READING STRATEGIES USED BY STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ENGLISH READING PROFICIENCY

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Abstract: Reading plays a vital role in academic development, particularly when learners have to work over a huge amount of foreign language materials for their own specialist subjects (McDonough & Shaw, 2013). Strengthening English reading ability is necessary for students to promote individual ability in university education. This study was conducted to explore if there were any differences in the use of reading strategies among university students of different levels of self-rated English reading proficiency. 957 students from 6 universities in the North of Vietnam participated in the study. The results of the study through the questionnaire adapted from Oxford's (2013) Self-Strategic Regulation model (S2R) show that there were significant differences in the use of reading strategies among students of different self-rated levels of English reading proficiency, especially between students of good and poor proficiency. The highest frequencies in the use of each strategy category were in the group of self-rated good readers and the students of the poor group reported the lowest frequencies. The study also reveals individual strategies used the most and the least by each group of students.

Keywords: reading strategies, English reading proficiency, university students, Vietnam

1. Introduction

Adolescents entering the world in the 21st century read and write more than at any other time in human history (Moore et al., 1999, as cited in International Reading Association, 2012, p. 3). In the full bloom of technology, especially in the stage of the fourth industrial revolution, students' ability to read might be crucial as they will need literacy to cope with the flood of information and to feed their imaginations to create their future. There are many factors affecting students' English reading proficiency such as text types, university and social environments, students' intelligence, learning motivation, teaching methods, and so on (Hsu, 2015). One of the most important factors is students' learning strategy use, particularly their use of reading strategies.

Reading strategies refer to the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text. They indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand (Barnett, 1988; Brantmeier, 2002). In fact, reading strategies play positive roles in English reading comprehension as they facilitate learning to read effectively (Brown, 2001; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 2008).

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This research was conducted to explore if there were any differences in the use of reading strategies by students of different levels of English reading proficiency.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Reading Strategies

According to Garner (1987), reading strategies are generally deliberate, planful activities undertaken by active learners, many times to remedy perceived cognitive failure. Reading strategies are also defined as actions that readers select deliberately and control to achieve goals or objectives (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991). In a very similar way, Carrell, Gajuusek, and Wise (1998) express "strategies are used deliberately to refer to actions that readers select and control to achieve desired goals or objectives" (pp. 97-112). Yang (2004) defines reading strategies as conscious and deliberate activities that readers take to help their reading in acquiring, storing, retrieving information, and constructing meaning from the text.

In the Self-Strategic Regulation (S2R) model, Oxford (2013) describes reading strategy as "deliberate, goal-directed attempts to manage and control efforts to read the L2" (p. 12). With the S2R model readers are seen as strategically self-regulated readers who approach challenging reading tasks and problems by choosing from a repertoire of tactics, the ones they believe are best compatible with the situation and purpose of their reading (Oxford, 2013). Furthermore, Oxford's (2013) argument into characteristics of reading strategies favors different types of consciousness (awareness, attention, intention, and efforts), whole reader, utilizing strategy chains, transferability of strategies to other related situations, and reading effectiveness.

Although different authors have defined reading strategies in different ways, all of them share the same viewpoint on the characteristics of reading strategies. Those are (1) deliberate, conscious plans, techniques, and skills; (2) aiming to enhance reading comprehension and overcome comprehension failures; and (3) behavioral mental. They are of interest for what they reveal about the way readers manage their interaction with the written text and how these strategies are related to text comprehension (Carrell, Pharis & Liberto, 1989). In this sense, a reading strategy is an action (or a series of actions) that is employed to construct meaning (Brantmeier, 2002).

Different classification systems of reading strategies based on contrasting criteria have been proposed by different authors (Carrell, 1989; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Oxford, 2013). Each existing classification system in and on itself involves an implicit theory about the nature of reading strategies. However, how many strategies are available to learners to assist them in language learning and how these strategies should be classified are open to debate (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). It may also cause a problem that many researchers are very easily puzzled with which classification to follow when they conduct studies on reading strategy use.

Oxford's (2013) S2R model includes strategies of three majors, mutually influential dimensions: cognitive, affective, sociocultural-interactive, and metastrategies.

Metastrategies, which consist of eight strategies, aim to help readers manage and control the reading process in a general sense, with a focus on understanding readers' own needs and using and adjusting the other strategies to meet those needs, for example, planning, organizing, monitoring,

evaluating, etc. Cognitive strategies include six strategies, which help readers remember and proceed with the reading process, such as activating knowledge, constructing, transforming, etc. Affective strategies consisting of two strategies help readers handle emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation in their reading process. Sociocultural Interactive strategies, which include three strategies, support readers to deal with issues of contexts, communication, and culture in their reading comprehension.

The conceptual framework is demonstrated as follows.

