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Aisha Farid *

Muhammad Ishtiaq †

Muhammad Sabboor Hussain ‡

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A Review of Effective Reading Strategies to Teach Text Comprehension to Adult English Language Learners

Abstract:

This paper reviews the reading strategies and their theoretical perspectives in reading comprehension inside/outside the classroom. Reading strategies aim to build vocabulary and help integrate the existing knowledge of the readers/learners with the new knowledge through analysis and critical reflection on textual form and content. The study covers four major types of strategies, namely basic differentiated strategies, metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies, to highlight their pedagogical value. The study opens up the research area of how these strategies are viewed as significant, which strategies the teachers and the students neglect, and how these strategies are influenced by pedagogical instructions and assessment and shape the participatory and transformative teaching/learning. It is recommended that all these strategies should be given due attention as they collectively involve orthographic recognition and processing through cognitive patterns that engage memory and retention to integrate new knowledge with the previous for possible conceptual change.

Key Words:

Comprehension, Learning, Reading Strategies, Research, Teaching

Introduction

Reading comprehension has always been an intriguing, exciting, and inviting area for language researchers, teachers, and learners. Many established theories and researches inform, report, and highlight the intricate processes that support and facilitate reading comprehension. They guide the existing and novice researchers, teachers, and learners on the advantages and pitfalls of understanding the reading process, comprehension development through reading strategies, and authentic assessment processes. Such critical awareness is essential in the effective language teaching-learning process.

The theories inform reading strategies that play a vital role in the English language development of learners and teachers' professional development. The reading comprehension strategies are learned, taught, and innovated for effective and enriched learning from the given text and are influenced by the cross-linguistic, cultural differences, monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual knowledge and skills the readers/learners have. There is a dire need to review such strategies and bring them to the notice of the university teachers and adult language learners in the educational institutions so that the dying reading habits in the learners could be brought to life again, and the real scholarly spirit could be inculcated in them. The reflective pedagogical process is possible when the stakeholders have the required cognition (knowledge, beliefs, and practices) about them.

Thus, the present study analyzes the effective reading strategies and their significance mainly from a pedagogic perspective. In the present review paper, we have tried to include the latest researches on reading and effective reading strategies and their assessment to present a comprehensive picture of what

is significant for a teacher teaching English to adult learners. However, to understand the nature and influential role of these strategies, it is crucial to understand the significance of reading and the reading process.

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, GC Women University, Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: aisha.farid@gcwus.edu.pk

† Unaizah Science and Arts College, Al-Qassim University, Saudi Arabia.

‡ Assistant Professor, Department of English, GC Women University, Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.

Reading and Reading Process

Reading, though a receptive skill, engages a reader into a highly active role. The brain of a reader is more active than the one practising productive language skills— speaking and writing. The reader's task is more creative than that of the writer. He tries to solve the puzzle created by the writer and reproduces his message and builds upon it. He adds much more to the actual message and creates it anew. Reading is generally treated as a language skill but is much more than a mere recognition of words and their meaning. Reading is a cognitive process that crosses the boundaries of cognition and enters into the metacognition domain. Getting a garb of metacognition, reading becomes a social phenomenon and makes the written text a whole new social world for the reader. Thus, reading is a complex multi-dimensional activity that is of vital importance.

The reading process is significant because it leads the reader from orthographic recognition to an entire socio-psycho world of meaning. Starting from the phonological awareness to vocabulary recognition to making meaning in a psycho-social perspective makes reading a complex process: a reader negotiates with the text and makes conclusions in the light of his prior knowledge about the literal and social meaning of the message encoded in the text. The process requires proper training and guidance in developing skills and strategies to reach a meaningful end. Different researchers and educationists have explained the reading process in various ways.

The importance of reading skill is indisputable, especially in ESL/EFL paradigm. Reading and interpreting a text is an essential skill for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The purpose of reading is not just to get the superficial meaning of a text, but it is to analyze, synthesize and use metacognitive thinking to make a connection between the author's message and the already known concepts and principles ([Hermida, 2009](#)). Thus, it incorporates and requires the discourse competence and strategic competence of the readers. Researchers have also rightly tried to differentiate between reading skills and reading strategies. [Brevik \(2019\)](#) argues that reading skill means the readers' automatic response to a text while reading strategies refer to readers' awareness of comprehension problems and selecting appropriate tools to solve them. In short, reading involves effective and smooth transitions and paradigm shifts in the processes.

