



Exploring The Challenges Encountered by University Students in Employing Reading Strategies

استكشاف التحديات التي يواجهها طلاب الجامعات في توظيف استراتيجيات القراءة

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to investigate different reading strategies applied by EFL University students. The study also aims to explore whether there is a significant difference in using reading strategies between students based on their gender and the year of study. This study is quantitative in nature. A total of 155 University students participated in this study to answer the reading strategies (RS) questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was employed to evaluate the students' proficiency in using reading strategies, while Independent Sample T-test was also used to determine whether there is significant statistical difference in reading strategies according to the students' gender. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate whether the year of study had any significant impact on their use of reading strategies. The results showed that students in this study used all the reading strategies. The most frequently used strategies were cognitive strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies, while the least used strategies by students were testing strategies followed by compensation strategies. The results of the Independent Sample T-test indicated that there is no significant statistical difference in reading strategies among University students according to gender. The results of the One-way ANOVA also showed that there is also no a significant statistical difference in reading strategies used among students based on the year of study. The recommendations of the study were also included.

ملخص البحث:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف استراتيجيات القراءة المختلفة التي يطبقها طلاب الجامعات الذين يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. كما تهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف ما إذا كان هناك فرق ذو دلالة إحصائية في استخدام استراتيجيات القراءة بين الطلاب بناءً على جنسهم وسنة دراستهم. وهذه الدراسة ذات طبيعة كمية. شارك في هذه الدراسة 155 طالبًا جامعيًا للإجابة على استبيان استراتيجيات القراءة.

تم استخدام الإحصاء الوصفي لتقييم كفاءة الطلاب في استخدام استراتيجيات القراءة، بينما تم استخدام اختبار تي للعينات المستقلة لتحديد ما إذا كان هناك فرق إحصائي ذو دلالة في استراتيجيات القراءة وفقًا لجنس الطلاب. تم إجراء تحليل التباين (ANOVA) للتحقق مما إذا كان للسنة الدراسية أي تأثير ذي دلالة على استخدامهم لاستراتيجيات القراءة.



أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب في هذه الدراسة استخدموا جميع استراتيجيات القراءة. وكانت الاستراتيجيات الأكثر استخدامًا هي الاستراتيجيات المعرفية، تلمها الاستراتيجيات، ما وراء المعرفية، في حين كانت الاستراتيجيات الأقل استخدامًا من قبل الطلاب هي استراتيجيات الاختبار، تلمها استراتيجيات التعويض. وأشارت نتائج اختبار تي للعينات المستقلة إلى عدم وجود فرق إحصائي ذي دلالة في استراتيجيات القراءة بين طلاب الجامعة حسب الجنس. كما أظهرت نتائج تحليل التباين احادي الاتجاه عدم وجود فرق إحصائي ذي دلالة في استراتيجيات القراءة المستخدمة بين الطلاب بناءً على السنة الدراسية. كما تم تضمين توصيات الدراسة

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Keywords: Reading, strategies, cognitive, metacognitive, testing, compensation

الكلمات المفتاحية: القراءة، الاستراتيجيات، الادراك، ما وراء الادراك، الاختبار، التعويض.

Introduction

Reading strategies are designed to enhance learning outcomes and extend the retention of content among students by facilitating their effective application to follow these strategies. There is a lot of information about both the nature of reading as a process and the effectiveness of teaching reading strategies. Reading strategies have a lengthy and rich history. Many research works highlighted and focused attention on reading strategies. Bereiter & Bird (2012) asserted that reading strategies are important to students' success. Therefore, learners should benefit from studying strategies evolve for evidence or generate questions about a text.

There is no doubt that using reading strategies helps students to discover how to read effectively and easily. Rokhsari (2012) stated that the use of reading strategies is one of the factors that can make a reader privileged among other readers. Students need to improve their reading skills and they need to learn and use reading strategies. Particularly in higher education settings where students must interact with intricate and discipline-specific literature, reading skills are an essential part of academic success. These strategies are the intentional, goal-oriented methods that readers use to improve their understanding, recall, and critical interaction with written content. Proficient readers actively create meaning by interacting with the text, using past information, and keeping track of their comprehension as they read, as opposed to passively.