Figure 2.1

S2R Classification of Reading Strategies (Oxford, 2013)
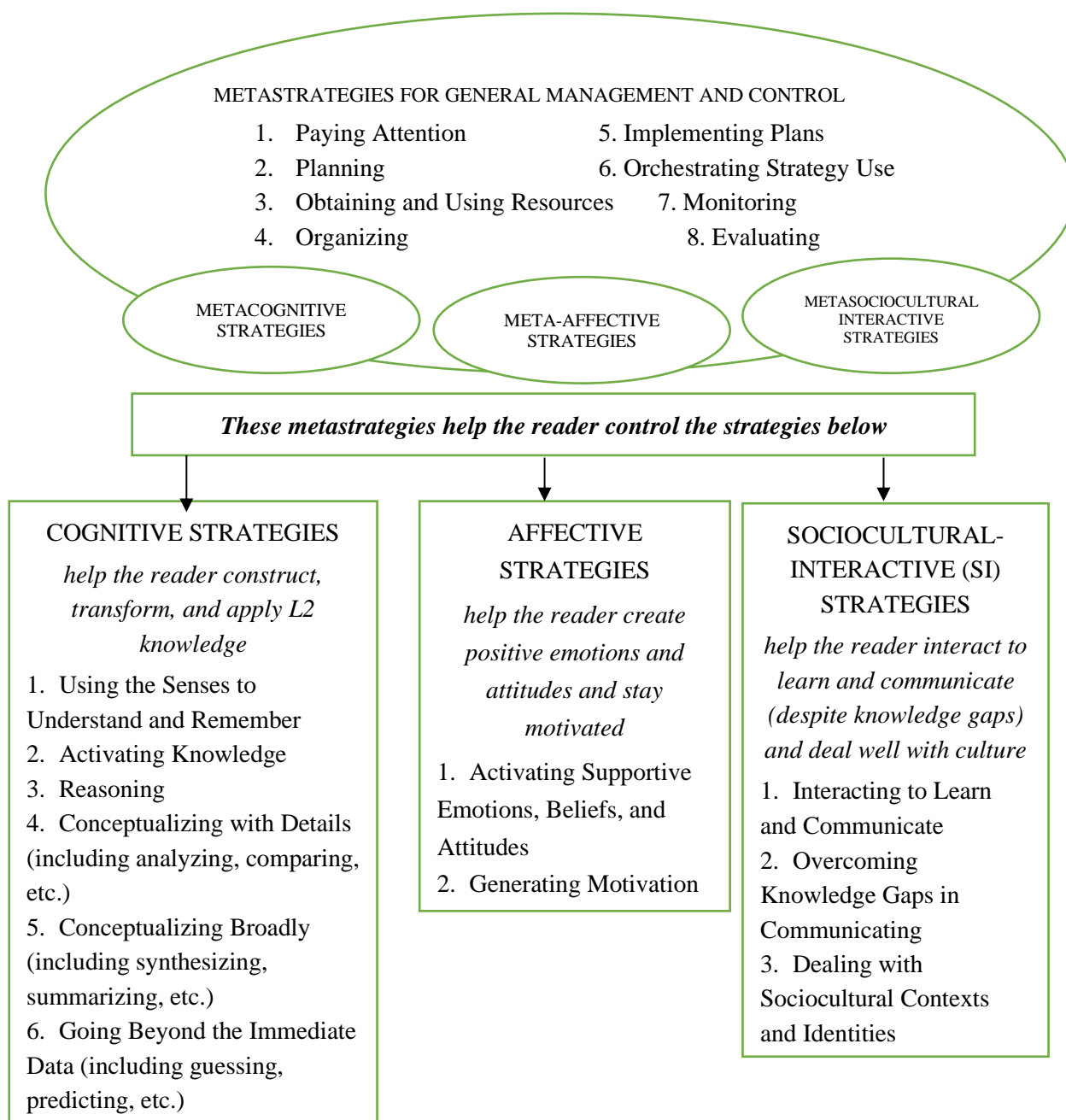
Oxford (2013) presents nine ways that make the S2R Model different from other strategy taxonomies, which shows the advantages of this new model. The most significant differences between Oxford's (2013) and other authors' systems can be demonstrated as follows.

First, the S2R Model systematically integrates three major traditions of learning theory and research: psychological, socialcognitive, and sociocultural. The psychological tradition of strategies is very diverse, including strategies related to schema (mental structure) development, comprehension, cognitive information-processing, metacognition, motivation, emotion, and beliefs. The social-cognitive strand deals with strategies associated with task phases, self-efficacy, and social comparisons. The sociocultural tradition involves strategies (often called "higher mental functions" or "operations") as linked with mediated learning, instrumental enrichment, communities of practice, and cognitive apprenticeship.

Second, by proposing affecting and sociocultural interaction subscales of strategies, especially by recognizing the significant importance of metastrategies, Oxford (2013) indicates that second language reading is not just a cognitive/metacognitive process but is also influenced by a complex web of beliefs, emotional associations, attitudes, motivations, sociocultural relationships, personal interactions, and power dynamics.