Some researchers divide the reading process into three general stages: pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading (Nolin and Sabariah, 2009; [Nordin et al., 2013](#)). Strategic readers are involved throughout the whole reading process. Hughes (2007) divides the reading process into five stages: pre-reading, reading, responding, exploring, and applying. At each level, a reader is required to follow specific strategies for successful text comprehension. [Nordin et al. \(2013\)](#) contend that good readers create, examine and deepen meaning before, during, and after reading, whereas poor readers cannot use background knowledge, ignore the process of reading, and thus cannot grasp the meaning of crucial words required for better comprehension.

There are various views and theories on the reading process. The two earliest reading process models are top-down (Goodman, 1967) and bottom-up models (Smith, 1978). These two models present two different directions during reading: from the reader to the text; from the text to the reader. The top-down model includes higher-level processes, considering meaning at the whole text-level and using previous knowledge to support comprehension. The bottom-up model is based on the lower-level processes like identifying words and basing comprehension on meanings at the word or phrase level. Schema theory suggests combining top-down and bottom-up models to develop better comprehension. According to Schema theory, reading comprehension is an interactive process with both top-down and bottom-up strategies ([Nordin, Rashid, Zubir, & Sadjirin, 2013](#)). Top-down strategies are higher-order strategies that involve learners' expectations and background knowledge. Bottom-up strategies refer to working with the actual text written on the page, like decoding a new word. Readers are expected to connect the ideas on the page and the knowledge they already have ([Sattar & Salehi, 2014](#)). Top-down strategies are also known as global strategies, and bottom-up strategies as problem-solving and support strategies (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001 as cited in [Huang, Chern, Lin, 2009](#)). These strategies lead the readers to identify clear stages in the reading process.

Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are part and parcel of reading comprehension. Several experimental studies have shown a positive relationship between reading strategies used in classes and reading comprehension ([Sattar and Salehi, 2014](#)). There is no dearth of studies accomplished by researchers and classroom instructors on reading skills, sub-skills, and general text comprehension issues ([Westwood, 2001](#), Block, 1992, [Pressley, 2004](#), [Guzzetti, 2000](#), [Nezami, 2012](#)). This indicates how vital the reading skills, strategies, and processes are for language practitioners.

The reflective teachers in the language class keep highlighting how to be an effective and proficient reader. Reading strategies help learners plan their work, deal with reading problems and choose appropriate skills and techniques to comprehend a text ([Sattar and Salehi, 2014](#)). Good readers can differentiate between suitable and unsuitable reading strategies and can cognitively choose appropriate strategies for better comprehension (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983 as cited in [Nordin et al., 2013](#)). In other words, reading is not a static activity but a complete and dynamic process. Hunt (2004) argues that reading is a three-pronged process— a part is shaped by the text, the reader's background shapes a part, and a part is fulfilled by the context in which it occurs (as cited in [Hermida, 2009](#)). This 3-D view of the reading process is quite crucial in a proper reader development plan or program.

Reading skills development in adults is more complicated than reading skills development in children. [Westwood \(2001\)](#) has worked on teaching and learning general strategies of reading. Applying such general strategies, a child starts learning to read at the initial stages of schooling and thus introduces himself/herself with emergent literacy. However, an adult reader enters the world beyond the emergent stage when s/he starts independent reading that requires self-effort and the mentor's motivational push and vigilant supervision.

