

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE USE OF METACOGNITIVE
READING STRATEGIES BY UPPER
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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Candidate's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. The thesis has not been submitted to any academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

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Abstract

The Use of Metacognitive Reading Strategies by Upper Secondary School Students

Metacognitive reading strategies are not explicitly taught to upper secondary students in Malaysia. Students are accounted to develop these strategies over the years. Thus, the research applied a mix-method design intended to recognise the use of metacognitive reading strategies to support the reading performance of ESL upper secondary school learners and factors involved in the use of metacognitive reading strategies by the participants. The research also aimed to examine the relationship between the use of metacognitive reading strategies and the participants' performance in reading. A total of sixty participants who study in Form 4 or also known as upper secondary school students from an urban school was chosen randomly for the research. The participants sat for reading proficiency test adopted from Mohammad, Chew, and Kabilan (2006) to determine their proficiency levels. They were divided into high, moderate, and low proficiency levels based on the English Proficiency Index (EPI) adopted from Morley (2010). Then, the participants were to respond to a questionnaire inclusive of Survey of Reading Strategies adopted from Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002). The data from the questionnaires was analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 16. The quantitative results indicated that participants of varied proficiency levels demonstrated different types and frequency for the use of metacognitive reading strategies. It was also learnt that there was positive relationship between the use of metacognitive reading strategies and their reading performance. Fifteen participants were chosen selectively for interview sessions to obtain factors for high and low usages of metacognitive reading strategies. The qualitative results showed that there were several determining factors that contributed to high and low usage of the metacognitive reading strategies. This study concludes by discussing pedagogical implications of the findings at the end. The implications are metacognitive reading strategies must be taught to students in upper secondary and teachers must provide recursive sustaining situations and activities in language classes to ensure learners apply the metacognitive reading strategies. Along the way, teachers must be cautious about the materials and texts used in providing grounds for learners to practice the use of strategies while reading.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The role of reading in our life and education goes uncontested. Majority of our education and information has been received via reading act; hence reading is the principal element of learning and practice for second language learners in particular due to their limited contact of the target second language (McKeown and Gentilucci, 2007). There are abundant factors to why reading is deemed as the largely fundamental skill for students in school to acquire. According to Anderson (2005), there are three contributing factors that delineate the importance of reading. The first reason is it is important to be literate since reading leads to academic success (Yang, 2006). The next rationale is to develop vast academic knowledge and to ensure ESL learners become more cultured and industrious in their reading (Yang, 2006). Finally, it is imperative for ESL students to have high ability in comprehending English written work since it allows them to ‘weave their way in and out of diverse subject matter’. For example, according to Yau (2009) by being immensely cultured in English reading materials, it permits ESL learners to be ‘eloquent in different genres’ of reading materials and to be able ‘to example the language in the most effective’.

Albeit the perception of ESL learners about the difficulties of reading, it is however, a pursuit that is possible to achieve and acquire by ESL learners through the application of reading strategies. Due to the operational nature of reading, more learners and teachers are beckoned to concentrate on this indispensable skill. According to Samuels and Kamil (1998), since reading does engage specific operational skills, it has motioned many readers to have some sort of reading strategies. Undoubtedly, the use of reading strategies helps learners to focus on their reading.

1.1 Background of the Study

Poor reading performance among language learners is closely linked to ‘apprehension as a result of their lack of vocabulary and fluency in English’ (Salmeron, Canas, Kintsch, and Fajardo, 2005). Apprehension in reading is experienced by a number of ESL learners as most of them perceive comprehending academic reading materials as difficult and unachievable (Yang, 2006). Most ESL learners loathe reading as they become baffled and frustrated with the wide range of interpretation of the reading materials. Some learners even become complacent with the way teaching reading is done where the ESL teachers are the primal source for the explanation of the reading materials and this caused ESL learners to choose to be passive readers as most teaching objective is to ensure learners of ESL excel in public examination and not to prepare them with the needs of the world outside of their schools (Normah, 2009). ESL learners are comfortable to be receivers or followers and let their teachers to spoon-feed them. This has forced many ESL learners into ‘rote-learning and memorising’ which finally neglected the element of ‘creativity’.