Third, the S2R Model states that metastrategies, such as Planning, Organizing, Monitoring, and Evaluating, are naturally usable at either the task level or the entire-process level. Meanwhile, several social-cognitive models of self-regulated learning view these as only related to a particular task phase (e.g., strategies used before, during, and after the task). Finally, the S2R Model includes the fewest strategies

and metastrategies (a total of nineteen) needed for self-regulated L2 learning; therefore, the model can be viewed as scientifically elegant. Taking the advantages and disadvantages of the theoretical issues on reading strategies into consideration, reviewing empirical studies on reading strategies, the researcher has chosen the Self-Strategic Regulation (S2R) model by Oxford (2013) as the theoretical framework for this study. The main reasons for the choice are: firstly, the S2R reading model has overcome the weaknesses of the other models, especially by putting an important role of reading strategies on readers' comprehensions, which are ignored in all other reading models. In addition, self-regulation is one of the most exciting developments in a second or foreign language (L2) learning (Oxford, 2013, p. 7). Secondly, Oxford's (2013) model focuses on factors that make learning easier, more enjoyable, faster, and more efficient. Finally, through the comparing of the S2R reading strategy taxonomy and other ones, Oxford's (2013) S2R reading strategy classification shows its scientific elegance, especially it avoids the overlap of strategies in some other taxonomies, which shows usefulness and effectiveness for researchers to conduct a study on reading strategy use.

2.2. Previous Studies

There have been more and more studies on language learning strategies in general and on reading strategies in particular since the seventieth decade of the previous century. In this part, some studies on the reading strategy used by successful and unsuccessful readers will be presented.

A study which should be considered to create the ground of investigation in this field is one by Block (1986) when he using "general comprehension" and "local linguistic" categories echoed Hosenfeld's (1977) binary classification of strategies compared the reading comprehension

strategies used by native English speakers and ESL students who were enrolled in a remedial reading course at the university level. The strategies introduced were divided into two types: general strategies and local strategies. Of the ESL students in the study, the readers with higher comprehension scores reported using "general strategies" such as integrating new information in the text with old information, distinguishing main ideas from details, referring to their background, and focusing on the textual meaning as a whole. On the other hand, readers with low comprehension rarely distinguished main ideas from details rarely referred to their background, infrequently focused on textual meaning, and seldom integrated information.

In the same year, Ebrahimi (2012), and Saeed, Maedeh, and Mohsen (2012) conducted separate studies to investigate cognitive strategies used by EFL graduate students during their reading a hypermedia text (8 Persian and 23 Persian students, respectively). The data of both studies collected through think-aloud, interview, and questionnaire indicate that there was a considerable discrepancy in the strategies used between groups of high and low reading proficiency. Strategies used by the proficient group were mainly skimming and using prior knowledge. In contrast, the less-proficient group mostly made use of paraphrasing, translating into the first language, and checking the unknown words in a dictionary. The result is in coincidence with the findings in Zhang's (2001) and Yau's (2005) studies when they reveal that there was a significant difference among more advanced and less advanced readers. Proficient readers employed effective strategies such as monitoring their reading comprehension, skimming for the key ideas, and guessing meaning, while the latter depended on a dictionary for word meaning, and translated passages from English into Chinese. This result was also shared by

Malcolm (2009) when he compared the reported academic reading strategy use of medical students in Bahrain University at different English proficiency levels. The study result indicates that the low English proficiency group used more translation strategies and they reported using fewer strategies than the upper-year students. Moreover, the translation is also reported to be heavily relied on by less proficient readers in Alsheikh's (2011) study.

In the reality of their reading process, good readers outperformed the poor ones in employing metacognitive strategies. In their studies Yin and Agnes (2001), Zhang, Seepho and Sirinthorn (2013), and Shikano's (2013) used the same instrument of Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) (Mokhtari & Richard, 2002) to collect data on the readers' use of metacognitive strategies. Of the three studies, Yin and Agnes's (2001) study results show that good readers were more aware of metacognitive knowledge and used metacognitive strategies more frequently than poor readers. In addition, studies by Dhieb-Henia (2003), Swanson and De La Paz (1998), and Zhang (2001) conducted on poor and good readers' use of strategies demonstrated that good readers used more metacognitive strategies as they read.

In contrast, Shokrpour and Nasiri (2011) in their study to investigate the use of cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies by ninety-four good and poor Iranian academic IELTS test takers reveal that there were not any significant differences between good and poor readers in using cognitive strategies. Sharing the same results, the research by Shikano (2013) on sixty Japanese university students shows no significant differences between the high-reading-proficiency group and the low-reading-proficiency group. Moreover, Zhang et al.'s (2013) investigation on twenty-two Chinese third-year English majored undergraduate students reveals that

the metacognitive strategy use of high and low proficiency students was the same at medium level. This is similar to the findings of Anderson's (1991) and Yayli's (2010) studies when they found out that proficient and less proficient readers used the same strategy types while performing a reading activity. However, high-scoring students seemed to be applying strategies more effectively and appropriately.

