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ASSESSING THE SELF-PERCEIVED USE OF READING STRATEGIES IN ESL READING COMPREHENSION: A NEEDS ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

Despite great appreciation on the important roles played by metacognitive reading strategies in the attainment of comprehension, heightened prevalence of reading difficulties is depicted among Malaysian learners. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating the current status of self-perceived use of metacognitive reading strategies among the ESL learners in six secondary schools in one of the districts in Sabah. Utilizing an adapted version of Revised Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategy Inventory (MARSIR), data was obtained from 274 ESL learners in the same district. Descriptive analysis was used to determine the mean scores of three sub reading strategies, namely global reading strategies, problem-solving strategies and support strategies. The findings revealed that despite being aware of the use of metacognitive reading strategies, little emphasis was given on optimizing the use of global reading and support strategies, resulting in only medium usage of these two strategies. Therefore, it may be concluded that the findings implied the need to develop a reading comprehension module that incorporates the use of metacognitive reading strategies within reading comprehension instruction to facilitate Malaysian ESL learners to improve their reading comprehension.

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**Keywords:**

ESL Learners, Metacognitive, Reading, Secondary, Strategies

Introduction

Language globalization shifts the focal point of reading proficiency from word- or text-based deciphering to meaning negotiation through metacognitive integration. Successful comprehension and appropriate interpretation of information now revolve around readers' ability to understand and critically evaluate the textual information (Pressley, 2000) by merging the presented evidence with their background knowledge, experiences, attitudes and language society (Aziza & Abu Bakar, 2019; Semtin & Maniam, 2015). As an instructional tool for knowledge acquisition in academic settings (Maasum & Maarof, 2012), inability to acquire reading skills will negatively impact many aspects of the learners' life as the lack of comprehension skill impedes learning progress (Woolley, 2011).

However, despite the heightened concern on the importance of reading skills, the poor reading performance of Malaysian learners depicted through the results of reading in Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) 2012 and 2018 (OECD, 2012; 2019) is an attestation to the learners' current appalling conditions. The results denote that although Malaysian learners are able to draw textual inferences, the increase in text complexity hinders the learners' ability to manoeuvre through the texts.

A countermeasure to address this predicament of poor reading comprehension skills is through explicit utilization of both cognitive and metacognitive reading comprehension strategies to ensure a valid transaction of meanings between the reader and the text. Therefore, developing adequate reading comprehension strategies in English is pivotal as they improve readers' understanding, overcome reading difficulties, and counterbalance knowledge related to the text (Oktovia & Fitriana, 2017). Based on this assertion, this study investigated the current status of self-perceived use of metacognitive reading strategies among the ESL learners in six secondary schools in one of the districts in Sabah through the employment of Revised Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategy Inventory (MARSIR) developed by Mokhtari et al. (2018). This needs analysis will therefore determine the extent of necessity for the explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies for the ESL learners in Sabah.

Literature Review***Definition of Reading Strategies***

Research on reading comprehension in recent decades have been fixated on reading comprehension strategies (Wibowo et al., 2020) as scholars in the field of reading comprehension (Pressley, 2006) are adamant that successful reading requires readers to have good judgment on the selection of effective reading strategies (Lian & Azlina, 2020) in order to merge the elicited textual information with background knowledge (Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

Defined as complex yet conscious plan of reader's cognitive and metacognitive processes (Cohen, 1998), reading strategies are the selection and application of comprehension processes the readers made to understand textual information and interpret it appropriately (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). The enhancement of reading proficiency through the development of efficient cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007) often resulted in better academic performance (Fatemi et al., 2018). These two reading comprehension strategies are further discussed in the following sub-sections.

Cognitive Reading Strategies

Cognitive reading strategies are localized, focused techniques readers use while working with the text (Ahmad et al., 2020; Ajideh et al., 2018; Singhal, 2001) and applied throughout problem-solving tasks (Aziza & Abu Bakar, 2019) to understand the textual information that help learners in gaining knowledge or understanding of a task (Al Roomy & Alhawsawi, 2019). Moreover, good readers are active users of their cognitive resources, and they direct these in such a way that enhances successful completion of a task (Shih, 1992).