Consequently, it is vital to conduct SSSR (Supervised Silent Sustained Reading) sessions inside the classroom to promote good reading habits and eradicate the bad ones— lipsing, vocalizing, head-nodding, which slow down the reading pace. The significance of phonological awareness informs an adult's ability to understand the sound features of the language. This competence can well be recognized if s/he can exemplify phonemic skills by the external stimuli given by a vigilant teacher supervising the silent reading sessions. Phonological representations combined with semantic knowledge determine a reader's expressive vocabulary ([Ouellette, 2006](#); [Wise, Sevcik, Morris, Lovett & Wolf, 2007](#)). The readers should be encouraged to use contextual clues to combine both in the silent reading sessions in the class. Researchers suggest that oral competence of language does not reflect command on the reading skills ([Ricketts, Nation & Bishop, 2007](#)). Thus mere lecturing and making students passive listeners in the class, which is the usual routine in adults' language classes in most of the world, do not transform them into reflective and effective readers. Since intelligence plays a pivotal role in learning to read ([Das, 2002](#); [Jiménez, Siegel, O'Shanahan, & Ford, 2009](#)), learners should be engaged in the reading tasks in such a way that their IQs could be polished for the comprehensible input. Phonological awareness to distinguish between sounds is essential for orthographic knowledge, which results in recognition of words efficiently ([Akamatsu, 2005](#); Barker, Torgesen & Wagner, 1992, [Ehri, 2005](#); [Yamashita, 2013](#)). To achieve this goal, reading aloud sessions should also be conducted regularly. In short, reading strategies realize the goals and objectives that the teachers and learners set for themselves to teach and comprehend textual content effectively.

However, the reading development process must be started at the school level when there are Young Learners (YLS) to be trained as effective readers. According to [Watkins \(2019\)](#), in contexts where English is the medium of instruction in other subjects at a higher level (Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)), learners need to develop good reading skills at a younger age in order to learn about other subjects later. A lack of fundamental reading skills impacts other subjects' learning, and that holds back progress across the curriculum. With this in mind, it is clearly essential that teachers monitor the progress of young readers so that support can be given immediately, should they start to fall behind. At this level, there are various reading skills the learners can develop if they are trained through effective reading strategies. *Learning the alphabetic*

code is a higher ability, reflecting young learners' understanding of the writing system and its efficient usage. Their phonic skills refer to understanding the letter-sound relationship that eventually develops into *Sight* vocabulary when they automatically read what their sight meets. In the *reading process*, a learner is expected to identify the word accurately and control, adjust and manipulate eye movements. The reading difficulties in word recognition and its sight may be minimized by focusing on semantic, syntactic, grapho-phonic (or alphabetic) cues ([Westwood, 2001](#)). Westwood further suggests some important teaching methods to develop reading skills in the learners, like shared book experience, guided reading, K-W-L strategy (Know. Want to know. Learned), the 3-H strategy (Here. Hidden. In my Head), PQRS (preview, question, read, summarize) reading strategy, listening to children read: the 'pause, prompt, praise' technique and supervised silent sustained reading. When the students enter higher education with such background training, they can be easily transformed into real scholars who love knowledge and wisdom based on their love for books and reading. Such a scenario can emerge when teachers make informed decisions based on recent researches in this area.

Research reflects many essential reading strategies that help teachers and learners develop reading abilities. Moats (2000) discusses eight reading strategies— making connections, questioning, inferring, visualizing, summarizing, using prior knowledge, evaluating, and synthesizing (as cited in [Sattar and Salehi, 2014](#)). [Sattar and Salehi \(2014\)](#) argue that reading comprehension is a complicated process, and students need to use different sub-skills to get meaning out of a text while reading successfully. They add that several factors are involved in the reading process, such as students' language proficiency, cultural beliefs about reading, background knowledge, and teaching context. [Bouchard \(2005\)](#) has given detailed differentiated reading strategies for beginning language learners comprehensively, though the discussed perspectives have been discussed separately by many researchers ([Ankrum & Bean, 2007](#); [Bouchard, 2005](#); [Csillag, 2016](#); [Jafari, & Kitabi 2012](#)). They include metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies. The strategies for beginning language learners include *using illustrations to interact with text* where readers illustrate their understanding of the given image. The purpose of *frame sentences* is to build content vocabulary and create awareness about the sentence structure. The strategy *summary with illustrations* provides a chance for the readers to put information in sequential order and express it in different modalities.

