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Literatura Inglesa

The effects of Reading Strategies on ESL and EFL learners' reading
comprehension

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Resumen

Las estrategias de lectura se utilizan comúnmente en todo el mundo, por lo que el propósito de esta síntesis de investigación es informar los efectos fundados de las estrategias de lectura en la comprensión lectora de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera y de inglés como segundo idioma. A lo largo de este análisis, el estudio intenta orientar a los profesores e instructores sobre aspectos relevantes a la hora de aplicar estrategias de lectura. Se consideraron estudios cualitativos, cuantitativos y de métodos mixtos. A partir de diferentes bases de datos se analizan los artículos publicados centrados en las estrategias de lectura y sus efectos, pros y contras en la comprensión lectora. En total, se estudiaron 16 artículos. Los hallazgos revelaron que la instrucción previa de los alumnos es crucial para comprender un texto. El estudio también reveló que cada etapa de las actividades de lectura desarrolla diferentes habilidades y sub habilidades de los alumnos. También es necesario contemplar ventajas y desventajas a la hora de preparar una estrategia de lectura. El contexto de aprendizaje podría impulsar la adquisición del inglés a través de la interacción. Se encontró que el uso de estrategias de lectura presentó efectos más positivos que negativos sobre la cognición y la meta cognición. En conclusión, podría ser fundamental considerar el nivel educativo de los alumnos, las actividades lectoras empleadas, las ventajas y desventajas, el contexto de adquisición del lenguaje y los efectos positivos o negativos al aplicar las Estrategias de Lectura.

Palabras claves: Estrategias de lectura. Comprensión lectora. Efectos. Inglés como lengua extranjera. Inglés como segundo idioma.



Abstract:

Reading strategies are commonly used worldwide, so the purpose of this research synthesis is to report the founded effects of reading strategies on EFL and ESL learners' reading comprehension. Throughout this analysis, the study tries to give guidance for teachers and instructors on relevant aspects when they apply reading strategies. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method studies were considered. From different databases, published articles focused on reading strategies and their effects, pros, and cons of reading comprehension are analyzed. In total, 16 studies were studied. Findings exposed that the previous instruction of the learners is crucial to comprehend a text. The study also revealed that each reading activity stage develops different learners' skills and subskills. It is also necessary to contemplate the advantages and disadvantages when preparing a reading strategy. The English learning context could boost language acquisition through interaction. It was found that reading strategies use presented more positive than negative effects on cognition as well as metacognition. In conclusion, it could be essential to consider the learners' level of education, the reading activities employed, the advantages and disadvantages, the language acquisition context, and the positive or negative effects when applying Reading Strategies.

Keywords: Reading strategies. Reading comprehension. Effects. English as a foreign language. English as a second language.



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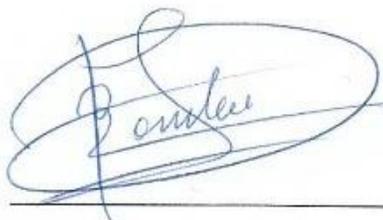
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DEDICATION

To my adored family, especially to my mom, my wife, and my coming baby who are my
inspiration.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading has been considered a crucial feature for EFL and ESL learners in their learning process. English learners that want to increase their English speaking skills to be comparable to native speakers must develop literacy skills as well as oral proficiency (Linan-Thompson, Vaughn, Hickman-Davis, & Kouzekanani, 2003). For this reason, reading strategies have been used in EFL and ESL classrooms. However, the use of the reading strategy could present different effects on learners' reading comprehension. In Ecuador, English is taught as EFL; therefore, it seems important to study the effects of reading strategy teaching.

To observe those effects, this study includes categories that examine the use of reading strategies from different points of view. This research tries to make the learners notice whether their reading comprehension is or is not improving. This research synthesis aims to help EFL and ESL learners recognize the main effects that reading strategy application provides. In this context, Chapter I presents a brief description of the topic, the background, the statement of the problem, the justification as well as the research questions, and the objectives. Chapter II incorporates the theoretical framework, and the key terms are elucidated. In Chapter III, the review of the literature is presented and 16 studies are briefly reviewed. Chapter IV deals with the methodology applied in the study, the data collection process, and the criteria used. Chapter V includes the data analysis and the results found throughout the revision of the literature. Finally, Chapter VI provides the conclusions and recommendations from this analysis.



Chapter I

1. Description of the Research

1.1 Background

To have a clearer awareness of this study, it is important to review what Harris and Hodges (1995) indicate about what a strategy is in education, they see it as “a systematic plan, consciously adapted and monitored, to improve one’s performance in learning” (p. 244). Strategies could be used in many areas, so EFL and ESL learners had used this conception to learn English. Throughout time, these different strategies had become more effective, and these could be used to improve reading comprehension. McNamara (2007) stated that “a reading comprehension strategy is a cognitive or behavioral action that is enhanced under particular contextual conditions, with the goal of improving some aspect of comprehension” (p. 26).