This study is conducted to examine the reading strategies used by university students. Furthermore, the study attempts to identify the influence of students' demographic profile, their gender and year of study on their reading strategies.

The Background of the Study

The current English language curriculum is designed to integrate the four English language skills. However, knowing how to read is an obstacle for many students. Thus, there is a big gap between students' ability and achievement. Despite their significance, many college students struggle to use reading strategies effectively. These difficulties could be caused by a lack of experience, a small vocabulary, or trouble modifying tactics for various academic fields.





Reading is a skill which is learned in school. Also, reading is the process of recovering operative and stored information, whether the information is in the form of letters, symbols, or even pictures (Seng & Hashim, 2006).

Bornholt (2002) demonstrated that learning strategies in reading depends on the mental and physical maturity of an individual and the difficulty for the learner determines his progress in social function.

In addition, most of the students cannot read while others try to read just to pass examination. Alhmal (2007) stated that the exercise studying and learning is a success in terms of examination. This study aims to identify the problems that face university students and try to proffer solutions by using the best strategies recommend it to officials in order to have a better education.

In conclusion, this study discusses whether the university students know the different reading strategies by examining the most and the least reading strategies among university students. Also, the study seeks to study the impact of students' gender and the year of study on the use of reading strategies.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is that a significant proportion of university students suffer from difficulties in reading. Consequently, students may become overwhelmed by the growing amount of reading material in higher education, which could result in surface-level engagement rather than in-depth comprehension. Hulme et al. (2010) stated that reading difficulties reflect, at least partly, oral-language weaknesses that can be effectively improved by suitable teaching.

At the present time, reading strategies cannot be ignored in learning languages because the lack of understanding how to read leads to difficulties in effective communication. Gilani et al. (2012) argued that reading involves difficulty with language. From the facts mentioned above, the researcher intends to investigate whether university students are aware of the different strategies for reading through the study of reading strategies applied among university students.

Objectives of the Study

This study originated from the desire:

- 1- To determine the most common and the least common strategies used by university students.
- 2-To examine whether there is a statistically significant difference in reading comprehension strategies used by university students based on gender.
- 3-To examine whether there is a statistically significant difference in reading strategies used by university students based on the year of study.

Research Questions

- 1-What is the most common of reading strategies used by university students?
- 2-What is the least common of reading strategies used by university students?
- 3- Is there a significant difference in reading strategies according to students' gender?





4- Is there a significant difference in reading strategies according to the students' year of study?

Research Hypotheses

H1. There is no significant difference in reading strategies according to students' gender.

H2. There is no significant difference in reading strategies according to the students' year of study.

Significance of the Study

This study benefits the English language teachers through their knowledge of the strategies that used by their students and their taking advantage of it. Also, Students will benefit from the best strategies for reading. Moreover, the current study will benefit the educational programs for the students' advantages and this contributes to the development of the learning process. It will also enrich the libraries in their resources for reading.

Scope of the Study

This study investigated reading strategies used by university students. One hundred and fifty-five (155) students, aged between 19 to 21 years participated in this study by answering the questionnaire for reading strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section reviews the theoretical framework which consists of the Schema theory and the Cognitive theory, define reading strategies, classification of reading strategies (CRS) and the importance of strategies in reading. Finally, it highlights previous researches as well as conceptual framework related to the study.

Theoretical Framework

Many theories provide assumptions about the importance of reading strategies for students. Among these theories are the Schema theory and the Cognitive theory.

The Schema Theory

Park (2010) demonstrated that Schema theory explains how the readers understand and organize information. Also, this theory showed that the process of reading with understanding includes the interaction between the reader's plan and the text.

