



Learning Achievement and the Reading Strategy Instruction

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Abstract

When students in Taiwan enter into higher education, the reading demands placed upon them often lead them to select ineffective and inefficient strategies with little strategic intent. To investigate how reading strategy use affects the development of Taiwanese EFL learners' reading comprehension, the aim of this study was to investigate the frequency and differences of four reading strategy uses (cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and testing strategies) between good and poor readers on their reading outcomes. Based on the purpose of the present study, three main research questions were addressed: (1) What is the most frequent use of reading strategy reported by individual students? (2) Is there any significant relationship between students' self-reported reading strategy use and English reading performance? (3) What are the differences existing in the reading strategy uses of good and poor Taiwanese EFL readers and reading comprehension performance? One hundred and ten sophomores (27 males and 83 females) majoring in English at I-Shou University participated in this study. To examine the relation of strategic use on students' reading performance, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed in the study and a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the interaction effect between good and poor readers on their ability in using reading strategy and reading comprehension. Results of the study showed that students generally used more cognitive and testing strategies, and particularly devoted more efforts to using rehearsal and eliminating techniques to reach a higher level of reading comprehension performance. A significant interaction effect was found between strategy use and proficiency levels, indicating that poor readers scored lower than good readers in their use of all strategies. Implications of these findings for implementing effective reading strategy instruction in a Taiwanese EFL context are discussed.

Keywords: Reading strategy use; cognitive strategy; metacognitive strategy; compensation strategy; testing strategy; EFL reading comprehension

1. Introduction

Recent research on the subject of reading has shown that reading exists as a complex cognitive activity indispensable for adequate functioning and for obtaining information in contemporary society (Alfassi, 2004; Zhang, 1993). To enter any literate society, students must know how to learn from reading in order to succeed. However, when students in Taiwan enter higher education for the reading demands that are placed upon them, they often select ineffective and inefficient strategies with little strategic intent (Ko, 2002). Feng and Mokhtari (1998) and Cheng (2000) found that when reading easy English and Chinese texts, Taiwanese students' use of reading strategies is similar; but when they are presented with difficult Chinese and English texts, their use of strategies in reading the Chinese text is more meaning-focused or global; in contrast, when they read the English text, they employ more low-level or local processing strategies. Many Taiwanese EFL students assume that the intended author's meaning lies within the printed words, leaving the reading process no more than obtaining meaning from the words on the page. They

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approach reading passively, relying heavily on the use of a bilingual dictionary, thereby spending countless hours laboring over direct sentence-by-sentence translations. Despite all the efforts made, students' reading comprehension remains poor.

Investigations of reading strategies in second/foreign language acquisition have further identified the reading strategy use by effective and poor readers (Chamot, 2005; Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Kang, 1997). For example, effective EFL/ESL readers know how to use a variety of appropriate strategies to reach their learning goals in both retrospective and productive tasks; while less effective readers not only use strategies less frequently, but often do not choose the appropriate strategies for the tasks. To enhance the reading comprehension ability in English, Alfassi (2004) stated that students should "understand the meaning of text, critically evaluate the message, remember the content, and apply the new-found knowledge flexibly" (p. 171). Using reading strategies appropriately may be of great help to non-native readers because it can serve as an effective way of overcoming language deficiency and obtaining better reading achievement on language proficiency tests (Zhang, 2008). As EFL educators, it is essential to explore how Taiwanese students learn to read in English and understand more the problems they have encountered in reading strategy use, so that teachers can help them acquire better strategies.

To get a clear picture regarding good and poor Taiwanese readers' use of specific strategies, this study employed four major reading strategies including cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and testing strategies, to analyze which strategy use might result in a higher level of reading comprehension. The reason for selecting these four strategies was that in the instructor's (who was also the researcher) teaching experiences, they were the most important learning strategies resulting in successful reading. Based on the purpose of the present study, three main research questions were addressed as follows:

1. What is the most frequent use of reading strategy reported by individual students?
2. Is there any significant relationship between students' self-reported reading strategy use and English reading performance?
3. What are the differences existing in the reading strategy uses of good and poor Taiwanese EFL readers and reading comprehension performance?

