NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION SCIENCES DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TOWARD READING STRATEGIES AND READING PROBLEMS

MASTER THESIS

SARBAST SHARIF YOUSIF

NICOSIA 2014

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Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. MUSTAFA KURT

NICOSIA

June 2014

We certify that we have read this thesis submitted by Sarbast Sharif Yousif titled "Perspectives of Teachers and Students toward Reading Strategies and Reading Problems" and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to the study.

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ABSTRACT

PRESPECTIVES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TOWARD READING STRATEGIES AND READING PROBLEMS

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MA, English Language Teaching

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This mixed methods study was designed to investigate English reading strategies used by ELT students at Zakho University when reading English texts. It also examined the reading strategies used by students to solve the reading problems. A questionnaire and an interview were two different tools used to collect data. In the first part, the main instrument, the Reading Strategies Questionnaire, was employed to collect quantitative data in order to find out the reading problems of students, the reading strategies they used to solve these problems, and general reading strategies they used in reading English texts. The participants of this study were 180 university students selected randomly. They were 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students in ELT Department at Zakho University. SPSS 20 for Windows was used to analyse the data. The questionnaire results were analysed quantitatively. Frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, and means were calculated for each questionnaire item. In the second part, the semi-structured interview was conducted to collect qualitative data to obtain more information about reading problems, general strategies and strategies ELT students used to solve their English reading problems. The participants of semi-structured interview were seven ELT instructors at Zakho University. The results of the current study revealed four main reading problems that the participants experienced while reading English texts. The first problem of the participants while

reading English texts was that they "always moved their eyes back to words or phrases that they had already read in a text". The second problem that the participants experienced was that they "met with unfamiliar words" and these words were difficult for them to understand their meaning. Participants also encountered the third problem while reading, they "came across with some words that they did not know the synonyms and antonyms". The forth problem that the participants experienced was that they "wasted their time to find the meaning of words from dictionary". On the other hand, the results also revealed that two most frequent reading strategies, a memory and a cognitive, were used while reading English texts. As a memory strategy, the participants reported that they "imagined or had a picture of word or story in their mind". As a cognitive strategy, the participants reported that they "reread only the parts in the texts that they enjoyed or the parts which were meaningful to them". Finally, the results revealed three most frequent reading strategies, one cognitive, one compensation, and one social strategy that the participants used to solve their reading problems. The main strategy that the participants used to solve their problems as a cognitive strategy was that they "looked up unknown words in a dictionary" because they encountered many unfamiliar words. The compensation strategy participants used was that they "guessed the meaning of unknown words from linguistic clues such as prefixes, suffixes, and word order". To solve their problems, the participants also used a social strategy which they "discussed the story with someone who knew the story well".

*Keywords***:** Reading strategies, Reading problems, ELT learners, Zakho University

ÖZ

OKUMA STRATEJİLERİ VE OKUMA SORUNLARINA YÖNELİK ÖĞRETMEN VE ÖĞRENCİ GÖRÜŞLERİ

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Haziran, 2014   sayfa 109

Bu karma yöntem çalışması Zakho Üniversitesindeki İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (ELT) öğrencilerinin İngilizce parçaları okurken kullandıkları okuma stratejilerini araştırmak amacıyla tasarlanmıştır. Aynı zamanda, öğrencilerin okuma sorunları yaşarken kullandıkları çözüm stratejilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Veri toplamak için kullanılan iki yöntem anket ve mülakatlardır. Birinci bölümde, temel ölçüt olan Okuma Stratejileri Anketi (Reading Strategies Questionnaire), nicel verileri toplayarak öğrencilerin İngilizce parçaları okurken yaşadıkları okuma sorunlarını, bu sorunları çözmek için kullandıkları çözüm stratejilerini ve genel olarak uyguladıkları okuma stratejilerini öğrenmek için uygulanmıştır. Çalışmanın katılımcıları rastlantısal olarak seçilen 180 üniversite öğrencisinden oluşmaktaydı. Katılımcılar, Zakho Üniversitesi'nde ELT Bölümünde okuyan 1., 2.,3. ve 4. sınıf öğrencileriydi. Verilerin analizi için Windows için SPSS 20 yazılımı kullanılmıştır. Anket sonuçları nicel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Her anket maddesi için sıklıkları, yüzdelikleri, standart sapmalar, ve ortalamaları hesaplanmıştır. İkinci bölümde, yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakatlar nitel verileri elde ederek, öğrencilerin İngilizce parçaları okurken yaşadıkları okuma sorunlar, bu sorunları çözmek için kullandıkları çözüm stratejileri ve genel olarak uyguladıkları okuma stratejileri hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek için kullanılmıştır.

Yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakatların katılımcıları ise Zakho Üniversitesi'ndeki yedi ELT öğretmeniydi. Mevcut çalışmanın bulguları katılımcıların İngilizce parçaları okurken dört temel pkuma sorunu yaşadıklarını göstermiştir. Birinci sorun "sürekli olarak gözlerinin parçada daha önce okudukları sözcüklere geri gitmesi"ydi. İkinci sorun, "bilinmeyen kelimelerle karşılaşmaları" idi ve bu kelimelerin anlamları anlamak onlar için zordu. Katılımcılar ayrıca okurken içinci bir sorunla karşılaşmışlardır: "eşanlamlılarını ve zıt anlamlılarını bilmedikleri kelimelerle karşılaşmak". Katılımcıların yaşadığı dördüncü sorun ise, "kelimelerin anlamlarını sözlükten bulmak için vakit kaybetmeleri" idi. Diğer yandan, sonuçlar İngilizce parçaları okurken en sık kullanılan iki, biri hafıza biri bilişsel, okuma stratejisini göstermiştir. Hafıza stratejisi olarak, katılımcılar "zihinlerinde bir kelimenin veya hikayenin hayalini kurduklarını ya da akıllarında canlandırdıklarını" söylediler. Bilişsel bir strateji olarak, "parçada okurken eğlendikleri veya anladıkları bölümleri tekrar okuduklarını" belirtmişlerdir. Son olarak, sonuçlar, katılımcıların okuma sorunlarını çözmek için en sık kullandıkları üç, bir bilişsel; bir telafi; ve bir sosyal strateji olduğunu göstermiştir. Katılımcıların sorunlarını çözmek için kullandıkları temel bilişsel strateji "bilinmeyen kelimeleri sözlükte aramak"tı çünkü tanımadıkları kelimelerle karşılaşıyorlardı. Telafi stratejisi ise "kelimenin anlamını, önek; sonek; ve kelime sırası gibi dilsel ipuçları sayesinde tahmin etmek"ti. Sorunları çözmek için, katılımcılar ayrıca sosyal stratejiyi yani "hikayeyi iyi bilen biri ile tartışma" yöntemini de kullanmışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okuma stratejileri, Okuma sorunları, ELT öğrencileri, Zakho Üniversitesi

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ABBREVIATIONS

ELT: English language teaching

EFL: English as a foreign language

ESL: English as a second language

L1:   First language

L2:   Second language

SPSS: Statistical package for social science

CHAPTER I

1NTRODUCTON

Problem

Reading texts has been one of the important skills in daily life, especially for those who work in an academic world since it helps people to get further information about their life, study and work. Pangsapa (2012) points out that "generally, people learn to read at very early age with different purposes: reading for pleasure or reading to gain more knowledge and experience or to know what is happening around the world" (p. 1). According to Wallace (1984), there are five basic reasons for reading and these are (a) to get a general idea and main ideas about the topic; (b) to spend the time when he/she is free; (c) to get knowledge about world's news; (d) to find useful thoughts for any piece of writing, and (e) to get more information about a place he/she plans to go there.

Moore, Luisa, Maria, and Dora (1986) specify two types of reading texts: reading for general ideas and reading for specific information indicating that people often read for both reasons. Reading for general ideas happens when people go over the topic and identify the main ideas of it. Reading for specific information, on the other hand, occurs when people read to find the information they want, by referring to the relevant parts of the passage. Harmer (2003) suggests that one of the reason that makes reading English texts an important session of the teacher's duty is because many of students want to read texts in English either for their careers, for study purposes or simply for pleasure. Therefore, teachers have to make reading easier for them. For students, reading English texts can also be helpful to improve their vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way they form sentences, paragraphs and texts. May (2009) states that "Reading is one of the primary skills students

have to learn. Every day, EFL students have many different texts to read, such as text books or other extracurricular reading materials" (p. 1).

In university classrooms, EFL students are required to read English texts as a part of class activities. To understand these texts and overcome their reading problems, students need to be aware of certain strategies. Silberstein (1994) views reading as "a complex information processing skill in which the reader interacts with text in order to (re) create meaningful discourse" (p. 12). He also states that readers have an important role in the reading session because readers can use various strategies to facilitate their understanding of a text and overcoming their problems.

Some researchers such as Rubin, O'Malley, and Chamot (as cited in Chen, 2007) have indicated the importance and necessity of reading strategies and their effective role in enhancing and developing the reading process. From their perspectives, learning strategies always assist EFL learners in terms of understanding English texts better since these strategies enable learners to know how to deal with texts and especially with difficult texts. Cohen, (1990) states that "learning strategies are actions which are chosen consciously by students and these strategies help them in their learning. In addition to that, second or foreign language students may use or apply these strategies when they need to recall any language element" (p. 9). McNamara (2009) also points out that "Strategies are essential, not only to successful comprehension, but overcome reading problems and becoming a better reader and comprehender (*sic*)" (p. 1).

According to McNamara,

> Readers may encounter any number of roadblocks in the path to comprehension.
> Regardless of the locus of the reading problems, teaching strategies is one of
> the most effective means of helping students to overcome them. Strategy

instruction across a variety of domains builds on the notion that less skilled students should learn strategies that mimic those exhibited by skilled students. (p. 34)

Oxford and Crookall (as cited in Gilani, 2012) believe that the reading strategy is a process used by the learners to improve reading comprehension and overcome comprehension failures. Gilani (2012) states that "Students or readers who do not use any strategies in reading usually face difficulties in reading comprehension" (p. 81). Ben (as cited in Gilani, 2012) states that readers often encounter problems in reading the text and have difficulties in understanding the meaning of the context but reading strategies help them in learning foreign language and reading comprehension. Richeck, List, and Lerner (as cited in Pangsapa, 2012) explained the following five other key elements of reading problems:

The first factor is at different environments such as home, school, social group, and cultural have strong impact on learning ability. Second factor is emotion. Poor readers who are reading failure often have emotional problems. For example, readers who are low self – esteem and depression, they will be lack of confidence and afraid of making a mistake. The third one is physical factor. It includes hearing problems, visual problems, as well as other physical factors. Another factor is intelligence. For this element, it depends on the level predicted by intelligence tests. Finally, language knowledge consisting of vocabulary and sentence structure is one factor which affected to read. It is difficult to the readers to acquire higher level reading skills if lack of this factor. (p. 17)

Teaching strategies and studying strategies are becoming a dominant paradigm in ESL/EFL education programs worldwide. Therefore, EFL learners and teachers need to

make adaptions in using strategies in order to match the whole requirements of the learners and overcome their difficulties. The term 'strategy' has recently been used in the curriculum of higher education in Kurdistan Region but students are not aware of various reading strategies and they are not familiar with using many strategies to solve their comprehension problems. In other words, students are introduced many strategies in class activities or they do not know many of them or they are only familiar with certain strategies which are not very useful to employ in order to understand an English reading text. Thus, there is a need to investigate, the general reading strategies with those strategies that ELT students in Zakho University use to solve their problems and their role in their learning while reading English texts.

Aim of the Study

The main purpose of the current study is to investigate the reading strategies in Zakho University. The research tries to unveil whether ELT learners in Zakho University are aware of reading strategies and whether they apply them or not. The study also attempts to show what strategies and skills the participants use to understand English texts. In addition, the variables of gender, frequency of reading English texts and grades are discussed in relation to learning strategies. More specifically, the research aims at finding answers to the following questions:

1. What reading strategies are used by the ELT university learners in their studies?
2. What reading problems do ELT learners face while reading English texts?
3. What reading strategies do ELT learners use to solve their reading problems?
4. Is there any significant difference between genders, grades, frequency of reading and the use of reading strategies?

Significance of the study

If we look at all these problems mentioned above, we will understand that the students should follow some strategies in reading so as to read and understand a text without difficulty. This study will raise awareness among ELT teachers and students of Zakho University about reading strategies and their use during their studies. Since this study will be conducted about reading strategies and problems in ELT department at Zakho University, teachers and students of this department will get information about it and they will be aware of many strategies and problems when they read English texts. In addition, this study will be a good reference for ELT students to use when they need a topic about reading strategies and problems.

