

Investigating Reading Strategies Utilized by Able English Users and Less Able English Users of Thai EFL Students

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[Abstract] Reading is one of the most important language skills for ensuring success at all educational levels. Knowing which reading strategies should be used and how to apply those strategies are very important for reading comprehension. However, there has not been any comprehensive conclusion to ascertain the use of reading strategies. This study, therefore, aimed to investigate the reading strategies utilized by able English users and less able English users when reading English materials. Seventy-four participants were asked to complete the questionnaires adapted from Anderson's Reading Strategies Checklist (1999) and a Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) developed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002). The findings revealed that the average means of the overall reading strategies utilized by the able English users and the less able English users were not significantly different; however, able English users tend to apply metacognitive reading strategies more frequently than less able English users. These findings confirmed that good readers should be able to reflect and monitor their cognitive processes while reading. Therefore, it meant that good readers know which strategy should be applied when reading and how to use these strategies effectively and efficiently so as to achieve their reading comprehension.

[Keywords] reading strategies; cognitive reading strategies; metacognitive reading strategies; compensating reading strategies; Thai EFL learners

Introduction

English is an international language used as a tool for communication by a majority of people in many countries around the world. People in some countries use English as an official language, while in some countries it is used as a second language or foreign language. Among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in English communication, reading is regarded as the most important skill to master for both native and non-native or ESL/EFL learners because they need to read in order to achieve personal, occupational, and professional goals (Anderson, 1999).

In Thailand, where English is used as a second or foreign language, reading plays a crucial role for Thai students in their academic context. For many years, the United States of America has taken a leading role in many academic fields of research, so academic publishing in English has been dramatically increased (Mercer & Swann, 1996). Therefore, most of the new academic knowledge that Thai students need to acquire for improving both of their academic and professional lives is commonly written in English. However, several reading research studies conducted with Thai students in all levels reveal that Thai students have some difficulties in reading English (The Department of Educational Techniques, 1995). In order to help students cope with such difficulty, nowadays researchers and educators pay their attention to the study of students' reading processes and reading strategies used because it is believed that to become effective readers, students should seek and be equipped with appropriate reading strategies. Thus, teachers should know what strategy students use and how they use it when they encounter their difficulties so that teachers can help students improve their reading proficiency (Anderson, 1991).

According to several research studies conducted through metacognitive reading strategy questionnaires, there is a strong relationship between students' reading proficiency and reading strategy use (Barnett, 1988). There is also some concrete evidence that competent, second-language readers can compensate for a lack of language proficiency by using reading strategies during reading to comprehend the reading text (Carrell, 1989). Although many studies have been done to date, more research needs to be conducted to investigate the effects of reading strategies in relation to students' reading abilities in a variety of learning situations. To investigate how students utilize reading strategies to comprehend the

given text, a researcher-constructed questionnaire was used as the research instrument in a survey study on cognitive, metacognitive, and compensating reading strategies utilized by M.4 students of Triamudom Suksa School. The study will be useful for EFL teachers and course designers to use as a guideline for helping students enhance their reading proficiency.

Literature Review

Definitions of Reading

Reading can be variously defined. According to Anderson (1999), reading is an active fluent process that involves the reader and reading material in building meaning. He furthermore suggests that meaning does not reside on the printed page, nor is it in the head of the reader. A synergy occurs in reading that combines the words on the printed page with a reader's background knowledge and experience.

Grabe and Stoller (2002) explained that reading is "the ability to draw meaning from the print page and interpret this information appropriately" (p.9). Harris and Smith (1986) provided a definition of reading as follows: "Reading is the intellectual and emotional perception of printed message" (p.5) while Alderson and Urquhart (1984) expressed the point that reading deals with two necessary elements, which are a reader and a text. Similarly, Aebersold and Field (2000) pointed out that reading is an interaction between readers and text. The reading occurs when the text is processed by the readers in an interaction. Rosenblatt (1994) explained that reading is "a transaction, a two-way process, involving a reader and a text at a particular time under particular circumstances" (p. 268).