One of the cognitive pre-reading comprehension strategies is predicting. Using available textual evidence to envision what will come next in the text (Bailey, 2015) is the most common predicting strategy. Utilizing the information presented on the text to anticipate the content of the text, making predictions allow readers to set a purpose for reading, monitor their understanding, to either confirm or reject ideas about the content of the text (Al Roomy & Alhawsawi, 2019), thus engages them actively in reading process.

In order to make good prediction, readers need to know how to scan and skim the text for information. Scanning which is also known as quick reading is a pre-reading cognitive strategy (Fauzi, 2018; Yusuf et al., 2017) that focuses on locating predetermined information by quickly scuttling across sentences. It is often employed when the reader knows what information is required and is aware of how it looks like, hence knows what to search for and knows when the information needed has been found. As a valuable skill to retrieve information relevant to a purpose, scanning entices learners' anticipation on what they want to learn. Some suggested scanning activities include locating specific words, speed reading to look for relevant information, and searching for short simple answers (Fauzi, 2018; Yusuf et al., 2017).

Coupled with scanning is another cognitive activity known as skimming. This activity also happens in pre-reading stage. Sometimes referred to as gist reading, skimming helps the readers know what the text is about (Fauzi, 2018; Yusuf et al., 2017) by allowing them to read quickly, normally focusing only on the first few lines of each paragraph in the text. Readers use skimming strategy to grasp an overview of the passage and to determine if the text deserves a more careful reading. However, skimming is a more challenging skill to acquire as compared to scanning because apart from locating the gist of the text, skimming also requires readers to recall and sequence the information. A common skimming activity that can be carried out in ESL reading classroom is SQ3R (survey, question, read, review and recite).

Brown (1994) reckons that these two most valuable pre-reading strategies that should be acquired by learners are often used together. Efficient scanning of the text is only attainable when the readers have some ideas of the text content. As scanning is less complicated than skimming, Pugh (1978) suggested that this strategy should be introduced first. As skimming involves a thorough overview of a text and higher level of reading competence, learners should therefore be exposed to this strategy later.

As learners advance into while reading stage, they need to be more attentive to signal words or phrases that signify text organization. A cognitive reading strategy that gives hints pertaining to author's intention, paying attention to the structural organization of text facilitates the process of meaning construction (Aziza & Abu Bakar, 2019). However, research evidence highlights on the difficulties of most learners in recalling the meaning of words they encounter in the process of reading (Klinger et al., 2007), thus vocabulary journal can be used to rectify difficulties in lexical recalls.

Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words is also a critical cognitive while reading strategy. Instead of relying solely on dictionaries for difficult words or skipping unfamiliar words (Anderson, 1991), retrieving the meaning of words from contextual clues can be performed through linguistics context or situational context (Miholic, 1994). As guessing can be carried out at word, sentence or text level, readers can either analyse the grammatical form of the unfamiliar words or use previous information or other sentences to understand the context in which the words are used (Barnett, 1988; Miholic, 1994).

However, if contextual guesses fail, using dictionary parsimoniously (Cohen, 1990) can also be permitted. Using vocabulary journal, learners are allowed to use the dictionary for the unfamiliar words that seem important (Anderson, 1991; Cohen, 1990; Padron & Waxman, 1988) and transfer this into their vocabulary journal. Although total dependent on dictionary is prohibited as it is believed to impede comprehension (Miholic, 1994), neglecting the use of dictionary is undesirable as well. This is due to the reason that inability to guess the unfamiliar words through linguistics and contextual clues and resort to omitting those unfamiliar words may result in the readers missing important information presented on the written materials (Oxford, 1990).

Another effective post reading cognitive strategy as suggested by Rusciollelli (1995) is making notes. Besides retaining important information and readers' focus on the text, note taking increases reader's ability to organize ideas by identifying main ideas and supporting details (Cohen, 1990; Padrón & Waxman, 1988). This strategy was highlighted extensively in reading comprehension classroom because learners are required to locate main points and supporting details and to retain the information, learners need to summarize them thus utilize this strategy. Activities such as mind-mapping, story mapping and 5-fingers retell are among the suggested activities that support the use of this strategy.

