



## The application of S2R strategies in English reading comprehension by university students in Vietnam

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### Abstract

Reading plays a significantly important role in every student's academic development, especially when they have to work over a great number of foreign language materials for their professional subjects (McDonough & Shaw, 2013). Strengthening English reading ability is necessary for students to promote individual ability in university education.

One of the most important factors affecting students' English reading proficiency is their use of reading strategies. This study is taken to explore how Vietnamese university students applied Self-strategic regulation (S2R) strategies in their English reading comprehension. 963 students from 6 universities in the North of Vietnam participated in the study. The results of the study through the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews show that the participants applied S2R strategies at a medium level of frequency ( $M=2.9$ ) when they read general English materials. Cognitive strategies were reported being used the most frequently, followed by Affective strategies, Socio-cultural Interactive strategies, and Meta-strategies. Five of the six most frequently used strategies were in the category of Cognitive ones. All the five least commonly used strategies were of medium and low usage falling into the Meta-strategy subscale. From the research results, the author has proposed some pedagogical recommendations to educational administrators, English teachers, students, and English textbook writers as well.

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*Keywords:* self-strategic regulation; reading comprehension; reading strategies; university students; Vietnam.

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## 1. Introduction

Being the essence of reading (Durkin, 1993), reading comprehension is one of the most important factors in language learning for all students because it provides the basis for a substantial amount of learning in education (Alvermann & Earle, 2003). It is thought to be the primary means of gaining access to various sources of information, providing the basis for "synthesis and critical evaluation skills" (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

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Strengthening English reading ability is necessary for students to develop other English skills as well as to get knowledge for their study major. However, though students have to read a large volume of academic texts in English many of them entering university education are unprepared for the reading demands placed on them (Dreyer & Nel, 2003). According to Hudson (2007), second or foreign language readers can reimburse a lack of English proficiency by sending for interactive strategies, utilizing prior knowledge, and becoming aware of their strategy choices; so the best way to prevent difficulties in foreign language reading is early providing with strategies (DeMoulin & Loye, 1999).

## *1.1. Literature review*

### *1.1.1. Reading strategies*

Reading strategies refer to the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text (Barnett, 1989). 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 (Block, 1986; Brantmeier, 2002).

Different authors have classified reading strategies in different ways. In the Self-Strategic Regulation (S2R) model, reading strategy is described as ‘deliberate, goal-directed attempts to manage and control efforts to read the second language’ (Oxford, 2013). Readers following S2R model can be 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).

### *1.1.2. The Self-Strategic Regulation model (Oxford, Teaching and researching language learning strategies, 2013)*

The Self-Strategic Regulation (S2R) model by Oxford (2013) consists of four mutually influential strategy groups: Cognitive, Affective, Socio-cultural Interactive, and Meta-strategies. Using Cognitive strategies readers can construct, transform, and utilize second/foreign language knowledge. Oxford (2013) claims that while Affective strategies support readers create positive emotions and attitudes and stay motivated Sociocultural Interactive (SI) strategies help them with communication, sociocultural contexts, and identity. From Oxford’s (2013) viewpoint, Meta-strategies, by their executive-control and management function, help readers know whether and how to deploy a given strategy and aid in determining whether the strategy is working or has worked as intended. All the strategies and meta-strategies mentioned are highly dynamic because they respond to the changing needs of learners for varying purposes in different socio-cultural contexts (Oxford, 2013).

## *1.2. Research questions*

The purpose of this study was to explore how Vietnamese university students apply S2R strategies (Oxford, 2013) when reading English texts. It aimed to answer the question: ‘How do Vietnamese university students apply S2R strategies in their English reading comprehension?’.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Sample/Participants*

Nine hundred and sixty-three students from six universities in Hanoi, Vietnam participated in this research. The participants chosen based on their diversity in gender, academic major, experiences in English learning, including self-rated English reading proficiency, etc., were second or third-year students aged from 20-22.