In terms of communication process, Cohen (1990) defined reading as an important skill which is perceived as a channel of communication providing a source of input. He explained that different background knowledge may lead to individual differences for different readers in their reading. Also, diverse types of texts provide different information because of a variety of language considerations (organization of information, grammar, cohesion, and vocabulary). Moreover, according to the study of Perfetti in 1985 (as cited in Urquhart & Weir, 1998, pp.16-17) the definitions of reading can be defined in terms of literature as the follows:

1) Reading is "decoding" the skills of interpreting printed words into spoken words. However, the decoding process has limited application to the demands of actual reading when a restricted performance and a restricted set of processes are examined. The decoding is not feasible in the initial process, while it is ended by the time other cognitive linguistic processes begin. The argument according to Goodman (1967) was that the decoding process involves syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic knowledge. Moreover, decoding can be identified as an essential part but not the whole of the reading process if there is no comprehension in that reading.

2) Reading is "the whole set of cognitive activities carried out by the reader in contact with a text." This reading can be considered as thinking guided by print, with reading ability as skill at comprehension of text. Similarly, Widdowson (as cited in Urquhart & Weir, 1998, pp.17) defined reading as the process of interpreting messages or linguistic information via print. It was stated that since the 1970s, reading had emphasized comprehension rather than reading as decoding.

Model of Reading

According to Anderson (1999), reading models can be divided into three general categories, which are the bottom-up model, top-down model, and interactive model.

Bottom-up Model. The bottom-up model is data-driven or text driven because it predominantly relies on the information divulged by the written text. The meaningful information is processed from letter features to letters to words to meaning. This model of reading really highlights the "lower-level reading processes" (Anderson, 1999, p.2). Devine (1986) pointed out that the bottom-up model is a text based or text oriented model of comprehension. Readers begin to read the text by decoding the words to form the meaning. Martinez (1995) (as cited in Gascoine, 2005, p.2) expressed the belief that texts can be viewed as "a chain of isolated words, each of which is to be deciphered individually, and the reader is someone who approaches the text by concentrating exclusively on the combination of letters and words in a purely linear manner." Gough (1972) (as cited in Carrell, Devine, & Eskey, 2002, p. 23) described that "all

letters in the visual field must be accounted for individually by the reader prior to the assignment of meaning to any string of letters.” Aebersold and Field (2000) indicated that the reader constructs the text from the smallest units (letters to words, words to phrases, phrases to sentences, etc.) and decodes at the earlier term of the process. In other words, reading comprehension is operated by a process of reading from decoding at the letter level. As a result, the prior knowledge of linguistic elements, such as vocabulary, grammar, and syntax has a crucial influence on reading comprehension (Li, Wu & Wang, 2007).

Top-down Model. Urquhart and Weir (1998) pointed out the contrast between bottom-up and top-down in general terms as text (or data)-driven and reader-driven. Thus, unlike the bottom-up model, the top-down model is a reader based or reader-oriented model of comprehension. Gascoigne (2005) indicated that this model of reading considers the world knowledge and readers’ interest as a part of the driving force to read. The model involves what already exists in the readers’ minds. The readers apply their existing knowledge in order to obtain a confirmation of what they have already predicted (Devine, 1986, pp.9-10). In order to read texts, readers bring their knowledge of the subject or the knowledge of language and expectations to the content of the text. Grabe and Stoller (2002) explained that the top-down model represents reading as a process of reconstruction of meanings from the text rather than decoding symbols of letters. Instead of reading every word in a text, readers, rather, look at the larger units at a time and match their own knowledge with the data they have just gained from the text.

Moreover, the top-down model is considered as a reading process in which a general prediction based on general schemata is required (Li, Wu, & Wang, 2007). Therefore, the interpretation of each reader of the same text may be different depending on the reader's experience and background knowledge.