Numerous other researchers have pointed out useful strategies for effective reader development. [Moreillon \(2007\)](#) enlists simple seven reading comprehension strategies, which can be compared with some other general strategies to understand better their role and effects ([McLaughlin & Allen, 2002](#); [Moreillon, 2007](#)). The first strategy *activating or building background knowledge* involves making connections with prior learning, experiences, schema, and cognitive patterns by the reader's brain to integrate the new knowledge and organize the information. The second strategy *using sensory images* is a fundamental and instinctive human strategy used to learn from the environment. Learners can bring their sensory knowledge to reading a given text, especially in today's highly technological world with visual culture, audience, and text. The third strategy, *questioning*, aims at exposing students to new information, reinforcement of knowledge, and feedback of learning. The questions initiated by the readers lead to *making predictions and inferences*, the fourth strategy. In interaction with the text, the learner finds relevant clues, connects the identified points to make predictions, and draws inferences leading to conclusions and making input comprehensible. *Determining the main ideas* during reading is the next strategy that highlights the key points that are subsequently explained. It lays the desired foundations for entailing and capturing details. Learners' main ideas are guided by their reading goals and objectives and depend upon their ability to discern connections and define relationships within different information and thematic chunks. Another important strategy is *using fix-up options*. This is metacognitive— thinking about the thought strategy. It enables a reader to tie the lost knots in the brain to recover meaning. Persuasive techniques in this regard may be rereading, reading ahead, or figuring out unknown words with the help of previous knowledge and contextual clues. Since this is a metacognitive strategy, the focus is on developing critical thinking in the learners. The last strategy for effective reader development is *synthesizing*, where a reader sorts out essential information, evaluates it, and integrates it with the existing knowledge base.

These seven strategies make part of broader teaching-reading collaborative strategies facilitated by teachers, parents, librarians, and educational administrators.

Apart from the above reading strategies pointed out by individual researchers, several researches suggest reading strategies, which can all be categorized into five major types that help, influence, and facilitate a reader's comprehension. These are simple differentiated strategies, metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, socio-affective strategies, and digitalized strategies.

Simple Differentiated Strategies

Simple Differentiated Strategies are mainly based on the needs and interests of the learners. Differentiation occurs at various levels, including age, time, materials, and people. Tomlinson originated differentiated instruction in 1999. It was based on Howard Gardner's concept of multiple intelligences and brain-compatible research literature. Differentiation involves a regular and ongoing analysis of learners' nature and their needs asking for instructional adjustments and use of a variety of instructional strategies. Teachers are encouraged to consider students' unique learning styles, prepare differentiated educational activities suiting their varied learning styles by differentiating instruction in three areas: content that includes the facts, concepts, generalizations or principles, attitudes, and skills related to the subject; a process that is how the learner comes to make sense of, understand, and "own" the key facts, concepts, generalizations, and skills of the subject, and product that refers to items a student can use to demonstrate what he/she has come to know, understand, and be able to do as the result of an extended period of study (Bender, 2012). According to Tomlinson and Allan (2000), the principles that guide differentiated instruction include flexibility in learning goals, effective and ongoing assessment, flexible grouping, *respectful* activities and learning arrangements, and collaboration between students and teacher.

Researchers have designed and suggested several differentiated strategies that may work effectively with different groups of students. These include the use of learning stations and learning contracts (Wu, 2013), conferencing (Edwards and Pula, 2008), internet centers, and anchor activities (Cox, 2008). However, differentiation is rooted in sound teaching, but good teaching is not always differentiated (Hockett, 2018). Hockett (2018) suggests a process for planning and implementing differentiation strategies that starts with identifying learners' needs on the basis of KUDs (Know, Understand, Do) followed by the differentiation lesson plan, its implementation and evaluation of the evidence of learners' learning. Thus, differentiation strategies include any activity that aims to inquire about the learners' problem areas in reading.

Cognitive Strategies

The cognitive strategies involve a reader's mental faculties in the reading process (Ahmad, 2014; Oslon & Land, 2007; Ratna, 2014; Syatriana, 2012). In *the coding text* process, the reader annotates text while reading, and thus he/she monitors his/her comprehension logically and sequentially. *Herringbone* is a graphic organizing technique based on questions related to the main idea. *Opinion-proof* is about making of reader's opinion about a text and its persuasive expression through speech and writing. The readers form a visual representation through semantic feature analysis, and the given constructs are analyzed and defined. *Guided imagery* helps in creating mental images to associate new learning with background knowledge. *The anticipation-reaction guide* retrieves students' existing ideas concerning the new ones offered in the text to revise and synthesize their learning. *Mapping* refers to creating visual spaces to produce semantic relationships for remembering and retaining information. *Selective highlighting and note-taking* teach the learners to point out the most significant and essential chunks of information during reading. *Using graphic organizers and signal words to teach text organization/structure* is an important strategy to identify the descriptive or expository text's structural pattern that may have compare-contrast, problem-solution, and cause-effect designs. *Question-research-outline-write* is a research-oriented technique in which the learner poses the question to conduct research and writes the gathered information in informational text (Bouchard, 2005). Once the learners' brains

are involved through these metacognitive strategies, their affective filter lowers down considerably, and input provided to them becomes interesting and comprehensible.