## 2.2. *Instrument(s)*

The research data was collected through a reading strategy questionnaire adapted from the Self-Strategic Regulation model by Oxford (2013). The questionnaire consists of two parts:

- Part One designed to collect the information of the participants' characteristics required the subjects to provide their ethnographic data, such as age, gender, majors, English learning time, 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, adopted from the S2R strategy model by Oxford (2013), were divided into four sections, corresponding to four strategy categories: Meta- strategies, Cognitive strategies, Affective strategies, and Socio-cultural Interactive strategies.

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 a number of researchers in the field across the world (Oxford, 2001).

For each questionnaire statement in part Two, participants were required to select one from five alternative options as follows:

- 1 - the statement is Never or rarely true for me;
- 2 - the statement is Usually not true for me;
- 3 - the statement is Somewhat true for me;
- 4 - the statement is Usually true for me;
- 5 - the statement is Always or almost true for me.

## 2.3. *Data collection and analysis*

The researcher herself arranged a meeting with students at each university. At the beginning of the meeting, the objectives of the study were explained to all the participants. After giving written informed consent, all students were required to complete the questionnaire. Following this, the completed questionnaires were manually checked for the completeness of data before submission for data entry and analysis.

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyze the data from the questionnaires.

The internal consistency of reliability of the questionnaire statements used for this study was examined by the Cronbach's Alpha score measurement. The result for the overall nineteen items was .855 and for each item, if the item deleted ranged from the highest of .901 to the lowest of .842, which confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire (Cronbach, 1951).

The types and frequencies of strategies used were counted and averaged by adding up individual scores from each participant to obtain a total score for each subscale in the strategy questionnaire (Meta-strategies, Cognitive strategies, Affective strategies, and Socio-cultural Interactive strategies) and the entire instrument. The scores for respective subscale were added up and divided by the number of items in each category (8 items for Meta-strategies, 6 for Cognitive strategies, 2 for Affective strategies, and 3 for Socio-cultural Interactive strategies). The higher the averages the more frequently the participants used the strategy concerned. The scores were interpreted using the interpretation key based on the frequency scale delineated by Oxford (1990) for general learning strategy usage (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Frequency scale delineated by Oxford (1990)

Mean score	Frequency scale	Evaluation
1.0-1.4	Low	Never or rarely 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

### 3. Results

To address the given question, the participants’ reports on the reading strategy questionnaires were examined. The descriptive statistics of the questionnaire including means and standard deviations of the overall usage, the application of each strategy category, and the use of each strategy were employed. Also, the qualitative results from semi-structured interviews were used to support the findings from the questionnaires.

Table 2 summarizes the average use of the nineteen provided reading strategies by the participants, arranged in descending order by their means. The average score of overall reading strategy use by the participants was 2.9 (S.D=1.17), which was medium according to the 5-point Likert scale. The mean strategy used ranged from a maximum of 3.41 (S.D=1.03) (for Activating knowledge) to a minimum of 2.41 (S.D=1.00) (for Planning). Three strategies were reported low use (Organizing, Implementing plans, and Planning) and all the rests were used at medium level. The figures show that none of the strategies were reported being at a high level of usage.

**Table 2.** Strategies used by the participants

Category	Strategy	Mean	S. D	Level
COG.2	Activating knowledge	3.41	1.03	Medium
MET.3	Obtaining and using resources	3.30	1.10	Medium
COG.1	Using the senses to understand and remember	3.29	1.04	Medium
COG.6	Going beyond the immediate data	3.21	1.07	Medium
COG.4	Conceptualizing with details	3.18	1.09	Medium
COG.5	Conceptualizing broadly	3.18	1.07	Medium
COG.3	Reasoning	3.16	1.05	Medium
MET.1	Paying attention	3.04	1.05	Medium
AFF.1	Activating supportive emotions, beliefs, and attitudes	2.92	1.09	Medium
AFF.2	Generating and maintaining motivation	2.85	1.04	Medium
SOC.2	Overcoming knowledge gaps in communicating	2.84	1.02	Medium
SOC.1	Interacting to learn and communicate	2.81	1.07	Medium
SOC.3	Dealing with sociocultural contexts and identities	2.75	1.04	Medium
MET.8	Evaluating	2.71	1.07	Medium
MET.6	Orchestrating strategy use	2.56	3.29	Medium
MET.7	Monitoring	2.56	1.05	Medium
MET.4	Organizing	2.47	1.00	Low
MET.5	Implementing plans	2.45	1.03	Low
MET.2	Planning	2.41	1.00	Low
	Valid N	2.90	1.17	Medium