2. Literature Review

Reading strategy use

Reading is an interactive process combining top-down and bottom-up processing (Barnett, 1989); as a result, it is very important for students to use appropriate reading strategies to increase their comprehension. According to Barnett, the term strategy means the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text to make sense of what they read (p. 66). In other words, reading comprehension requires the integration and application of multiple strategies or skills. Those strategies involve memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, social, and test-taking strategies (Chamot, 2005; Oxford, 1990, 1996; Zhang, 1993). For the research purpose, cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and testing strategies were selected and described as below: *Cognitive strategy*. According to Chamot and Kupper (1989), cognitive strategies are approaches "in which learners work with and manipulate the task materials themselves, moving towards task completion" (p. 14). Examples of cognitive strategies include the skills of predicting based on prior knowledge, analyzing text organization by looking for specific patterns, self-questioning, making a summary, taking notes by writing down the main idea or specific points, translating, inferencing, and transferring (Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Oxford, 1990). Weinstein and Mayer (1986) characterized those cognitive learning strategies into three main sets: rehearsal, elaboration, and organizational strategies. Rehearsal strategies involve underlining the text, saying a word or phrase aloud, or using a mnemonic. Elaboration strategies include paraphrasing or summarizing the material to be learned, creating analogies, generative note-taking, explaining ideas to others, asking and



answering questions about the text. The other type of deeper processing strategy, organizational, includes behaviors such as selecting the main idea from text, outlining the text to be learned, and using a variety of specific techniques for selecting and organizing the ideas in the material. According to Weinstein and Mayer, all of these organizational strategies can be used to test and confirm the accuracy of learner's deeper understanding of the text.

Metacognitive strategy

Students' metacognitive knowledge and use of metacognitive strategies can have an important influence upon their achievement. According to Chamot and Kupper (1989) and Wenden (1998), metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned. Oxford (1990) proposed that metacognitive strategies include three strategy sets: Centering, arranging and planning, as well as evaluating the learning. A similar model of metacognitive strategies proposed by Pintrich (1999) included three general types of strategies: Planning, monitoring, and regulating. Planning activities include setting goals for studying, skimming a text before reading, generating questions before reading a text, etc.

Monitoring strategy is an essential aspect of self-regulated learning. Weinstein and Mayer (1986) regard all metacognitive activities as partly the monitoring of comprehension where students check their understanding against some self-set goals. Monitoring activities include tracking of attention while reading a text, self-testing through the use of questions about the text material to check for understanding, etc (Pintrich, 1999). The other type of metacognitive strategies is regulatory strategy which is closely tied to monitoring strategies.

Regulatory activities may include asking questions to monitor students' comprehension, slowing the pace of reading with more difficult texts, reviewing examination materials, and postponing questions. Several studies have shown that all these strategies can enhance second/foreign language reading by correcting their studying behavior and repairing deficits in their understanding of the reading text (Carrell, 1989; Pintrich, 1999; Whyte, 1993).

Compensation strategy

According to the literature, another factor resulting in successful reading is the development of vocabulary knowledge (Yang, 2004). However, many EFL readers often encounter the problem of unfamiliar vocabulary and unknown concepts so as to interfere the comprehension (Zhang, 1993). Several researchers suggest teaching students active compensation strategies to achieve comprehension (Oxford, 1990; Sinatra & Dowd, 1992; Zhang, 1993). Sinatra and Dowd proposed a comprehension framework for the use of context clues: syntactic clues (related to grammatical structures) and semantic clues (involved intra- and inter sentence meaning relationship). Sinatra and Dowd argued that readers should not only understand how the writer used grammar, but also use semantic clues such as restatement, use of examples and summary clues in order to guess the meaning of a new word. In addition, to guess the meaning of words intelligently, Oxford (1990) clustered 10 compensation strategies into two sets: linguistic clues (guessing meanings from suffixes, prefixes, and word order) and other clues (using text structure such as introductions, summaries, conclusions, titles, transitions, and using general background knowledge). These decoding skills can not only help readers overcome a limited vocabulary, but also help them guess about the theme of an article. Such learning strategies can significantly increase the speed and raise reading efficiency (Winstead, 2004; Zhang, 1993).