The landscape model is also related to cognitive strategies. It helps understand the comprehension processes while reading a text in relation to emerging memory. The relationship between readers' attention and coherence identification in the text for comprehension is reflected in how they make meaning ([Van den Broek, Rapp, & Kendeou, 2005](#)). It is critical here to help the learners visualize the text's words and images for proper meaning-making. When they are made to do so at the macro level, they capture coherence in the text. Likewise, when done at the micro-level, their brains identify cohesion and cohesive devices in the text and the affective filter—the barrier between the text and the brain is broken down.

In short, reading cognitive strategies help readers construct meaning from text and perform the given task. These strategies include translating, making predictions, summarizing, linking reading with prior knowledge or experience, applying grammar rules, and guessing meaning from contexts.

Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies have attracted many theorists' attention due to the critical role they play in comprehension. These strategies focus on self-management in reading. Metacognitive strategies, thus, include planning and monitoring strategies. Planning strategies are based on what, when, and how an action is to be taken by the reader, whereas monitoring strategies stress checking, monitoring, and evaluating the learners' thinking and reading performance ([Zhang & Guo, 2019](#)). For [Bouchard \(2005\)](#), the first metacognitive strategy is *about-point*. It focuses on a silent reader to identify the crux of the given text. During *think aloud*, the readers express their thinking aloud while they are reading the given text. The readers formulate questions and try to respond to them from text or their background knowledge in *Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)*. *Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text (GIST)* enables a reader to identify the main vocabulary and then integrate essential information into a summary to reflect on the text's gist. *Reading Guide-o-Rama* gives a reader expert guidance to focus on specific content. In *question guides*, the teacher-tailored questions direct the readers through the intended assignment. By *previewing text*, the learner gets a general idea of the text before reading it ([Bouchard, 2005](#)). Applying these metacognitive strategies in a planned manner in the class, the readers' motivation can be increased immensely when their comprehension apprehensions subside.

Thus, metacognitive strategies involve higher-order thinking used to plan, arrange, evaluate, organize, set goals and objectives, supervise, regulate, or self-direct. These enable a learner to be a successful independent reader.

Socio-Affective Strategies

Socio-affective strategies invoke a reader's social and affective domains ([Nasab & Motlagh, 2015](#); [Zeynali, Zeynali & Motlagh, 2015](#)). These strategies involve active and self-directed movement and are, thus, essential for developing independent readers. The *reciprocal teaching* strategy stresses the teacher to assign the role to the learner to become the teacher (role-play activity) to improve his/her comprehension by teaching the classmates. The *request procedure* gives the learners the liberty to set their own goals and model their pre-reading questions to make them active and independent learners. The *cued retell—oral or written* strategy makes the learners interactive and cooperative in recalling and sharing what they have learned from a careful reading. *Peer tutoring* encourages a learner to transfer a learned skill to his or her fellow. In *think-pair-share* the students think and share a thought first in pair and then share the idea with the class. *Jigsaw classrooms* encourage support, cooperation, and mutual respect among the co-learners to facilitate learning for one another. The *collaborative reading and alternative texts* is a participatory exercise where the learners consult various sources and share what they have learned with the group and the class ([Bouchard, 2005](#)). These socio-cognitive strategies have a tremendous potential to make the class highly vibrant, interactive, and goal-oriented on collaborative and cooperative teaching/learning principles.

Digitalized Reading

The theorists have worked on digital texts and reading to make the reading classes collaborative, interactive, and learner-centred. They have evolved some new specialized reading strategies for these new kinds of texts. [Altun's \(2003\)](#) reading strategies mainly address a digital reader. These readers click links to navigate through their reading material, and *a link does not do much unless it is appealing*. He cautions the reader that *electronic text is relatively fast*, so the reader needs to be quite alert. Since readers *do not have the pen* to write with unlike the printed text, *page design can cause disorientation* ([Altun, 2003](#)). There are some other harms inherent in making the readers digital, viz., impact on the eyesight, herniated discs due to excessive use of technological devices, and unnecessary diversions snatching the attention span of the readers/learners. They must be taught and trained to be selective, eclectic, and divergent in their reading time/approach and divide it proportionately between book reading and screen reading.