The result also reveals the strategies used the most and the least frequently by the students. Six strategies reported to be used the most frequently ranged from 3.41 to 3.18, five of which falling into the category of

Cognitive strategies were Activating knowledge, Using the senses to understand and remember, Going beyond the immediate data, Conceptualizing with details, and Conceptualizing broadly with the mean scores of 3.41, 3.29, 3.21, 3.18 and 3.18 (S.D=1.03, 1.04, 1.07, 1.09, and 1.07), respectively. The rest one Obtaining and using resources was of Meta-strategies and it was at the second top of usage with the mean score of 3.30 (S.D=1.10). None of the Affective and Sociocultural-Interactive strategies were in the most frequently used strategy group.

It can also be seen from Table 2 that the five least commonly used strategies were of medium and low usage and ranged from 2.56 to 2.41. All of these strategies fell into the Meta-strategy subscale: Orchestrating strategy use, Monitoring, Organizing, Implementing plans, and Planning (M=2.56, 2.56, 2.47, 2.45, and 2.41; S.D=3.29, 1.05, 1.00, 1.03, and 1.00, respectively). No strategies of other subscales were reported being used in this group. Of the five least frequently used strategies, Planning and Implementing plans stood at the bottom with a low medium level of usage.

Considering the use of each category, the most frequently used category was Cognitive strategies (M=3.24; S.D=0.85), followed by Affective strategies (M=2.89; S.D=0.85), Socio-cultural Interactive strategies (M=2.80; SD=0.85) and Meta-strategies were reported being used at the lowest level with M=2.69, SD= 0.83 (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Participants' use of each strategy category

Strategy Category	Mean	S. D	Level	Rank
Cognitive strategies (COG)	3.24	0.83	Medium	1
Affective strategies (AFF)	2.89	0.97	Medium	2
Socio-cultural interactive strategies (SOC)	2.80	0.85	Medium	3
Meta-strategies (MET)	2.69	0.83	Medium	4

Table 4 shows the participants' use of six cognitive strategies listed in the descending order of the mean score.

**Table 4.** Participants' use of Cognitive strategies

Category	Strategy	Mean	S. D	Level
COG.2	Activating knowledge	3.41	1.03	Medium
COG.1	Using the senses to understand and remember	3.29	1.04	Medium
COG.6	Going beyond the immediate data	3.21	1.07	Medium
COG.4	Conceptualizing with details	3.18	1.09	Medium
COG.5	Conceptualizing broadly	3.18	1.07	Medium
COG.3	Reasoning	3.16	1.05	Medium
		3.24	1.06	Medium

All Cognitive strategies were reported being used at the medium level with the mean ranged from 3.41 to 3.16. The results show that the strategy reported the highest usage level appeared in this category (Activating knowledge with M=3.41; S.D=1.03).

Regarding Affective strategies, two strategies of this subscale were used at quite the same medium level (M=2.92 for Activating supportive emotions, beliefs, and attitudes and M=2.85 for Generating and maintaining motivation (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Participants' use of Affective strategies

Category	Strategy	Mean	S. D	Level
AFF.1	Activating supportive emotions, beliefs, and attitudes	2.92	1.09	Medium
AFF.2	Generating and maintaining motivation	2.85	1.04	Medium
		2.89	1.07	Medium

Considering the Socio-cultural Interactive category, table 6 reveals that all three strategies of this group were used at the medium level (M=from 2.84 to 2.75) which means the students seemed to be aware of the affection of socio-cultural issues to their reading performance.

**Table 6.** Participants' use of Socio-cultural interactive strategies

Category	Strategy	Mean	S. D	Level
SOC.2	Overcoming knowledge gaps in communicating	2.84	1.02	Medium
SOC.1	Interacting to learn and communicate	2.81	1.07	Medium
SOC.3	Dealing with socio-cultural contexts and identities	2.75	1.04	Medium
		2.80	1.04	Medium

It can be seen from table 7 that the students used eight strategies in the Meta-strategy subscale at the medium level of frequency with M ranged from 3.30 to 2.41. Besides, it should be mentioned that the strategies with the least frequency of use among all the nineteen strategies introduced were also in this group (Organizing, Implementing plans, and Planning with M=2.47, 2.45, and 2.41, respectively).