Besides note taking, rereading can also be considered as effective post reading strategy. This strategy helps to recall textual information, thus strengthen readers' understanding on the text (Auerbach & Paxton, 1997; Miholic, 1994). Rereading improves readers' comprehension as text structure is becoming more apparent over repeated reading (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). Successful rereading can be modelled by structuring process of discoveries

pertaining to linguistic and contextual difficulties of the text. Reinforcement activity to enhance the new knowledge can be applied to strengthen the learning process. Although this strategy is not apparent in the reading activities, it is often practiced unconsciously during the teaching and learning process. Learners were encouraged to utilize this strategy when they confront uncertainties that need repetitive reading.

Lastly, rectifying difficulties in second language reading through the use of first language is also a facilitative cognitive strategy (Oxford, 1990). However, over dependence on translation to first language while reading will diminish one's understanding and resulted in mechanical reading as they are unable to draw conclusion from what they read (Cohen, 1990). In this study, the use of first language is selective and minimal. It is the last resort and only can be used when the learners really have difficulties in understanding the concept or the text. However, word-for-word translation is prohibited as this will only hinder the process of reading comprehension.

Metacognitive Reading Strategies

Metacognitive reading strategies on the other hand, are conscious and flexible plans that readers employ to establish reading purposes (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). They are indicative of readers' ability to make sense of the presented information and to help them with task completion. Metacognitive strategies are also known as flexible repertoire of self-monitoring and self-regulating behaviours used by readers to plan, monitor and regulate the reading as it takes place (Huo & Cho, 2020; Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002).

The planning stage involves actions such as setting a purpose for reading a particular text and adjusting the reading according to the purpose and the difficulty of the text. Monitoring, on the other hand, requires an awareness of whether the goals of reading are being achieved or not and thus, an understanding of the comprehension failures encountered. Regulation happens when the readers check the effectiveness of the strategies they have used and remedy the comprehension failures with a conscious attempt to revise the strategies.

In brief, metacognitive reading strategies refer to a reader's overall understanding of the cognitive processes taking place in reading. The seven common metacognitive strategies are making connections, asking questions, making inferences, determining importance, synthesizing information, and visualizing.

The first metacognitive strategy that a good reader uses is making connections. Learners make connections between the new information and their previous experience or knowledge all throughout the reading process as to identify misconceptions and to determine whether to support or deny their predictions (Zimmerman & Hutchins, 2003). According to Amalia and Devanti (2016), text comprehension refers to understanding beyond words level. It refers to situation in which the readers are aware of the context of the text, are able to construct meaning from the text, and understand the intention of the authors.

Making connection to derive meanings from the text require the inclusion of readers' background knowledge into the reading process. Background knowledge can be activated through connecting previous knowledge with the information presented on the text. It is important for the learners to connect to the text by drawing on their previous experiences or

prior knowledge as this action helps them to understand the text better. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) also pointed out that comprehension is normally escalated when learners can relate the story or information portrayed on the text to their background knowledge or similar experiences. Therefore, activation of learners' background knowledge is important in pre-reading stage. The importance of relating previous experience and background knowledge for predictions is reflected in the Schema Theory (Carrell et al., 1989; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Smith et al., 2021) which highlights on the importance of readers' existing knowledge and their ability to comprehend texts.

Questioning is the second metacognitive reading strategy employed by good readers. Correct application of questioning technique clarifies readers' doubts by providing explanation on the matter concerned. Apart from increase the learners' level of comprehension, questioning allows the learners to interact with the text, resulting in the increase in learners' active participation and more engaging learning situations. The versatility of this technique makes it applicable into whole-class teaching. Two common suggested activities that focus on questioning techniques are self-questioning and 5W1H questions. Sadly, instead of promoting and fostering learners' own questions, schools place heavy emphasis on the answers to the questions (Amalia & Devanti, 2016; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

The third metacognitive reading strategy is making inference. Inferring which refers to the process of coming to a conclusion through reasoning based on textual evidence is a common metacognitive reading strategy. Inferences are drawn based on readers' interpretation and textual information. According to Harvey and Goudvis (2007), readers infer by reading between the lines and establishing coherence by connecting all information and ideas. Inferring in reading happens when readers draw conclusion with supported judgement. In reading comprehension classrooms, inferring activities can be introduced to learners by using picture task cards, thought bubbles with text or using various pieces of information are some activities suggested in ESL reading comprehension classrooms.