By employing these divergent learning strategies, learners understand a text to validate, authenticate, challenge, and transform their previous knowledge to integrate it with the existing knowledge. In detail, theorists have discussed the nature and types of conceptual change learning (CCL) ([Chi, 2000](#)). During learning, new concepts emerge that eventually replace and modify the previous ones ([Chi, 2008](#)). Conceptual change learning (CCL) works best in the four conditions viz. to have dissatisfaction with the existing knowledge, be ready for the comprehensibility of new information, build belief in the new information, and effectively respond to the questions. There is considerable empirical evidence that refutational texts help readers detect discrepancies between their conceptions and scientific conceptions ([Kendeou, Muis & Fulton, 2011](#); [Kendeou, & van den Broek, 2007](#); [van den Broek & Kendeou, 2008](#)). Refutational texts complement instructional material and are also beneficial in reshaping the misunderstandings ([Guzzetti, 2000](#); [Tippett, 2010](#)). Students somehow form these constructs based on their false conceptions based on intuition. By refuting common concepts directly and providing satisfactory alternatives, such texts could promote and encourage the readers' reality-based consciousness ([Dole, 2000](#); [Hynd, 2001](#)). It effectively works for advanced-level readers ([Ariasi, & Mason, 2011](#); [Mason, Gava & Boldrin, 2008](#); [Tippett, 2010](#)). With such a particular focus on CCL, university students can develop critical thinking, analytical skills, key concepts, and knowledge base by being sane and sensible readers and being well equipped for future academic and professional lives, turning them out to be successful practitioners, scholars, and teachers.

Discussion

The research reviewed reflects that all reading strategies aim to help learners of different levels develop their reading abilities. Reading strategies, direct (differentiated instruction and cognitive strategies), metacognitive strategies, socio-affective strategies, and digitalized reading have their positive roles in developing reading comprehension skills among the learners if applied and implemented carefully.

All learners vary tremendously in interests, abilities, and learning styles, which creates the need for all teaching to be differentiated. Successful practice using differentiated instruction inculcates a higher sense of self-efficacy, engagement, and passion for learning in the students (Hillier, 2011). The students need to develop an interest in reading to manage their content-based studies at higher levels. Therefore, differentiated instruction proves to be a useful teaching strategy in today's schools, especially when the number of students in a class is manageable. Differentiated instruction is quite challenging in large classes due to constraints like limited time and more syllabus.

Cognitive reading strategies involve learners cognitively, making the reading process challenging as well as interesting for them. Readers at all levels somehow use one or the other cognitive strategy in reading. However, it is necessary for the teachers to train the learners in numerous cognitive reading strategies like resourcing, grouping, deduction, imagery, getting the main idea, inferencing, predicting, analyzing, using context clues, note-taking, and summarizing. There is a strong relationship between cognitive and metacognitive strategies for successful reading. Meta-cognitive reading strategies are especially beneficial to

university students since these aim to develop conscious independent readers who can plan and monitor their reading. At the university level, the students have to realize that commitment to doing work is the most crucial thing in reading and learning. Thus, metacognitive strategies aim to directly motivate the students to strengthen their learning attitude and take responsibility for their learning. Cognitive strategies help learners achieve a particular goal, for example, understanding a text, whereas metacognitive strategies ensure the successful completion of the reading.

Socio-affective strategies involve the whole learner in contact with their environment and society. These deal with learners' interactions with others. The strategies like reciprocal teaching, request procedure, cued retell—oral or written strategy, peer tutoring, think–pair–share, Jigsaw classrooms, and collaborative reading and alternative texts not only make the learners successful readers but also teach them how to survive in a society with mutual respect and cooperation.

In the present-day technological era, digital reading has dominated over all other kinds of reading, making it imperative on the part of the teachers to train their learners digitally too. Also, the recent Covid-19 pandemic has turned all kinds of teaching and learning digital—online. Reading, an essential part of language learning needs its due share in the teaching/learning process during these challenging times. The attractive cover design, reader-friendly fonts and colors, pictures and figures, precise and meaningful text, and guides searching for supporting materials online for better understanding can prove to be quite helpful in developing successful digital readers.