Nevertheless, a study by Oranpattanachi (2010) on ninety Thai engineering students shows that the high and the low proficiency readers shared both different and similar issues in their reading processes. The differences were divided into two aspects: the frequency of perceived strategy use and the frequency of perceived top-down strategy use. The similarities in their reading processes were also divided into two aspects: the rank ordering of perceived strategy use and the style of text processing.

To summarize, of studies investigating strategies used by successful and unsuccessful readers, most results reveal that there were differences in strategy use between the two kinds of readers. All the authors share the idea that readers with higher reading proficiency reported using various and effective reading strategies, with higher frequency and vice versa. High proficient readers tended to deploy a wider range of strategies with higher frequency. The strategies used by successful readers are more appropriate to tasks than those by unsuccessful readers, so the strategies used show higher effectiveness. Meanwhile, some other studies show no significant differences in strategy use, especially in the total number of strategies, between the two kinds of readers. However, the difference lies in types and the frequency of using the strategies. The strategies used by proficient readers are mainly integrating new information in the text with old information or using background knowledge, including

inferences, predictions, and elaborations; skimming, guessing. In contrast, less proficient readers tended to use less effective strategies such as paraphrasing, translating into the first language, and checking the unknown words in a dictionary.

3. Methodology

3.1. The Participants

The participants chosen in this study consisted of 981 students from six universities in Hanoi, Vietnam (Banking Academy, Posts and Telecommunications Institute of Technology, National Economics University, University of Social Science and Humanities, Hanoi Medical University, and University of Science and Technology of Hanoi). The participants aged from 20-22, majoring in Economics, Technology, Finance/Banking, Accounting, Social Science and Humanities, Medicine, and Administrating were second or third-year students. They were diverse in gender, academic major, experiences in English learning including reading comprehension proficiency, etc.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments

Because of their salient advantages, especially they are self-administered and can be given to large groups of participants at the same time, which can assure more uniform and standard, and more accurate collected data, questionnaires were the first choice in the consideration of research instruments for this study.

The questionnaire used in the present study consists of two parts:

- Part One designed to gather the information about individual characteristics of the participants required the subjects to supply their ethnographic data, such as gender, age, time of English study, major, their self-assessment on English, and reading proficiency.

- Part Two included nineteen statements appropriate to nineteen different strategies applied in reading comprehension. These questionnaire statements, which are broad, teachable actions that readers choose from among alternatives and employ for second/foreign language learning purposes, adapted from the S2R strategy model by Oxford (2013) demonstrated above.

The external reliability of the questionnaire was assured as all the nineteen items in the questionnaire were replicated from Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) which has been applied by many other researchers across the world in the field (Oxford, 2001).

For each questionnaire statement, five alternative choices were provided. Participants were asked to select one from among the followings:

1 for Never or rarely true of me

2 for Usually not true of me

3 for Somewhat true of me

4 for Usually true of me

5 for Always or almost true of me

The higher the number that respondents indicated applied to them, the more frequent the use of the particular strategy was reflected. The whole questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese for the participants' better understanding (Appendix A).

A pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the research instrument, especially to check the compatibility of the scale and the suitability of the statements in the questionnaire. 110 students chosen randomly participated in this pilot study and they were asked to complete the reading strategy questionnaire.

Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the reliability of the scale inside the questionnaire. The internal reliability of the questionnaire was high with Cronbach's Alpha=0.935 for 19 items of reading strategies. In addition, the correlation between coefficient variables and the total of each item was high with the score ranging from 0.454 to 0.758.

These results revealed that both external and internal reliability and validity of the questionnaire were assured and it could be used as the instrument of the main study.

3.3. Data Collection and Analyzing Procedures

At the beginning of the procedures, all of the participants were introduced to the purpose of the study and were given guidelines and instructions for completing the questionnaire. The students then filled in the two parts of the questionnaire, which took about 30 to 40 minutes.

981 questionnaires were returned. However, after the data cleansing, 957 ones were used for the research, which then were analyzed via The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0.

Descriptive statistics were employed to identify what and how frequently the participants used strategies during their reading English texts. The descriptive statistics provided frequencies, means, and standard deviations. These data were used to describe what reading strategies the participants used and how frequently the strategies were used: the mean score of overall reading strategy use, the mean score of each strategy category, the most and the least frequently used strategies among 19 strategies/4 strategy categories.

The Cronbach's Alpha score was measured to examine the internal consistency of the reliability of the questionnaire statements with the participants for this study. The Cronbach's Alpha for the overall 19 items was .855 and for each item if item deleted ranged from the highest of .901 to the lowest of .842, which

confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire (Cronbach, 1951). This is commonly considered a good indicator, as the coefficient alpha should exceed 0.70 to ensure dependable measurement of cognitive activities (Cronbach, 1951).