For EFL and ESL learners, reading comprehension could be considered an essential component to learn how to read and write in English. There are several reading strategies that instructors had used to develop learners’ reading comprehension. A clear example could be brainstorming. This is a pre-reading strategy studied by Ghabanchia and Behrooznia (2014) as experimental research in which 54 participants, 29 as the control group and 25 as the experimental group, were studied. According to Ghabanchia and Behrooznia (2014), “the results of the pretest confirmed the homogeneity of the participants in the two groups regarding their reading comprehension ability as well as critical thinking ability” (p. 7).



It is noticeable that reading strategies could improve learners' reading comprehension skills. As in the example of brainstorming, many studies have shown that reading strategies have positive effects on reading comprehension. It could be also feasible to state that reading strategies improve other language skills and subskills as well as critical thinking.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Comprehension is considered a concept that involves the interpretation of a text, the relation of the previous knowledge with the new one, and coherent representation of the text (McNamara, 2009). High comprehension skills may not be easy to achieve, especially at the beginning of a program, but these features might help students to learn the new language. According to Gani, Yusuf, and Susiani (2016), "reading comprehension is a complicated, cognitive, meaning-constructing process which involves the interaction of the reader, the text, and the context" (p.34). Consequently, it could be assumed that high reading comprehension skill development requires a degree of concentration and effort as well as the right strategy use.

Once it is stated that reading comprehension skills may not be easy to acquire, it is important to stipulate how difficult for beginners it could be. According to Snowling (2005) "at the beginning, children are learning to decode and identify words, so it is these word-reading processes that limit comprehension" (p. 78). For beginners, who are not familiarized with the vocabulary, the process might become especially difficult and confusing.



Reading proficiency could not refer just to understanding a word, a phrase, or even a sentence. A proficient reader should be the one who is capable of understanding a whole text and the message of the writer. Learners reading proficiency may be improved through reading strategies. In this regard, McNamara (2009) states that “high ability students use reading strategies and these strategies are essential, not only to successful comprehension but to overcoming reading problems and becoming a better reader and comprehender” (p. 34). It might be stated that reading strategies ought to assist the learner when reading comprehension becomes a difficult task.



1.3 Rationale

One of the best ways to develop writing skills could be acquiring reading habits. As in the study of Lai (1993), which says that “getting reading input in this way produces significant effects on reading comprehension, reading speed and writing performance of a large number of the experimental subjects”(p. 11). For this reason, it may be essential to be a proficient reader in language learning. The difficult path of language acquisition could be clarified by reading strategies. Patterns of language acquisition explain that children use extended utterances in a process of many stages (Ellis, 1994). To be a proficient user of the language, the learner should dominate speaking and writing. Notwithstanding, it could be difficult to acquire good speaking and writing skills. The learner has to dominate grammar, structure, and s/he should be able to create cohesion and coherence in his writing. Strategies applied to Reading could accompany the learner through the difficult path of language learning.

The purpose of this study is to show how reading strategies could improve reading comprehension skills in EFL and ESL learners. It also tries to raise awareness about the importance of the right management on reading strategies that learners should have. Finally, another reason could be the lack of conducted synthesis on the effects of reading strategies on learners’ reading comprehension in our context.



1.4 General objective

To synthesize the reported impact and importance of reading strategies on EFL and ESL learners' knowledge.

1.5 Specific objectives

To analyze the reported effects on EFL and ESL learners of the reading strategies before, while, and after the reading process.

To discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the studied reading strategies on EFL and ESL learners' reading and comprehension.

1.6 Research questions

- What are the reported effects on EFL and ESL learners of the reading strategies before, while, and after the reading process?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of studying reading strategies on EFL and ESL learners' reading and comprehension?



Chapter II

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This section will present the essential concepts to appreciate the effects of reading strategies on reading comprehension. It will be divided into the following subsections: reading concerns, reading strategies application, academic performance in a bilingual context, and socio-cultural influence in reading comprehension.

2.2. Reading Strategies Concerns

To support the basis of this study, it is essential to look toward the main concerns related to reading strategies and their effects on reading comprehension. Therefore, an essential term to be revised is “strategy”. Karbalaei (2010) states that “a strategy is an individual’s comprehension approach to a task. It includes how a person thinks and acts when planning and evaluating his or her study behavior” (p. 167). Next, it is necessary to define reading complexity. According to Kern (1989), “reading in any language is cognitively demanding, involving the coordination of attention, memory, perceptual processes, and comprehension processes” (p.135). Once the high cognition processes needed for reading has been established, it is vital to remark the difference between strategy and skill. In this regard, Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008) say “that skill is associated with the proficiency of a complex act, and strategy is associated with a conscious and systematic plan” (p. 365). Once these associations have been stated, the difference may be more distinguishable. As a result of the reading process, we reach a reading comprehension degree which is considered by Perfetti, Landi, and Oakhill (2005) as “learning to understand writing as well as one understands spoken language has empirical justification”



(p. 227). The grade of reading comprehension learners achieve is a key part of this analysis, it could define the academic performance of the language learner.