Interactive Model. The interactive model is recognized as the most comprehensive description of the reading process because in this type of reading model both bottom-up and top-down approaches are combined. Many scholars who consider the interactive model as the most effective and practical approach for reading believe that both bottom-up and top-down models are necessary for reading a text as each type of reading approach functions independently or cooperatively. Murtagh (1989) (as cited in Anderson, 1999, p. 4) expressed the idea that the best second-language readers are those who can efficiently integrate both bottom-up and top-down processes. Silberstein (1994) also supported this approach, stating that “In contemporary approaches to reading, meaning is not seen as being fully presented in the text waiting to be decoded. Rather, meaning is created by the interaction of reader and text” (p.8).

According to Grabe (1991) (as cited in Anderson, 1999, p. 3), there are two conceptions of interactive approaches. The first conception relates to the interaction occurring between reader and the text. He explains that “the meaning of the text does not reside in the text itself but that as readers interact with the text their own background knowledge facilitates the task of comprehending.” Another conception of interactive approaches relates to the interaction between bottom-up and top-down processes. He believes that in order to read the text, several skills, strategies, and processes must be intergraded. Therefore, good readers should be able to decode and interpret the texts automatically by recognizing words and bringing their background knowledge to construct the meaning of the texts.

Reading Strategies

According to Winograd and Hares, reading strategies are defined as “deliberate actions that learners select and control to achieve desired goals or objectives” (as cited in Anderson, 1999, p. 70). Also, Barnett defined reading strategies as “the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively and make sense of what they read” (as cited in Kitao, 1995, p.62). Brown (1994) (as cited in Ozek & Civelek, 2006, p.3) stated that “reading strategies are checking the outcome of any attempt to solve a problem, planning one’s text move, monitoring the effectiveness of any attempted action, testing, revising, and evaluating one’s strategies for learning.”

Although there are many definitions relating to reading strategies, one of the most comprehensive descriptions of reading strategies was proposed by Anderson. Anderson (1999) suggested that, in general, there are three specific types of reading strategies, which are cognitive reading strategies, metacognitive

reading strategies, and compensating reading strategies. He suggests that these three strategies have significant impact on reading text.

Cognitive Reading Strategies. William and Burden (1997) (as cited in Ozek & Civelek, 2006, p. 3) explained that “cognitive strategies are seen as mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information in order to learn, that are for obtaining, storage, retrieval or use of information.” Brown (1994) defined cognitive strategies as specific learning tasks that involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Block, 1986, Carrell, 1989, and Davis and Bistodeau, 1993, (as cited in Salataci & Akyel, 2000, p.2) mention, “Cognitive strategies aid readers in constructing meaning from the text. In general, studies in both first language (L1) and second language (L2) reading research provide a binary division of cognitive strategies as bottom-up and top-down.”

According to Anderson (1999), there is a checklist for cognitive reading strategies. He proposed the Reading Strategy Checklist relating to cognitive reading strategies as follows:

- Predicting the content of an upcoming passage or section of the text.
- Concentrating on grammar to help you understand unfamiliar constructions.
- Understanding the main idea to help you comprehend the entire reading.
- Expanding your vocabulary and grammar to help you increase your reading.
- Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases to let you use what you already know about English.
- Analyzing theme, style, and connections to improve your comprehension.
- Distinguishing between opinions and facts in your reading.
- Breaking down larger phrases into smaller parts to help you understand a difficult passage.
- Linking what you know in your first language with words in English.
- Creating a map or drawing related ideas to enable you to understand the relationship between words and ideas.
- Writing a short summary of what you read to help you understand the main ideas.

Metacognitive Reading Strategies. Kellog (1994) expressed the idea that metacognitive theory deals with cognitive self-knowledge, that is, what individuals know about their own thinking. Skehan (1993) (as cited in Ozek & Civelek, 2006) also described metacognitive strategies as containing functions to monitor or dominate cognitive strategies. Therefore, metacognition is a form of cognition that involves active control over the cognitive process. Flavell (1976) also defined metacognition as one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to active monitoring of consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes.