The scores were interpreted using the interpretation key based on the frequency scale delineated by Oxford (1990) for general learning strategy usage. The higher the averages are the more frequently the participants used the strategy concerned.

Table 3.1

Frequency Scale Delineated by Oxford (1990)

Mean score	Frequency scale	Evaluation
1.0-1.4	Low	Never or almost never used
1.5-2.4		Generally not used
2.5-3.4	Medium	Sometimes used
3.5-4.4	High	Usually used
4.5-5.0		Always or almost always used

One-way ANOVAs, MANOVAs were employed to find significant differences in both the overall use of reading strategies and the use of each strategy category across levels of the participants' English reading proficiency.

4. Findings and Discussion

The questionnaire analysis shows how the participants self-evaluated their English reading proficiency based on four scales, from "Good" to "Poor". It can be seen from Table 4.1 that only 11.8% of the participants self rated good at reading, while most of them were fair or average at reading, and nearly a quarter considered themselves as poor English readers.

Table 4.1

Participants' Self-Rated English Reading Proficiency

Level of self-rated English reading proficiency		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Good	113	11.8
	Fair	232	24.2
	Average	379	39.6
	Poor	233	24.4
Total		957	957

Table 4.2 shows the means and standard deviations of the overall use of reading strategies for the participants' different levels of self-rated English reading proficiency. It can be seen clearly from the table that students who rated themselves good and fair at English reading proficiency outperformed those who self-rated average and poor at English reading proficiency (M= 3.21, 3.14 vs M=2.86, 2.63, respectively).

Table 4.2

Participants' Overall Strategy Use by Levels of Self-Rated English Reading Proficiency

Self-rated English reading proficiency	Overall strategy use		
	Number	Mean	S.D
Good	113	3.21	1.066
Fair	232	3.14	1.010
Average	379	2.86	0.993
Poor	233	2.63	1.362
Total	957	2.90	1.168

A one-way MANOVA results reveal a significant multivariate main effect for students' self-rated English reading proficiency (p=0.000<0.05) indicating the relationship between the participants' levels of self-rated English reading proficiency and their overall reading strategy use.

Table 4.3 contains the means and standard deviations of the four reading strategy categories for the participants of different levels of self-rated English reading proficiency. The figures show that the highest frequencies in the use of each

strategy category were in the group of the students who self-rated good at English reading proficiency, and the students of average and poor groups reported the lowest frequencies.

Table 4.3

Participants' Use of Strategy Category by Levels of Self-Rated English Reading Proficiency

English reading proficiency	N	META		COG		AFFEC		SOCIO	
		M	S.D	M	S.D	M	S.D	M	S.D
Good	113	2.84	0.723	3.58	0.859	3.01	0.981	3.09	0.789
Fair	232	2.92	0.626	3.57	0.797	3.02	0.911	2.92	0.873
Average	379	2.61	0.643	3.19	0.732	2.89	0.935	2.78	0.807
Poor	233	2.50	1.184	2.81	0.855	2.69	1.050	2.58	0.869
Total	957	2.69	0.828	3.24	0.846	2.89	0.971	2.80	0.850

In addition, the results from one-way MANOVA confirm that levels of the students' self-rated English reading proficiency had effects on their use of the four strategy categories.

Multiple Comparisons using the LSD method were taken to compare the frequent use of strategy categories by participants of different levels of self-rated English learning proficiency. The result indicates that there were great differences in the use of all strategy categories between a group of self-rated poor students and three other groups with p value=0.000 for all comparisons. There were also significant differences in the use of the Cognitive Category between the group of self-rated average and other groups.

One more MANOVA with LSD method was also taken to compare the frequent use of individual strategies by participants of different levels of self-rated English reading proficiency. The results reveal that there were significant differences in the use of twelve strategies between self-rated students of each reading proficiency level and students of other groups, with

p value=0.000<0.05 in the use of the strategies (Paying attention, Monitoring, Evaluating, Using the Senses to Understand and Remember, Activating Knowledge, Reasoning, Conceptualizing with Details, Conceptualizing Broadly, Going Beyond the Immediate Data, Generating and Maintaining Motivation, Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communicating, and Dealing with Sociocultural Contexts and Identities). Ten of the strategies were shared by the self-rated average group (Paying attention, Monitoring, Evaluating, Using the Senses to Understand and Remember, Activating Knowledge, Reasoning, Conceptualizing with Details, Conceptualizing Broadly, Going Beyond the Immediate Data, Dealing with Sociocultural Contexts and Identities), too. It can also be seen from the findings that two strategies- Organizing, and Implementing plans were reported being used differently by self-rated poor and fair groups. Five strategies that did not show the significant differences in the use by the groups of different levels of self-rated reading proficiency were Planning, Obtaining and Using Resources, Orchestrating Strategy Use, Activating

Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes, and Interacting to Learn and Communicate. It can be said that there were significant differences in the frequent use of strategies between students of different levels of self-rated English reading proficiency, especially between poor and average students and those of other self-rated English reading proficiency levels.