2.3 Reading Strategies Application

The kind of reading strategy could determine the reading process and the comprehension of the learner. In the case of pre-reading strategies, in the path toward comprehension, the focus points are the readers' background and the texts (Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977). Some reading strategies could be influenced by the nature of cognitive skills. Williams and Burden (1997) state that "cognitive strategies are seen as mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information to learn, that is for obtaining, storage, retrieval or use of information" (p. 148). These authors also mentioned that the strategies' course and cognitive factors could influence the reading process.

Metacognitive strategies are also tested in some studies. According to Flavell (1979), "metacognition involves one's knowledge about his thinking processes and products, active monitoring, and regulation of cognitive processing activities" (p. 908). In terms of reading, Meniado (2016) explains that "metacognitive strategies are those activities that make students aware of their thinking as they do reading tasks" (p. 119). In the end, both concepts encompass a clear idea about metacognitive strategies.

2.4 Academic Performance in a Bilingual Context

This subsection contains the conceptions which involve EFL and ESL learners' reading comprehension; therefore, it is important to look toward academic performance in a bilingual context. Moll (1992) explains that a classroom could be the bilingual context even for EFL or ESL learners. Bilingual education is focused on pedagogical and academic



development to provide quality in education (Moll, 1992). Academic performance would be linked to the perception of self-efficacy which according to Bandura (1982), “self-percepts of efficacy are not simply inert estimates of future action. Self-appraisals of operative capabilities function as one set of proximal determinants of how people behave, their thought patterns, and the emotional reactions they experience in taxing situations” (p. 122).

The policies of the academic ruler organism should be analyzed. According to Cummins’ position (1989), “if a theoretical principle is supported in evaluations of bilingual programs in many different contexts, then it is reasonable to base policy on that principle because considerable confidence can be placed in the predictions derived from it” (p. 19). In this regard, Cowan and Sarmad (1976) concluded that “it is quite possible that academic performance of students enrolled in bilingual programs may vary considerably from country to country and depend more upon linguistic and socioeconomic variables than on the type of bilingual schooling”(p. 372). This author’s idea suggests that the context influence could affect academic performance.

2.5 Background and Culture Influence on Reading Comprehension

To clarify this section, it is essential to have an idea about the influence that society and culture could have on reading comprehension. Davidson (2010) argues that “for the integration of cognitive and sociocultural perspectives on reading, students are socially situated in school settings, and literacy development occurs through an interaction between cognitive, motivational, environmental and social factors” (p. 253). The social identity of some individuals is built from group membership, and it is satisfactory for them. They may



attempt to change their group membership to integrate themselves into the group (Tajfel, 1981).

Another conceptualization necessary to be arranged for this analysis is the background. According to Boyce, Pollatsek, and Rayner (1989), “the background could convey global semantic information that would help to determine the setting of the scene” (p. 556). Apart from the background, the language complexity is analyzed by Johnson (1981), who explains that “language complexity and the culturally determined background of a text on reading comprehension have always been recognized as elements of concern in the selection of reading materials for foreign language learners and in the evaluation of their reading comprehension”(p. 69). In the end, background information could vary in the type of source it brings, and the complexity of the provided source. (Boyce et al, 1989 and Johnson, 1981)

2.6 Conclusion

To sum up, Reading Strategies and their effects involve basic terms and also complimentary terms. Once those terms are clear, the reading strategies application becomes essential for reading comprehension. The next factor revised is the language acquisition context which could vary according to the location where reading takes place. Finally, there is a lot of theory on the Culture and background of the learner that could be essential for his/her reading comprehension process. In the case of social skills, it involves cognitive, motivational, environmental, and social factors as Davison(2010) and Tajfel (1981) explained above.



Chapter III

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

In this part, a review of the existing literature relevant to this research synthesis is presented. The studied data has been classified according to the approaches, methods, and varied results. The way the studies are classified is the following: type of reading strategies and its usage, the influence of context (ESL/EFL) on learners' reading comprehension, and the influence of the culture on learners' reading comprehension.

3.2 Reading Strategy and Its Usage

In the case of EFL learners, reading strategies could be better processed according to the kind of reading strategy that the instructor uses as Yukselir (2014) shows in his study about reading strategies use on EFL learners. The study, which was descriptive research, aimed to examine the use of reading strategies that young adult Turkish learners reported. The study, based on quantitative data, included 65 participants, enrolled in the one-year intensive English course offered at Osmaniye Korkut Ata University. Data was collected through a questionnaire that had 35 items grouped under three categories: strategies used before, while, and after reading. The results according to Yukselir found that “fourteen reading strategies were most frequently used by the students. Three of these strategies belong to the ‘before reading’ section and the rest of them belong to the ‘while reading’ part. However, four strategies were least frequently used by the students as belonging to the ‘while reading’ section” (p.72). It seems to be more effective to employ while reading strategies on ESL learners because of the frequency in the usage.