Limitations

The current study is only limited to English language teaching department at Zakho University and the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other non-English majors studying in different faculties in Zakho University.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study investigated the reading strategies and the reading problems in ELT classes at Zakho University. The aim of this chapter is to review related literature, the theories related to the topic and the previous studies as the ground of the study. This chapter discusses the importance of reading comprehension, strategy, learning strategy, reading strategies, reading problems, related research on reading problems and reading strategies used to solve problems as well as related research on reading strategies.

The Importance of Reading Comprehension

Since English becomes the dominant language of the technology, internet, international business, education and science, students start to improve their reading ability in order to qualify themselves for modern careers. Reading is also one of the language skills which is used most in daily life. Some readers are good at reading; they can read fluently and clearly, but they may misunderstand what they read. For this reason, the concept of reading comprehension are being discussed by many researchers.

Reading is one of the four main language skills that students need to master in an academic world or other fields. To prove this, Harmer (2007) found that "reading has a positive effect on students' vocabulary knowledge, on their spelling and on their writing" (p. 99). In addition to this, reading is an important skill for readers, especially foreigner English language learners, to improve their knowledge about various fields. This knowledge is a key used to access many opportunities to discover jobs. Komiyama (2009) states that "reading is

an important skill for English language learners in today's world; it supports the development of overall proficiency and provides access to crucial information at work and in school" (p. 1).

Lilles et al. (2008) claimed that "reading is a core academic skill that not only lays the foundation for educational achievement, but also provides the groundwork necessary for life- long success" (p. 19). Additionally, Blake (1998) stated that "reading is a construction of meaning from written text. It is an active, cognitive, and affective process" (p. 3). Also, Rivers (1981) found that "reading is a most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language" (p. 259).

According to Renandya and Jacobs (2002) "reading for comprehension is the primary purpose for reading; raising student awareness of main ideas in a text and exploring the organization of a text are essential for good comprehension" (p. 277). Gebhard (2006) identifies reading as "discovering meaning in print and script, within a social context, through bottom-up and top-down processing, and use of strategies and skills" (p. 194). Moreover, Harmer (2007) stated that "reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students more or less understand what they read, the more they read, the better they get at it" (p. 99).

According to Thompson (1987), reading comprehension is a process through which the readers are able to recognize a message against the background knowledge of the readers themselves. Also, there are three major factors to achieve in reading comprehension: (a) ability to use background knowledge; (b) ability to recognize sentences structures of a text; and (c) ability to use efficient reading strategies. Additionally, according to Koda (2005), there are two types of the concept of reading comprehension: Firstly, reading comprehension

is a product of the readers' interactions with texts and product can be assumed as the outcomes of reading which are collected in the reader's long term memory. Secondly, reading comprehension is a process of receiving information from the text and integrating it into a coherent meaning. On the other hand, Mariotti (2010) indicated that there are five techniques to help students in reading comprehension: (a) connecting to prior knowledge, (b) creating a strong vocabulary activity, (c) giving time for actual reading and writing, (d) setting time to talk about the reading, and (e) giving direct instruction and model of reading strategies.

From the concept of reading comprehension mentioned above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is the understanding of an interaction between readers and texts by using various strategies which are suitable for them to comprehend the text. Thus, the next topics will discuss strategy, learning strategies and reading strategies.

Strategy

Horwath (2006) stated that the term strategy comes from an ancient period and Byzantine (330 A.D.). The researcher also confirmed that the form of the term strategy was 'strategos' in Greek period which means "general." Nickols (2012) is another researcher who views that the term strategy comes from 'strategia' which means generalship in Greek ancient language. In addition, the term 'strategia' was used in the field of war to guide military troops against enemy. Oxford (1990) also stated that "the word strategy comes from the ancient Greek term 'strategia' meaning generalship or the art of war. Strategy involves the optimal management of troops, ships, or aircraft, in a planned campaign" (p. 6).

Nickols (2012) stated that "The concept of strategy has been adopted from the

military and adapted for use in business" (p. 2). Therefore, researchers have various views regarding the term strategy but most of them have the same goal to be achieved. This is because they may describe the term strategy according to their understanding and the field they are working on it or their definition of strategy depends on the researchers' field. As Mintzberg (1987) stated "the term strategy has been defined in a variety of ways, but almost always with a common theme, that of a deliberate conscious set of guidelines that determines decisions into the future" (p. 395). The same thing happens with language as well, learning strategy is not only concerned with language but it is useful with science as well such as economics, business, and military. Oxford (1990) claimed that learning strategies do not only play an important role in language, but they take the role in business and science as well.

To start with military field, Rapp (1997) claimed that "the term strategy was first used in the military to describe the grand plan for winning a war" (p. 1). On the other hand, Bartholomees (n.d.) also stated that strategy is "the art of making war upon the map, and comprehends the whole theater of war" (p. 14). Horwath (2006) pointed out that the origin of term strategy was first found in the ancient writings especially in historical battles and war poems. More specifically, this term was used in Chinese ancient poems between 400 – 200 B.C. In ancient periods, strategy played an important role on the changing world's power and authority. In wars, warriors employed strategy to defeat their enemies.

In business management, Rapp (1997) found that "businesses use strategic plans to contend with their environments. These plans provide the fundamental direction of purposes and policies that define the cooperative" (p. 1). Also, Steen (2012) defined strategy as "the smallest set of choices and decisions sufficient to guide all other choices and decisions" (p. 1). Moreover, the researcher showed that strategy plays an important role in business issues

such as overcoming economic and financial crisis.

Mintzberg (1987) claimed that strategy is a positive factor to develop business into the top of its power by using sets of management guidelines. As Nickols (2000) pointed out "strategy is that which top management does that is of great importance to the organization. Strategy refers to basic directional decisions, that is, to purposes and missions" (p. 3). Jones and Bartlett (n.d.) stated that "strategy aims to steer the direction of the overall organization. It affects the long – term well-being of the organization" (p. 2).

Regarding language strategies, Ellis (2001) defined the term strategy as "it consisted of mental or behavioral activity related to some specific stage in the overall process of language acquisition or language use" (p. 12). Additionally, Rubin (1975) defined strategy as a group of techniques learners employ to get more information. Besides, O'Malley, Chamot, Manzanares, Russo, and Kupper (1985) pointed out that strategy is a process utilised by learners to acquire more knowledge and to keep information in their mind.

Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990) defined learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8).

Regarding the language strategies, Oxford (1990) summarized the features of language strategies as follows: they (a) contribute to the main goal, communicative competence; (b) allow learners to become more self-directed; (c) expand the role of teachers; (d) are problem-oriented; (e) are specific actions taken by the learner; (f) involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive; (g) support learning both directly and

indirectly; (g) are not always observable; (h) are often conscious; (i) can be taught; (j) are flexible; and (k) are influenced by a variety of factors.

According to Oxford (1990), learning language strategies are classified in two classes, six groups, and nineteen sets. The two classes of learning strategies are: (a) direct strategies and (b) indirect strategies.

Direct strategies are the strategies used by language learners to learn the subject matter directly. The direct strategies are divided into three sets of strategies: (1) memory (dealing with learners' ability to remember parts of speech), (b) cognitive (to cope with the ways of learners' thoughts concerning their learning) and (3) compensation (an act of making amends for limited knowledge).

Memory strategy is away through which mind stores, retrieves, and remembers information when it is needed. Memory strategies are subdivided into four categories: strategies used to (a) create mental linkages which involves grouping, association/elaborating, and placing new words into a context; (b) apply images and sounds which contain subsections like using imagery, semantic mapping, using keywords, and representing sounds in memory; (c) review well at new target language information which contains structured reviewing; and (d) employ action by doing two strategies, using physical response or sensation and using mechanical techniques.

The cognitive strategy is the mental action of acquiring knowledge through reasoning, abstract thinking, forming judgments and experience. Cognitive strategies are subdivided into four categories: (a) practicing which falls into various strategies such as repeating, formally practicing with sounds and writing systems, recognizing and using formulas and patterns, recombining, and practicing naturalistically; (b) receiving and sending messages which involve getting the idea quickly and using resources for receiving and

sending messages; (c) analyzing and reasoning which comprise some strategies like reasoning deductively, analyzing expressions, analyzing contrastively, translating, transferring; and (d) creating structure for input and output which consist of taking notes, summarizing, and highlighting.

The compensation strategy is a process through which learners use in their guessing to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words while reading and listening, speaking, and writing a passage.

Compensation strategies are divided into two categories: strategies used to (a) guess intelligently which involves using linguistic clues and using other clues; (b) overcome limitations in speaking and writing which comprises various strategies such as switching to the mother tongue, getting help, using mime or gesture, avoiding communication partially or totally, selecting the topic, adjusting or approximating the message, coining words, and using a circumlocution or synonym.

Indirect strategies are the strategies through which learners gain knowledge indirectly. The indirect strategies are subdivided into three sets: (1) metacognitive strategies (relating to the thinking of learners about their own mental process); (2) affective strategies (dealing with learners' feelings and emotions); and (3) social strategies (an act of interaction with other learners to learn).

Metacognitive strategies help learners to plan, organize, focus, and evaluate their own learning process. Metacognitive strategies are subdivided into three categories: strategies used to (a) overview and link with already known material, pay attention, and delay speech production to focus on listening; (b) arrange students' learning plan which contains subsections like finding out about language learning, organizing, setting goals, identifying the purpose of a language task, planning for a language task, and seeking practice

opportunities; and (c) evaluate students' learning which contains self-monitoring and self-evaluating.

Affective strategies are the strategies utilised by learners to control emotions, motivation, and attitudes belong to learning language. Affective strategies are divided into three categories: these strategies used to (a) lower students' anxiety by doing various actions such as using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or mediation, using music, and using laughter; (b) encourage students to make positive statements, take risks wisely, and reward themselves; and (c) take students' emotional temperature such as listening to their body, using checklist, writing a language learning diary, and discussing their feelings with someone else.

Learners use social strategies, when they need others to show them the meaning. Social strategies have three categories: strategies used to (a) ask questions for clarification or verification and correction; (b) cooperate with others by asking for help from peers and proficient users of the new language; (c) emphasize with other learners to develop cultural understanding and become aware of their thoughts and feelings.

From the concept of language learning strategies mentioned above, it can be concluded that learning strategies need to be explained to learners. Richard (1994) found that language learners often are required to complete language tasks. In some tasks, a reading task for instance, learners need to employ suitable strategies in order to complete the task or to comprehend a text. Thus, the next section will discuss the reading strategies.

Reading Strategies

Cheng (1999) showed that "in the last few decades, the focus of both first and second language reading research has gradually shifted from the product of reading to the process of

reading, i.e., strategies used by readers to accomplish various reading tasks" (p. 2). Ben (2002) discussed that most readers find many difficulties to understand the meaning of a text while reading. In this case, readers search for some useful reading strategies to overcome their difficulties. For example, readers use prior knowledge as a suitable strategy to understand new information in a text. Additionally, Trabasso and Bouchard (2002) focus on readers' ability to answer reading tasks easily. To fulfill tasks, using reading strategies is a key to discover specific information in a text. Moreover, Dehnad (2005) claimed that reading strategies are important for readers to facilitate their learning and understanding the meaning of the whole text.

According to Block (1992), reading strategies are essential for learners to strength their reading comprehension. To improve the reading comprehension, learners are required to employ these strategies appropriately. For example, using meta-cognition as a strategy in a text is helpful for EFL learners to monitor their reading comprehension. On the other hand, Chamot (2005) discussed that EFL learners are required to employ a suitable reading strategy after failing in comprehending a text. To be motivated readers, EFL learners need to use self- monitoring as their selective strategy. According to other researchers (Baker, 2002; Cohen, 2003; Duffy, 2005; and Grabe, 2004), learners need to know many reading strategies so as to employ them appropriately in a difficult text while reading.