According to Baker and Brown (1984), Garner (1987), and Afflerbach (2002), there also appears to be a strong relationship between metacognitive strategies and reading proficiency. In essence, successful readers appeared to use more strategies than less successful readers and, also, appeared to be using them more frequently. Better readers also have an enhanced metacognitive awareness of their own use of strategies and what they know, which in turn leads to a greater reading ability and proficiency. Anderson (1999) also suggested the Reading Strategy Checklist relating to metacognitive reading strategies as follows:

- Setting goals for yourself to help you improve areas that are important to you.
- Making a list of relevant vocabulary to prepare for new reading.
- Working with a classmate to help you develop your reading skills.
- Taking opportunities to practice what you already know to keep your progress steady.
- Evaluating what you have learned and how well you are doing to help you focus on your reading.

Compensating Reading Strategies. According to Anderson (1999), there is the Reading Strategy Checklist relating to compensating reading strategies as follows:

- Relying on what you already know to improve your reading comprehension.
- Taking notes to help you recall important details.
- Trying to remember what you understand from a reading to help you develop better

comprehension skills.

- Reviewing the purpose and tone of a reading passage so you can remember more effectively.
- Picturing scenes in your mind to help you remember and understanding your reading.
- Reviewing key ideas and details to help you remember.
- Using physical action to help you remember information you have read.
- Clarifying words into meaningful groups to help you remember them more clearly.

Related Research Studies

Singhal (2001) conducted a study to investigate the differences between good readers and poor readers in terms of strategies used. The findings revealed some significant correlations between reading strategies used by readers and proficiency level. He concluded that highly proficient readers demonstrate use of more variety of strategies and more frequent use than less proficient readers.

A study of Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) also indicated that ESL students who have high reading ability tend to use overall reading strategies more frequently than those with low reading ability. However, among three categories (metacognitive, cognitive, and support) strategies, ESL students use cognitive, metacognitive, and support reading strategies as both high and low reading ability students.

Moreover, Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) used the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) to evaluate adolescent and adult ESL students' metacognitive awareness and perceived use of reading strategies, which have been shown to help students improve reading comprehension skills. The findings are consistent with their prior research showing a positive correlation among the awareness of strategies, the use of reading strategies, and the successful reading comprehension.

Another study was conducted by Tercanlioglu (2004) to examine how L1 and ESL postgraduate students used reading strategies in the context of a British university. The result of the study revealed that both L1 and ESL students demonstrated a distinct preference for cognitive strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies and support strategies, and while ESL students reported more frequent use of support strategies, the L1 students reported frequent use of metacognitive strategies.

In addition, Duangrutai Suksang (2005) conducted a study with students in the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Program of Thammasat University to investigate academic reading strategies of English used by successful readers. She aimed to investigate reading strategies and compare the similarities and differences of reading strategies. The data were collected through a think-aloud protocol and questionnaires. The result of the study demonstrated that most of students used more global strategies than local strategies in reading academic texts.

The last related research was proposed by Xianming (2007). This research investigated the first-year college students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. The results provided evidence that the students had awareness and a reasonable control of metacognitive strategies while reading academic texts. Moreover, they have to be able to think how they can achieve in comprehending the text by implementing the appropriate strategies.

Methods

Research Questions

This study attempted to provide comprehensive answers to the following research questions: 1) What reading strategies do M.4 students of Triamudom Suksa School use in order to comprehend the text? 2) What are the significant relationships among reading strategies used by M.4 students of Triamudom Suksa School?

Participants

The subjects of this study consisted of 74 M.4 students of the Triamudom Suksa School in Bangkok. All of them were studying in a Japanese program. They had completed English for Reading and Writing I (E. 31201) and were studying English for Reading and Writing II (E. 31202) in the second semester of the academic year 2010. These subjects were divided into two groups based on the results of the English for Reading and Writing II (E. 31202) summative exam. These two groups were defined as "able English

users” and “less able English users.” The “able English users” had to get more than 70% out of the total score in the English for Reading and Writing II (E. 31202) summative exam, while the subjects who got less than 70% were defined as “less able English users.” There were 58 subjects in the group of “able English users” and 16 subjects in the group of “less able English users.”