From a different point of view, the research conducted by Ghabanchia and Behroozniab (2014) revealed the effectiveness of brainstorming on reading comprehension and critical thinking, and it is a pre-reading strategy. Ghabanchia and Behroozniab's study aimed to identify the impact on EFL learners' reading comprehension and critical thinking ability. To evaluate the students' progress, a pre-test and a post-test were taken, the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal. The participants of the study were 54 TEFL university students studying at a university in Mashhad, Iran. According to Ghabanchia and Behroozniab (2014) "The findings revealed that brainstorming had a significant role in improving the participants' reading comprehension ability besides their critical thinking ability" (p. 516). In the end, Before reading strategies could be very effective as while reading strategies do.

Another perspective is considered in the study of Alsamadani (2011), which was conducted on the effects of the 3-2-1 reading strategy on EFL reading comprehension. This study aimed to test the effect that training Saudi EFL students in using the 3-2-1 strategy, while reading English texts, and the effects it has on their reading comprehension. The participants of the study were all enrolled at King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU). The total number of participants was 85, and they ranged between 18 and 23 years of age. Students were matched based on their scores on the proficiency test administered by the English Language Institute at KAU. They were classified as low-intermediate level. The sample was divided into four classes: two experimental, with a total of 42 students, and two control, with a total of 43 students. The instruments used for data collection in this study were pre- and post-reading comprehension tests. Alsamadani (2011) found that "the 3-2-1 strategy helps students become engaged with the text by maximizing their metacognitive



monitoring skills. Students in the experimental group had time to think about their comprehension of the text before they began answering the questions” (p. 188).

In the same sense, the study conducted by Nazurty et al. (2019) aimed to identify which reading strategies Indonesian student teachers tend to use and the frequency of usage for each of them. A total of 653 student teachers from the Indonesian educational system participated, however, just 570 samples were measurable. The participants were divided by gender, and a questionnaire consisting of 23 items was applied. The researchers focused on obtaining quantitative results. Once concluded the research, the authors found that cognitive strategies were repeatedly applied to the different stages with a great frequency. Another relevant finding was that male participants tend to use metacognitive reading strategies with greater incidence, while female participants used cognitive reading strategies more often (Nazurty, 2019).

Other studies include comparisons among reading strategies, its usage, and its effects on Reading Comprehension. Mihara (2011) conducted a study of two pre-reading strategies on EFL and ESL Reading Comprehension. To obtain qualitative data, vocabulary pre-teaching, and comprehension question presentation strategies were applied. The purpose was to study the effects of the two reading strategies and the relationship with the students’ reading comprehension and English proficiency. The participants were 78 first-year university English students from an Engineering private university in Japan. The findings showed that pre questioning strategy presented better results on the English comprehension test. Even though the vocabulary pre-teaching strategy presented a



deficiency in Reading Comprehension, the participants preferred the vocabulary pre-teaching strategy.

The type of strategy could be relevant to achieve reading comprehension, so the effects could vary for this reason. The study conducted by Khandari (2018) that compared learning strategies for reading. The study aimed to differentiate among three learning strategies used as an object to improve reading comprehension. It was quantitative research that used a causal-comparative design through a Reading Comprehension test. The participants were a second grade class of 36 students from a junior high school in North Lampung, Indonesia. The findings showed the students that scored high in the test applied cognitive, metacognitive, and social reading strategies (Khandari, 2018).

3.3 The Influence of Context (ESL/EFL) on Learners' Reading Comprehension

The impact of reading strategies could be diverse according to the context of the learner, as we can notice in the study of Khajavi and Ketabi (2012) which aimed to investigate EFL contexts. The paper aimed to explore the influence of concept mapping on reading comprehension and the self-efficacy of intermediate EFL students in Iran. The cited study was conducted on 60 Iranian learners from an English reading comprehension course, 30 applied the strategy and 30 were the control group. To measure the students' reading comprehension, a reading test was used. As Khajavi and Ketabi (2012) stated “the results of the study clearly showed positive effects of concept mapping strategy instruction on Iranian EFL students' reading comprehension and self-efficacy at the intermediate level of language proficiency”(p. 21). In this case, EFL learners improved not only reading comprehension but also language proficiency.



In the same way Lestari, Fitriani, and Erdiana (2017) studied EFL learners' difficulties founded by senior high school EFL students. The researchers expected to find the difficulties in Reading Comprehension faced by the senior high school from Banda Aceh, in this case, second graders. A mix-method approach was used to collect data. A reading comprehension test and an interview were used as tools. In total, 30 second grade students participated in the study. It was found that among the main factors that affected student's performance were the reading strategy use lack, extensive reading lack, reading levels variation, erroneous vocabulary, the type of text, and the type of questions (Lestari, Fitriani, and Erdiana, 2017).

Additionally, Molla (2015) conducted a study on EFL learners that analyzed the recurrence of reading strategy use and its relationship with reading comprehension. The study aimed to identify the used reading strategies most frequently by second-year English majoring students. Data was measured quantitatively through a descriptive study. A total of 40 students from Dilla University were considered for the study. The findings revealed that the participants were not aware of the variety of the reading strategies used. It was also found that the reading strategy used did not guarantee learning. (Molla, 2015).