According to Cook (cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011) the Schema theory was developed by the Gestalt psychologist Bartlett "...who observed how people, when asked to repeat a story from memory, filled in details which did not occur in the original but conformed to their cultural norms".

Xiao-hui et al. (2007) stated that the Schema theory has an essential role in reading. Therefore the authors provided three models of reading process to show the relationship between the Schema theory and reading strategies. These models are the Bottom-up model, the Top-down model and the Interactive model.

1- The Bottom-up model





This model shows that reading is the process of constructing the codes into words, words into sentences and sentences for getting the general meaning. Bottom-up model focuses on understanding the linguistic more than the reading skills. Therefore, this model is very weak in reading because it depends on understanding the linguistic with focus on the Schema theory.

2–TheTop-downmodel

This emphasizes that readers use real knowledge in memory. Also, readers have greater ideas from the meaning of the text during the process of reading. Top to the bottom model makes general expectations based on the highest level and general schemata.

3- The Interactive model

This model is a blend of bottom-up and top-down models. "Interaction in this perspective takes place at three levels: 1) the interaction between lower-level and higher-level skills; 2) between bottom-up processing and top-down processing; 3) between the background knowledge presupposed in the text and the background of the reader". This model is considered more effective in reading process.

This theory describes the process used by readers in integrating between their knowledge with the new information in the text in order to understand the text. Also, the Schema theory develops students' reading skills and improves their abilities in reading.

The Cognitive theory

Cognitive theory has played an important role since the 1970s. This theory focuses on the conceptualization of the students' learning processes. Cognitive theory is the theory of development about the nature of intelligence and its evolution. However, this theory deals with the nature of knowledge itself in the process of reorganization of mental processes as a result of mature of experience. Park (2010) stated that cognitive theory means that the reader is involved in the interaction and uses of knowledge resources such as his knowledge and expertise for the construction of meaning.

Alkhasawneh et al. (2012) stated that Cognitive theory allows the learners to improve their understanding in the material dependent on their knowledge and experiences with the new information that are presented in the classroom. Finally, Cognitive theory is interested in the development of the learner's thinking processes and encourages him/his in understanding and interaction with the educational world.

Reading Strategies

Definitions of reading

Reading is a way to receive sensible information from the writer or the sender of the message. Also, it is a way for awareness by retrieving information recorded in the brain. Baluoti et al. (2012) determined that most students learn to read brilliantly, but some of them do not have the ability to read and some of them grow up without gaining reading skill.





Reading is of great importance and it is a window to human thought which leads to all sorts of different knowledge. Moreover, students learn facts and different subjects by resorting to reading materials. Any weakness in reading skills will result in weakness in all materials; Cain et al. (2004) stated that reading is a control on the one aspect of metacognition and it is the re-evaluation of the reader's ability to detect the deficiencies in the text, such as mixing the sentences or information that are inconsistent with the text.

To summarize, reading is the outcome to absorb by the reader and contributes to knowledge and facts. Also, it begins to realize symbols, words and relationships that connect them and then absorb the meanings.

Definitions of Strategies

Zare (2013) defined language learning strategies as processes that are selected by learners to enhance learning or the use of a second language through storage, keeping them and applying information about this language.

LEE (2010) observes that language learning strategies are the behaviours, and techniques that apply to language learners to facilitate language learning in order to obtain information and promote self-learning.

Oxford (1990) classified language learning strategies into two types which are direct and indirect strategies:

1- Direct Strategies: these strategies are directly involved in the target of language and they are divided into three categories:

A- Cognitive Strategies: These are the mental strategies which help students to comprehend and generate new language for making sense through summary in order to produce the target of language.

B- Memory Strategies: These strategies help students to store new information in memory and link the mental picture of words and review lessons.

C- Compensatory Strategies: These are strategies that help students to use the language so that they can overcome the knowledge gaps and sustain a continuation of the conversation.