Table 1

The Frequency and Percentage of the Subjects Comparing Able English Users and Less Able English Users

General Information	Able English Users		Less Able English Users	
	n = 58		n = 16	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1. Sex				
▪ Female	51	87.9	13	81.3
▪ Male	7	12.1	3	18.8

Instrument

This study used the questionnaires as an instrument to gather information from 74 M.4 students enrolled in English for Reading and Writing II (E. 31202) in the second semester of the academic year 2010. The questionnaires were divided into two parts (Part I: the General Information and Part II: the Survey of Reading Strategies). The following information provides a more detailed description of the questionnaires.

Part I: the General Information. This part consisted of four questions. It was designed to obtain the general information from the subjects regarding gender, English for Reading and Writing I grade, English for Reading and Writing II summative exam scores, and the amount of time spent in reading English materials each week.

Part II: the Survey of Reading Strategies. This part of questionnaire was designed to examine reading strategy used by the subjects when they read English materials. The questions in this questionnaire were written in a Thai version. These questions were adapted from Anderson’s Reading Strategies Checklist (1999) and the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), which was developed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002). This part consisted of 20 questions with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never or almost never) to 5 (always or almost always): the explanation of the scales is as follows: The 20 questions in this part of the survey (Reading Strategies) were divided into three categories or subscales of reading strategies as follows:

A. *Cognitive Reading Strategies:* the mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information in order to construct meaning from the text. There are 8 statements shown in questions 1-8.

B. *Metacognitive Reading Strategies:* the knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to active monitoring of consequent regulation and behaviors undertaken by the learners to plan, arrange, and evaluate their own learning There were 6 items shown as questions 9-14.

C. *Compensating Reading Strategies:* skills such as inferencing, guessing while reading, or using reference materials. There are 5 statements shown in questions 15-20.

Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaires were distributed to 74 subjects by hand. There were 58 subjects in the group of “able English users” and 16 subjects in the group of “less able English users” at the Triamudom Suksa School. The questionnaires were collected within a week and checked for completeness.

Data Analysis

The software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was applied to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics were used for each part of questionnaire and described by mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S.D.). For interpreting the reading strategies used as reported in this instrument, three levels of usage have been identified: high (mean of 3.5 or higher), moderate (mean of 2.5-3.4), and low (mean of 2.4 or lower). The usage levels were interpreted based on the interpretation key suggested by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995).

Results**Comparison of the Reading Strategies Utilized by Able English Users and Less Able English Users**

The means and standard deviations of the results from Part II of the questionnaires were computed. The differences in reading strategies used by able English users and less able English users are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

The Overall Reading Strategies Utilized Comparing Able English Users and Less Able English Users.

Reading Strategies		Able English Users		Less Able English Users	
		n = 58		n = 16	
Statement	Category	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1. I predict the content of an upcoming passage.	COG	3.26	1.07	2.25	1.07
2. I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	COG	2.55	1.16	2.63	1.09
3. I distinguish between opinions and facts in my reading.	COG	2.16	1.12	1.75	0.78
4. I concentrate on grammar to help me understand unfamiliar constructions	COG	3.10	1.66	2.94	0.68
5. I understand the main idea to help me comprehend the entire reading.	COG	4.03	0.92	3.75	1.07
6. When I read I translate from English into my native language.	COG	3.31	1.31	4.13	1.09
7. I break down larger phrases into smaller parts to help me understand the difficult passage.	COG	3.05	1.61	2.51	1.27
8. I create a map or draw related ideas to understand relationships between ideas and words.	COG	1.90	1.17	1.44	0.89
9. I set goals in mind when I read.	META	3.45	1.10	2.94	1.06
10. I evaluate what I have learnt and how well I am doing to help me focus on my reading.	META	3.45	1.28	3.13	1.15
11. I check my understanding when I come across new information.	META	3.62	1.11	3.44	1.26
12. I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading.	META	4.05	1.10	3.19	1.33