Reading strategies' effects could vary in an ESL context. This can be seen in a study conducted by Madhumathi and Ghosh (2012) about the awareness of reading strategy use which was reported by Indian learners. The research aimed to find out the connection that Indian ESL students show in terms of reading strategy use and reading comprehension achievement. In this case, data from 52 Indian university students from the first year of an engineering class were collected. Descriptive statistic results through a Survey of Reading



Strategy and Reading Comprehension Test were found. According to Madhumathi and Ghosh (2012), “this reports that ESL readers are consciously employing a wide variety of reading strategies similar to that of the native readers of English, to achieve their comprehension ” (p. 133).

ESL learners could use different Reading Strategies than EFL learners do. A clear example could be Teevno and Raisani (2017) study whose purpose was to identify the reading strategies adopted and its effects on secondary school level students in Pakistan. A stratified radon technique was applied to 359 participants from secondary schools from the district of Naushahro Feroze Sindh Pakistan. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from this study. The results showed that participants had a great performance on basic strategies like answering questions, summarizing, reading aloud, notwithstanding more complex processes like analyzing or paraphrasing were poorly performed (Teevno and Raisani, 2017).

The influence of the EFL/ESL context was contrasted by Karbalaei (2010) in his study about metacognitive reading strategies used by EFL and ESL readers. This study aimed to recognize any significant differences between EFL and ESL learners in their perceived use of reading strategies while reading academic text in English. The participants in this study were 189 college students including 93 Indians and 96 Iranians. The students, who were both freshman and sophomore and were admitted to their respective universities for full-time academic study, were majoring in English Translation and Literature. The test of reading comprehension was taken from Rajinder’s Kit of Reading Comprehension and a background questionnaire which was developed by Karbalaei. The results of the study



showed that both groups used almost similar strategies for awareness. Concerning the differences, Indian students reported using most types of strategies more often than did their Iranian counterparts (Karbalaeei, 2010)

Findings could vary among studies that contrast EFL and ESL students reading strategy usage. Anderson (2004), in his study about metacognitive reading strategy awareness, contrasted the use of reading strategies in these two settings. The study aimed to study differences between EFL and ESL readers, using academic materials. In this study, 396 learners participated. 260 from Centro Cultural Costarricense Norteamericano (CCCN) in San José, Costa Rica, and 136 learners were studying in an ESL environment at the English Language Center (ELC) at Brigham Young University, in Provo, Utah. (Anderson, 2004). Both groups had to complete a background questionnaire and a survey about reading strategies as homework. Anderson (2004) found that “when the three subsections of the SORS were examined, it was found that there is a difference in the use of problem-solving strategies between ESL and EFL readers” (p. 20)

3. 4 The Influence of Learners’ Culture and Background on Reading Comprehension

The culture of the learner has to be considered when it refers to reading and comprehension. Hellerstein-Yehezkel (2016) in her study about reading comprehension through intercultural competence in the multicultural EFL classroom met a great diversity of participants. The participants were 39 students which included a population of 21 native Hebrew speakers, 11 native Arabic speakers, 3 native Russian speakers, 3 native Amharic speakers, and 1 native Spanish speaker. The group included 11 Muslim and 28 Jewish students. This study tried to determine the role of cultural background on learning and



reading approaches in the EFL multicultural classroom. To explore the purpose of the study, this author conducted action research using a case study approach. The participants had to take six exams, which showed that students are socialized and acculturated in classroom behaviors, which echoed the environment in which they were raised. Hellerstein-Yehezkel found that “students possessed poor vocabulary and grammar skills and revealed a variety of ineffective reading strategies, such as copy-paste techniques and mainly ineffective attempts of translation to students’ native languages” (p. 11).

A different form to categorize cultural differences was used by Kim (2018) in his study about ESL learners’ use of reading strategies with culturally relevant and culturally distant stories. This research aims to determine the uses of reading strategies and describe how each English learner employs these strategies while reading both culturally relevant and culturally distant stories. Qualitative research and verbal protocols were employed in Brown Elementary School located in a middle-class area of a Southwestern city from the U.S. There were 599 students identified as White (57%), Hispanic (25%), Asian/Pacific Islander (12%), and other (6%). Kim observed Ms. Green’s language-arts and literature classroom for 10 months and Ms. Lopez’s classroom for five months. These were both certified ESL teachers. Kim found that there is a connection between L1, beliefs, morals, and cultural heritage, which students acquire throughout the conversation (Kim, 2018).

Considering self-efficacy beliefs could also influence Reading Comprehension achievement. Naseri (2012) conducted a study on Iranian EFL junior and senior university students aimed to determine the relationship between reading self-efficacy beliefs, Reading Strategies, and Reading Comprehension. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected



through the Michigan test and a reading strategy used questionnaire. The participants were 80 English students whose native language was Persian. The results showed that the majority of the participants used cognitive reading strategies. It was found also that reading self-efficacy beliefs have a positive relationship with the reading strategy use (Nasari, 2012).

3.5 Conclusion

Since there some factor could influence the effects that reading strategies could have upon learners' reading comprehension, it is crucial to differentiate which is relevant for the research. First, we could notice that some effects depend on the usage the instructor give to the reading strategy. Then, the context in which the reading strategy is developed could also be important for communicative competence. Lastly, the influence of social and cultural factors could affect the effectiveness of reading strategies on learners' reading comprehension.