The fourth metacognitive reading strategy is being able to determine importance. According to Zimmerman and Hutchins (2003), good readers are able to identify key ideas or themes as they read and they can distinguish between important and unimportant information. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) later point out that determining what is important in a text may not be easy for students. Hence, teachers need to model explicitly teaching how to distinguish between important and unimportant information to determine comprehension.

Monitoring their understanding and repairing faulty comprehension is also a common metacognitive reading comprehension strategy used in ESL classrooms. Frequently students will read page after page without stopping to monitor their understanding. Explicit teaching on problem-solving strategies to remedy unknown words, confusing passages will ensure better comprehension result in the students. Listening to one's inner voice while reading helps one keep track of his or her own thinking, clarify confusion, and allow one to stop, think and react to the information they read (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

Another important metacognitive reading strategy is synthesizing. Synthesize information within and across texts is another metacognitive reading strategy used by good readers. It is considered to be one of the most complex reading comprehension strategy. When readers are

able to synthesize information, they are able to see the bigger picture as they read. They are also able to track their thinking as it evolves during reading, to get the overall meaning (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Prior to the application of this strategy, the module in this study used the cognitive strategy of note making to complement this strategy. Synthesizing happens only after the learners are able to differentiate the importance of the information in the text.

The seventh effective metacognitive reading strategy is visualizing. This strategy should be employed especially when there is a need for delayed retention (Anderson, 1991; Knight et al., 1985; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Visualization helps readers to fill in informational gaps in the text and to comprehend it by merging prior experiences and the text to create visual images. (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Good readers visualize and create mental images as they read, and remember the text information better and relate the ideas to the to the incoming ideas in the text (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Padrón & Waxman, 1988) as they become emotionally involved with what they read (Zimmerman & Hutchins, 2003). Visual images such as pictures and photos can be used in texts and worksheets to guide the use of this strategy.

Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies

In academic setting, there is a clear consensus among researchers that metacognitive strategies catalyse effective reading comprehension. Cognitive processing is more crucial for less-skilled readers because they tend to use surface strategy such as focusing on the details in the text, rather than deep strategy such as focusing on main ideas of the text (Cain, 2010). Proficient readers, on the other hand, are able to master and use both cognitive and metacognitive strategies to facilitate text comprehension. They have purpose for reading, monitor comprehension while reading and reflect on their reading process. Moreover, they have conscious, instantiated and flexible plans they can apply and adapt deliberately to a variety of texts and tasks to handle comprehension failures (Pressley & Allington, 1999).

However, employing metacognitive strategies requires the readers to have metacognitive knowledge. As asserted by Zhang and Seepho (2013), metacognitive strategies in reading are those strategies designed to increase readers' knowledge of awareness and control, to improve their reading comprehension, and to evaluate whether their attempt at comprehension has been achieved. A prerequisite for successful monitoring reading, metacognitive awareness on reading strategies helps in strategy evaluation, reading goal attainment and text comprehension. This awareness helps the readers in information recognition, relevant background knowledge activation and reading strategies monitoring and regulation (Carrell et al., 1989; Grabe, 1991).

The key to successful reading comprehension is metacognitive knowledge that involves selection of the appropriate reading comprehension strategies, monitoring and analysing the effectiveness of the strategies and changing them according to tasks and needs. As posited by Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001), the main difference between skilled and less skilled readers is believed to be in the ability that skilled readers possess in engaging in deliberate activities that require thinking, flexible strategies use, and constant self-monitoring. Hence, it is crucial for ESL learners to be aware of how they should employ reading strategies in planning, regulating and evaluating their own reading processes.