Based on research by Wenden (1987), using strategies is a consciousness process students use to learn skills, language process, and to solve problems in a text. The term strategy usually comes up with the mental or behavioral activity related to some specific stage of readers and how they comprehend what they read in a text (Barnett, 1989). According to Brown (2000), the reading strategy is defined as a method that readers use when they need to do some tasks, activities, solving problems, or searching specific information. To develop the ability of the readers in reading comprehension, many studies

were investigating the effective reading strategies in order to help readers to perform better. Block (1986) pointed out reading strategies can be classified into two major categories as general strategies and local strategies. General strategies are the strategies that readers use to find out linguistics clues, the whole meaning of a text, questions that come up after reading a text, and how the readers react when they finish reading a text. For local strategies, readers often use some strategies such as summarizing, knowing the meaning of vocabulary, understanding the meaning of a word or sentence from context clues, and repeating a difficult part of a text to overcome most problems they face when reading a text. On the other hand, Thompson (1987) identified seven effective reading strategies which can help the readers to improve their reading comprehension as follows:

1. Flow charts and hierarchical summaries is a strategy used to improve text recall.

2. Titles, knowing the title before reading texts, the readers can activate background knowledge to generate appropriate predictions of meaning and clarify ambiguous points in the text.

3. Embedded headings is a strategy which helps readers to improve delayed recall.

4. Pre-reading questions is a strategy readers often use to remember main ideas, details, and other information of the text.

5. Story-specific schema from general schema is a strategy which helps readers to remember more information.

6. Imagery is to image during reading a text. Readers do imagining as strategy to recall and recognize information from text effectively.

7. Perspective is a strategy that some readers use to get the meaning of a text from their own perspectives/ points of views.

Additionally, Rubin (1987), classified cognitive strategies into six major categories:

1. Clarification/verification is the process of asking for an example of how to use a word in a context.

2. Monitoring is a strategy by which readers correct errors that they have already done in a text.

3. Memorization focuses on storage and retrieval of language such as repetition

4. Guessing/inductive means guessing meaning from key words, structures, pictures, and context.

5. Deductive reasoning is grouping words, comparing native/other language to target language.

6. Practice involves strategies such as repetition, rehearsal, imitation, and experimentation, application of rules, and attention to detail.

Oxford (1990) acknowledged four main valuable reading strategies: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, and social strategies.

1. Memory strategies are the strategies readers often use when they need to retrieve the meaning of a word in a text. The following are some of the memory strategies.

a) Classifying a text into many related groups and omitting unrelated parts of a text in order to remember only meaningful words or expressions.

b) Associating is a process through which readers connect their thoughts and ideas with main points in a text. When using this strategy readers remember the meaning of a text easily.

c) Using imagery is another important strategy readers use to keep words in their mind such as converting symbol or picture to each word and expression in a text.

d) Semantic mapping is another way by which readers use arrows and lines to give the meaning of the concept in a text.

e) Writing keywords is also a strategy readers often use and which consists of two

steps; firstly a known word that sounds like an unknown word is identified. Secondly, they convert an image for both words together in order to retain the meaning of the unknown word.

f) Memorizing a new word through its sound is a strategy used to match the new word's sounds with the sounds of a familiar word to retain the meaning of a new word.

g) Acting out is a strategy by which readers associate their physical acts and impressions with a new word to recall.

h) Mechanical technique is another strategy by which readers can write their new word on the right side of a flashcard and write the meaning of the word on the left side.

2. Cognitive strategies are divided as follows:

a)   Repeating which is a strategy by which readers often restate a word, sentence, and passage in many times to comprehend the meaning of a text as much as possible.

b)   Skimming and scanning are two techniques used to get the idea quickly. The first one skimming is usually used when readers explore for main points in a text. The second one, scanning is used when the readers search for certain details.

c) Finding out resources is a strategy readers often use to check the meaning of a text via dictionaries.

d) Analyzing expressions is a strategy readers often use when they read a text. To understand the meaning of an expression, firstly readers break a new expression into parts and then all various parts in a text are given the meaning of all expressions.

e)   Taking notes in the readers' own language is another strategy that readers use to write down the important thoughts and ideas in a text.

f) Writing a summary of a passage is another strategy found in a cognitive category.

g) Highlighting a word or an expression is used to show the importance of the word or expression in a text by using underlining and bold writing.

3. Compensation strategies:

a) Linguistic clues is a strategy by which readers focus on the form of a sentence and its elements to guess the meaning of an unknown word in a text such as prefix, suffix or word order.

b) Using other clues is another strategy used to guess the meaning of a text from context, situation, and text structure.

 4. Social strategies:

a) Asking for clarification or verification is a strategy readers use to a request something from someone when they do not quite understand the meaning of a text. They usually ask to restate, slow down, go over again, repeat, go through again, explain, and give examples on the text.

b) Cooperating with peers is a strategy used when readers work with other people to develop their language abilities. This strategy usually is done in pairs or small groups.

c) Cooperating with a proficient user of the new language is a strategy readers use to improve their language skills.

Also, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) proposed three types of reading strategies which are metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies.

1. Metacognitive strategies can be employed as selective attention for special aspects of learning tasks, planning the organization of written text, monitoring or reviewing attention to a task, and evaluation or checking comprehension after completion of a text reading.

2. Cognitive strategies involves: rereading, repeating, organizing a text, converting group of words, terminology, guessing meaning from the context clues, or summarizing the meaning of main ideas, inferring the meaning from linguistic clues

like using grammar rules to understand language, connecting new ideas with known

thoughts, and having a picture of each word in a text to comprehend better.

3. Social/affective strategies include some techniques such as asking for help from

teachers and their colleagues to clarify a text. Another technique is that readers

cooperate with each other such as working with peers to overcome their problems,

and they depend on each other to reduce anxiety about a task.

On the other hand, Zimmerman and Hutchins (2003) designed seven reading strategies. These strategies are used when readers need to understand a text completely, such as identifying the main ideas, connecting all parts together in a text, creating questions, guessing the meaning from a context, producing important information, and imagining the meaning of a text while reading. Moreover, Lei, Berger, Allen, Plummer, and Rosenberg (2010) claimed that there are some important ways readers may use to get better in understanding the meaning of a text such as reading English materials frequently and extensively, enhancing the quality of vocabulary, and searching in a dictionary.

In conclusion, each researcher provides reading strategies in many different ways so as to help the readers to be more efficient in reading. In addition to this, the researchers may play an important role in instructing readers to use appropriate reading strategies for each type of text. Thus, it is very important for the readers to select appropriate reading strategies to increase their comprehension. However, most readers are facing many problems in English reading so, the next topic will discuss English reading problems.

Reading Problems

One of the most useful and important skills to learn a new language is reading texts

effectively. However, readers often face many difficulties when they read English texts. To identify some difficulties, Richek, List, and Lerner (1989) classified reading problems into four categories. The first problem readers face while reading a text is to study in a different atmosphere. Being associated to a certain atmosphere is very important to improve the reading ability. Different environments such as home, school, social group, and cultural have strong impact on learning ability. The second problem students have is lack of self-confidence. For example, readers who have low morale are afraid of making mistakes while reading a text. The third problem readers have is difficulties in reading a text while they have a physical problem such as hearing and visualizing a text. Finally, the lack of vocabulary to understand the meaning is a difficulty that readers face when reading a text.

Some other researchers also pointed out several difficulties that readers face while reading an English text. Gunning (2002) claimed that readers have difficulties and problems to understand the meaning of the whole text while reading. Therefore, these problems seem to be factors on their comprehending a text, such as the luck of vocabulary, not being familiar with using reading strategies, not having background knowledge, not being good at reading a text correctly, and not concentrating and thinking deeply of a text. Moreover, Mourtaga (2006) classified reading problems into four: (a) students are not aware of using reading strategies in class because teachers do not take their responsibility to teach them according to their level of understanding; (b) students are not really motivated to read extensively; (c) the system of English sounds is quite different from the mother tongue of EFL students such as Arabic sounds system; finally (d) the difference of spelling system between English and other languages.

Regarding the reading problems, Tateum (2007) identified two main problems that EFL students face while reading. The first problem is that students have limited knowledge about vocabulary and the second one is that the use of dictionaries to search the meaning of

unfamiliar words also interrupts the reading process and destroys the chance to comprehend much of the texts.

Related Research on Reading Problems and Strategies Used to Solve Problems

The reading ability is very important in our life. Many researchers try to investigate reading problems and the ways to solve these problems.

Chuenta (2002) investigated English reading problems and needs of graduate students studying in the administration department of a university. The results showed three main problems: (a) participants were using reading strategies randomly; (b) they were bad at finding out the main ideas in a text; and (c) they could not read quickly due to limited vocabulary. Besides this, the researcher identified some factors which caused participants to face problems such as high level of texts, choosing inappropriate text which contains so many idioms and unknown words, and limited knowledge about the background of a text.

Tanghirunwat (2003) indicated some problems that participants faced while reading a text. In his study which was about the reading difficulties of Thai engineers working in the telecommunication industry, they highlighted the difficulties they faced when reading manuals and technical textbooks. The results of this study showed three main problems: participants used to (a) meet with unfamiliar words; (b) meet compound sentences, passive voice, noun phrases, and verb phrases; and (c) find difficulty in the content of a technology text.

There are some other researchers who investigated the reading strategies that teachers used to overcome students' reading problems and their difficulties. Ghanaguru, Liang, and Kit (2003) investigated in their study the teacher's perspective on EFL learners

who faced reading problems and the strategies that their teacher utilised to solve students' problems. To collect data, the researchers used semi-structured interviews to find out the participants' point of view concerning EFL learners' reading problems and their reflections on what strategies they used to solve the problems. The results of this study showed that teachers' perspective was negative toward students' abilities. The results also indicated that students had the lack of prior knowledge and they could not read fluently as well. To overcome these difficulties, the results found that teachers used to teach them five strategies (1) clarifying unfamiliar vocabulary; (2) identifying the main ideas in a text; (3) showing images or pictures in books and video tapes; (4) teaching students how to put stress on words; and (5) how to pronounce difficult vocabulary.

Wang (2006) also investigated the reading problems in his study under the title "problems of reading comprehension and ways to improve reading ability". The study indicated four main problems: firstly, unknown words in a text was a problem when the participants did not know the meaning of words. This unknown word leads participants to check the meaning of that unknown word in a dictionary. So, looking for words takes lots of time and slows down the process of reading. To sort out these problems, teachers taught their students the strategy of "guessing a word from the contextual clues". The second problem is vocalized reading. The readers who vocalized the text they read were possibility to comprehend the text in half because this style of reading forced the readers to read only as fast as they can. To solve this problem, readers should read interesting text because it can help readers to control their eyes to move at optimum speed and readers should read in mind. Thirdly, moving back eyes to the previous sentences was a problem the participants met when they read a text. They did this eye movement because they missed the meaning of some unknown words from the sentences they had already read. The participants who reread the words or phrases were wasting much of time to read. This caused readers not to

understand the whole meaning of a text. To overcome this problem, the readers needed to concentrate more on their reading in order to keep reading a text and avoiding moving their eyes to previous sentences; (d) the fourth problem is the habit of finger pointing while reading. According to the researcher, this technique of using finger on a text made readers slowdown in reading and it did not help readers' thinking. It is better if the readers use a cardboard to focus on each line in a text by holding it above the line. The last problem is rapid reading. In this kind of reading most readers did not know what information they were looking for or they did not know the purpose behind their reading. Thus, the readers should use three super speeds to help them to be as a good readers: (a) surveying is a technique used to tell the readers general and important ideas in the content of a text, such as understanding the content by looking at the title, the first paragraph, the last paragraph, and italicized words; (b) skimming is the second technique used to read a text quickly to note only important points; and (c) the last technique is scanning. This technique is used to find specific information. For instance, if the readers are searching for a date, they should look for numbers in the text.

Moreover, Chawwang (2008) found two main reading problems in his study: (a) inability to form a sentence; (b) unknown words or difficulty to understand the meaning of a text. To collect data, the researcher used a reading test on 12th grade students in Thai to find out participants' abilities on formatting a sentence, understanding the meaning of words, and the ability of comprehending the meaning of a text.

Concerning the reading ability, an article "improve your reading strategies" was published by Saint Louis University in 2008 which was about the ways students can improve their reading strategies. In this article, there are four factors which cause students to find a text difficult while reading. The difficulty of a text is the first factor which results in

students' not understanding the meaning. Reading an unfamiliar text takes long time for readers to catch the whole meaning. The second factor is the level of the vocabulary. The high level of vocabulary is a factor which causes difficulty for readers to comprehend a text. The third factor, a text sometimes contains difficult grammatical structures such as subordinate clauses, difficult sentences, long sentences, and complex sentences. The lack of grammar knowledge makes reading comprehension difficult. The last factor is the readers.