Testing Strategy



A number of test-taking strategies have been recommended by reading researchers. This is in line with the wide use of multiple-choice items in standardized testing (Zhang, 1993). Jacobs (1985) made two suggestions for test takers: (1) test takers should first read the questions and answers before reading a passage (skimming); (2) test takers should answer each question through a process of elimination (for multiple-choice questions). The same testing strategies were recommended by Oxford (1990) with the assumption made that reading with a purpose would significantly improve both efficiency and test results. EFL Proficiency Levels, Reading Strategy Use, and EFL Reading Comprehension Numerous studies (Chamot, 2005; Grenfell & Harris, 1999; Wenden, 1998; Zhang, 2008) have addressed the importance of understanding the type of reading strategies used by good readers and the differences in reading strategy use between more and less effective readers. For example, good EFL/ESL readers know how to use a variety of appropriate strategies to reach their learning goals in both retrospective and productive tasks, while less effective readers not only use strategies less frequently, but often do not choose the appropriate strategies for the tasks. Cheng (2000) found that when reading easy English and Chinese texts, Taiwanese students' use of reading strategies is similar; but when they are presented with difficult Chinese and English texts, their use of strategies in reading the Chinese text is more meaning-focused or global; in contrast, when they read the English text, they employ more low-level or local processing strategies.

To investigate the differences in reading strategy use between good and poor readers, Lau and Chan (2003) compared 83 good readers and 76 poor readers on their ability to use reading strategies in Chinese reading comprehension. The results showed that poor readers scored lower than good readers in using all reading strategies, especially in using sophisticated cognitive and metacognitive strategies. It is suggested that poor readers might have deficiencies in higher-order cognitive ability. Besides, Jie and Xiaoqing's (2006) study focused on the relationship between learning styles and language learning strategies in the EFL context in China. The analyses showed that learning styles had a significant influence on learners' learning strategy choices. Compared with low achievers, high achievers were more capable of exercising strategies that were associated with their non-preferred styles.

Based on the research results, it is proposed that learning styles may influence learners' language learning outcomes through their relationship with learning strategies. Carrell (1989) conducted a study of ESL readers in the USA, whose results showed that there was a difference between strategy perceptions associated with good L1 readers and those associated with good L2 readers. She pointed out that there was a consistent difference according to L2 proficiency level, with low-proficiency readers tending to report more local strategies than higher-proficiency readers, suggesting that L2 proficiency could intercept readers' perceived use of strategies.

To investigate learners' metacognitive knowledge of L2 learning strategies in order to establish possible links between learners' knowledge and use of strategies in context, Zhang (2001) examined 10 Chinese EFL readers' metacognitive knowledge of strategies in learning to read EFL in the People's Republic of China (PRC). His findings showed that the PRC EFL readers' metacognitive knowledge of reading strategies had close links to their EFL proficiency, with high scorers showing clearer awareness of strategy use; that is, they knew better which strategies could be used more effectively in order for comprehension to occur. In contrast, the low scorers did not realize that reading EFL required them to adopt different reading strategies to solve the problems they might encounter. This suggests that readers' L2 proficiency level and L2 reading ability interact with each other. Based on the literature mentioned above, a good reader becomes an active participant in the reading process; one who requires the integration and application of multiple strategies while reading. This is also where good and poor readers can be distinguished from each other in terms of their control over strategy use (Oxford, 2001; Rubin, 2001; Wenden, 1998).