13. When I read I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	META	4.02	1.00	3.19	0.98
14. When the text becomes difficult, I reread it to increase my understanding.	META	4.07	1.04	3.75	1.24
15. I try to picture or visualize information to help me understand and remember what I read.	COM	2.97	1.24	2.75	1.34
16. I rely on what I already know to improve my reading.	COM	3.52	1.11	3.25	1.29
17. I make a list of relevant vocabulary to prepare for my reading.	COM	1.91	0.95	1.36	0.50
18. I review the purpose and tone of the reading passage so I can remember more effectively.	COM	2.95	1.20	2.31	1.14
19. I clarify words into meaningful groups to help me remember them more clearly.	COM	1.56	1.30	2.63	1.26
20. When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	COM	2.22	1.39	2.06	1.57
Average Mean and S.D.		3.13	0.66	2.85	0.64

From Table 2, the means of the individual strategies used by the able English users range from the highest mean of 4.07 (statement 14 [META]: When the text becomes difficult, I reread it to increase my understanding) to the lowest mean of 1.56 (statement 19 [META]: I clarify words into meaningful groups to help me remember them more clearly). There are 6 individual strategies with the mean of 3.50 or above, 9 strategies with the mean of 2.50-3.40, and only 5 strategies with the mean below 2.50.

For the less able English users, the means of individual strategies range from the highest mean of 4.13 (Statement 6 [COG]: When I read I translate from English into my native language) to the lowest mean of 1.36 (Statement 17 [COM]: I make a list of relevant vocabulary to prepare for reading). There are only 3 strategies with the mean of 3.50 or above, 10 strategies with the mean of 2.50-3.40, and 7 strategies with the mean below 2.50.

A comparison of the results of average means of the overall reading strategies used by the able English users and less able English users show they are not significantly different. The average means of the able English users and the less able English users are 3.13 and 2.85 respectively. Both of these means fall into the moderate usage level of reading strategies (mean of 2.5 to 3.4).

Comparison of the overall categories reading strategies utilized by able English users and less able English users.

The means and standard deviations of the results from part II of the questionnaires were computed. The comparison of the overall categories reading strategies used by able English users and less able English users is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Overall Categories of Reading Strategies Used Comparing Able English Users and Less Able English User

Reading Strategies	Able English Users n = 58		Less Able English Users n = 16	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1. Cognitive Reading Strategies	2.92	0.63	2.67	0.56
2. Metacognitive Reading Strategies	3.78	0.68	3.27	0.88
3. Compensating Reading Strategies	2.69	0.67	2.62	0.49
Average Mean and S.D.	3.13	0.66	2.85	0.64

Table 3 shows different categories of reading strategies used by the able English users and the less able English users. Comparing the usage of each category for these two groups shows that the able English users have more usage in all categories (COG = 2.92, META = 3.78, and COM = 2.69) than the less able users (COG = 2.67, META = 3.27, and COM = 2.62). Also, comparison among all categories shows that the able English users have a higher average mean (3.13) than the less able English users (2.85).

The comparing of cognitive reading strategies used by able English users and less able English users

Table 4

Cognitive Reading Strategies Used Comparing Able English Users and Less Able English Users

Cognitive Reading Strategies Statement	Able English Users n = 58		Less Able English Users n = 16	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
I predict the content of an upcoming passage.	3.26	1.07	2.25	1.07
I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	2.55	1.16	2.63	1.09
I distinguish between opinions and facts in my reading.	2.16	1.12	1.75	0.78
I concentrate on grammar to help me understand unfamiliar constructions.	3.10	1.66	2.94	0.68
I understand the main idea to help me comprehend the entire reading.	4.03	0.92	3.75	1.07
When I read I translate from English into my native language.	3.31	1.31	4.13	1.09
I break down larger phrases into smaller parts to help me understand the difficult passage.	3.05	1.61	2.51	1.27
I create a map or draw related ideas to understand the relationship between ideas and words.	1.90	1.17	1.44	0.89
Average Mean and S.D.	2.92	0.63	2.67	0.56