**Table 7.** Participants' use of Meta-strategies

Category	Strategy	Mean	S. D	Level
MET.3	Obtaining and Using Resources	3.30	1.10	Medium
MET.1	Paying attention	3.04	1.05	Medium
MET.8	Evaluating	2.71	1.07	Medium
MET.6	Orchestrating Strategy Use	2.56	3.29	Medium
MET.7	Monitoring	2.56	1.05	Medium
MET.4	Organizing	2.47	1.00	Low
MET.5	Implementing Plans	2.45	1.03	Low
MET.2	Planning	2.41	1.00	Low
		2.69	1.32	Medium

#### 4. Discussion

The overall mean score of 2.90 indicates that the participants applied S2R strategies at a moderate scale of frequency when they read English for general academic purposes. This result is consistent with several previous studies on students' reading strategy use (Do & Vo, 2015; Hoang, 2016; Sim, 2007; Wu, 2005). For example, Lee (2007) using SORS with a 5-point Likert scale examined strategy use in reading general English materials by seventy-two Korean students found out that the students used reading strategies at a moderate level with a mean score ranged from 2.92 to 3.01. A study by Hamzah and Abdullah (2009) on four hundred Malaysian ESL students indicated that the participants used metacognitive strategies in their reading at a moderate level (M=3.34). Besides, two studies by Hsu (2008) and Wu (2005) were conducted to

investigate EFL students' reading strategy use in Taiwan showed the same results when both the authors found out that EFL Taiwanese students reported using reading strategies at a moderate level, too ( $M=3.16$  and  $M= 3.08$ , respectively).

However, the result of this study is contrastive to some other earlier studies in which EFL learners reported a high frequency strategy use in reading (Hunsaker, 2012; Park, 2010; Al-Sobbing, 2013). For instance, Park (2010) using SORS as the main instrument to investigate students' reading strategy use found out that Korean students used strategies at a high level of frequency in their reading English authentic expository texts with the average score of 3.62.

One possible explanation for the result of this research is that most of the participants (80%) were not trained to use reading strategies. They used the strategies mostly with their English learning experience (nearly 70% of the students have learned English for more than 5 years).

Considering the usage of each reading strategy category, the most frequently used category was Cognitive strategies ( $M=3.24$ ), followed by Affective strategies ( $M=2.89$ ), Socio-cultural Interactive strategies ( $M=2.80$ ), and Meta-strategies were reported to be used at the lowest level of frequency with

$M=2.69$ . This result is in line with those of some other studies (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001; Wu, 2005) that Cognitive strategies were used at the highest level. Reviewing important theories on language learning strategies shows that the largest category of strategies is cognitive strategies (Alhaisoni, 2017) as the strategies help readers interact with materials to be read, manipulate the materials mentally or physically, using prior knowledge, apply a specific technique and various strategies in their efforts to construct meaning in the comprehension process (Oxford, 2013; Pang, 2008). This shares the same functions with Problem-solving strategies when Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) define Problem-solving strategies are localized, focused techniques, actions, and procedures that readers use while working directly with the text (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). Hence, the result of this study supports some prior studies (Al-Sheikh & Mokhtari, 2011; Shikano, 2013; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2012) and proves Olshansky's (1977) view that Problem-solving strategies are the most preferable because they contribute a more effective reading comprehension.

All strategies of this category were used at the medium level ( $M=$ from 3.16 to 3.41), much higher than the average mean score ( $M=2.90$ ) meaning that the students seemed to be able to solve difficulties when dealing with English texts. It also reveals that the students showed their high interests in reading and tried to comprehend the texts as well as possible by focusing on the ways to meet the purposes of their reading. For example, they activated knowledge ( $M=3.41$ ), used the senses to understand and remember ( $M=3.29$ ), conceptualized with details ( $M=3.21$ ). Besides, five of the six most frequently used strategies by the participants were in the Cognitive group. An explanation for the frequent use of Cognitive strategies of the students is that those strategies are easy to be used, do not seem to require many resources from readers to be applied (Park, 2010).