2- Indirect Strategies: These strategies encourage indirect language- learning in different ways through sorting, cooperation with others and asking questions. These strategies are divided into three categories:

A- Affective Strategies: These are the techniques which help students to employ emotional strategies such as managing emotions, and promoting a positive attitude toward the target language, but often students get disappointed with feeling of strangeness in learning a foreign language.

B- Social Strategies: These strategies provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge through interacting with others. They contribute indirectly to learning because they lead to access, storage and use of the language.

C- Metacognitive Strategies: These are procedures used to express the operational tasks and planning to control the students' learning. These strategies emphasized on the thinking during the learning process. Additionally, they involve different processes like setting goals and self-managing.

Definitions of reading Strategies



There are various definitions of reading strategies. These strategies are a subset of learning strategies in second language acquisition. Reading strategies are the procedures that active readers use to understanding more about what they read. Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011) stated that reading could be categorised into two types of processes namely: the bottom to the top which indicates that reader obtains the meaning of the letters and words from the components of the text. The other process is from top to bottom which refers to the ability of the reader to fully understand the text as a whole and link it with his knowledge. Therefore, there is need for both processes to assimilate the contents of the text.

Shang (2011) defined reading strategies as an interactive process that combines process from top to bottom and versa. This means that reading strategies requires the integration and application of multiple strategies and skills.

Gilani et al. (2012) argued that reading strategies constitute the key elements in learning English language for all students as well as making instructions clear. This will facilitate, encourage learning and motivate students to read. In addition, Ebrahimi (2012) stated that reading strategies implies that students understand what they read and that their desire to read should lead to the ability to pronounce the words. Thus, the need for learning to read means knowing the meaning, understanding and improving their capacity in reading.

Classification of Reading Strategies (CRS)

Many scientists attempted to develop classification of reading strategies. These classifications have contributed effectively in explaining the knowledge of reading strategies. This section discusses the different classifications that have been identified in different contexts by different scientists.

Lai et al. (2008) classified reading strategies into three categories. These classifications are cognitive, metacognitive, and testing strategies. These strategies are integrated instructions which promote reading and understanding the students' teaching style, which are direct and explicit strategies. This helps students to meet the demands of the task of reading and to become more efficient in reading.

Shang (2011) divided reading strategies into four classifications which included cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy, compensation strategy and testing strategy.

1-Cognitive strategy: Cognitive strategy is a mental process to achieve a particular goal of knowledge. Researchers have found out that learners who use cognitive strategies are more effective in reading and writing, problem solving, as well as thinking. Also, cognitive strategies could be public or private. Public cognitive strategies are strategies that can be applied in many disciplines and in different situations while specific cognitive strategies tend to be more narrow and specific to a particular type of task.

2- Metacognitive strategy: This is defined as cognition which takes many forms and plays an important role in organizing tasks. It includes the knowledge of, when and how to use certain strategies to learn or to solve problems. There are three components of metacognition namely: knowledge, cognition and the organization of perception. Finally, this strategy involves three main sets: Planning, monitoring, and regulating





3- Compensation strategy: This strategy is used to develop the skills used to compensate for the shortcoming in the student who cannot be remedied. Compensation is an important incentive when required to achieve organizational results and consists of: semantic clues and linguistic clues.

4- Testing strategy: This strategy was considered by researchers in reading. Jacobs (cited in Shang 2011) "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 strategy defines testing approach to achieve its purposes. This means this strategy includes skimming and elimination.

The classification of reading strategies gives a clearer view of how these strategies are interrelated. The classification of Shang (2011) was adopted in this study because it is comprehensive and combines the most useful strategies that benefit the students to develop their language.

The importance of reading strategies

Reading strategies constitute the key factor in all learning strategies. According to McNamara & Kendeou (2011) there is an urgent need for reading strategies because they focus on improving processes to the performance of students. It is agreed that reading strategies aim at activating the student's knowledge and forms the starting point or pivot for learning. Also, these strategies encourage students to develop the habit of reading actively and effectively by asking questions and thinking about the concepts received during the reading.