To overcome the above difficulties, this article suggests key techniques to improve reading ability. First technique is to be an active reader. Reading Comprehension is based on recognizing the authors' main ideas, then applying them to the readers own experience, and evaluating them. . The second one underlines it is better for the readers read for ideas not read word by word. The readers should read and think in phrase because phrase reading will increase both speed and comprehension. The last technique is adjusting the rate to suit the reading purpose. There are four basic types of reading: study reading, rapid reading, skimming, and scanning. Each type of reading suited different purpose. To introduce these sorts of reading are: (a) readers read a text slowly to understand or memorize it; (b) readers use rapid reading to get a general idea; (c) readers use the skimming strategy to overview general ideas in order to refresh the memory; and (d) readers use the strategy of scanning in the reading process to get specific information.

In conclusion, the problems in reading are caused by the readers or by the texts on the one hand readers always lack prior knowledge and the skills of the language, and on the other hand some texts are very complicated. To solve the reading problems, there are many strategies to help the readers comprehend more.

Related Research on Reading Strategies

Intaravilak (2000) investigated the use of the reading strategy, "understanding the meanings of unfamiliar words", by proficient and less proficient readers. Fifteen participants from the graduate diploma program of business communication participated in this study. After using a questionnaire and tests to collect data, the results showed that the strategy of "encountering meanings of unknown words" was used by proficient readers more than less proficient readers. Another interesting study was conducted by Brashdi (2002), who investigated the reading problems that the first grade students faced in classes and the strategies which they used to overcome their problems. A questionnaire and interviews were used as the main instruments to collect data. Focusing on the meaning of vocabulary was the important strategy participants utilised to understand a text.

A study conducted by Julo (2003) explored the EFL students' reading strategies taking into consideration the degree of proficiency and how they employ reading strategies. Ninety - one participants from Thai Chamber of Commerce University participated in the study. All the participants were third graders and they were divided into two groups according to their proficiency level. The results of the study revealed seven reading strategies used: (1) summarizing my murmuring; (2) reading a text out; (3) writing down the important parts; (4) highlighting key words; (5) using clues from key words; (6) using clues from background knowledge; and (7) using clues from similar stories.

Another interesting study conducted by Wongphangamol (2005) explored the use of reading strategies by twelfth graders studying English at Assumption College Thonburi. To collect data, fifty six students were used as participants. A questionnaire, the Oxford Quick Placement Test and a semi-structured interview were utilised as three main instruments. Compensation strategies were found as the most frequent strategies applied by students

while memory strategies were the lowest strategies applied by the participants.

A study conducted by Aegpongpaow (2008) investigated the use of metacognitive strategies at English reading in Thai. The participants of this study were 20 Thai students of Srinakarinwirot University. The participants were classified according to their proficiencies: high proficiency and low proficiency. To collect data, three instruments were used: observation, interviews, and journal entries. The results showed that most participants were aware of using metacognitive strategies in the reading session. In addition to this, the low proficiency participants used metacognitive strategies less than the high proficiency participants.

Moreover, Zhang, Gu, and Hu (2008) explored the reading strategy which was used by Singaporean primary students. In this study, the researchers also tried to find out the use of strategies by the high and low proficiency students. Two unlike texts were given to the participants. One of them was simple and the other one was difficult. The data were collected by using the think aloud concept. The researchers asked the participants to read and report what they were thinking about while reading. In addition, they audio-taped and video-taped the students' reading behavior while doing the reading task. The finding revealed that those participants who were in the lower proficiency group used strategies less than those who were in the high proficiency group.

A study conducted by Griva and Anastasiou (2009) explored the awareness of reading strategies between two levels of readers: poor readers and good readers. Thirty six participants were took part and they were divided into two groups: poor readers and good readers. Thinking aloud technique and interviews were used to collect data. Participants were asked to read two texts aloud, answer four open-ended questions, and then they were interviewed to find out their awareness of reading strategies and reading problems. The result

revealed that the good and poor readers were the same in using cognitive strategies. Regarding the metacognitive strategies, the findings found that good readers were aware of them more than poor readers and they utilised these strategies more frequently than poor readers. Shah et al. (2010) also explored reading processing strategies used by readers with differing proficiency. Thirty two participants divided into good readers and poor readers took part in the study which involved the participants of the four secondary schools in the Klang Valley area. Twenty-two questionnaire items were used to collect data. The findings indicated that good readers used the reading strategies more frequently than poor readers.

In conclusion, all studies about reading strategies were conducted to reach the same goal. This goal is to instruct readers (a) where to find out suitable strategies; (b) when they can employ strategies; (c) which strategy is needed to be used; and (d) how to utilise strategies in a text. That is, to find out the reading strategies of the readers in different fields, so these can be good examples for further studies.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Design

Mixed methods aiming at finding more about learning reading strategies in Zakho University was used in the study. Mercer (2010) stated that the "mixed methods or the combined use of quantitative and qualitative methods has become more common in educational research" (p. 8). Regarding the quantitative method, The Reading Problem and Strategies Questionnaire was used to find out the reading strategies used in reading, the reading problems encountered when reading an English text, and the reading strategies used to solve these problems. Descriptive statistics was used to find the mean, standard deviation, percentages, and frequencies. In qualitative method, semi-structured interview was used to discover problems that ELT learners faced and to identify those strategies they used to solve their problems while reading a text. This also examined the awareness of ELT instructors regarding reading strategies and problems in classes.

Participants

Students. According to the responses in the background section of the questionnaire, it was revealed that the total number of student participants was 180. As indicated on Table 1, ninety-five of them were females (52.8%), and the rest, 85 of them were males (47.2%). They were all Kurdish people. In terms of students' grades, 42 of them were first graders (23.3%), 46 of them were second (25.6%), 48 of them were third (26.7%) and 44 of them were fourth graders (24.4%).

Table 1

Participants

Gender	N	%
Male	85	47.2
Female	95	52.8
Grade		
First grade	42	23.3
Second grade	46	25.6
Third grade	48	26.7
Fourth grade	44	24.4
Totals (N = 180)		

Teachers. The participants were seven ELT instructors randomly chosen from English the language department at Zakho University. In terms of participants' genders, five of them were males (71%) and two of them were females (29%). For participants' experience in teaching English, three of the participants (42%) were teaching more than 12 years, two of them (29%) had eight years, and the rest of the participants (29%) had less than five years. They were all specialist at teaching linguistics and literature. During the interviews, it was revealed that six of participants held Master degrees while one had a PhD degree. Three of participants had been teaching literature and the rest of them were specialist at TESOL and linguistics. According to the responses of the participants, they took many courses about English language teaching. They also participated in many international conferences. For reliability of the current study, the researcher used pseudonyms for all participants. Ashti, Bilind, Milan, Laween, Salar, Yusra, and Jiwan.

Frequencies of reading English texts. Table 2 shows the frequency of reading English texts, 84 student participants (46.7%) read every day, 57 student participants (31.7%) read 1-2 times per week, 20 student participants (11.1%) read 3-4 times per

week, 13 student participants (7.2%) read English texts 1-2 times per month, and six student participants (3.3%) read 3-4 times per month.

Table 2

Frequencies of Reading English Texts

Reading Frequency	N	%
Every day	84	46.7
1-2 times per week	57	31.7
3-4 times per week	20	11.1
1-2 times per month	13	7 .2
3-4 times per month	6	3.3
Totals (N = 180)		

Instruments

Questionnaire. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire adapted from Pangsapa (2012). The questionnaire consisted of three main parts (see appendix A). The first part aimed to elicit demographic characteristics of the participants such as gender, grades, and frequency of reading English texts. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 15 items aiming at obtaining data regarding the problems in reading English. In the third part of the questionnaire, there were 39 items to collect data about the English reading strategies used by the participants. These Thirty- nine items were divided into four main categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, and social strategies. In the questionnaire, memory strategies consisted of 14, cognitive strategies 18, compensation strategies three, and social strategies four items.

According to Oxford (1990), there are two fundamental groups, direct strategies and indirect strategies, which are then subdivided into six categories. (Memory, cognitive,

and compensation belong to direct strategies). The other three categories, (metacognitive, affective, and social) are covered by indirect strategies. For this study, the researcher did not use two categories: metacognitive strategies and affective strategies. The reason of excluding these two categories, metacognitive strategies and affective strategies in the current study, was that the researcher wanted to adhere to questionnaire he adapted from Pangsapa (2012). Moreover, the researcher believed that metacognitive and affective strategies were not proper strategies to be investigated in the current study. The reason was that, contrary to the aim of the current study, the two excluded strategies are associated with the learners' own learning, not with teachers or texts. As oxford (1990) claimed that metacognitive and affective strategies "are actions which provide a way for leaners to coordinate their own learning process" (p. 136). Therefore, the researcher believed that the four strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, and social were valid and effective strategies to cover up the whole research questions and aims. The second, and the third part of the questionnaire consisted of 5- point Likert type statements with scores ranging from 1 to 5. (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3= sometimes, 4 = very often, 5 = always).

Semi-structured interview. In the current study, semi-structured interview (see appendix B) was employed as an additional instrument to collect more information about teachers' views concerning participants' problems and strategies while reading an English text. During the interview, twenty five questions were asked. The questions were based on the purpose of the study. All interview questions were accurately examined by the thesis advisor. The questions of interviews were grouped according to the reading strategies used: reading problems, reading strategies used to solve problems, and gender differences. The interview of each participant was completed within maximum 30 minutes.

Validity

In the current study, the questionnaire sample was adapted from Pangsapa (2012). The questionnaire items were based on the reading problems and strategies. The questionnaire statements were examined by the researcher Pangsapa (2012) which investigated reading problems and strategies in Thai. Before the questionnaire was administered, the items were examined by the thesis advisor for face validity and appropriateness. Thesis advisor confirmed that questionnaire items were relevant to the aims of the study. The questionnaire then was considered as valid and suitable to the current study.

Reliability

For internal reliability, Cronbach Alpha was calculated as 0.82 which showed that the instrument was reliable.

Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative data collection. The quantitative data for this study was collected through 5 point Likert scale 'Reading Problem and Strategies Questionnaire" (see appendix). The following procedure was utilised:

1. The researcher contacted the administrator of Zakho University to ask for permission to conduct the research with the first, second, third and fourth graders who study English in English department.

2. The researcher contacted all 180 participants to request their co-operation in data collection.

3. The Reading Problems and Strategies Questionnaires were distributed and

explained to the participants.

4.   The participants spent approximately 3 hours to complete the questionnaire. After that, the researcher asked them to return the questionnaires.

Qualitative data collection. The qualitative data collected as in the following procedures:

1.   The researcher contacted the chairperson of the English language department at Zakho University to ask for permission to interview the English teaching instructors.

2.   The researcher randomly selected seven participants from English language department at Zakho University. The researcher got permission from instructors to record their interviews. Instructors had been teaching to all graders. Within two weeks, all seven participants were given individual appointments to be interviewed in order to find out more information about English reading problems and English reading strategies.

3.   At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained the purposes of the interview, so that the participants had a clear understanding of what they were participating in.

4.   The English language was used during the interview and note-taking in English also was employed to record the data. The interview of each participant was completed within maximum 30 minutes. All the interviews were transcribed within two weeks.

Data Analysis

To answer the research questions about the reading problems, reading strategies used when reading English texts, and the reading strategies used to solve English reading problems of ELT students, collected data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively as follows.

Quantitative data analysis. The quantitative data were analysed in the following procedures:

1. Frequencies of the ratings from the Reading Problems and Strategies Questionnaire of ELT students were calculated.

2. Mean, percentage, and standard deviation were calculated using SSPS. The results revealed the level and the frequency of reading problems, reading strategies used in reading, and reading strategies used to solve reading problems of ELT department at Zakho University while reading English texts.

3. T-test and ANOVA tests were used to find out the significant differences between genders, grades, frequency of reading and the use of reading strategies. Also, Post-hoc analysis was carried out where significant differences were found.

Qualitative data analysis. The qualitative data was obtained from the semi-structure interviews which were used to validate and triangulate the quantitative results to discover the problems and the strategies on the returned questionnaires. The interview data was analyzed descriptively to reveal the strategies that instructors used while teaching reading. Twenty- five questions were prepared. Firstly, the researcher used these questions according to the flow of the interviews. During the interviews, the researcher asked additional questions to focus on certain points. These points were important to the researcher to discover the right answer of the questions. The researcher also noted down the main ideas of their responses then he matched

them with the responses of questionnaire to find out the most accurate answers for research questions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Reading Strategies used by ELT Students

This section discusses the results from Part C of the questionnaire which attempted to answer the first research question: What reading strategies are used by the ELT university learners in their studies?

From the data obtained in the current study, students used two main reading strategies (memory and cognitive) while reading English texts. Table 3 illustrates the means of memory reading strategies used by ELT learners in reading, and table 4 shows the means of cognitive reading strategies.