The findings also indicate that the use of Affective strategies and Socio-cultural interactive strategies was much less frequently than that of Cognitive ones but was at a higher level of frequency than that of Meta-strategies. In her S2R model, Oxford (2013) emphasizes the role of 'culture' and includes strategies that are used to 'deal with socio-cultural contexts and identities. This is consistent with the viewpoint of 'community of practice' by Lave and Wenger (1991) when they claim that "learning is not a property of individuals and the representations in their heads (the cognitive view), but rather a more relational property of individuals in context and interaction with one another (the situated view)". Lave and Wenger (1991) also state that learning is central to human identity and the motivation to become a more central participant in a community of practice can provide a powerful incentive for learning. The medium level of usage of Affective and Socio-cultural Interactive strategies of the participants in this study reveals a fact that though they saw the significant role of motivation, attitudes, socio-cultural knowledge, and interaction among partners during their reading performance the students still did not make the best use of those things.

Of the four strategy categories, the use of Meta-strategies was reported the least frequent ( $M=2.69$ ;  $S.D=0.83$ ). The mean scores of the use of Meta-strategies ranging from 2.41 to 3.30 reveal that the

participants were aware of this strategy subscale but they used them at the moderate and low usage levels. As mentioned earlier, Meta-strategies help readers manage and control their reading process in a general sense, with a focus on understanding their own needs, using and adjusting the other strategies to meet those needs (Oxford, 2013), the results prove the fact that the students were not very good at managing or monitoring their reading to comprehend successfully. One reason for this might be that the participants coming into the reading process had hardly the right direction or though they had clear purposes for their reading they did not know how to achieve the best results. Consequently, they did not either plan, organize, or evaluate their reading frequently ( $M=2.41$ ;  $2.47$ ;  $2.71$ , respectively). Planning strategy means setting the goal for reading comprehension (Pressley, 2002), so it can be inferred from these mean scores that readers did not always read with a clear purpose and they might spend much time reading word by word, line by line, without focusing on main things of text comprehension.

It is also notable that all the five least frequently used strategies were in the Meta-strategy category: Planning ( $M=2.41$ ), Implementing Plans ( $M=2.45$ ), Organizing ( $M=2.47$ ), Monitoring ( $M=2.56$ ), and Orchestrating Strategy Use ( $M= 2.56$ ).

Self-questioning is one of tactics related to monitoring, which can happen during reading (Israel, 2007), and finding which part of the text can be emphasized or ignored based on the purpose of the text is monitoring strategy (Hudson, 2007). The mean score of Monitoring strategy in this study is consistent with Park's (2010) research when he found out that questioning, critical analyzing, and evaluating the information strategies were the three least used ones by students in Korean colleges when they read English expository texts ( $M=2.67$ ;  $M=2.77$ , respectively) (Park, 2010). According to Pressley et al. (1992), reading expresses collaboration between the reader and the author, in which readers cooperate with the author by asking the right questions, paying careful attention to the author's answers, and asking questions of their own. Successful reading is not simply the mechanical process of 'text decoding', but also a process of active inquiry and good readers approach a text with questions and develop new questions as they read (Pressley et al., 1992). Because questioning was one of the most frequently used reading strategies by proficient readers (Yayli, 2010) it is one of the five most encouraging strategies to be effectively taught in producing skilled readers (Harrison, 1996). Generating questions is a good way for readers to predict text content and to facilitate their reading comprehension (Oxford, 1990; Pressley et al., 1992).

One more strategy of this category being one of the five least used strategies was Orchestrating Strategy Use ( $M=2.56$ ). This result once more shows a proof that most of the students were not very efficient English readers as Anderson (1991) claims that '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' (p. 468).