Methodology

This quantitative cross-sectional study investigated ESL learners' self-perceived use of metacognitive reading strategies in six secondary schools in one of the districts in Sabah. An adapted version of Revised Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategy Inventory (MARSIR) developed by Mokhtari et al. (2018) were distributed 274 randomly sampled Form Four ESL learners. comprehension. A slight modification was made on MARSIR. Ten-point semantic differential scale ranging from 1 = Never, to 10 = Always was used in this study instead of its original 5-Likert scale, as the researchers felt that semantic differential scale expresses respondents' answer more adequately and conveys more useful information (Taherdoost, 2019) as compared to Likert scale. On average, as the questionnaires were distributed face-to-face, it took the respondents about 10 to 15 minutes to complete them.

The 15 items in MARSIR assess ESL learners' self-perceived use of reading strategies during academic reading through three broad categories of reading strategies: global reading strategies, problem solving strategies and support strategies. Global reading strategies are those intentional, carefully planned strategies by which learners monitor their reading. Problem solving strategies focus on the actions and procedures the readers use while attempting the text whereas support strategies are basic support mechanisms intended to aid the readers in reading.

Results

Data was analysed using descriptive analysis via the IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25. The analysis of mean scores for this study aimed at determining the gap between the current situation of the Form Four ESL learners' use of reading comprehension strategies and the ideal situation

Demographic Background of the Respondents

Upon satisfying the normality assumptions, descriptive statistics were performed to describe the demographic information of the respondents. Among the 274 respondents, there were 83 (30.3%) male Form Four ESL learners and 191 (69.7%) female respondents. Majority of the respondents (33.2%) obtained A in their PT3 English Language result, followed by 25.5% obtained B and 23% got a C in their result. Among the 274 respondents, only one failure (0.4%) was recorded. In terms of self-rated reading proficiency levels, majority of the respondents (59.1%) rated themselves as good reader, 30.7% rated as fair readers, 6.6% self-rated themselves as excellent readers and 3.3% were weak in reading. The details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	83	30.3
	Female	191	69.7
PT3	A	91	33.2
	B	70	25.5
English Result	C	63	23.0
	D	43	15.7
	E	6	2.2

	F	1	0.4
Self-Rated Reading Proficiency	Excellent	18	6.6
	Good	162	59.1
	Fair	84	30.7
	Weak	9	3.3

Analysis of the Self-Perceived Use of Reading Comprehension Strategies

According to Mokhtari et al. (2018), with the maximum score of each item in the questionnaire is set at 5, the scores obtained should be interpreted as high (3.50 and higher), medium (2.50 to 3.49) and low (below 2.49). In the case of this study, as the maximum score was set at 10, the score interpretation was recorded as high (7.00 and higher), medium (5.00 to 6.99) and low (below 4.99).

With the total mean scores recorded at 6.92 (medium), the score for global reading strategies is 6.69 (medium), problem-solving strategies is 7.47 (high) and 6.67 (medium) for support strategies (Table 2). The results indicated that Form Four ESL learners performed only medium usage of global reading strategies (strategies for comprehension monitoring) and support strategies (mechanisms that aid in reading comprehension), but high problem-solving strategies (actions and procedures taken while attempting the text). The total mean score for the use of reading strategies however was still at medium level. Table 2 presents the mean scores for all the 15-items in MARSIR.

Table 2: Mean scores for MARSIR (n = 274)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Indicator (Level)
Global	6.69	1.44	Medium
GS1	6.99	1.82	Medium
GS2	7.13	1.98	High
GS3	6.13	2.02	Medium
GS4	6.83	2.33	Medium
GS5	6.37	1.77	Medium
Problem	7.47	1.36	High
PS1	7.48	1.84	High
PS2	7.44	1.77	High
PS3	6.95	1.95	Medium
PS4	7.77	1.77	High
PS5	7.72	1.78	High
Support	6.67	1.50	Medium
SS1	5.98	2.26	Medium
SS2	6.09	2.49	Medium
SS3	6.52	2.34	Medium
SS4	7.38	2.16	High
SS5	7.34	2.18	High
Total	6.92	1.19	Medium

In detail, the three highest means were all identified in the problem-solving strategies. They were 7.77 in PS4 - re-read to make sure I understand what I'm reading, 7.72 in PS5 - guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases, and 7.48 in PS1 - get back on track when getting

side-tracked or distracted. Contrarily, the three lowest means were identified in SS1, SS2 and GS4. The mean score in support reading strategy was 5.98 in SS1 – make notes while reading, followed by 6.09 in SS2 – read aloud helps me understand what I’m reading and 6.13 in GS3 - make sure the content of the text fits my purpose of reading.