Table 4.4 shows strategies that were used the most and the least frequently by self-rated good and poor readers. The five most used strategies by self-rated good English readers were Activating Knowledge, Going Beyond the Immediate Data, Using the Senses to Understand and Remember, Reasoning, and Conceptualizing Broadly with the mean scores at high level ranged from M=3.72; S.D=0.940 to M=3.50; S.D=1.087. Meanwhile, the most used strategies by the other group were Obtaining and Using Resources, Activating Knowledge, Using the Senses to Understand and Remember, Interacting to Learn and Communicate, and Conceptualizing with Details, with the mean scores at medium level ranged from M=3.07; S.D=1.212 to M=2.76; S.D=1.105. Of the five least used strategies both of the groups shared four strategies: Monitoring, Implementing Plans, Organizing, and Planning. Each group showed a different strategy for the rest - Orchestrating Strategy Use for self-rated good readers and Dealing with Sociocultural Contexts and Identities for self-rated bad English reading proficiency.

Table 4.4

The Most and the Least Frequently Used Strategies by Self-Rated Good and Poor Participants

STRATEGIES	GOOD		STRATEGIES	POOR	
	M	**S.D**		**M**	**S.D**
S10 Activating Knowledge	**3.72**	.940	*S3 Obtaining and Using Resources*	**3.07**	1.212
S14 Going Beyond the Immediate Data	**3.61**	1.114	*S10 Activating Knowledge*	**3.04**	1.078
S9 Using the Senses to Understand and Remember	**3.58**	1.015	*S9 Using the Senses to Understand and Remember*	**2.88**	1.044
S11 Reasoning	**3.58**	1.051	*S17 Interacting to Learn and Communicate*	**2.76**	1.091
S13 Conceptualizing Broadly	**3.50**	1.087	*S12 Conceptualizing with Details*	**2.76**	1.105
S12 Conceptualizing with Details	3.49	1.127	S15 Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes	2.76	1.165
S3 Obtaining and Using Resources	3.42	1.092	S1 Paying attention	2.73	1.054
S1 Paying attention	3.40	1.040	S13 Conceptualizing Broadly	2.73	1.134
S19 Dealing with Sociocultural Contexts and Identities	3.20	.888	S11 Reasoning	2.72	1.044

STRATEGIES	GOOD		STRATEGIES	POOR	
	M	S.D		M	S.D
S18 Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communicating	3.12	1.016	S14 Going Beyond the Immediate Data	2.72	1.037
S16 Generating and Maintaining Motivation	3.04	1.030	S6 Orchestrating Strategy Use	2.66	6.429
S15 Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes	2.98	1.118	S18 Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communicating	2.64	1.017
S17 Interacting to Learn and Communicate	2.95	1.034	S16 Generating and Maintaining Motivation	2.62	1.089
S8 Evaluating	2.93	1.075	S8 Evaluating	2.46	1.148
S7 Monitoring	**2.72**	1.122	*S19 Dealing with Sociocultural Contexts and Identities*	**2.35**	1.015
S6 Orchestrating Strategy Use	**2.66**	1.185	*S4 Organizing*	**2.32**	1.047
S5 Implementing Plans	**2.58**	1.124	*S5 Implementing Plans*	**2.28**	1.132
S4 Organizing	**2.55**	1.118	*S7 Monitoring*	**2.27**	1.009
S2 Planning	**2.48**	1.078	*S2 Planning*	**2.23**	1.032
Total	**3.13**		**Total**	**2.63**	

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between language learning strategy use and proficiency in specific skill areas, including speaking, listening, reading, writing, and vocabulary learning have been shown to exist (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Griffifths, 2008). Findings from many studies reveal a positive relationship between reading proficiency and reading strategy use, which indicate that readers of higher levels of proficiency tend to use more reading strategies, as well as a wider range of strategies than those of lower proficiency levels (Huang & Nisbet, 2014; Madhumathi & Ghosh, 2012).

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of the previous studies with the fact that students who self-rated good and fair readers overwhelmed those who rated themselves average and poor readers, especially poor readers, in the overall use of strategies while reading.

The significant differences were shown in the use of all the four strategy categories between self-rated poor reading proficiency participants and those of the other groups. Self-rated poor students used all the four strategy categories at a much lower frequency degree than the others. The greatest differences could be seen in the use of Cognitive and Sociocultural categories. Self-rated good proficiency students used Cognitive strategies the most frequently with high level (M=3.58; S.D=0.859), followed by Sociocultural Interactive, Affective categories, and Metastrategies received the lowest level of frequency. The poor readers also reported using the Cognitive category at the highest frequency level but at a much lower grade than that by the good self-rated group (M=2.81; S.D=0.855 vs M=3.58; S.D=0.859). This result supports Ehrman et al.'s,

(2003) study when they claimed that only cognitive strategies had a significant relationship with language proficiency; in other words, only cognitive strategies significantly influenced ESL/EFL learners' proficiency outcomes. However, the results contradict Shokrpour and Nasiri's (2011) findings as they indicated that there were not any significant differences between good and poor readers in using cognitive strategies.