Rokhsari (2012) argues that the use of reading strategies helps students to read effectively and easily. Also, these strategies considered project reading as necessary in all areas to achieve success and learning. Finally, the goal of reading strategies is to acquire information from the text that is read, and to achieve academic success.

Previous Studies on Reading Strategies Use

Reading is an essential part in the development of language skills which encourage scientists to study reading strategies. Also, it highlights a considerable number of studies on the use of comprehensive strategies in different environments by various researchers. Researchers have achieved different results in reading strategies, which leads students to use strategies for improving their communication in the second language.

Shang (2011) investigated how Taiwanese students used reading strategies (cognitive, metacognitive, compensatory, and testing strategies) and the effects on their development in reading strategies. The results of the study showed that EFL Taiwanese students often use various reading strategies in the process of reading English language. Readers with a high level of efficiency used test strategies more than readers with a low level of efficiency to reach a higher level of performance in reading.

Khezrlou (2012) assessed the effectiveness of cognitive strategy on Iranian graduate students in reading strategies. The results showed that cognitive strategies have a positive impact on the development of reading





among Persian-speaking students. In this study, the results showed a more positive attitude towards the teaching of reading and the improvement of its performance.

Zare (2013) conducted a study which aims to evaluate reading strategies among eighty Iranian EFL learners who participated in the study, as well as find out if the strategies differed according to gender. The results showed that Iranian EFL learners used the medium form of strategies and also showed that there is no significant difference in the use of reading strategies between male and female language learners. In conclusion, all the previous researches agree that reading requires the ability to read special types of materials containing illustrations, graphs, maps and tables.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate reading strategies among university students. This section describes the methodology taken in the study which is a plan for reaching the goals. As well as, it includes a description of research design, research sampling, instrument, reliability and validity of the methodology.

Research Design

The research design of this study is the quantitative research. This study conducted a survey in order to answer the research questions. These questions are designed to investigate the reading strategies used by university students and whether there was a difference between male and female students in the reading strategies, as well as if there is difference in strategies based on the year of study. In this study, quantitative method was used to collect and analyze data

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of university Student. The participants of this study were 155 students selected randomly from the different colleges in the Division of AZ Zawia. The students chosen for this research were studying in first, second and third year in university. The participants were selected from various age groups between 19 to 21 years, from three years of university.

Instrument

This study applied quantitative method by using a questionnaire to measure students' performance. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: part one: participant's personal data which consist of gender and year of study. Part two: reading strategies which include Cognitive strategies, Metacognitive Strategies, Compensation Strategies and Testing Strategies. The questionnaire used in this study was adopted from Shang (2011) in order to collect the necessary information.

Data collection

Questionnaire was distributed to three different years of university taking into account the numbers of students in terms of gender and age. In addition, information was given to participants about the purpose of this questionnaire that is for search only. Participants were giving the sufficient time to fill the questionnaire.





Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this study is based on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences program (SPSS, version 18.0). Descriptive statistics which includes, standard deviation of the data, the mean and frequency to answer questions (1,2) , In addition, Independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA were used to answer the questions (3,4).

Results

This section discusses the result of the data collected from respondents using questionnaire. The SPSS version 18.0 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics was used to present information about the respondents' demographic profile (gender and year of study). The participants in this study were 155 university students, 82 (52.9%) of them female and 73 (47.1%) male. Evidently, the number of female students is higher compared with the male students. It found that 50 students which is (32.3%) were first year students, divided into (26) females and (24) males, 57 students amount to (36.8%) were second year students, divided into (36) females and (21) males. Third year students were 48 is number which is (31.0%) divided into (20) females and (28) males. Therefore, the highest percentage of students which participated in this study (36.8%) was the second year students.

Q1- "What are the most common reading strategies used by university students?"