3. Objective of the Study



Although investigations of learning strategies in second/foreign language acquisition have identified the strategy use by good and poor readers (Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Zhang, 2001, 2008), yet until recently there have been fewer studies focusing on EFL learners' reading strategy use in a Taiwanese learning context. As mentioned earlier, university students in Taiwan often have poor English reading ability partly due to their level of reading strategy knowledge and a lack of control over strategy use, so they often select ineffective and inefficient strategies with little strategic intent (Cheng, 2000; Ko, 2002; Lau, 2006; Oxford, 2001; Rubin, 2001; Wenden, 1998; Zhang, 2008). To enhance EFL learners' reading comprehension, O'Malley et al. (1985) and Chamot (2005) mentioned that there is a need for teachers to provide more structure in students' self-report, so that teachers can understand whether students can apply the specific strategies for the reading tasks and whether students can be critically reflective about the language learning activities. Once a learning strategy becomes familiar through repeated use, it may be used with some automaticity; particularly less successful readers can be taught new strategies, thus helping them become better English readers (Chamot, 2005; Grenfell & Harris, 1999). Nevertheless, a review of the literature shows that although language-learning strategy research has produced sufficient evidence to inform language teaching and learning practices (Oxford, 1996; Wenden, 1998; Zhang, 2008), reports directly addressing Taiwanese EFL learners' reading strategies are insufficient.

To examine the strategies used by Taiwanese EFL learners during the reading process, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the following research questions: (1) What is the most frequent use of reading strategy reported by individual students? (2) Is there any significant relationship between students' self-reported reading strategy use and English reading performance? (3) What are the differences existing in the reading strategy use of good and poor readers and EFL reading comprehension performance? The aim of this study was to investigate the frequency and differences of current reading strategy uses between good and poor readers, as well as examining the relations between reading strategy use and students' reading outcomes. It is expected that the research results of this study can provide more basic information about effective reading strategy use for the improvement of reading instruction in an EFL context, so as to enhance Taiwanese EFL learners' reading comprehension.

4. Methodology

4.1. Subjects

One hundred and ten sophomores (27 males and 83 females) majoring in English from one university in Taiwan participated in the study. A demographic questionnaire was administered to gather information about the subjects' backgrounds. Results from the questionnaires showed that the subjects of this study ranged in ages from 19 to 22 years old, with an average of 20.8 years old. All of the subjects had experienced some formal instruction in English for an average of 6.8 years by the time they came to study at the University. Eighty-three percent of the subjects performed various kinds of practices to improve their English language proficiency during their free time, such as listening to English songs and radio programs, by watching American movies or CNN news, and by reading English magazines for personal pleasure. However, 17% of them did not do any practice at all.

4.2. Learning Contexts

A guided reading course, which was designed in terms of a completely formal instruction class, lasted in the Fall 2006 semester. The required textbook for the course was "Mosaic 1: Reading" (Kirn & Hartmann, 2002). The objective of the reading course was to help students with intermediate to high intermediate levels understand the contents of the reading materials and mostly develop various reading skills needed to succeed in their academic studies. In the reading class, students were engaged in practicing a variety of reading skills/strategies, such as previewing vocabulary, predicting reading contents, identifying main ideas, skimming



for main ideas, scanning for information, making inferences, etc. The course emphasized the reading of various topics of expository texts, such as education, city life, business, jobs, lifestyles around the world, global trade, medicine, language and communication, etc. The course aimed to enhance students' reading comprehension in English through direct teaching on various reading strategies. Based on the interactive model of the reading process and the information offered by Weinstein and Mayer (1986), Pintrich (1999), and Oxford (1990), 10 sets of reading strategies were selected as essential for EFL students in Taiwan to enhance their English reading comprehension. These reading strategies were categorized into four groups (see Table below): cognitive (items 1-13), metacognitive (items 14-25), compensation (items 26-35), and testing (items 36-43) strategies.