These findings show a significant relationship between the participants' English reading proficiency and their employment of reading strategy categories. Higher self-rated English reading proficiency participants reported using strategy categories much more frequently than those of lower self-rated English reading proficiency. However, students of all the groups showed no good ability to manage and control their reading, especially ability to use and adjust other strategies to meet their needs in the reading process as all of them reported using Metastrategies at the lowest frequency level, which consequently influenced their reading comprehension. The results of Vann and Abraham's (1990) studies reveal that unsuccessful learners did use strategies generally considered as useful, and often they employed the same strategies as successful learners. Nevertheless, the difference is that successful learners used a larger range of strategies in language learning more frequently and appropriately than unsuccessful learners. That might be the reason why the participants of this study, both with high and low self-rated English reading proficiency, used the same strategy categories but at different frequency levels.

Taking the use of individual strategies into consideration there were significant differences in the use of sixteen out of the nineteen given strategies. The differences were mostly in the use of strategies by the participants of self-rated poor reading proficiency and those of the good group. A comparison in the use of individual strategies between these two groups shows many significant differences.

Firstly, the mean scores on overall use of strategies by the self-rated good readers were much higher than those of the poor (M=3.13; S.D=1.066 vs M=2.63; S.D=1.362). All the five most used strategies by the good group were at high level (M= from 3.72; S.D= 0.940 to M=3.50; S.D=1.087; M average=3.60; S.D=1.0414) while those by the poor were at medium level (M= from 3.07; S.D= 1.212 to M=2.76; S.D=1.105; M average=2.90; S.D =1.106).

Secondly, all the five most used strategies by self-rated good students belonged to the Cognitive category while those by poor ones were of three different categories- one of Metastrategies, three of Cognitive, and one of Sociocultural Interactive category. It is noticeable that the strategies most used by the two groups were completely different. The good group reported using Activating knowledge strategy the most and all the other four related to guessing or inferring the meaning of the text while the other group reported Obtaining and Using Resources the most and only one strategy related to guessing (the least of the five most used strategies). The two most used strategies by the two groups were the typical ones of high and low proficient readers as Oxford (1990) indicates that high proficiency language learners make educated guesses when they encounter unknown expressions, but low proficiency language learners try to look up unfamiliar words. In addition, Rubin (1975) focusing on observation of successful second language learners concluded that the characteristics of good language learners are to be a willing and accurate guesser, to have a strong drive to communicate, to learn from communication, to be uninhibited and willing to make mistakes, paying attention to form by looking for patterns, taking advantage of every opportunity to practice,

and focusing on meaning. The results of this study support Oxford's (1991) findings when she concluded there were differences between high and low proficient learners in the frequency of application of strategies, which in turn affected their academic achievement. It is also in line with Zhang and Wu's (2009) findings as they claim that the frequency of the use of strategy use increase as learners become more proficient and proficient learners show a greater and higher tendency to use strategies than low proficient learners (Park, 2010; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). The explanation for the results might be that advanced learners might be more autonomous in their use of reading strategies (Park, 2010). However, the results contradict Aliakbari and Mahjoob's (2016) findings when they recognize no significant relationship between the students' proficiency level and their use of metacognitive strategies.

5. Conclusions

It can be seen clearly from the research that the participants' levels of self-rated English reading proficiency were related to their overall reading strategy use. There were significant differences in the use of reading strategy categories among students of different self-rated levels of English reading proficiency, especially between students of good and poor proficiency. The highest frequencies in the use of each strategy category were in the group of self-rated good students, and the students of the poor group reported the lowest frequencies. The differences here might have resulted from the students' motivation and attitude to English learning and reading. These were effective factors, which consist of three variables: attitudes, motivation, and anxiety. It is then crucial to improve students' affective factors (Henter, 2012).

In the reality of language learning, learner's use of appropriate strategies enables them to be responsible for their own learning through improving their independence, self-direction, and learner's autonomy, which are crucial for learners to continue their life-long learning endeavors (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). It is suggested from the results of this study that elicit instruction of strategy use should be incorporated into the English curriculum for university students. Especially, students also need to motivate themselves so that they can become self-strategic regulating readers to get high English reading achievement. In addition, according to Anderson's (1991) "strategic reading is not only a matter of knowing what strategy to use but also the reader must know how to use a strategy successfully and orchestrate its use with other strategies. It is not sufficient to know about strategies; a reader must also be able to apply them strategically" (pp. 468-469).