The results showed that most common strategies were used by university students are cognitive strategies (COG) was 3.79 (SD= .43639), that of metacognitive strategies (MET) was 3.62 (SD= .41959); while that of compensation strategies (COM) was 3.46 (SD= .50247). Finally, the mean score of testing strategies (TEST) was 3.40 (SD= .45281).. Also, the results of descriptive statistical analysis showed that the highest score of (COG) was 4.19 (SD= .828). This means that university students have a clear understanding for using these strategies, especially cognitive strategies which indicate that students underline key words to remind them of the important concepts of the passage.

Q2- "What are the least common of reading strategies used by university students?"

It found that the least common strategies for reading were testing strategies (TEST) because they have the least mean score which is 3.40 (SD= .45281). The lowest score was (M=2.46) with the standard deviation (SD= 1.285), because of testing strategies required the learners to read the text carefully and relating the questions with the text that is read. The second lowest strategies used by university students was compensation strategies (COM) with the mean score (3.46) and the standard deviation (.50247). Therefore, the results of descriptive statistic indicated that the participants skip the words if they don't know the meaning. (M= 3.31, SD=1.115). To sum up, testing strategies are the least common strategies of reading used by university students.

Q3- "Is there any statistically significant differences in reading strategies according to the students' gender?"



The results showed that female students used metacognitive and compensation strategies more than male students; while the cognitive and testing strategies were used by male students more than female students. It used Independent Sample T-test to examine the differences in reading strategies according to students' gender. The results of the Levene's test showed that p-value of cognitive strategies is .604 ($F=2.70$), the p-value of metacognitive strategies is .207 ($F=1.603$), the p-value of compensation strategies is .255 ($F=1.303$), and the p-value of testing strategies is .258 ($F=1.290$), the finding means that p-value more than 0.05 in four strategies of reading. Consequently, the assumption of equal variances of reading strategies according to gender variable was met.

H1: There is no statistically significant difference in reading strategies based on the students' gender. The reported p-value ($p > 0.05$) therefore the first null hypothesis is failed to reject. So the results showed that there is no statistically significant difference in reading strategies among university students according to gender.

Q4- "Is there any statistically significant difference in reading strategies according to the students' year of study?"

The result showed that the mean score of these strategies among the first year students was 3.5165 ($SD=.31244$), while the mean score of second year students was 3.6011 ($SD=.32437$). Finally, the mean score of third year students was 3.6210 ($SD=.25653$). Therefore, the third year students had the highest mean score followed by the second year students, while the first year students had the lowest mean score in reading strategies.

The findings show that the highest mean score of cognitive strategies was used by the second year students, followed by third year students in addition to metacognitive and compensation strategies; while the highest score of testing strategies were used by the first year students when compared with the second and third year students. The One-way ANOVA technique was used to determine the differences in reading strategies among university students according to year of study. The test of homogeneity of variances used to examine its relationship with Leven's test for the equality of variances. The result shows that p-value of homogeneity of variances was (.07) which is more than (0.05). Therefore, the finding indicates that the assumption of homogeneity is met.

H2: The second null hypothesis "there is no statistically significant difference in reading strategies among university students according to the year of study" was failed to reject because p-value is more than 0.05.

DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of this part is to discuss the results based on the data analysis in order to achieve the aims of this study which is to determine the most and least common strategies used by university students. Additionally, the study intends to determine if there is any statistically significant difference in reading strategies based on





the students' gender and the year of study. Finally, pedagogical implications related to this study as well as some suggestions for future research are presented.

The first research question of this study is to explore the most common strategies of reading used by university students. Descriptive statistic analysis used in this study showed that the most common strategies used by students were cognitive strategies (COG) because it represented the highest mean score. The use of cognitive strategies can increase the efficiency of the learner in a learning task. In a classroom where cognitive strategies are used, the teacher achieves a pivotal role, bridging the gap between student and content to be learned.

The second reading strategies used by university students were metacognitive strategies as illustrated earlier. The results from this study correspond with the study of Faghat & Zainal (2010) who studied the reading strategies of the advanced and intermediate Iranian postgraduate students. The results indicated that advanced Iranian students used both cognitive and metacognitive strategies; whereas the intermediate Iranian students used the cognitive strategies.