Memory reading strategies. When the researcher analysed the findings about the most and least frequently memory strategies used by FLT students it was discovered that the participants used the strategy of "imaging picture of word or story in their mind" at a high level (M=3.54). The results of this study are consistent with Griffiths' (2003), who investigated language learning strategy use and proficiency at a private language school in New Zealand. In the results of his study, the researcher found that the participants were creating images of a new word at a high level (M=3.20). As can be seen from Table 3, the results of the current study also indicated that the participants utilised the strategy of "using the sounds of a familiar word to remember a new word" at a high level (M=3.28). This was different from Liu' (2012) study which investigated motivation and its relationship with learning strategy which found that the participants employed the strategy "I connect the sound of a new word to familiar word to help me remember it" at a low level (M=2.25).

Table 3

The Most and Least Memory Reading Strategies Used by Students

Memory Reading Strategies

Items	N	Frequency		Percentage	Mean	SD
I imagine or have a picture of word or story in mind	180	1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	5.6% 9.4% 6.7% 1.7% 26.7%	63.7	3.54	1.145
I use the sounds of a familiar word to remember a new word	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	9.4% 12.2% 36.7% 23.9% 17.8%	59.0	3.28	1.174
I connect the sounds of a new word with its image (picture) in order to remember the meaning of the word	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	11.7% 12.2% 41.1% 15.6% 19.4%	57.4	3.19	1.223
I act out what I read	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	13.3% 19.4% 42.8% 10.6% 13.9%	52.5	2.92	1.179
I arrange the story I have read into order by numbering or using an arrow	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	19.4% 27.2% 35.0% 13.3% 5.0%	46.2	2.57	1.099

Totals (N = 180)

From the data obtained in the present study, the results revealed that the participants

used the strategy "I connect the sounds of a new word with its image (picture) in order to

remember the meaning of the word" at a high level. Similar to Nam and Leavell's results (2006) who investigated language learning strategy use of ESL students in an intensive English learning which found that their participants used the strategy "I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word" at a high level (M=3.40).

As indicated on Table 3, the participants of the current study used the strategy "I act out what I read" at a low level (M=2.92). This was also similar to Nam and Leavell's (2006) research who investigated language learning strategy use of ESL students in an intensive English learning context which found that their participants utilised the strategy "I physically act out new English words" at a low level (M=2.80). From the findings of this study, it was revealed that the participants used the strategy "I arrange the story I had read into order by numbering or using an arrow" at a low level (M=2.57). The results of the present study were different from Amer, Barwani, and Ibrahim's (2010) who investigated the student teachers' perceived uses of reading strategies which found that the participants used the strategy " I arrange the text by noting its characteristics like numbers, length, and organization" at a high level (M=3.80).

Cognitive reading strategies. After the researcher analysed the most and least frequently strategy used cognitive strategies, it was revealed that ELT undergraduate participants were better strategy users in "rereading the parts they enjoy or meaningful to them" at a high level (M=3.52). Similarly, Juan and Madrid (2009) found that the participants reread the text in order to understand better at a high level (M=3.98)). This was also similar Zhang and Wu's (2009) results which investigated metacognitive awareness and using reading strategy among Chinese senior school showed in their study that the participants reread the difficult text to increase their understanding at a high level (M=4.07).

Table 4

The Most and Least cognitive Reading Strategies Used by Students

Cognitive Reading Strategies

Items	N	Frequency		Percentage	Mean	SD
I reread parts I enjoy or meaningful to me	180	1.Never	6.7%	63.3	3.52	1.189
		2.Rerely	10.0%			
		3. Sometimes	35.6%			
		4. very often	20.0%			
		5. always	27.8%			
I underline or highlight key words, main idea or important parts of the passage	180	1.Never	7.2%	61.1	3.43	1.182
		2.Rerely	11.7%			
		3. Sometimes	36.1%			
		4. very often	21.1%			
		5. always	23.9%			
I scan the passage for finding specific details of interest	180	1.Never	10.0%	57.2	3.18	1.170
		2.Rerely	14.4%			
		3. Sometimes	38.9%			
		4. very often	20.6%			
		5. always	16.1%			
I skim the whole passage	180	1.Never	15.0%	53.1	2.95	1.234
		2.Rerely	18.3%			
		3. Sometimes	38.3%			
		4. very often	13.3%			
		5. always	15.0%			
I create my own questions before reading	180	1.Never	9.4%	52.2	2.89	1.198
		2.Rerely	13.9%			
		3. Sometimes	35.6%			
		4. very often	23.9%			
		5. always	17.2%			

Totals (N = 180)

In addition to this, the results of the current study showed the participants used the strategy of "underlining or highlighting words, main ideas or important parts of passage" at a high level (M=3.43). Similar to the current study, Lai, Tung, and Luo (2008) investigated the theory of reading strategies and its application by ELT learners. In their findings, they indicated that the participants used the strategy of "underlining keywords and giving high light to the important parts of the text" at a high level (M=3.33).

As indicated on Table 4, the results of the present study found that the participants used the strategy "I scan the passage for finding specific details of interest" at a high level (M=3.18). Similarly, Amer, Barwani, and Ibrahim (2010) who indicated in their study that the participants utilised the strategy "I scan the text to get a basic idea" at a high level (M=3.70). As indicated on Table 4, the results of the present study found that the participants employed the strategy "I skim the whole passage" at a low level (M=295). This was also similar to Sahan's (2012) research who investigated cognitive reading comprehension strategies employed by ELT students which found that the participants used the strategy "I skim the text to get general information" at a low level (M=2.99).

The researcher also found in the results that the participants "created their own questions before reading" at a low level (M=2.89), similar to Leavitt's (2010) which investigated metacognitive strategy use in foreign language reading. Leavitt found that the participants of Indiana University asked questions to themselves about the text to understand what they read at a low level (M=2.31). Similarly, Zhang and Wu (2009) who investigated metacognitive awareness and using reading strategy among Chinese senior school, the researchers indicated that the participants asked themselves questions to find out the answer in the text at a low level (M=2.49). Besides, Gibson (2009) believed that good readers always ask questions of themselves, the author and the text when they read.

From the interviews, it was revealed that Zakho University instructors have limited knowledge about reading strategies. Most instructors followed few strategies to develop the students' comprehension levels. From the data obtained it is obvious that the instructors advised their students to follow almost six of strategies (skimming, scanning, looking words in dictionary, highlighting words, finding synonyms and antonyms, and understanding from the context clues). Further analysis of these strategies showed that there were three most frequently used strategies. The first strategy students used was to understand the meaning of unknown word from the contextual clues. The reason of using this strategy more than the others could be that instructors tried to teach their students how to enrich their vocabulary within a text. On the other hand, the other two (skimming and scanning) strategies were used to understand the whole meaning of a text or search for specific information. In addition to this, during the interviews, there were some other strategies introduced. The following paragraphs are found as the main parts taken from instructors' interviews regarding the use of reading strategies while reading.

Mr. Ashti explained that he usually made students be aware of strategies when they read a passage. In his opinion, he taught them some important strategies that could help them understand a text better.

Mr. Ashti: "I usually make students be aware of some strategies such as looking for synonyms and antonyms to unknown word, filling words into gaps, inferring, matching words, skimming, and scanning".

From the data obtained it is obvious that Mr. Milan introduced, in class, the most important strategies such as highlighting words, finding synonyms to certain words, relating the synonyms to the context, skimming, and scanning to students in order to ease understanding of certain texts.

Mr. Milan: "I teach them the most important strategies to understand certain contexts for example highlighting words, searching for synonyms, relating the synonyms to the context of passage, and skimming or scanning".

During the interview with Mr. Bilind it was obvious that he was aware of most reading strategies. He stated that he made students be aware of the important strategies such as skimming, scanning, finding key words, and highlighting words which helped them when they needed to understand a difficult text.

Mr. Bilind: "I make students be aware of the valuable strategies for improving reading skill, for example skimming, scanning, looking for key word, and highlighting the key words".

Finally, Mr. Salar stated that he was aware of most strategies and he introduced students these strategies at the beginning of course.

Mr. Salar: "At the beginning of the course I teach them reading strategies just to make them be aware about them. I give them many strategies to understand the text such as group working, pair working, solo working, skimming, and scanning".

The Main Reading Problems that ELT Students Face While Reading

This section presents and discusses the results from Part B of the questionnaire which attempted to answer the second research question: What reading problems do ELT learners face while reading English texts?

Reading problems. Table 5 below shows the English reading problems that ELT students face when they read English texts. As indicated on Table 5, "students moving their eyes back to words or phrases that they had already read" was the most important

problem they encountered at a high level (M=3.18). The results of this study were alike with

Pangsapa's (2012) which investigated English reading problems and strategies in Thai.

Pangsapa indicated that the participants had visual problems of moving their eyes back to

words or phrases at a low level.

Table 5

The Main Reading Problems that Students Face while Reading Texts

Reading Problems

Items	N	Frequency		Percentage	Mean	SD
I always move my eyes back to words or phrases that have already read	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	11.7% 17.8% 32.2% 17.2% 21.1%	57.2	3.18	1.279
I meet with unfamiliar words	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	5.0% 14.4% 56.1% 12.8% 11.7%	56.1	3.12	965
I am poor with vocabulary knowledge such as synonyms and antonyms	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	7.8% 19.4% 40.0% 18.9% 13.9%	56.1	3.12	1.115
I waste time to find the meaning of words from dictionary	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	17.2% 17.2% 25.0% 18.9% 21.7%	55.9	3.11	1.338

Totals (N = 180)

The second problem regarding reading was that the participants met with unfamiliar

words at a high level (M=3.12). This is also similar to Brashdi's (2000) study which aimed

at finding out reading problems and strategies among Arabian people. Brashdi found that the participants had problem with unknown words in text at a high level.

The third problem was that they were poor with vocabulary knowledge such as synonyms and antonyms (M=3.12). The results of this study were different from Pangsapa's (2012) which investigated English reading problems and strategies in Thai. The researcher revealed that the participants could not find synonyms and antonyms to each unknown vocabulary at a low level (M=2.10). The forth problem that the participants faced was that they wasted time to find the meaning of words from a dictionary (M=3.11). The results of this study were consistent with Aegpongpawo's (2008) which investigated the metacognitive strategies used by English reading students in Thailand. The researcher found that the participants did not look up unknown words from the dictionary at a high level (M=3.21) because they thought they would waste their time and their understanding of reading could be interrupted by looking up words.

From the interviews, most of the participants showed that their students faced difficulties with the meaning of unfamiliar words and difficult words in a text. Moreover, one of the participants claimed that students had difficulty in understanding a text because of the difference between Kurdish and western cultures. This problem was one of the reasons that students did not know the meaning of difficult words. From the data obtained it is obvious that most of the participants shared the same idea that the main problem of ELT students at Zakho University was facing unknown and difficult vocabulary. To find out more about the reading problems, the following paragraphs are the main parts from instructors' interviews that uncover the main problems ELT students' faced while reading a text.

Mr. Ashti claimed that students faced various problems such as having limited vocabulary when they read texts.

Mr. Ashti: "most of our students lack vocabulary".

Similarly, Mr. Laween found that his students had limited vocabulary and they did not have enough vocabulary.

Mr. Laween: "students are poor in vocabulary".

Mr. Milan also pointed out the main problem his students faced while reading the text was archaic words and difficult words.

Mr. Milan: "students face problems with understanding words from text because literacy texts contain many archaic words, difficult words".

Another participant shared the same opinion, Mr. Bilind stated that his students were poor in vocabulary and pronunciation. Bad reading was found as the main problem that causes Mr. Bilind's students not to understand the meaning of a text.

Mr. Bilind: "students encounter some problems such as they don't get the meaning of the most words in the text. This might be because they have poor vocabulary".

Regarding Mrs. Jiwan's classes, most students had difficulty in comprehending the text because they kept forgetting the meaning of words.

Mrs. Jiwan: "students have difficulty with vocabulary".

Reading Strategies Used to Solve English Reading Problems

The findings in this section reported from Part C of the questionnaire which aimed to collect data to answer the third research question: What reading strategies do ELT learners use to solve their reading problems?

From the analysis of this study, students used three main reading strategies (cognitive, compensation, and social) to solve their reading English problems. The following table 6 illustrates the means of cognitive reading strategies used by ELT learners in reading, table 7 shows the means of compensation reading strategies, and table 8 indicates the means of social reading strategies as well.