Chapter IV

Methodology

The present study is a research synthesis. According to Cooper, Hedges, and Valentine (2019) “A research synthesis can be defined as the conjunction of a particular set of literature review characteristics. Most definitional about research syntheses are their primary focus and goals: research synthesis attempts to integrate empirical research for the purpose of creating generalizations” (p. 6). To gather the needed sources for this analysis, databases like ProQuest, Taylor Francis Online, Springer Link, EBSCO host, and Google Scholar will be consulted. Different criteria will be considered to select the studies for this research: the studies have to focus on the reading strategies, its advantages and disadvantages; and its influence on EFL and ESL learners. This is because reading seems to be one of the most important skills needed to ensure success in learning for both academic and lifelong learning (Anderson, 2003). The studies have to be published articles. The design of the studies is not a determiner, so it could be a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method.

For this research, the following terms will be used: 1. Reading strategies 2. EFL 3. ESL 4. Advantages and disadvantages 5. Effects 6. Comprehension 7. Skills. An important factor to consider is access to physical information which is restricted in our context, so for this analysis, just digital data will be collected.



Chapter V

5. Data Analysis

As it was presented in the literature review, there is previous research about reading strategies applied in EFL and ESL context. A sample of 16 studies was selected from different sources. The selected studies meant to examine the impact that reading strategies could have on reading comprehension of EFL and ESL learners. The results of the studies were grouped into 5 categories: English instruction of the participants, the reading activities, the advantages and disadvantages, the English language acquisition context, the effects of the reading strategies usage.

5.1 English Instruction of the Participants

Table 1

English instruction

Author – Year	Level	Number of studies	Percentage
Madhumathi & Ghosh (2012); Karbalaee (2010); Kim (2018);	First level (elementary)	3	21,4 %
Khajavi & Ketabi (2012); Khandari (2018); Naseri (2012)	Second level (intermediate)	3	21,4 %



Yukselir (2014); Ghabanchia & Behrooznia (2014); Alsamadani (2011); Nazurty (2019); Teevno & Raisani (2017); Molla (2015); Mihara (2011) ; Lestari, Fitriani & Erdiana (2017)	Third level (advanced)	8	58,2 %
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Note. N=14

The participants' English instruction could be relevant to determine reading comprehension achievement. From the analysis represented in Table 1, it was elucidated that the third level of education represents 58,2 % of the studies, while the first and second level represents 21,4 % and 21,4 %, respectively. The proficiency of a reader relies on word decoding and processing capacity which advanced readers have more developed than elementary readers (Perfetti and Hogaboam, 1975). Remarkable results were found, as in Alsamadani's (2011) study about the effects of the 3-2-1 reading strategy. The tested group consisted of 85 college students, and according to Alsamadani, "when students apply this strategy to their learning, they automatically synthesize information and formulate questions regarding the topic of study" (p. 188).

5. 2 Reading Activities

Each one of the analyzed studies includes reading strategies that contain reading activities. These reading activities are developed in the pre- while and post-reading stage. The reading activities employed in each reading strategy are analyzed to expose its occurrence in the reading process.

Table 2

*Reading activities employed in each study*

Author – Year	Reading activities	Number of studies	Percentage
Ghabanchia & Behrooznia (2014)	Pre-reading activity	1	6,3 %
Mihara (2011);	While reading activity	1	6,3 %
Madhumathi & Ghosh (2012); Karbalaie (2010); Molla (2015); Khandari (2018); Naseri (2012);	Post-reading activity	5	31,2 %
Yukselir (2014); Alsamadani (2011); Nazurty (2019); Khajavi & Ketabi (2012); Anderson (2004); Hellerstein- Yehezkel (2016); Kim (2018); Teevno & Raisani (2017); Lestari, Fitriani & Erdiana (2017)	More than one reading stage	9	56,2 %

Note. N= 16

As presented in Table 2, pre-reading activities, while reading activities, and post-reading activities are the three considered stages in which the reading activities were applied in the studies. The obtained results from Table 1, with the 56, 2 % of the studies,



suggest that the majority of the researchers used more than one reading activity in their reading strategies. For instance, Nazurty et al. (2019) conducted a study that applied reading activities in the pre, while, and post-reading stage. According to Nazurty et al., the participants reported using a higher percentage of pre-reading activities. This suggests that, according to Nazurty findings, the most relevant reading activities employed are pre-reading ones. Besides that, a research-focused just on post-reading activities, conducted by Molla (2015) showed that “hence, the reading comprehension level of almost all subjects of this study was found to be low and below what is expected of them” (p. 40). In the end, even though post-reading activities are the most used reading activities, it seems to be less effective than the others.

5.3 Advantages and disadvantages

This section deals with some advantages and disadvantages that the researchers found in the studies applying the different reading strategies.