Considering the ideal or desired condition of the Form Four ESL learners at the maximum score of ten, the results indicated gaps in all the scores. By deducting the means scores from the perfect score of ten revealed a 3.08 gap in total mean, 3.31 in global reading strategies, 2.53 in problem-solving strategies and 3.33 in support strategies. Table 3 presents the gaps in the use of reading strategies.

Table 3: Gaps in the Use of Reading Strategies

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Indicator (Level)	Gap (10 - Mean)	Remarks
Global	6.69	1.44	Medium	3.31	
Problem	7.47	1.36	High	2.53	Needs
Support	6.67	1.50	Medium	3.33	identified
Total	6.92	1.19	Medium	3.08	

The reliability test was also performed to determine the internal consistency of the items in the three constructs: global reading strategies, problem solving reading strategies and support reading strategies. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for internal reliability of MARSIR was reported at .87, which is still within the range of .70 to .95 (Nunnally & Berstein, 1994).

Discussion

Needs Analysis

In the attempt to investigate self-perceived use of reading strategies of Form Four ESL Learners, needs analysis was performed. Two classifications of needs namely the necessities and lacks (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) were used to further discuss the findings in this phase. Necessities refer to what needs to be learned to function effectively in a targeted situation. the necessities referred to the ideal conditions of the Form Four ESL learners at the maximum score of ten in MARSIR. Lacks refer to the gap between what the learners already knew and the targeted proficiency while wants are associated with subjective needs of the learners. It is the actual situation as reported by the ESL learners in this study.

Necessities

The language curriculum framework details the levels of language proficiency Form Four ESL learners should achieve in order to be at par with the international standards and meet the demands of global challenges. By placing the Form Four ESL learners at B1 (intermediate) level in CEFR, the necessities of the ESL learners in this study were determined by the reading curriculum (SBELC). As the necessities in this study refer to what the B1 language users have to know in order to function effectively in reading comprehension, thus the CEFR guideline was used as the yardstick to measure the learners’ reading performance.

Generally, the CEFR guideline stated that a B1 user should be able to understand the main points of clear standard inputs on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school or leisure. In detail, apart from explicating the main purposes of reading as to comprehend the ideas in a text, connect them to prior knowledge and apply them into real world situation, the SBELC also stipulates that the Form Four ESL learners should be able to understand the main points and specific details in extended texts on a wide range of familiar topics, to use the contextual clues to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words, to clarify meanings using digital and printed resources, to recognize author's intentions, and to read a variety of genres. These specifications highlighted the importance of using reading strategies to assist the learners' reading comprehension.

However, the allocation of 210 minutes per week (MoE, 2018) for English lessons indicated that ESL learners are exposed to reading activities for a maximum of 60 minutes per week, indicating only a double period reading lesson in a week. This is due to the reason that other skills such as listening, speaking and writing also require the same amount of attention. This leaves little time for learners to practice skills and strategies needed to achieve successful reading comprehension. As previous research highlighted on the inclusion of effective reading strategies to optimize reading comprehension instruction (Taraban et al., 2000; Hong-Nam et al., 2014), thus, the current condition in the ESL learners' use of reading strategies is accountable for the desired outcomes in the learners.

Lacks

The determination of necessities alone is insufficient in the needs analysis as the concern in this study was with the needs of the Form Four ESL learners. The information on what the learners already know feeds paved the way to achieve their necessities. In aligning the ESL learners' lacks with the necessities, the investigations of the learners' current situation focused specifically on their use of reading strategies. This is due to the consistent evidence from previous studies insinuates that awareness and usage of these metacognitive strategies (Aziz et al., 2019; Becirovic et al., 2017; Chamot, 2005; Dardjito, 2019; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001) escalate learners' comprehension of the difficult texts. Hence, in order to achieve the aforementioned B1 level in reading comprehension, the learners' use of reading strategies is no longer just an option but an imperative decision.