Cognitive reading strategies used to solve problems. As shown below on Table 6, the results indicated that the participants looked up unknown words in a dictionary (M=3.58) at a high level. Similarly, Juan and Madrid (2009) investigated EFL learners' strategic reading behaviour. The results of their study showed that the participants looked up a word in a dictionary to help them when they read at a very high level (M=4.06). Also, the results were similar to Zhang and Wu's (2009) who found that the participants used dictionaries as their main reference materials at a high level (M=3.35). This finding was also similar to Prichard's (2008) which aimed at evaluating L2 readers' vocabulary strategies and dictionary use in Japan. The researcher indicated that the participants used dictionary to find out unknown word at a high level (M=3.69). In addition, Pirchard suggested that looking up new words may help learners to learn more words and to understand the text and sentence better. Besides this, the participants used the strategy "I reread only parts that I do not understand" at a high level (M=3.46). The results of the current study were similar to the results of Songseingghai's (2010) which investigated strategies in reading online and printed texts. According to him, the participants used the strategy of "rereading the difficult part of texts to help them understand its meaning" at a high level (M=3.43).

As indicated on Table 6, the results of the current study also discovered that the participants used the strategy "I reread words or phrases that have already once read" at a high level (M=3.06). Similar to the current study, Amer, Barwari, and Ibrahim (2010) who investigated the student teachers' perceived uses of reading strategies which found that

the participants of their study used the strategy "I reread words and phrases that I did not concentrate on the first reading" at a high level (M=3.07).

Table 6

The Most and Least Cognitive Reading Strategies Used to Solve English Reading problems

Cognitive Reading Strategies Used to Solve Reading Problems

Items	N	Frequency		Percentage	Mean	SD
I look up unknown words in a dictionary	180	1.Never	3.3%	64.4	3.58	1.113
		2.Rerely	11.7%			
		3. Sometimes	36.7%			
		4. very often	20.6%			
		5. always	27.8%			
I reread only parts that I do not understand	180	1.Never	2.8%	62.2	3.46	1.095
		2.Rerely	15.0%			
		3. Sometimes	39.4%			
		4. very often	18.9%			
		5. always	23.9%			
I reread words or phrases that have already once read	180	1.Never	3.3%	57.9	3.22	1.026
		2.Rerely	18.3%			
		3. Sometimes	47.2%			
		4. very often	15.6%			
		5. always	15.6%			
I reread the whole text	180	1.Never	11.1%	43.6	2.94	1.116
		2.Rerely	18.3%			
		3. Sometimes	42.8%			
		4. very often	16.7%			
		5. always	11.1%			
I reread the same passage in different sources	180	1.Never	16.1%	50.4	2.80	11.60
		2.Rerely	21.7%			
		3. Sometimes	37.2%			
		4. very often	16.1%			
		5. always	8.9%			

Totals (N = 180)

On the other hand, the findings of this study showed that the participants used the strategy "I reread the whole text" at a low level (M=2.94). This was different from Kasimi's (2012) study which investigated cognitive and metacognitive strategies employed by Iranian and Turkish EFL readers. In his study, the participants employed the strategy "I reread a text for better comprehension" at a high level (M=3.50). As it can be seen on Table 6, the results of this study indicated that the participants reread the same passage in different sources (M= 2.80) at a low level. The results of this study were similar to Pangsapa's (2012) which investigated the reading problems and strategies of Thai editorial staff. It was discovered that the participants utilised the strategy "I reread the same passage with different sources" at a low level (M=2.93).

Compensation reading strategies used to solve problems. Concerning compensation strategies, the participants used the strategy of "guessing the meaning of unknown word from the linguistic clues such as prefixes, suffixes, and word order" at a high level (M=3.10). Similarly, Lai, Tung, and Luo (2008) investigated the theory of reading strategies and its application by EFL learners in Taiwan. The results of their study indicated that the participants used linguistic clues at a low level (M=2.64).

The findings of the current study also showed that the participants were using the strategy "I guess the story or text by using clues from background knowledge" at a high level (M=3.04). Similar to the current study, Macaro (2001) who investigated the strategies in foreign and second language classrooms. According to him, contrary to the results of this study, the participants used the strategy of "guessing meaning of unknown words from context clues" at a low level (M=2.10).

As indicated on Table 7, the results of this study showed that the participants guessed the words meaning from contextual clues at a low level (M=3.01). Similarly, Juan

and Madrid's (2009) study which indicated that the participants used the strategy of "guessing unknown words in context" at a low level (M=2.45). Moreover, Leavitt (2010) found different results which indicated that the participants used information outside of the immediate word or phrase to provide meaning and support comprehension at a high level (M=3.11).

Table 7

The Most and Least Compensation Reading Strategies Used to Solve English Reading Problems

Compensation Reading Strategies Used to Solve Reading Problems

Items	N	Frequency		Percentage	Mean	SD
I guess the meaning of known word from linguistic clues such as prefix, suffix, and word order	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	9.4% 18.9% 38.3% 18.9% 14.4%	54.8	3.10	1.154
I guess the story by using clues from background knowledge	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	7.8% 12.8% 54.4% 17.2% 7.8%	54.7	3.04	.0962
I guess the meaning of words from context clues	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	11.7% 13.9% 45.6% 19.4% 9.4%	54.1	3.01	1.088

Totals (N = 180)

On the other hand, the results of this study were different from Zhang and Wu's (2009), which investigated metacognitive awareness and the use of reading strategy among

Chinese senior schools. The results revealed that the participants used context clues to help them better understand the text at a high level (M=4.12).

Social reading strategies used to solve problems. For social strategies, the results of this study revealed that the participants used the strategy of "discussing the story with someone who knows the story well" at a high level (M=3.50).

Table 8

The Most and Least Social Reading Strategies Used to Solve English Reading Problems

Social Reading Strategies Used to Solve Reading Problems

Items	N	Frequency		Percentage	Mean	SD
I discuss the story with someone who knows the story well	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	6.1% 11.7% 35.6% 19.4% 27.2%	63.0	3.50	1.184
I discuss the story with a friend or group of friends	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	8.3% 12.8% 35.6% 20.6% 22.8%	60.6	3.37	1.205
I ask someone to explain parts of the passage I do not understand	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	7.2% 11.7% 43.3% 25.0% 12.8%	58.3	3.24	1.055
I ask the meaning of unknown words from someone	180	1.Never 2.Rerely 3. Sometimes 4. very often 5. always	12.8% 15.0% 33.9% 9.4% 18.9%	57.0	3.17	1.262
Totals (N = 180)						

However, the results of this study were different from the study of Wongwaiyut's (2011) whose results revealed that the participants understood the story from their masters and colleagues who were clever in reading at a low level (M=2.61). In addition to this, the results of this study showed that the participants used the strategy of "discussing the story with a friend or group of friends" at a high level (M=3.37). The results were similar to Macaro's (2001) which explored the strategies in foreign and second language classrooms. Macaro indicated that the participants in his lingua study asked others (parents, and friends) for help to understand better at a high level (M=3.01).

From the findings of the current study, the participants employed the strategy of "asking someone to explain the parts of the passage they did not understand" at a high level (M=3.24). Unlike the results of this study, Lai, Tung, and Luo (2008) found that the participants in Taiwan asked for clarification and verification on the parts of the text that they did not comprehend at a very high level (M=4.98). This finding also revealed that the participants applied this strategy by asking someone to clarify the text in order to understand better. As indicated on Table 8, the findings of the current study indicated that the participants utilised the strategy "I ask the meaning of unknown words from someone" at a low level (M=3.17). The results of the present study were different from Hellekjar's (2009) who investigated English reading proficiency at the university level which found that his participants employed the strategy "I ask the meaning of unfamiliar words from other students" at a high level (M=3.32).

During the interviews, the participant teachers were asked which strategy their students used more to solve their reading problems. The analysis of the interviews showed that, most instructors believed, the most frequent problem students faced while reading was the unknown and difficult vocabulary in a text. From the data obtained it is obvious that the instructors recommended their students to follow some strategies to overcome the above

difficulties while reading English texts. The following speeches are the main participants'
responses regarding the use of reading strategies to solve students' problems.

Mr. Laween recommended his students to memorize many new words and then he
asked them to find these words in a text and try to understand the meaning of them from the
context.

Mr. Laween: "I give them a good number of vocabulary and I always tell them
how to use such vocabularies in context."

Mr. Milan informed his students to highlight the difficult words and gave the
synonyms of so-called words in the context they were used.

Mr. Milan: "I ask students to highlight the difficult words to search for its
synonyms. After they find synonyms, they relate them to the context and then
analyse the main purpose of writer".

When Mr. Salar had such a difficulty in a text, he taught them how to understand
unknown words from the context, paragraph, topic, and theme. When they still cannot
comprehend the meaning of a text, he uses a group work or an activity-pair work. If they
keep not understanding the meaning he asks students to use a dictionary to find the
necessary word.

Mr. Salar: "to overcome these difficulties, the first thing that I do is when my
students face a difficult word in a sentence. I try to help them to discover the
meaning from the context, paragraph, the topic, and the theme. If they keep not
understanding they will work in groups or do a pair work. In this group working
students ask each other the meaning of a text. If again they fail to understand I will
jump to the last solution which is to check words from the dictionary".

Significant Differences of English Reading Strategies Based on Gender

The results of independent sample t-*test* revealed that there is a significant difference among sexes in the use of the strategy "I imagine or have a picture of word or story in mind." (p >.012). This can be due to the fact that females are better than males to create a mental image of the new word since they might interest pictures, appearances, and dreams more than males.

Table 9

Significant Differences of English Reading Strategies Based on Gender

T-Test Results of Reading Strategies

Items	Gender	N	Significance	Mean	SD
I imagine or have a picture of word or story in mind	Male	85	.012	3.32	1.157
	Female	95		3.75	1.101

Totals (N = 180)

From the interviews, the teacher participants were asked which gender, they thought, used more strategies. This question aimed to elicit the information about the difference between males and females when reading English texts. Regarding gender, the analysis of interviews showed that most instructors believed that males and females were at the same level regarding the use of reading strategies. They also clarified that females sometimes used strategies more than males and sometimes males used strategies more than females as well. According to participants' responses, they believed that there were no differences between males and females regarding the use of reading strategies in a text. The following extract is about participants' views regarding gender and the use of reading strategies.

Mr. Ashti stated that sometimes boys had very intelligent ideas. Similarly, he indicated that females had good thoughts regarding the use of reading strategies.

Mr. Ashti: "I say both genders are same in using strategy, because I sometimes find boys telling really very intelligent ideas about specific point of a text and I also see girls do as well".

Mr. Laween had the same point of view as Mr. Ashti regarding gender. He stated that sometimes boys were better than girls in using reading strategies and he also saw that some girls were cleverer than boys in using reading strategies.

Mr. Laween: "I think sometimes females are better than males regarding using strategy when reading a text, and sometimes males are better than females too".

Dr. Yusra also indicated that both genders were at the same level of using strategies.

Dr. Yusra: "I don't know because I have both genders in class who are good at reading and vocabulary".

Mr. Bilind had no certain point of view concerning the difference between males and females. He stated that he had good students including both genders.

Mr. Bilind: "I cannot be quite certain that males perform better than females but I can say both genders are the same in using reading strategies".

Mr. Milan said that males were more creative than females in using reading strategies.

Mr. Milan: "I think males are more creative than females regarding reading strategies"

Finally, Mr. Salar stated that girls followed the procedures of using strategies more than males and they applied them in a better way.

Mr. Salar: "I think females follow strategies more than males because they often read the strategy I teach them".

Significant Differences of Reading Strategies Use Based on Grades

One way ANOVA was used to find out if the mean differences among groups were statistically significant. After finding the significant results, a post-hoc analysis was carried out to determine the specific groups with significant differences (See appendix C).

As it can be seen from Appendix C, the participants from the first grade (M=3.19) were found to be significantly different (P<.029) from the fourth grade participants (M=3.91) regarding the use of the strategy "I imagine to have a picture of word or story in mind". This means that the first grade students imagine less or do not have a picture of word in their minds than the fourth grade students. The researcher thinks imagining a new word is not simple for the first grade students in ELT department at Zakho University because in this early stage of learning English they cannot be expected to think as native English speakers and they often start to learn words through Kurdish language then translate them into English. On the other hand, the first and fourth grade students do this strategy better because their ideas are almost the same as Native English speakers.

Regarding the use of the strategy "I think of a character in the reading passage to someone I know" first grade participants were discovered to be significantly different (P<.009) from those participants in the second and third grades. First graders (M=3.64) used this strategy more than the second (M=3.09) and third graders (M=2.79). This could be because the first grade students are new and they are not trained earlier to use various strategies, so they match new words to someone they know in order to recall these words; for example, to memorize the word (tailor), they match this new word to one known person who

sews clothes in their neighborhood.