The second research question of this study is to find the least common strategies of reading used by university students. Testing strategies represented the least used strategies. These strategies need to manage the time and ensure that students answer as many questions as possible. Testing strategies help to narrow down choices and ensure that students select the correct answer. The second lowest strategies used by students were compensation strategies. The importance of compensation strategies is to teach students to achieve comprehension. In addition to, the students' responses in terms of compensation strategies indicated that the participants skip the words if they don't know the meaning which refers to the Linguistic strategies. This finding is supported by the results of the previous research by Lai (2008) examined the theory of reading strategies and it's Application by EFL Learners. The results showed that the participants used more cognitive strategies than testing and metacognitive strategies.

The second and third objectives of the study is to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences in using reading strategies among university students based on students' demographic profile, which is students' gender and year of study. This depends on the descriptive statistical' findings and the investigations on the third research question to examine if there is any statistical difference in using reading strategies among university students. The results indicate that female students tended to use metacognitive and compensation strategies more than male students, while cognitive and testing strategies were used by males more than females.

The independent sample T-test analysis was conducted to investigate the difference in using reading strategies among university students by gender. The findings of T-test indicated that (p -value > 0.05). The P -value is more than 0.05 in all strategies; therefore, the assumption of equal variances of the reading strategies by gender variable was met.





Therefore, the first research hypothesis “there is no significant differences in using reading strategies among university students based on gender” failed and is rejected. So, there is no statistical difference in using reading strategies among university students based on their gender. Finally, Zare (2013) examined the reading strategy use and reading success among EFL Iranian learners according to gender. The sample consisted of eighty Iranian EFL learners. The results showed that there is no significant difference in the use of reading strategies between male and female language learners.

The results of the third question showed that female and male students have the same level in using reading strategies which means that the same teaching of reading strategies and the classroom activities that used by English language teachers, or that the teacher understood the most important strategies that help students in reading.

The fourth research question of the study is to examine the probability of any statistical significant difference in reading strategies used by university students based on the year of study. The descriptive statistical analysis indicated the mean score of reading strategies used by university students according to the year of study in the first year as 3.5165 (SD= .31244); the mean score of the second year students was 3.6011 (SD= .32437), whereas the mean score of the third year students was 3.6210 (SD= .25653). Thus, it is clear that third year students had the highest mean score followed by the second year students, while the first year students had the lowest mean score in reading strategies. The One-way ANOVA test was used to investigate the differences in using reading strategies among university students considering the year of study. The result showed that there is no a significant statistical difference in reading strategies among the three groups of students based on the year of study, because the p-value was more than Alpha value ($p > 0.05$).

Therefore, the second hypothesis “there is no a statistically significant difference in the reading strategies used by university students was failed to reject.

Pedagogical Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations to improve reading strategies among university students are made:

- Based on the students’ demographic profiles, English teachers should support students in reading strategies.
- EFL teachers should abandon traditional methods of teaching reading and adopt the new reading strategies; and these strategies of reading must be included in the teacher’s tutorial handbook.
- Improving the reading skill of EFL teachers and students in reading strategies through formal reading training programs.

Conclusions

To sum up, this study was conducted to provide some ideas about reading strategies used by university students. The results of the data collection were analyzed using SPSS (version 18.0). The results indicated that





the most common strategies used by university students were cognitive strategies which indicated that students underline key words to remind them of the important concepts of the passage, and means there are the rehearsal, elaboration, and organizational strategies. On other hand, the least common strategies used by students is testing strategies which showed that students went back to read the details of the passage for the answers of some questions.

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APPENDIX A

The Questionnaire

Dear students,

Please read the items below carefully and tick (√) on one option for each statements in the questionnaire.
There is no right or wrong answers so please do not answer how you think or copy from your friend.

Part One: Students' demographic profile:

Please read the statement below carefully and tick the appropriate choices.