The research also identifies six the most used strategies by the participants in their English reading, of which five fall into the category of Cognitive strategies: Activating knowledge, Using the senses to understand and remember, Going beyond the immediate data, Conceptualizing with details, and Conceptualizing broadly ( $M=3.41$ ;  $3.29$ ;  $3.21$ ;  $3.18$ ;  $3.18$ , respectively). The results reveal that the students preferred activating their prior knowledge when reading because they saw the importance of the strategy in facilitating their reading comprehension as background knowledge is composed of content and formal schemata (Pritchard, 1990; Smith & Swinney, 1992). It is in line with Sim's (2007) findings when he found out that the Korean students reported employing this strategy quite often in think-aloud protocols and diary studies, but moderately in reading strategy questionnaires. By using prior knowledge, readers might be able to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words to explain and clarify the reading passage content. When students make connections between relevant background knowledge and the text they are reading, they have a foundation, or scaffolding, upon which they can place new facts, ideas, and concepts. Consequently, their comprehension increases. In reality, good readers usually try to make sense out of what they are reading by seeing how it fits with what they have already known. Keene & Zimmermann (1997) state that in this way, activating prior knowledge is not only a useful reading strategy for empowering students to independently



comprehend the text, it can also be used as a confidence booster for those students that typically give up before even trying. By linking instruction to familiar topics, prior experiences, or students' interests, students will read more effectively (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997).

Although the usage level of this strategy by the participants was not very high ( $M=3.41$ ) this result of the study indicates a fact that Vietnamese students are potentially good readers, as activating prior knowledge, or schema, is the first of seven strategies that Keene and Zimmerman (1997) identify as a key for reading comprehension success. As mentioned earlier, by thinking about what they are reading and considering how the information fits with what they already know, good readers build upon the schema that they have already developed (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997).

The participants also reported Conceptualizing with Details and Conceptualizing broadly at the same level of usage ( $M=3.18$ ). According to Oxford (2013), two pairs of most common tactics related to each of these two strategies were scanning and taking notes, skimming, and summarizing. The results support Hoang's (2016) findings when she found out that Vietnamese students in the United Kingdom figured out the main idea of each paragraph the most frequently ( $M=4.00$ ). They then guessed words from context clues ( $M=3.98$ ) and used the title to predict contents ( $M=3.95$ ). However, the findings are inconsistent with the results of Park's (2010) study when he revealed 'taking notes' was one of the three least frequently used strategy by Korean students ( $M=2.99$ ). It can be explained here that readers seem to be required more sophisticated techniques with additional resources or actions when using the strategies beyond just decoding

words or reading lines of texts, which stimulates the active role of readers in achieving full comprehension (Park, 2010). Furthermore, summarizing can be more challenging than taking notes because it requires greater consideration of thought (Oxford, 1990). Besides, although taking notes is a very important strategy for reading, readers generally are not taught to use it effectively and it is often considered as an advanced tool, to be used at a high level of proficiency (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Oxford, 1990). The fact that the students used these two strategies quite often reveals Vietnamese students might be aware of how to implement these strategies effectively although 80% of the participants had never been trained on reading strategies.

The participants reported using the strategy Obtaining and Using Resources, such as Using a dictionary (belonging to Meta-strategy category) at the second-highest level. A study by Sim (2007) also shares the same result. Stating the reason for this, Sim (2007) explains the readers believed that the key to grasping the text is to understand the unknown words and that their comprehension would be impeded. This is easily understandable because dictionary use is essential in language learning, especially for L2 learners (Li & Munby, 1996). However, Miller and Gildea (1985) claim that looking up words using a dictionary is a complex skill that few learners truly master. Specifically, readers must correctly both select those words worth looking up and utilize the dictionary to find the words, in addition to distilling from the definition the relevant and worthwhile information considering the contextual and grammatical clues of the text (Scholfield, 1982). A study by Atkins and Varantola (1998) reveals that less able dictionary users often could not find the word or be frustrated by not being able to determine which of alternative meanings given in the dictionary entry was the correct one, wasting too much time looking up every unknown word. With this result, it is necessary to teach students how to use the dictionary effectively, because over half of the participants (67%) reported having average or poor English reading proficiency.