Ten Sets of Reading Strategies

Strategy	Sets of Reading Strategies	Number of Items	Total
Cognitive	● Rehearsal	3 (items 1-3)	13
	● Elaboration	5 (items 4-8)	
	● Organizational	5 (items 9-13)	
Metacognitive	▼ Planning	3 (items 14-16)	12
	● Monitoring	4 (items 17-20)	
	● Regulating	5 (items 21-25)	
Compensation	● Linguistic	5 (items 26-30)	10
	● Semantic	5 (items 31-35)	
Testing	● Skimming	4 (items 36-39)	8
	● Eliminating	4 (items 40-43)	

4.3. Instrumentation and Procedures

In this study, the subjects' strategy-using effect was evaluated based on the reading comprehension test and reading strategy questionnaire. First, reading comprehension was assessed using the Reading Comprehension section of the simulated TOEFL test (Phillips, 1996). Five reading passages were selected, each passage followed by nine to 11 multiple-choice reading comprehension questions, with the total number of 50 questions in a given test. The test lasted for exactly 55 minutes. Time is a definitive factor in the reading comprehension test. Many students who took the TOEFL test before noted that they were unable to finish all of the questions in this section. Therefore, they needed to make the most efficient use of their time by using effective reading strategies to get the highest score in a limited amount of time. In addition, greater care went into the choice of passages so that the passage type would match the reading strategies taken.

Subjects were asked to take the comprehension test at the end of the semester as a part of the regular class activities. All test papers were scored by the researcher, whereby the subjects received one point if they chose the correct answer. The test results which provided the basis for assigning the subjects into different groups ranged from 10 to 45 points, with a mean of 32.5 and a median of 33. Thirty-six subjects (32.7%) whose scores ranged from 36 to 45 were labeled as "good"; 41 subjects (37.3%) whose scores ranged from 31 to 35 were labeled as "average," and 33 subjects (30%) whose scores ranged from 10 to 30 were labeled as "poor." For the research purpose, only the "good" and "poor" groups were chosen in this study with the total number being 69 subjects. Then, the reading strategy questionnaire adopted from Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, ESL/EFL version 7.0), Carrell's (1989) Metacognitive Questionnaire, Pintrich et al.'s (1991) The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Baker and Boonkit's (2004) English Reading Strategies Questionnaire, and the researcher's own teaching experiences was integrated and employed for this study to elicit subjects' reported frequency of using these reading strategies. The questionnaire was distributed to all the subjects who were invited to complete it within 15 minutes of having taken the reading comprehension test at the end of the semester. The questionnaire, containing altogether 43 items, consisted of four major categories of general use of reading strategies:



cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and testing strategies. Subjects were asked to rate certain statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never or almost never true of me) to 5 (always or almost always true of me). To form a pilot test, three students (English majors) were asked to comment on the contents of the questionnaire. Immediately after the pilot testing, the researcher took time to discuss with the students their concerns related to the meaning and clarity of the statements found in the questionnaire. Minor adjustments were made to the wording in some of the learning contexts as a result of these solicited comments.

5. Data Analysis

To calculate the score of the reading strategy questionnaire, the answer to each of the items, 1 to 5, was added up for each participant. The overall average indicated how often the participant tended to use reading strategies in general, while averages for each category indicated which strategy categories the participant tended to use most frequently. The means and standard deviations of the strategy use scores for each of the groups of strategies identified were computed to investigate the frequency of strategy use. The cronbach internal consistency coefficients for categories of cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and testing strategies were .80, .83, .79, and .81 respectively. To examine the relation of strategic use on students' reading performance, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed for the purpose of this study. Additionally, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the interaction effect between good and poor groups (independent variable) on their ability in using reading strategy (dependent variable) and reading comprehension (dependent variable).

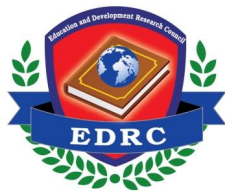
6. Results

Research question 1: What is the most frequent use of reading strategy reported by individual students?

