

**ESL LEARNERS' USE OF ONLINE
METACOGNITIVE READING STRATEGIES:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the metacognitive awareness and online reading strategies employed by Form Four ESL learners' of a secondary school in relation to language proficiency. Specifically, it examined the types and frequency of reading strategies used by the high and low language proficiency students and the differences between them. Additionally, the study attempted to find out the relationship between the ESL learners' overall language proficiency performance and their frequency of use of the overall and three sub-categories of reading strategies, namely global, problem-solving and support strategies. The research design was a cross-sectional survey research which used the Anderson (2003) Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS). The independent variable was the language proficiency of the ESL learners and the dependent variable was the metacognitive awareness of the ESL learners measured in terms of their ratings of the three sub-categories of reading strategies. Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using One-way ANOVA, independent sample t-test and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings of the study revealed that the high language proficiency students were moderate reading strategy users. High language proficiency students used the global, problem-solving, and support strategies with somewhat similar moderate frequency. However, the low proficiency students used the problem-solving and support strategies with higher frequency than the global strategies. High proficiency students used overall, global and problem-solving strategies more frequently than the low proficiency students. However, support strategies were used with somewhat similar frequency by both high proficiency and low proficiency students. Moreover, there was a positive significant relationship between the ESL learners' overall language proficiency performance and their frequency of use of global and problem-solving strategies. However, there was a negative significant relationship between the ESL learners' overall language proficiency performance and their frequency of use in support strategies. Pedagogical implications are offered along with suggestions for further research.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Reading is an essential skill for learners of English. It is the most crucial aspect in learning and information gathering (Alfassi, 2004; Wei, 2005). Anderson (2003) maintains that reading should be a fluent process which involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning. Today, the nature of reading is no longer restricted to reading printed materials such as magazines, brochures, textbooks and other offline reading materials but also materials on the Internet. With rapid advancement in information technology, having the skills and strategies to read and comprehend online information is undoubtedly a crucial aspect contributing to students' academic success. In order to comprehend knowledge and information available on the Internet, which exist in various forms such as electronic journals and newspapers, online database, and blogs, learners need to have high reading ability.

1.1. Background of the Study

In Malaysian secondary schools, 5 periods are allocated for English language class per week with the allocation of 40 minutes for each class. The curriculum focuses on the four language skills, which are reading, writing, speaking and listening. Since 1999, reading has become an even more important skill to be mastered as the introduction of the English Literature component in