Table 3

Advantages

Author – Year	Advantages	Number of studies
Karbalaei (2010)	Activate mental operations	1



Alsamadani (2011); Teevno & Raisani (2017)	Develop reading subskills	2
Ghabanchia & Behrooznia (2014); Khajavi & Ketabi (2012); Karbalaei (2010); Kim (2018)	Improve reading comprehension	5
Ghabanchia & Behrooznia (2014)	Develop critical thinking	1
Khajavi & Ketabi (2012)	Improve learners' motivation	1

Note. N= 7

This section highlight the advantages that 7 studies presented, as an effect of using reading strategies. Some studies presented more than one advantage, and they are included in two or more rows in Table 3. The reading strategy usage led the learners to employ mental operations summarizing, underlining, and note-taking to improve reading comprehension (Karbalaei, 2010). Regarding Teevno and Raisani (2017), in their study about reading strategy impact on students' performance, they found that "the students perform tasks like filling gaps, underling, column matching, translating text, summarizing, finding the meaning of new vocabulary."(p. 162).

Table 4

Disadvantages



Author – Year	Disadvantages	Number of studies
Yukselir (2014); Khandari (2018);	Depend on clear instruction	2
Teevno & Raisani (2017)	The effectiveness variate	1
Madhumathi & Ghosh (2012)	Require constant monitoring	1

Note. N= 4

On the other hand, as indicated in Table 4, just 4 studies explained the disadvantages found during their research. One of the most relevant aspects could be the instructions about reading strategies use (Khandari, 2018). A study developed by Teevno and Raisani (2017) in Naushahro Feroze Sindh, Pakistan, among students from a rural and urban area reported differences in reading comprehension achievement. In this sense, reading strategies were more effectively applied to urban area students (Teevno and Raisani, 2017). Another study that evidenced a disadvantage was Madhumathi and Ghosh's (2012) study. Teachers had to coordinate and monitor among the groups to achieve effectiveness in the strategies (Madhumathi and Ghosh, 2012).

5. 4 The English Language Acquisition Context

Table 5

Language acquisition context



Author – Year	Context	Number of studies	Percentage
Hellerstein-Yehezkel (2016); Yukselir (2014); Ghabanchia & Behrooznia (2014); Karbalaei (2010);	ESL	4	26,6 %
Khajavi & Ketabi (2012); Molla (2015); Khandari (2018) Nazurty (2019); Mihara (2011); Naseri (2012); Lestari, Fitriani & Erdiana (2017) Anderson (2004); Madhumathi & Ghosh (2012);	EFL	9	60 %
Kim (2018); Alsamadani (2011)	Both	2	13,3 %

Note. N= 15

As Table 5 shows, 26,6 % of the studies were developed in a setting in which English was learned as a second language. On the other hand, 60 % of the studies were developed in the English Foreign Language context. The last row of Table 5 includes studies that developed research in both, ESL and EFL acquisition contexts. The results of the studies establish a difference between EFL and ESL learner's context, in terms of usage frequency. As presented by Karbalaei (2010) in his study about metacognitive reading strategies where 93 Indians and 96 Iranians participated, Indian students reported using



reading strategies more often than the Iranian students did (Karbalaei, 2010). In this example, both groups had a similar amount of participants, and they participated in the same activities, maybe the difference relies on the language learning environment. Students in an ESL context are habitually in contact with the target language (Loncorpe, 2009).

5.5 The Effects of the Reading Strategies Usage

Table 6

Effect of reading strategies

Author - Year	Cognitive		Metacognitive	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Yukselir (2014)	O	-	-	-
Ghabanchia & Behrooznia (2014)	O	-	O	-
Alsamadani (2011)	O	-	O	-
Nazurty et al (2019)	O	-	-	-
Khajavi & Ketabi (2012)	O	-	O	-



Madhumathi & Ghosh (2012)	O	O	-	-
Karbalaei (2010)	-	-	O	O
Anderson (2004)	-	-	O	-
Teevno & Raisani (2017)	O	O	O	O
Khandari (2018)	O	-	O	-
Naseri (2012)	-	-	O	-
Mihara (2011)	O	O	O	O
Sum and percentage	9 (75%)	3(25%)	9(75%)	3(25%)

Note. N= 12

A key part of this analysis is the effects that the reading strategies brought in terms of reading comprehension skill development. 75% of the studies presented positive effects on cognitive skills that improve reading ability while 25% presented negative effects. In the case of cognitive skills, Ghabanchia and Behroozniab (2014) in their study about brainstorming effects found that “brainstorming had a significant role in improving the participants' reading comprehension ability besides their critical thinking ability” (p. 516). On the other hand, 75% of the studies showed positive effects on metacognitive skills that



support reading skill development while just 25% presented negative effects. The metacognitive reading strategy use is linked to the self-assessment of the reading ability and it could be essential in a classroom (Anderson, 2004). This section of the analysis suggests that the majority of the studies focused on cognitive effects metacognitive effects of reading strategies found positive implications on reading comprehension skills.

5.6 Conclusion

The categories above looked for a deeper analysis of the effects of reading strategies on learners' reading comprehension. To answer the research questions, the literature review presented the influence of the Reading Strategy usage, the context, and the culture and background. For this reason, in this chapter, the categories focused on the participants' English previous instruction, the reading activities used, the advantages and disadvantages, the context in which language acquisition took place, and the effects that reading strategies usage brought.