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Appendix A (English Version)

Questionnaire on Students' Strategy Use in Reading Comprehension

In order to assess the use of English reading strategies of students, please answer the following questions by filling in the personal information and marking X with the appropriate choices. The information obtained is for research purposes only.

Part I: Personal Information

1. Full name: ………………………………..……… Age: ………………
2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐   4. Major: ……………………
5. Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, or Senior (circle one)
6. How long have you been studying English? ………………………………
7. Do you like learning English?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Do not mind ☐
8. Do you like reading in English? Yes ☐   No ☐   Do not mind ☐
9. Have you ever been trained about reading strategies? Yes ☐   No ☐

10. How do you rate your overall English proficiency?

Good ☐   Fair ☐   Average ☐   Poor ☐

11. How do you rate your English reading proficiency?

Good ☐   Fair ☐   Average ☐   Poor ☐

12. How important is it for you to become proficient in reading in English?

Very important ☐   Important ☐   Not so important ☐   Not important ☐

Part II: Reading Strategy Use

This questionnaire has been designed to help you to identify which strategies you use in reading comprehension.

Read each statement below. Please write the responding 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 that tells HOW

TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

1. Never or almost true of me   2. Usually not true of me

3. Somewhat true of me   4. Usually true of me

5. Always true of me

(1) means that the statement is very rarely true of you

(2) means that the statement is true less than half the time

(3) means that the statement is true of you about half the time

(4) means that the statement is true more than half the time

(5) means that the statement is true of you almost always

Mark an X in the appropriate column.

Please respond to each statement quickly, without too much thought. Try not to change your responses after you choose them. Please use a pen to mark your choices.

Example:

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	I focus on the text when reading.	①	②X	③	④	⑤

Questionnaire statements

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
	METASTRATEGIES					
1	I plan for reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	I focus on the text when reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	I use references (dictionaries, vocabulary, etc.) to help me understand what I need to read.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	I organize reading to get effectiveness.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	I implement the reading plans.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	I orchestrate the strategy use when reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	I monitor my reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	I evaluate my reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	COGNITIVE STRATEGIES					
9	I use the senses to understand and remember what I read.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10	I activate my knowledge to understand the reading text.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11	I reason (analyze and guess grammatical points, vocabulary, etc.) what I read to understand the text (Reasoning).	①	②	③	④	⑤
12	I guess new words or phrases while reading through the analysis of known elements (Conceptualizing with Details).	①	②	③	④	⑤
13	I guess the text basing on the link between words, phrases, concepts, etc., in the reading (Conceptualizing Broadly).	①	②	③	④	⑤

14	I deduce the content of the readings from the available information (title, known vocabulary, topic sentences ...) (Going Beyond the Immediate Data).	①	②	③	④	⑤
	AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES					
15	I am self-motivated in the process of reading through activating supportive emotions, beliefs, and attitudes.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16	I generate and maintain motivation when reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	SOCIOCULTURAL- INTERACTIVE STRATEGIES					
17	I interact with others while reading to learn and communicate.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18	I overcome knowledge gaps about the text in communicating with others.	①	②	③	④	⑤
19	I try to deal with sociocultural contexts and identities when reading.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Thank you for your cooperation!

VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CHIẾN LƯỢC ĐỌC
CỦA SINH VIÊN CÓ NĂNG LỰC ĐỌC TIẾNG ANH KHÁC NHAU

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Tóm tắt: Đọc đóng một vai trò quan trọng trong sự phát triển học thuật, đặc biệt khi người học phải làm việc với một khối lượng lớn tài liệu bằng ngoại ngữ cho các môn học chuyên môn của mình (McDonough & Shaw, 2013). Tăng cường năng lực đọc tiếng Anh là rất cần thiết để sinh viên đại học có thể phát huy năng lực cá nhân của bản thân. Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm tìm hiểu liệu có sự khác biệt trong việc sử dụng các chiến lược đọc giữa các sinh viên đại học có mức độ tự đánh giá năng lực đọc tiếng Anh khác nhau. 957 sinh viên từ 6 trường đại học ở miền Bắc Việt Nam đã tham gia nghiên cứu. Kết quả của nghiên cứu thông qua bảng câu hỏi dựa trên mô hình S2R của Oxford (2013) cho thấy mức độ tự đánh giá về năng lực đọc tiếng Anh của sinh viên có liên quan đến việc sử dụng chiến lược đọc tổng thể của họ. Có sự khác biệt đáng kể trong việc sử dụng các chiến lược đọc giữa các sinh viên có năng lực đọc tiếng Anh, đặc biệt là giữa các sinh viên có năng lực tốt và kém. Tần suất sử dụng mỗi loại chiến lược được ghi nhận cao nhất là ở nhóm sinh viên tự đánh giá tốt và ngược lại.

Từ khóa: chiến lược đọc, năng lực đọc tiếng Anh, sinh viên đại học, Việt Nam