Under the circumstances that majority of these learners obtained good grades in English language examination and self-rated themselves as skilled and good readers, the use of global reading strategies and problem-solving strategies should be at high level (Al-Mekhlafi, 2018; Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). However, an interesting observation in the findings from the ESL learners' self-perceived use of reading strategies in this study is the high level of usage only in problem solving reading strategies especially in re-reading to make sure they understand the content, guessing the meaning of unknown words, and getting back on track when distracted. These strategies helped the learners to pay more attention to texts while reading. Although the skilled readers in Mokhtari and Reichard's (2002) study also revealed high usage of problem-solving strategies, this somehow contradicts with the findings from Pammu et al.'s (2014) regarding the high usage of problem-solving strategies in low proficient readers.

Furthermore, the results from MARSIR also revealed that the ESL learners in this study utilized only medium level of global reading and support strategies while attempting their reading comprehension tasks. In global reading strategies, the lowest mean was elicited from the item that measures whether the content of the text fits the purpose of their reading. This indicated that the learners were either unaware of the importance of reading purposes or they were unconcerned about the purposes of reading. Another area to highlight was on learners' use of critical analysis and evaluation. Both situations were also highlighted and discussed in Al-Mekhlafi's (2018) study. Learners were reported to be less critical and evaluative in reading the presented information, thus training of awareness that gears toward critical and evaluative readers would be significant for them. Therefore, teaching and learning in reading comprehension should also include critical and evaluative elements as one of the learning objectives.

With regard to the support strategies, it seems that less proficient readers perform an overwhelming preference on these strategies as compared to the skilled readers (Pammu et al., 2014). The three items in this category that exhibited high mean scores were underline or circle importance information in text, use reference materials and check their understanding through discussion. These strategies helped the learners to further understand the texts. However, it appears that note making was the least use support strategy. This might signify that these learners have difficulties in extracting important information, thus more attention should be paid to this strategy in teaching of reading comprehension.

Although the investigation into ESL learners' awareness in the use of reading strategies might not reflect the real reading condition of the learners as some learners might be aware of such strategies but did not apply them to aid their comprehension (Pammu et al., 2018), the findings however provide some information pertaining to the importance of reading strategies awareness in reading comprehension. Perhaps, it is time to reduce the focus given on the completion of tasks and shifts towards understanding the importance of these reading strategies in escalating learners' reading comprehension. Therefore, further investigation into the 'wants' of the learners was necessary as to provide the study with more comprehensive feedbacks.

Conclusion

As MARSIR uncovers the learners' perceived reading strategies use in academic context (Mokhtari et al., 2018), these findings adhere to the purpose of needs analysis which aims at identifying probable causes for learners' performance gaps. These gaps are indicators of learners' actual use of reading strategies as compared to ideal usage. Apart from affirming the actual condition of ESL learners' use of reading, the results of this study also highlighted on the dire need for an immediate action to be taken to rectify the learners' reading comprehension difficulties. One best solution to remedy the lacks in fully utilizing reading strategies is to develop a localized reading module.

The decision to develop a reading comprehension module that incorporate the suggested reading strategies was based on the flexibility of the module as instructional unit that is able to consolidate certain techniques that adheres to the behavioural objectives and learning outcomes which focuses on specific context. In the context of this study, a reading module that encompasses the use of reading strategies in reading comprehension that anchored on the

values of authenticity and localization of materials will gauge learners' interest in reading comprehension. The rationale for localized contents was to reduce the interference of linguistic and cultural differences that make reading tasks far more complex and demanding for them. The reduction in learners' unfamiliarity towards the foreign settings will shift learners' attention to the process of reading itself, thus might escalate text comprehension.

Conclusively, it is crucial for ESL learners to be aware of how they should employ reading strategies in planning, regulating and evaluating their own reading processes, thus justify the needs analysis phase of this study, which is to determine the ESL learners' necessities and lacks in reading comprehension. The developed module is intended to serve as an agent that connects the learners with effective reading comprehension strategies. It is also intended for the teachers to reflect on the issues surrounding reading comprehension and to co-construct their knowledge and views about the ways in which reading comprehension can be delivered more effectively to the students and discussion. The module hopes to encourage learning as a continual process and keeping abreast with current issues in education that can subsequently help the teachers to face challenges more readily and with more professionalism.

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