As shown on Appendix C, the strategy "I convert group of word into a picture, chart, or diagram" was seen in the results as significantly different (P<.031). The participants from the first grade (M=3.21) used this strategy more than those participants in the third (M=2.77) and fourth grades (M=2.55). As far as I understand from the first grade students, this might be because they classify words into groups in order to be easier for them while when they memorize the words, such as teacher, student, book, pen, and desk. On the other hand, the third and fourth grade students do not classify new words into groups because they know the meaning of words through the context of the passage. Concerning using the strategy "I make a semantic map of the words or story by using related words or pictures" first grade participants were found to be significantly different (P<.006) from the participants in the second and third grades. First grade (M=3.12) used this strategy more than the second (M=2.93) and third grades (M=2.56). The researcher believes, the reason could be that the first year students use this strategy to memorize the meaning of many English words through learning the new word, such as (hair – cut – barber– barber shop). Besides, the first graders are curious to learn many basic words from the very beginning of their study.

As it is observed on Appendix C, the strategy "I connect the sound of a new word with its image in order to remember the meaning of the word" was revealed to be significantly different (P<.049) among grades. First graders (M=2.93) used this strategy less than the second (M=3.59) and third graders (M=3.83). This might be because the first grade students are new in learning English, they take only general English sounds in the first class and they do not learn how to memorize words through their sounds. Second grade students in Zakho University often use this strategy more than the first grade because ELT department teaches them this strategy in the second class. Regarding the use of the strategy "I write the new words and definition on flash cards", second grade participants

were discovered to be significantly different (P<.001) from the participants in the third and fourth grades. The participants in the second grade (M=3.39) used this strategy more than the participants in the third (M=2.92) and fourth grades (M=2.80). This could be because the second grade students are more eager than the third and fourth graders regarding the learning vocabulary. In the second year, English teachers usually teaches students vocabulary in order to improve the level of their English comprehension.

As it can be seen on Appendix C, the participants who used the strategy "I reread parts of the text I enjoy and is meaningful to me" were found to be significantly different (P<.022) from other grades. First grade participants (M=3.07) used this strategy less than the participants in the second (M=3.80) and fourth grades (M=3.93). To solve the difficulty of comprehending a text, the researcher believes that the second and fourth grade students use this strategy because they sometimes take stories and novels as their lessons, so in this case they might go over the parts they enjoy and are useful to them because they can comprehend the whole text. Regarding the use of the strategy "I re-skim to find details", first grade participants were revealed to be significantly different (P<.037) from the participants in the second grade. The participants who were in the first grade (M=3.00) used this strategy less than the participants in the second grade (M=3.50). Usually in the second grade, students are required to understand the whole meaning of text not like the first grade students. Therefore, to comprehend the whole text second grade students skim the text again to find details.

From Appendix C it is obvious that the participants in the fourth grade were found to be significantly different (P<.025) from the second and third grades. Fourth grade participants (M=2.61) used the strategy "I reread the whole text" less than the second (M=3.15) and third grade participants (M=3.23). Usually, the fourth grade students are supposed to know everything written in a text when they read for the first time. This could be because they are

aware of most reading strategies. On the contrary, the second and third grade students might not be aware of most strategies. In this case, they cannot comprehend the text precisely then they need to reread the whole text in order to understand better.

Concerning the strategy "I reread only parts that I do not understand" third grade participants were discovered to be significantly different (P<.005) from the second and fourth grades. Third grade participants (M=3.05) used this strategy less than the second grade participants (M=3.57). The researcher believes that the second year students do not understand the whole text in the first reading because of some difficulties found in text. Therefore, they read only those parts that they do not understand unlike the third grade students who are supposed to understand the whole text because of their language level.

As shown on Appendix C, the second grade participants were shown to be significantly different (P<.007) from the first and third grade participants. "I scan the passage for finding specific details of interest" was a strategy used more by the second grade participants (M=3.91) than the first grade (M=2.79) and third grade participants (M=3.38). This could be because the second grade students do more drills than the first graders. Most of the drills require answers from prepared questions which belong to the passage. So the second grade students are supposed to use this strategy to find out the right answers. First grade participants (M=3.21) used the strategy "I look up unknown words in a dictionary" less than the second (M=3.91) and fourth grades (M=3.80). This could be because the first year students study very simple texts with very few difficult words unlike the second grade students who learn many words through loaded passages that contain more difficult vocabulary. That is why they use dictionary more than the first graders to search those unknown words. The strategy "I underline or highlight the key words, main idea or important parts of the passage" was found significantly different (P<.013) among grades. Second grade participants (M=3.83) used this strategy more than the first (M=3.07) and third grades

(M=3.25). Usually, this strategy is acquired in the second grade when the language level of students is higher. This means that the first year students do not focus on this strategy as much as the second grade students because they deal with grammar lessons more than comprehending text.

The Appendix C shows a significant difference in the result (P<.028) that the participants in the first grade (M=3.50) used the strategy "I guess the meaning of unknown words from linguistic clues" more than the participants in the third grade (M=2.77). This could be because the first year students are more aware of sentence structure and linguistic clues than the third grade students who comprehend the meaning of unknown word from context clues. Regarding the use of the strategy "I ask someone to explain parts of the passage I do not understand" second grade participants were shown to be significantly different (P<.015) from the first, third, and fourth grades. Second grade participants (M=3.67) used this strategy more than the first (M=3.12), third (M=3.06), and fourth grades (M=3.11). The researcher believes in the second year teachers started to show their students how to read as a group or a pair. This does not mean that the first grade students are not aware of using this strategy, but they do not use this to help them understand the text.

Significant Differences of Reading Strategies Use Based on Frequency of Reading English Texts

One way ANOVA was used to find out if the mean differences among groups were statistically significant. After finding the significant results, a post-hoc analysis was carried out to determine the specific groups with significant differences.

From Table 10, the participants who read 1-2 times per month (M=4.31) were found to be significantly different (P<.047) from those participants who read every day

(M=3.46) regarding the use of the strategy "I imagine to have a picture of word or story in mind". This means that the participants who read a text every day used this strategy less than those participants who read a text 1-2 times per month. This is because the students who read every day may expect of seeing the unknown words repetitively or they think that they will have a chance to understand these unknown words in other lessons. Differently, the students who read a text 1-2 times per month prefer to use this strategy since they are not very sure whether they meet these unknown words again.

Regarding the use of the strategy "I arrange the story I have read into order by numbering or using an arrow", the participants who read a text every day (M=2.58) were discovered to be significantly different (P<.029) from those participants who read a text 1- 2 times per month (M=1.85). This means that those who read a text every day used this strategy more than the participants who read 1-2 times per month. This can be due to the fact that the teachers of every day readers ask their students to arrange and organize the story in order to find out the most important parts of the story which will be included for exam. Contrary to this, those students who read 1-2 times per month are not obliged to apply this strategy since they may read the story for pleasure.

Concerning the strategy "I reread parts I enjoy or meaningful to me" the participants who read a text 1-2 times per month found to be significantly different (P<.021) from the participants who read a text every day. This shows that the participants who read a text 1-2 times per month (M=4.31) used this strategy more than those participants who read a text every day (M=3.37). The reason could be because the 1-2 times per month readers do not

Table 10

Significant Differences of Reading Strategies Use Based on Frequency of Reading English

Texts

Reading Strategy	Frequency	F-Score	Mean	SD	Sig.
I imagine or have a picture of word or story in mind	Every day	2.606	3.46	1.197	.047
	1-2 times per week		3.61	1.098	
	3-4 times per week		3.45	.945	
	1-2 times per month		4.31*	.751	
	3-4 times per month		2.67	1.506	
I arrange the story I have read into order by numbering or using an arrow	Every day	2.446	2.58*	1.078	.029
	1-2 times per week		2.79	1.065	
	3-4 times per week		2.55	1.234	
	1-2 times per month		1.85	.801	
	3-4 times per month		2.00	1.265	
I reread parts I enjoy or meaningful to me	Every day	2.766	3.37	1.073	.021
	1-2 times per week		3.61	1.306	
	3-4 times per week		3.20	1.361	
	1-2 times per month		4.31*	.751	
	3-4 times per month		4.17	.983	
I write down the meaning of the text	Every day	2.961	2.85*	1.285	.016
	1-2 times per week		3.47	1.377	
	3-4 times per week		3.00	.725	
	1-2 times per month		3.69	1.109	
	3-4 times per month		3.33	.516	
I write the short version of the story in my own language	Every day	3.149	2.99	1.058	.001
	1-2 times per week		3.07	1.163	
	3-4 times per week		2.30*	1.031	
	1-2 times per month		3.54	1.198	
	3-4 times per month		2.50	.837	
I ask the meaning of unknown words from someone	Every day	5.086	3.07	1.269	.024
	1-2 times per week		3.60	1.178	
	3-4 times per week		2.45*	.999	
	1-2 times per month		2.62	1.325	
	3-4 times per month		4.00	.894	
I discuss the story with someone who knows the story well	Every day	2.872	3.44	1.090	.037
	1-2 times per week		3.86*	1.190	
	3-4 times per week		3.30	1.302	
	1-2 times per month		2.92	1.441	
	3-4 times per month		2.83	1.472	

According to Table 10, the participants who read 3-4 times per week were found to

be significantly different (P<.001) from those who read 1-2 times per month regarding the

use of the strategy "I write the short version of the story in my own language". This shows that the participants who read 3-4 times per week (M=2.30) used this strategy less than those who read a text 1-2 times per month (M=3.54). This can be due to the fact that the students who read 3-4 times per week are required to understand the story better than those who read 1-2 times per month. This is because they study only one or two parts of the story in which they are able to understand the text without writing any short version. On the other hand, those who read 1-2 times per month usually are in low levels of their study because they do not read so much and they often read the story at the end of month to prepare for monthly exams.

As it is shown on Table 10, the participants who read texts 3-4 times per week were found to be significantly different (P<.024) from those who read a text every day regarding the use of the strategy "I ask the meaning of the unknown word from someone". This means that the participants who read a text 3-4 times per week (M=2.45) used this strategy less than those who read a text every day (M=3.07). This might be because the students who read a text 3-4 times per week are not associated with the reading as much as those who read a text every day. Every day readers may ask many questions to understand the meaning of unknown words since they attend in the class more than those who read 3-4 times per week.

Concerning the use of the strategy "I discuss the story with someone who knows the story well" the participants who read a text 1- 2 times per week were shown to be significantly different (P<.037) from those participants who read a text every day. This displays that the participants who read a text 1-2 times per week (M=3.86) used this strategy more than those participants who read a text every day (M=3.44). The reason might be due to the fact that the students who read a text 1-2 times per week do not understand the meaning of the text as much as those who read every day. Therefore, they may discuss the story with clever colleagues so as to remember the events of the story. Differently, every

day readers may not need to ask for discussion because they follow all the events of the story in the class.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The present study aimed to investigate reading problems, reading strategies used in reading as well as reading strategies used to solve the reading problems of ELT students. The data from this study were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. There were 180 student participants randomly selected from Zakho University to collect quantitative data and 7 instructor participants to collect qualitative data. All student participants were asked to complete the "Reading Problems and Strategies Questionnaire" and instructor participants were interviewed. The following are the conclusions of the study:

The use of reading strategies. Regarding the memory strategies, the participants used the strategy of "imagining or having a picture of a word or a story in their mind" at a high level. This may be due to students' habits in learning while they were in the high school. They concentrated more on using pictures to identify the word, for example, the word "tree" is given with the image of a tree in their activity book in the curriculum. The current study also concluded that the participants employed the strategy "I use the sounds of a familiar word to remember a new word at a high level. This was unlike Griffiliths's study (2003) which found that the participants used the strategy of "utilizing the sounds of other known words to remember new words" at a low level. As indicated on Table 3, the results of this study concluded that the participants used the strategy of "connecting the sounds of a new word with its image in order to remember the meaning of the word" at a high level. This can be because this strategy can be used easily to remember abstract words by associating the sounds

of words with a visual symbol of concrete object, such as "table".

From the findings of the current study, it was also discovered that the participants used the strategy "I act out what I read" at a low level. This may be because students feel embarrassed to act out while reading among their peers in class. Moreover, they may believe that the use of this strategy was a kind of disrespect toward their teachers. However, the participants used the strategy "I arrange the story I have read into order by numbering or using an arrow" at a low level. Leavitt (2010) indicated similar results that the participants summarized the text by identifying the main ideas of a sentence, paragraph, or entire text at a low level.