According to the means and standard deviations of strategy use scores for each reading strategy identified, subjects used many eliminating strategies ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .69$), while elaboration strategy use was a lower level ($M = 3.05$, $SD = .67$). Compared with the overall four strategies (see Table 3), the most frequent use of reading strategy was found to be testing strategy ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .64$), followed by compensation strategy ($M = 3.60$, $SD = .57$), followed by metacognitive strategy ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .62$), and then followed by cognitive strategy ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .55$). As shown in Table 3, the mean values for the strategy use ranged from 3.49 to 4.00, and the mean score of the four strategies was 3.66. These findings indicate that the overall frequency of reading strategy use was almost "usually"; that is, students generally have a clear awareness to use the combination of strategies frequently, particularly using testing strategy, in order to get a high reading score.

Research question 2: Is there any significant relationship between students' self-reported reading strategy use and English reading performance?

To examine the relationship between the measures of strategy use and reading comprehension, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted in the study. The students' ability in using rehearsal ($r = .32$, $p < .01$) and eliminating ($r = .35$, $p < .01$) strategies had significantly low correlations with the reading scores, indicating the weak relation of rehearsal and eliminating strategy use in reading development. The testing and cognitive strategies were significantly correlated (correlation coefficients ranged from .24 and .27, $p < .05$) with reading scores, indicating the weak and positive correlations of cognitive and testing strategies with reading comprehension. This finding shows that to reach a higher level of reading performance, students generally used more cognitive and testing strategies and particularly devoted more efforts to using rehearsal and eliminating techniques.



Differences between Good and Poor Groups on Strategy Use and Reading Score

	Good (N=36)		Poor (N=33)		F	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Cognitive	3.64	.55	3.33	.51	5.77	1	.019*
Metacognitive	3.73	.58	3.34	.60	7.30	1	.009*
Compensation	3.73	.59	3.46	.51	4.07	1	.048*
Testing	4.17	.57	3.76	.66	7.55	1	.008*
Reading Score	40.39	4.54	32.52	6.28	36.03	1	.000*

Research question 3: What are the differences existing in the reading strategy uses of good and poor readers and EFL reading comprehension performance?

To examine differences between good and poor readers' performance on the four reading strategy uses, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted in the study. Results show that a significant interaction effect was found between strategy use and proficiency levels (Wilks' = .604, $F = 8.265$, $p = .000$). Findings in Table 6 and 7 also reveal that all differences between the two student-groups were significant, indicating that good readers scored higher than poor readers in all variables. These findings indicate that poor readers were less capable than good readers in using all reading strategies to comprehend English texts.

7. Discussions and Conclusion

To investigate how reading strategy use affects the development of Taiwanese EFL learners' reading comprehension, the aim of this study was to examine the frequency and differences of four reading strategy uses (cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and testing strategies) between good and poor readers on their reading outcomes. Several key findings emerge from this study. First, regarding the frequency of reading strategy use, results of the present study demonstrate that students usually employed integrated reading strategies in English reading process. Such results support findings in the literature (Chamot, 2005; Grenfell & Harris, 1999; Wenden, 1998; Zhang, 2008), suggesting that it is more effective for students to reach their learning goals if they have a higher frequency of employing a variety of strategies in their reading process. Another finding of the study indicates that students particularly used more testing strategies (e.g., skimming and eliminating techniques) to reach a higher level of reading comprehension performance. Such a result is not surprising since Taiwanese students have been traditionally branded "rote" learners, who seem to master testing strategies to overcome language deficiency and obtain better reading achievement on language proficiency tests (Zhang, 2008).