## 5. Conclusions

The findings of the present research indicate that Vietnamese students reported applying S2R reading strategies at the medium level of frequency when reading English texts. The participants reported using Cognitive strategies the most frequently, followed by Affective strategies, then Socio-cultural Interactive strategies, and Meta-strategies. Considering the use of individual strategies, Activating knowledge strategy was used the most and Planning strategy received the lowest frequency level. The findings suggest that the

students should apply three other categories (besides Cognitive strategies) much more frequently, especially Socio-cultural Interactive strategies, because socio-cultural theory states that without social interaction with other more knowledgeable peers, cognitive development will not occur. Indeed, mediation and scaffolding are prerequisites for cognitive development to take place (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

From the results of this study, some pedagogical implications can be recommended for English teaching and learning in universities not only in Vietnam, but worldwide, especially for educational administrators, English teachers, students, and text writers as well.

*For educational administrators*

It is suggested that an instruction of reading strategies should be an integral part of teaching English reading or a course on reading strategies should be built as a compulsory short course for all first-year students since it would be significantly beneficial for the students in their academic reading. This will help educators develop appropriate English language curricula for universities.

*For teachers of English*

University teachers should raise students' awareness of teaching and learning strategies in class to help improve their reading competence. Teachers should be equipped with deep understanding of reading strategies so that they could not only provide students basic knowledge of various reading strategies, but also instruct them how to utilize each strategy effectively as 'it is not the presence or absence of a strategy that leads to effective learning; rather it is how that strategy is used (or not used) to accomplish tasks and learner goals' (Rubin, 2008).

*For students*

Students need to raise their awareness of reading strategies and use them as frequently as possible. The list of strategies introduced in this study might be a good choice for students.

Especially, students also need to motivate themselves so that they can become self-strategic regulating readers to get high English reading achievement.

*For English textbook writers*

Oxford's (2013) Self-strategic Regulation model of reading strategies emphasizing the concepts of 'learning for fun', 'affective issues', and 'earner autonomy' (Uztosun, 2015) has given textbook writers an urgent need to compose more suitable reading texts for English language learners. It is very important that writers need to design, require, and allow readers to practice applying as many appropriately effective strategies as possible to get better reading performance. It also indicates the necessity for textbook writers to subgroup readers, so that readers with different individual characteristics can not only improve their reading comprehension, but also expand their linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge applying effective reading strategies.

## **6. Ethics Committee Approval**

The author(s) confirm(s) that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country (Date of Confirmation: August 24, 2020).

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## Vietnam'daki üniversite öğrencilerinin İngilizce okuduğunu anlamada S2R stratejilerinin uygulanması

### Öz

Okuma, her öğrencinin akademik gelişiminde, özellikle mesleki konuları için çok sayıda yabancı dil materyali üzerinde çalışmaları gerektiğinde önemli bir rol oynar (McDonough & Shaw, 2013). İngilizce okuma becerisinin güçlendirilmesi, öğrencilerin üniversite eğitiminde bireysel yetenekleri geliştirmeleri için gereklidir.

Öğrencilerin İngilizce okuma yeterliliklerini etkileyen en önemli faktörlerden biri okuma stratejilerini kullanmalarıdır. Bu çalışma, Vietnamlı üniversite öğrencilerinin İngilizce okuduğunu anlamalarında öz stratejik düzenleme (S2R) stratejilerini nasıl uyguladıklarını keşfetmek için yapılmıştır. Çalışmaya Kuzey Vietnam'daki 6 üniversiteden 963 öğrenci katıldı. Anket ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla yapılan araştırmanın sonuçları, katılımcıların genel İngilizce materyalleri okuduklarında S2R stratejilerini orta düzeyde ( $M = 2,9$ ) uyguladıklarını göstermektedir. Bilişsel stratejilerin en sık kullanıldığı rapor edilmiş, bunu Duyuşsal stratejiler, Sosyo-kültürel Etkileşimli stratejiler ve Meta-stratejiler izlemektedir. En sık kullanılan altı stratejiden beşi Bilişsel stratejiler kategorisindeydi. En az yaygın olarak kullanılan beş stratejinin tümü, Meta-strateji alt ölçeğine giren orta ve düşük kullanımdı. Araştırma sonuçlarından yazar, eğitim yöneticilerine, İngilizce öğretmenlerine, öğrencilere ve İngilizce ders kitabı yazarlarına da bazı pedagojik öneriler önermiştir.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* öz stratejik düzenleme; okuduğunu anlama; okuma stratejileri; üniversite öğrencileri; Vietnam.

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