From Table 4, the means of the reading strategies categorized as cognitive reading strategies used by the able English users range from the highest mean of 4.03 (Statement 5: I understand the main idea to help me comprehend the entire reading) to the lowest mean of 1.90 (Statement 8: I create a map or draw related ideas to understand the relationship between ideas and words). There is only one strategy with the mean of 3.50 or above, 5 strategies with the mean of 2.50-3.40, and 2 strategies with the mean below 2.50.

For the less able English users, the means of the reading strategies range from the highest mean of 4.13 (Statement 6: When I read I translate from English into my native language) to the lowest mean of 1.44 (Statement 8: I create a map or draw related ideas to understand the relationship between ideas and words). There are 2 strategies with the mean of 3.50 or above, 4 strategies with the mean of 2.50-3.40, and only 2 strategies with the mean below 2.50.

Looking at the results of average means of the cognitive reading strategies used comparing able English users and less able English users, they are not significantly different. The average means of the able English users and the less able English users are 2.92 and 2.67 respectively. Both of these means fall in the moderate usage level of reading strategies (mean of 2.5 to 3.4).

The comparing of metacognitive reading strategies used by able English users and less able English users

Table 5
Metacognitive Reading Strategies Used Comparing Able English Users and Less Able English Users

Metacognitive Reading Strategies	Able English Users n = 58		Less Able English Users n = 16	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
I set goals in mind when I read.	3.45	1.10	2.94	1.06
I evaluate what I have learned and how well I am doing to help me focus on my reading.	3.45	1.28	3.13	1.15
I check my understanding when I come across new information.	3.62	1.11	3.44	1.26
I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading	4.05	1.10	3.19	1.33
When I read I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	4.02	1.00	3.19	0.98
When the text becomes difficult, I reread it to increase my understanding.	4.07	1.04	3.75	1.24
Average Mean and S.D.	3.78	0.68	3.27	0.89

According to Table 5, the means of the reading strategies categorized as metacognitive reading strategies used by the able English users range from the highest mean of 4.07 (Statement 14: When the text becomes difficult, I reread it to increase my understanding) to the lowest mean of 3.45 (Statement 9: I set goals in mind when I read, and Statement 10: I evaluate what I have learn and how well I am doing to help me focus on my reading). There are 4 strategies with the mean of 3.50 or above, 2 strategies with the mean of 2.50-3.40, and none with the mean below 2.50.

For the less able English users, the means of the reading strategies range from the highest mean of 3.75 (Statement 14: When the text becomes difficult, I reread it to increase my understanding) to the

lowest mean of 2.94 (Statement 9: I set goals in mind when I read). There is only one strategy with the mean of 3.50 or above, 5 strategies with the mean of 2.50-3.40, and one with the mean below 2.50.

The results comparing the average means of the metacognitive reading strategies used between able English users and less able English users show they are significantly different. The average means of the able English users and the less able English users are 3.78 and 3.27 respectively. This indicates that the average mean of able English users falls into the high usage level of reading strategies (mean of 3.5 or above), while the average mean of less able English users falls into the moderate usage level (mean of 2.5 to 3.4).

The Comparing of Compensating Reading Strategies Used By Able English Users And Less Able English Users

Table 6

Compensating Reading Strategies Used Comparing Able English Users and Less Able English Users

Compensating Reading Strategies	Able English Users n = 58		Less Able English Users n = 16	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
I try to picture or visualize information to help me understand and remember what I read.	2.97	1.24	2.75	1.34
I rely on what I already know to improve my reading	3.52	1.11	3.25	1.29
I make a list of relevant vocabulary to prepare for reading.	1.91	0.95	1.36	0.50
I review the purpose and tone of the reading passage so I can remember more effectively	2.95	1.20	2.31	1.14
I clarify words into meaningful groups to help me remember them.	1.56	1.30	2.63	1.26
When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read	2.22	1.39	2.06	1.57
Average Mean and S.D.	2.69	0.67	2.62	0.49