Second, regarding the differences in the strategy use between good and poor readers' performance, the finding of this study demonstrates that the good readers seem to have distinguished themselves from the poor readers in their reported frequency of having the strategic knowledge. This frequency was reflected in their understanding of how to use these strategies (Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Zhang, 2001). That is, students with a higher reading ability frequently used more reading strategies than did students with a poorer reading ability. This is consistent with the view that a good reader becomes an active participant in the reading process; one who requires the integration and application of multiple strategies while reading (Oxford, 2001; Rubin, 2001; Wenden, 1998). The other possible reason is that good readers are already proficient at using more varied strategies, so that they might unconsciously be applied in their reading process (Chamot, 2005; Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Kang, 1997). In other words, EFL readers' proficiency level intercepts their perceived use of strategies (Carrell, 1989). Good EFL/ESL readers know how to use a variety of appropriate strategies to reach their learning goals, while less effective readers not only use strategies less frequently, but often do not choose the appropriate or sophisticated strategies for the tasks (Lau & Chan, 2003). Taken together, the above findings indicate that how to



effectively use a variety of reading strategies should be considered when investigating the reading problems of students with learning difficulties (Lau & Chan, 2003).

Even though the finding of the study demonstrates that students' use of reading strategies did not indicate a strong relationship in EFL reading achievement, such a result is not surprising, particularly because strategy training in the regular class has not been given much emphasis in Taiwan (Ko, 2002; Lau, 2006). Since poor readers encountered difficulty in the appropriate use of reading strategies due to their lack of proficiency in the target language, it is suggested that educators should plan effective reading instruction for poor readers. In order to enhance EFL reading comprehension, poor readers should be taught to enhance their awareness and ability in using reading strategies, such as rehearsal, elaboration, organization, planning, monitoring, regulating, linguistic, semantic, skimming, and eliminating strategic techniques in the reading process. It is especially important to explicitly teach poor readers cognitive and metacognitive strategies in the classroom since students reported to use fewer cognitive and metacognitive strategies while reading. This seems to be an expected outcome of EFL students' poor cognitive knowledge reported in the literature (Lau & Chan, 2003), and their lower level of metacognitive control in reading process (Cheng, 2000; Zhang, 2001, 2008). In order to enhance both strategic awareness and comprehension skills, instruction and support in the use of reading strategies such as memorizing, elaboration, executive control, planning, monitoring, or self-evaluation may be beneficial to those poor readers who do not yet employ such strategies. Textbooks should also give information about the importance of cognitive and metacognitive skills in learning and about the need to promote them through direct classroom instruction (Eme & Puustinen, 2006; Lau & Chan, 2003).

Lastly, we should keep in mind that developing reading strategy is a rather time-consuming task. Students need to go through a lot of practice before they can master and apply these strategies in reading. It is, therefore, advisable to integrate various strategies into regular classroom teaching and practice, so that less effective readers are allowed to have a relative period of time to employ these new-learned skills until they have acquired the strategies necessary for independent or autonomous learning (Zhang, 2008). In conclusion, to help students become strategic readers, teachers should raise students' strategic awareness, allowing them to become more aware of strategy use while reading (Ko, 2002). It is essential for teachers to help EFL learners build a repertoire of reading strategies and then provide various reading materials for students to try out different reading strategies through explicit explanation and modeling (Chamot, 2005; Wong, 2005). Demonstration (modeling) is seen as one of the most useful techniques for explaining strategies for reading achievement (Houtveen & van de Grift, 2007). Making it explicit in this way helps poor readers by making clear what they should be doing and what they were not doing before, or what they were doing wrong (Rosenshine & Meister, 1997). Furthermore, teachers should encourage students in applying the strategies to an expanded range of learning activities and materials so that the strategies transfer to new activities and are used by students independently of the teachers' support (O'Malley et al., 1985). Finally, it is also important that the teacher checks what students have understood and gives them feedback on their use of the strategies. Students must be given the opportunity and skills to discuss the text and the use of strategies with their fellow students in small groups so as to check individual students' reading comprehension and strategy use (Kindsvatter, Wilen, & Ishler, 1988). In future research, it is suggested that consideration of individual learner differences such as attitude, gender, previous academic background, and how such variables may promote the use of a reading strategy could lead to future research in other foreign language reading classes.



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