On the one hand, the strategy training can help to improve the awareness of students' strategy use; on the other hand, strategy training is such a complex project, and it is associated with a lot of factors such as students' motivations, and then it is necessary for the strategy training to be further studied, practiced and developed. The research reviewed provides ample evidence that successful readers are strategic readers. Teaching reading through these strategies can help less successful readers become effective readers. Students not only learn how to employ various reading strategies but also learn to evaluate their reading performance.

Conclusion

“Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createth. Createth man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous. Who teacheth by the pen. Teacheth man that which he knew not” ([Al-Quran 96: 1-5](#)). How do the researchers go from point nothing to a published research paper and take the first step on the bumpy, jumpy, jerky but equally joyful journey on the research road? In this regard, the first phase is: Read, Read, and Read (the first word spoken by Allah Almighty to Muslims, IQRA). First of all, the researchers need to read a lot as they cannot proceed without building a proper literature review, which requires an immense amount of reading. They choose a researchable area, go to different sources like a honeybee, and read everything about a topic that stems from their research area. They learn what research has already been done and build up a robust theoretical and conceptual framework of their study. In other words, they make a strong base that helps them come up with a BRQ (Basic Research Question) and make the research design of their research study. Now, they read the previous research studies that may answer their BRQ. If they do not find any research-based answer, they have got a definite and specific topic. They have discovered a problem with no acceptable or ready-made solutions. Now it is time to do some reading on methods that could be used to answer their question and find solutions, and they are ready to start their experiments or go to the field and dig out data interacting with people and population. Once experiments are done, and data is collected, they get back to the recent researches/papers they have read to see which are close to the one they want to write, find the journal they were published in, read their submission guidelines, and start penning down every accordingly, in a structured and organized manner. They are never tired of reading more and more like a thirsty person desperately wanting water, as new research in new contexts is always emerging, so reading is something never-ending for them. They read and write simultaneously to build up citations (in-text and at the end as references in alphabetical order in APA style) for their research paper—the output of their reading, reading, and reading.

Keeping in view such an immense significance of reading, this present study concludes and informs that the application of appropriate, planned, and informed strategies not only facilitates and motivates the readers but improves their meaning-making by raising the reading speed and comprehension level. The review highlights four reading strategies, namely differentiated strategies, metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies. Thus, the study has brought together to the limelight the divergent reading strategies, techniques, and perspectives to facilitate the readers, learners, and classroom practitioners for informed, improved, and constructive learning and teaching for knowledge building and creation and transform the university students into scholars.

Some university students use a surface approach to reading and are unaware of effective reading strategies. This makes them slow readers and, in turn, low achievers. [Nordin et al. \(2013\)](#) argue that high achievers use effective reading strategies more frequently than low achievers; therefore, encouraging the learners to work together in heterogeneous groups may improve their use of reading strategies and thus enhance their reading comprehension. Teachers need to use reading materials that encourage students to use an in-depth reading approach that involves cognitive and metacognitive skills ([Hermida, 2009](#)). Both the top-down and bottom-up strategies are needed in reading classes. Only then can university students become skilful, accurate, and fluent readers and have a scholarly approach to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and wisdom.

Recommendations

1. All language instructions must include reading strategies to help learners achieve their goal of becoming successful readers in the language. Teachers should modify their teaching style to adjust to the students' varied learning styles and interests and accordingly, design and implement reading activities. Students need to learn and develop reading strategies in the second/foreign language before studying content-based subjects in the language at higher levels. Therefore, they must be made aware of what reading strategies can help them become efficient learners – they must monitor and evaluate their reading. Reading is not an isolated skill. Thus, it must be integrated with the other language skills and the socio-affective strategies— mutual respect, asking for help, cooperation and collaboration, and empathizing. The digital era demands successful digital readers; thus, online resources must be a part of reading instructions.
2. With new challenges and possibilities like switch towards online teaching/ learning during the pandemic, availability of a lot of activities and materials on the internet, various readily available tools to create exciting and captivating reading activities, and the broader scope of distance learning, there are new challenges for teachers and researchers to be creative and innovative in developing new reading strategies on these four planes— differentiated, cognitive, meta-cognitive, socio-affective and digitalized.

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