A-Gender:

- 1- Female ()
- 2- Male ()

B- Year of Study:

- 1- First year ()
- 2- Second year ()
- 3- Third year ()

Part two: The following statements are about the strategies you use in reading the passages. Please indicate the frequency of reading strategy you use by circling the following appropriate number.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Part 1: Cognitive strategies

No	Statements	Frequency scale
1	I try to remember key words to understand the main idea of the passage.	1 2 3 4 5
2	I memorize key words to remind me of important concepts of the passage.	1 2 3 4 5
3	I underline key words to remind me of important concepts of the passage.	1 2 3 4 5
4	When I read the passage, I make up questions in my mind to help focus my reading.	1 2 3 4 5
5	When I read the passage, I ask myself to look for a common theme in the first	1 2 3 4 5



	line.	
6	When I read the passage, I take notes by writing down the key words.	1 2 3 4 5
7	I pass my eyes quickly over the rest of the passage to check that I really have found the main idea.	1 2 3 4 5
8	I draw a conclusion about the author's purpose for writing the passage.	1 2 3 4 5
9	I do not need to understand every detail in each passage to answer the questions correctly.	1 2 3 4 5
10	I look at the first line of each paragraph to find the main idea.	1 2 3 4 5
11	When I read the passage, I try to relate the material to what I already know.	1 2 3 4 5
12	I try not to translate word-for-word.	1 2 3 4 5
13	I skim/scan in the appropriate part of the passage for the key word or idea.	1 2 3 4 5

Part 2: Metacognitive strategies

No	Statements	Frequency scale
14	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	1 2 3 4 5
15	I have clear goals for improving my English reading skills.	1 2 3 4 5
16	When reading the passage, I am able to question the significance or truthfulness of what the author says.	1 2 3 4 5
17	I try to find as many ways as I can to comprehend the reading material.	1 2 3 4 5
18	I notice my reading difficulties and try to use other methods to help me understand the passage better.	1 2 3 4 5
19	When I become confused about something I'm reading, I go back and try to figure it out.	1 2 3 4 5
20	When the reading passage is difficult, I neither give up.	1 2 3 4 5
21	I try to find out how to be a better reader of English.	1 2 3 4 5
22	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in order to improve my reading ability in English.	1 2 3 4 5
23	I ask questions in order to improve my reading ability in English.	1 2 3 4 5
24	I slow the pace of reading when confronting with more difficult texts.	1 2 3 4 5
25	I review the instructed reading skills while studying for an examination.	1 2 3 4 5

Part 3: Compensation strategies

No	Statements	Frequency scale
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26	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	1 2 3 4 5
27	I skip the words if I don't know the meaning.	1 2 3 4 5
28	I read English without looking up every new word.	1 2 3 4 5
29	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses from suffixes and prefixes.	1 2 3 4 5
30	I look for context clues to help me understand the meanings of vocabulary words.	1 2 3 4 5
31	The thing I do to read effectively is to focus on getting the overall meaning of the text.	1 2 3 4 5
32	I predict what is going to happen next while reading.	1 2 3 4 5
33	I try to predict what the author will say next.	1 2 3 4 5
34	I use my background knowledge to guess the overall meaning of the passage.	1 2 3 4 5
35	I use examples and summary clues to guess the meaning of the passage.	1 2 3 4 5

Part 4: Testing strategies

No	Statements	Frequency scale
36	I read questions and answers before reading a passage.	1 2 3 4 5
37	I skim the questions first to determine the main idea and the overall organization of ideas in the passage.	1 2 3 4 5
38	I look ahead at the questions to determine what types of questions I must answer.	1 2 3 4 5
39	I go back to read the details of the passage for the answers of some questions.	1 2 3 4 5
40	I skip questions and return to them later if I am not sure about the right answer.	1 2 3 4 5
41	I eliminate the definitely wrong answers and choose the best answer from the remaining choices.	1 2 3 4 5
42	I choose the best answer to each question from the answer choices carefully.	1 2 3 4 5
43	I never leave any answers blank on the answer sheet.	1 2 3 4 5