Chapter VI

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This research synthesis aimed to explore the reported impact that reading strategies have on the reading process and the learners' reading comprehension, making a distinction between EFL and ESL contexts. In the analysis, it was elucidated that the learners' level of education could have a significant role when applying reading strategies. Now, to study the effects of reading strategies before, while, and after the reading process, the reading activities that each reading strategy used were also analyzed according to its stages. Then it was found that reading strategies could have a cognitive and metacognitive impact on the learners' reading comprehension. After that, the language learning context was revised, and it was shown that there were some differences in reading strategy usage between ESL learners and EFL learners. Finally, the advantages and some disadvantages that the learners could find by using reading strategies were evaluated

The English instruction that the learners have before a reading activity could be important to determine the effectiveness of the reading strategies. Findings revealed that the effects of reading strategies could be, in some cases, pushed by the level of education that the learner already had. According to Nazurty et al. (2019), "it is suggested that students of higher education tend to be more aware of the strategies that are appropriate to be used in English reading to help them comprehend English texts as well as to gather the information about the text" (p. 2540).



Before, while, and after reading activities were employed for the reading strategies were examined. Many researchers used reading activities in more than one reading stage, and each activity could be relevant to develop reading skills. First, the pre-reading activities use entail critical thinking, creative thinking, and higher-order thinking skills (Yukselir, 2014). Next, while reading activities could be appropriate to develop self-efficacy beliefs and understanding. (Nazurty et al, 2019; Khajavi & Ketabi, 2012). Finally, post-reading activities are supposed to evaluate deep understanding and summarizing skills (Nazurty et al., 2019). In the end, it could be important to choose the reading activity according to the skills desired to improve.

The revision of the advantages and disadvantages that the reading strategies used also showed interesting results. Among the advantages, the application of reading strategies could activate mental operations, develop reading subskills, improve reading comprehension, develop critical thinking, and improve learners' motivation (Karbalaeei, 2010; Alsamadani, 2011; Teevno and Raisani, 2017; Ghabanchia and Behrooznia, 2014; Khajavi and Ketabi, 2012; Karbalaeei, 2010; Kim, 2018; Ghabanchia and Behrooznia, 2014; Khajavi and Ketabi, 2012). On the other hand, among the disadvantages, it was found that it could be required clearness on the instruction, the effectiveness of the strategy could vary, and the strategic use require constant monitoring (Yukselir, 2014; Khandari, 2018; Teevno and Raisani, 2017; Madhumathi and Ghosh, 2012). To sum up, reading strategies use could have its pros and cons, which should be considered to choose the adequate reading strategy.



One of the main objectives for EFL and ESL learners is to understand the world and themselves, which leads them to think about what they read (Tierney, 2005). The language learning context was also analyzed in this research synthesis, and the findings suggest that English learners should keep in contact with the language through many reading and language activities. English learners' success relies on literacy and language activities participation (Cummins, 1992). In the same sense, the contact that ESL learners have with the target language could enhance comprehension. Similarly, Yukselir (2014) asserts that "research studies have demonstrated that language learners' successful comprehension does not happen automatically. It depends mostly on the intentional reading strategy use. A successful learner is aware of his strategy use and why he uses strategies." (p. 67). In the end, reading comprehension achievement could be determined by the right reading strategy selection according to the learners' context.

Learners' reading comprehension could be influenced by reading strategies that bring cognitive and metacognitive effects. In that sense, Carrell (1998) stated that "reading strategies are of interest not only for what they reveal about the ways readers manage interactions with written text but also for how the use of strategies is related to effective comprehension" (p.97). The finding of the studies reported cognitive and metacognitive effects, and both could be vital to achieving reading comprehension. To achieve reading comprehension it is necessary to understand the text, evaluate critically, memorize the content, and to be flexible in applying new knowledge (Alfassi, 2004). In this manner, the cognitive and metacognitive effects of reading strategies use could increase reading comprehension.



To sum up, reading strategies are expected to enhance reading comprehension and the reading process. As Karbalaei (2010) stated “we learn strategies that support our comprehension and we learn how to carry out these strategies effectively” (p. 166). Once the reading strategies are carried out effectively, the reading strategies could have the impact there are supposed to have on learners ‘reading comprehension.

6. 2 Recommendations

Based on the findings revised about the effects of reading strategies on reading comprehension, it is recommended that instructors revise the aspects that could affect the right use of reading strategies. Teachers should consider the learner's level of education and their reading skills. They should choose carefully the reading activities they are going to include in their learners' strategic reading. They also have to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the reading strategy that they are going to use.

Additionally, the revision of the different categories in this study highlighted some aspects that could influence the right reading strategy use. Since learners and strategy instructor's objective, most of the time is to apply the reading strategy correctly, it could be interesting to explore deeper the positive and negative aspects of reading strategy use for further research. A deeper study in this area could show key aspects of the right reading strategy use. Finally, it could institute some guidelines about what to do and what to avoid when applying reading strategies.



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