From Table 6, the means of the reading strategies categorized as compensating reading strategies used by the able English users range from the highest mean of 3.25 (Statement 16: I rely on what I already know to improve my reading) to the lowest mean of 1.56 (Statement 19: I clarify words into meaningful groups to help me remember them). There is only one strategy with the mean of 3.50 or above, 2 strategies with the mean of 2.50-3.40, and 2 strategies with the mean below 2.50. For the less able English users, the means of the reading strategies range from the highest mean of 3.25 (Statement 16: I rely on what I already know to improve my reading) to the lowest mean of 1.36 (Statement 17: I make a list of relevant vocabulary to prepare for reading). There is no strategy with the mean of 3.50 or above, 3 strategies with the mean of 2.50-3.40, and 2 strategies with the mean below 2.50.

The results from comparing the average means of the compensating reading strategies used between able English users and less able English users are not significantly different. The average means of the able English users and the less able English users are 2.69 and 2.62 respectively. Both of these means fall in the moderate usage level of reading strategies (mean of 2.5 to 3.4).

Discussion

The average mean of overall usage indicates how often the subjects used the strategies when reading English materials. The findings reveal that the average means of the overall reading strategies utilized by

the able English users and the less able English users are not significantly different. The average means of overall reading strategies used by both groups fall into the same degree of moderate level. These findings support the belief of Anderson (1991), who stated that skilled readers in L2 do not necessarily have more strategies than less skilled L2 readers-- they seem to have average degrees in the same range. Although the average means of overall reading strategies used by both groups are not significantly different, the able English users tended to apply reading strategies more frequently than less able English users. This difference is correspondent with the findings of Singhal (2001), who conducted a study to investigate the differences between good English users and poor English users in term of reading strategies used. Singhal concluded that highly proficient readers demonstrated use of more variety of strategies and more frequent use than less proficient readers. The research results of Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) also revealed that ESL high-reading-ability students have higher degrees of reading strategies usage than lower-reading ability students. Therefore, it can be assumed that high-proficient readers tend to apply reading strategies more frequently and more appropriately than less-proficient readers.

In addition, when comparing individual strategies used by the able English users and the less able English users, the data show some significant differences. The findings demonstrated that the able English users had the highest level of using metacognitive reading strategies, while the less able English users had the highest degree of using cognitive reading strategies. These results are consistent with the study of Xianming (2007), which reported that proficient readers have awareness and reasonable control of metacognitive strategies while reading academic texts in order to achieve comprehension of the text by implementing appropriate reading strategies. Anderson (1999) also indicated that the development of the metacognitive reading strategies may have the greatest impact on the development of second-language reading skills.

Moreover, to compare three categories of reading strategies (cognitive reading strategies, metacognitive reading strategies, and compensating reading strategies), the results reveal that both able English users and less able English users frequently apply the metacognitive reading strategy, cognitive reading strategy, and compensating reading strategy. These findings are similar to the results of the prior study in 2004 conducted by Tercanlioglu, who concluded that both L1 and ESL students demonstrate a preference for metacognitive reading strategies, followed by cognitive reading strategies and support reading strategies. Consequently, it can be assumed that the metacognitive reading strategies are very important for reading comprehension.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the reading strategies utilized by able English users and less able English users while they are reading English materials. Cognitive reading strategies, metacognitive reading strategies, and compensating reading strategies are the three main categories that this research intended to study. According to the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the overall reading strategies utilized by the able English users and the less able English users were not significantly different. However, able English users tend to apply metacognitive reading strategies more frequently than less able English users. These findings confirm that good readers should be able to reflect and monitor their cognitive process while reading. Therefore, it means that good readers know which strategy should be applied when reading and how to use these strategies effectively and efficiently so as to achieve their reading comprehension.

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