary level teachers give some strategic tasks. They are,

Primary Learners

- Possible Sentences: Students are asked to frame a sentence based on the key words. After reading they can assess whether it is related to the content they are going to read.
- SQR3 [Survey, question, read, recite and review]: At first, students are asked to go for a survey and expected to ask some question through that survey. In the next attempt the have to read and recite the question and also tend to give answer for those question. At last, it can be assessed that whether the answers given by the students are suitable to the content they are going to read.
- Word splash: After collecting random words teacher can ask the students to speak about that word. Then after the reading sessions ask them to correlate the meaning and what they have given.
- Book Discussion: Encouraging students to read for pleasure. Asking them to share about the book they have read recently.
- Focused mini lessons: Teaching mini-lessons to the students and relating it with the major concept.

Tertiary Learners

- KWHL: In KWHL students are asked to fill the column as in K they need to fill the information they known about that topic. In W they can ask for the information which one wants to learn. In H they must fill the procedure to learn that information. Finally, the L column is left free which can be filled after the reading session.
- Expectation outline: In pre-reading strategy students read the text through skimming and write expected questions or outline of the context.
- Directed Reading-Thinking Activity: It is a strategy in which students are asked to predict about the lessons and then make them to confirm after reading.
- Story Elements: creating the ability of students to identify the elements of story like plot, character, climax and setting. Then they can match it with reading context. It also helps them to write story of their own.
- Knowledge Testing: Before reading the context, the teacher asks some questions related to the topic.

During Reading Strategies

This is the most important stage where reader has to concentrate on reading alone. A reader needs to be conscious enough to employ strategies in this session. In this phase the applications of strategies differ based on the ability and skill of learners as problem-solving strategies, supporting strategies and global strategies.

After Reading Strategies

After reading strategies are to test their comprehension level of the text. These strategies aid students as well as teachers to assess improvement in reading and efficacy of using strategies.

Primary learners

- Summarizing: Students are asked to summarize the concept they have acquired from book.
- Sequencing: Rearranging the shuffled story as in order.
- Answers questions in writing: it is like answering comprehension question after the completion of the lesson.
- Map Maker: Creating map based on the text. For instance, mind map.
- Adjective-itis: selecting some the adjectives from the text and speaking about that.
- Strategies used while reading: There are three main strategies which students as well as teacher applied during reading exercise to get rid of all those reading problems. They are problem-solving, global and supportive strategies.

Tertiary Learners

- Research Fair: After reading students are asked to prepare power point presentation on the topic.
- Learning Logs: asking students to write the concept they have learned from the text. It consisted of following questions like content of reading, difference between their prediction and actual concept, difficulties of learning material.
- Write into writing our own assumption about the character, when it was disappeared from the play.
- Biography: Writing biography of the author.
- Poetry connection: Integrating poetry into the concept.

Therefore, these classifications of strategies based on the levels of learners helps the students to access self-learning. But teachers play prominent role in the initial stage to exhibit these strategies. They monitor the students while reading and assess the purpose and effects of using strategy. Moreover, they have to bring out the idea that the applications of strategy result in effective reading.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Results from the reviewed articles showed that problem-solving and global strategies are the most often utilized strategy by the students than the supporting strategies. Therefore, there is a need to introduce techniques, which are related to supporting strategies to ESL students. Moreover, problem-solving and global strategies are utilized by higher language proficiency students. Further, most of the previous researches prove that high ability students deploy more reading strategies while reading. However, in an ESL context, even the higher language proficiency students seem to use very few supporting strategies while reading due to some problems. They are; lack of skilled teachers in schools, insufficient time to develop their reading skills, exam-oriented teaching and, learning system. In such cases

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

Since the study used meta-analysis method, it does not cover most of the research works. Further, it generally speaks about the ESL learners. So, the future study can be carried out on specific set of learners with certain criteria and it can be extended as an experimental study by following the classifications suggested regarding the techniques and levels.

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supporting strategies will be helpful for the learners, particularly in the Indian context. A Supportive strategy which includes techniques like,

- Taking notes while reading
- Reading aloud to help comprehend quickly
- Summarizing the content to make sure of the points
- Discussing with friends for clear understanding
- Underlining or highlighting the word for clarity
- Using reference materials like dictionary and encyclopaedia
- Paraphrasing
- Rereading
- Self-questioning

These supportive strategies may help students to overcome the existing issues. Therefore, teachers should have knowledge of strategies to make the students aware of the way to employ the reading strategies.

CONCLUSION

Hence, strategy-based teaching and learning have to be encouraged in schools. The students and teachers require writing and reading across the curriculum. There are some inadequacies on executing this strategy-based instruction in schools for teachers as well as to students. Another problem in implementing strategy-based teaching is a gender difference in using strategies. In most of the research discussed above proved that female students are skillful than males in using these strategies. Thus, there are some suggestions on how to incorporate reading strategy training at schools. They are,

- Reading strategies can be taught in addition to reading comprehension.
- Along with reading comprehension passages, a strategy used while reading can also be tested.
- The teacher can use reading strategies through task-based activity or any other gaming activity.
- Often makes the students answer difficult questions to develop the comprehending skill. It also helps them to solve complex problems and apply some techniques to overcome those problems.
- Management can frame syllabus or schedule separately for these strategic settings.

To overcome this, the teacher should take part in creating awareness among the students. Teachers can employ newer techniques or any other means to teach strategies. For instance, by forming groups, the teacher can make the student learn in participation. It will enhance their reading comprehension as well. Thus, the study suggests the importance of supportive strategies and stresses the need at finding means for the implementation of supportive strategy with some other study skills in the future.

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