Regarding the cognitive strategies, the findings showed that most participants reread the parts they enjoyed or were meaningful to them at a high level. Similarly, Alhagbani and Riazi's (2012) study which indicated that the participants used the strategy "when text becomes difficult, they reread it to increase their understanding" at a high level. In addition to this, the results of the current study showed that the participants used the strategy of "underlining or highlighting words, main idea or important parts of passage" at a high level. This was different from the results of Juan and Madrids' (2009) study which obtained the results that the participants used the strategy of "underlying and highlighting the main ideas and important parts of the passage" at a low level.

From the data obtained in the current study, it was concluded that the participants utilised the strategy "I scan the passage for finding specific details of interest" at a high level. This was similar to Poole's (2008) research which investigate the relationship of reading proficiency to online strategy use which the participants of his study employed the strategy "I

scan the text to determine appropriate idea" at a high level. On the other hand, the findings of the current study also revealed that the participants used the strategy of "skimming the whole passage" at a low level which was similar to the research done by Salataci and Akyel (2002) who aimed at finding possible effects of strategy on L1 and L2 reading. They found that their participants employed the strategy "I skim the text" at a low level. As shown on Table 4, the findings indicated that the participants created their own questions before reading at a low level. Juan and Madrid (2009) found similar results when they investigated the study of EFL learners' strategic reading behaviour. The researchers indicated that the participants asked questions to the text or the author of the text at a low level.

The main reading problems. From the data obtained in the current study, it was concluded that the participants encountered four important problems while reading English texts. As indicated on Table 5, the first problem students faced was that "they moved their eyes back to words or phrases that they had already read" at a high level. The results of this study were similar to Wang's (2006) which investigated the problems of reading comprehension and ways to improve reading ability and found that his participants moved back their eyes to the previous sentences at a high level. The second problem discovered in this study regarding reading was that "the participants met with unfamiliar words" at a high level. This study was also similar to the study conducted by Ghawang's (2008) which found that unknown words was one of the main problem that students faced while reading at a high level.

As indicated on Table 5, the third problem that the participants faced was that "they were poor with vocabulary knowledge such as synonyms, and antonyms" at a high level. Similarly, Ghenta (2002) who investigated reading problems and needs of graduate students in

administration department found that the participants had also limited knowledge about vocabulary at a high level. Finally, "wasting time to find the meaning of words from dictionary" was another main problem that students faced in this study at a high level. The results of this study were alike to Wang's (2006) which indicated that the participants wasted much of their time to check the meaning of a word in a dictionary at a high level.

Strategies used to solve reading problems. From the analysis of the findings, it is clear that the ELT students used certain reading strategies to solve their reading problems. It is concluded that the participants used "looking up unknown words in a dictionary" as a cognitive strategy at a high level. These results were different from Wongwaiyut's (2011) which found that dictionary was used at a low level. It was also discovered that the participants used the strategy "I reread only parts that I do not understand". The results of the current study were similar to the research done by Aegpongpawo (2008). He investigated the metacognitive strategies used by English reading students in Thailand. Aegpongpawo revealed that the participants reread only the sentences or parts they had underlined in each paragraph from the first reading at a high level. The participants used this strategy to make sure that they understood the most important ideas in the whole text. As indicated on Table 6, the findings of the current study revealed that the participants used the strategy "I reread the whole text" at a low level. This was also different from the study conducted by Jafari and Shokpour (2012) which investigated the reading strategies used by Iranian ESP students to comprehend authentic expository texts in English. They obtained the results in their study that the participants utilised the strategy "I reread a text for better understanding" at a high level.

From the data obtained in the current study, it was also revealed that the participants

reread words or phrases that have already once read in a text at a high level. It seems that the teachers recommended their students to use this strategy as one of their class activity to focus on certain words or sentences while reading the text. On the other hand, the results of this study indicated that the participants "reread the same passage in different sources" at a low level. The results were similar to Pangsapa's (2012) which investigated the reading problems and strategies of Thai editorial staff. The researcher found that participants reread the same passage with different sources at a low levels.

In compensation strategies, the participants of this study stated that they utilised the strategy "I guess the meaning of unknown word from linguistic clues such as prefix, suffix, and word order" at a high level. The results of this study were different from Brashdi's (2000) which explored reading problems and strategies in EFL classes. Brashdi showed that the participants used linguistics clues to help them understand the text better at a low level.

The findings of the current study also concluded that the participants were using the strategy "I guess the story or text by using clues from background knowledge" at a high level which was similar to the findings of the research done by Zhang and Wu (2009). They found that the participants from China used their prior knowledge to help them understand what they read at a high level. However, it was also discovered that the participants guessed the meaning of words from contextual clues at a low level. Similarly, Lai, Tung, and Luo (2008) found in their study that the participants used the strategy of "guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context" at a low level. Different from the results of the current study, Macaro (2001) who investigated the strategies in foreign and second language classrooms in his study found that the participants used the strategy of "guessing meaning of unknown words from context

clues" at a low level.

For social strategies, the participants stated that they applied the strategy of "discussing the story with someone who knows the story well" at a high level. This could be due to the fact that the students usually apply this strategy when they have exams. To understand the meaning of the text better, students discussed the story with clever peers in their class. The results of this study showed that the participants used the strategy of "discussing the story with a friend or group of friends" at a high level. This can be due to the fact that learning the meaning of text tended to be done as a group working activity. However, participants stated that they used the strategy "I ask someone to explain parts of the passage that I did not understand" at a low level. Similarly, Pangsapa (2012) investigated reading problems and strategies of Thai editorial staff. The results of her study revealed that the participants asked help from someone to understand the text at a low level.

As indicated on Table 8, the findings of this study also revealed that the participants used the strategy of "asking the meaning of unknown words from someone to understand better" at a low level. The results of this study were different from the research done by Kafipour and Naveh (2011) which investigated vocabulary learning strategies and their contribution to reading comprehension of EFL undergraduate students in Kerman province. They found that the educational system in Iran is mostly based on individualism at a high level.

Instructors' views of reading strategies. With regard to the use of reading strategies, the analysis of the results derived from the interviews carried out with seven instructors working at Zakho University, revealed that students did not know much about using strategies.

Regarding the reading strategies, the instructors believed that there were three most frequently strategies used by students: (a) understanding the meaning of unknown word from the contextual clues; (b) skimming a text in order to understand the whole meaning of a text; and (c) scanning the whole text for specific information.

For reading problems, the instructors stated that the main problems that the students faced while reading English texts were the lack of vocabulary, unknown words, archaic words, difficult words, and forgotten words easily. From the participants' interviews, the results indicated that almost all instructors tried to teach learners some strategies such as skimming and scanning, looking words in a dictionary, highlighting words, finding synonyms and antonyms, and guessing the meaning of words from the contextual clues in order to solve their reading problems.

Regarding gender, it was concluded that most instructors believed that males and females were at the same level regarding the use of reading strategies.

Recommendations

According to this study, it was concluded that the students were not aware of useful strategies to follow while reading English texts. In other words, none of students knew the types of reading strategies and how they can use them. In order to raise awareness among all students in Zakho University a course book about reading strategies and reading problems should be used.

From the analysis of the findings, the researcher realized that the participants used the

reading strategies randomly. To solve this problem, ELT teachers should teach students how to use the reading strategies in texts. Moreover, the teachers should explain the strategies according to the type of text or type of the reading problems. For example, teachers should teach students the strategy of "skimming the text when they need to find out the main ideas or a good overview of the text". As soon as students discover the most effective reading strategies they can use with certain reading texts, they can overcome their problems that they often face in reading. To realize this, teachers have to introduce students with all the reading strategies. The results of this study concluded that students had many problems with vocabulary also. The students spent most of their time using dictionaries to find out the meaning of words. Similarly, Kafipour and Naveh (2011) investigated vocabulary learning strategies and their contribution to reading comprehension of EFL undergraduate students in Kerman province and they found that in their study that vocabulary learning strategies effected reading comprehension. To solve this, the chairperson of ELT department should add more courses on vocabulary strategies in their academic programme.

According to the conclusion of this study, the researcher found that students had a number of difficulties and problems where in only very few cases they used certain strategies to overcome them. Here, the researcher suggests that the teachers of Zakho University should teach their students how to identify these problems and how to find out useful strategies to overcome them. From the analysis of findings, the researcher concluded that the main difficulty that students faced while reading was that students did not know the meaning of unfamiliar word in a text. To overcome this problem, teachers are supposed to teach them compensation strategies. For example, students need to use the strategy of "guessing the meaning of unknown word from context clues". Teachers can also teach their students how to

find out the main ideas in a text to solve their unknown word problem. To apply this, teachers are supposed to bring some good sample texts in class in order to show and guide them how to find the main ideas by using prior knowledge.

Recommendations for Further Studies

1.   The results of this study illustrated that ELT students faced many problems with vocabulary. Lack of vocabulary was concluded to be the main reason that students did not understand the meaning of texts. Therefore, a correlational study can be conducted to investigate the relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension among ELT students at Zakho University. More specifically, the aim of the study is to determine if the vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension are related and how they affect each other.

2.   In this study, the results indicated that the four main reading strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, and social strategies are used during the process of teaching at Zakho University. For further study, it would be interesting to investigate how the students learn strategies by themselves and whether they apply any of their own strategies. For this reason, a survey study can be structured to uncover the metacognitive and effective strategies of language learners to find out the learners' own learning strategies.

3.   Mixed methods was used in this study. A further study can be conducted as an experimental study by specifying an experimental group and a control group. The researcher teaches reading strategies to the participants in the control group which

aims to investigate the impact of learning reading strategies on reading comprehension.

4. This study was conducted with the advanced level learners at university. A similar study can be applied with the medium level learners at intermediate schools to investigate whether there is a difference between university learners, intermediate school and the use of reading strategies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

The Reading Problems and Strategies Questionnaire

Dear Participant

This questionnaire aims to find out the reading problems you encounter while reading English texts and reading strategies you use in reading as well as reading strategies you utilise to solve problems. Your responses will never be used for any purposes other than present research.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation.

A. General Background Information: Please mark ($\sqrt{}$) in the box.

1. Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐

2. Grade/ Class: 1st grade ☐ 2nd grade ☐ 3rd grade ☐ 4th grade ☐

3. How often do you read English texts?

Every day ☐

1-2 times per week ☐

3-4 times per week ☐

1-2 times per month ☐

3-4 times per month ☐

B. English Reading Problems of the Respondents: Please indicate the frequency of reading problem you faced by marking (√) the number which describes your case. Each number means the following:

(1 = Never), (2 = rarely), (3 = Sometimes), (4 = Very Often), (5 = Always).

Reading problems

When reading an English text…

No.	Statements	Frequency Rank				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	I meet with unfamiliar words					
2	I do not know the meaning of words					
3	I do not understand the meaning of technical words					
4	I am poor with vocabulary knowledge such as synonyms and					
5	I face with complex and very long sentences with many dependent clauses or paragraphs					
6	I am confused with punctuation marks					
7	I lack grammatical knowledge					
8	I lack the ability to guess meaning from the context					
9	I waste time to find the meaning of words from dictionary					
10	I always move my eyes back to words or phrases that have already read					
11	I lack prior knowledge to link with what is read					
12	I am unfamiliar with the text					
13	I find that texts are too difficult					
14	I lack motivation in reading					
15	I read text with limited time					

C. English Reading Strategies used while Reading English Texts and
Reading Strategies use to Solve Problems.

While I am reading, I………..

No.	Statements	Frequency Rank				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	identify words into groups such as words about sport, place, food, and vehicle					
2	think of closely related word with new one found in the passage such as bread – butter, or school- book – paper					
3	imagine or have a picture of word or story in mind					
4	use symbols to represent abstract noun, such as horse for powerful					
5	replace the story with my own experience					
6	think of a character in the reading passage to someone I know					
7	convert group of word into a picture, chart, or diagram					
8	arrange the story I have read into order by numbering or using an arrow					
9	make a semantic map of the words or story by using related words or pictures					
10	use the sounds of a familiar word to remember a new word					
11	connect the sounds of a new word with its image (picture) in					
12	memorize the new word by using familiar words or sounds from any language (goat-coat-boat, familiar-family)					
13	act out what I read					
14	write the new word and definition on flashcards					
15	reread parts I enjoy or meaningful to me					
16	re-skim to find details					
17	reread the whole text					
18	reread words or phrases that have already once read					
19	reread only parts that I do not understand					

20	skim any pictures, charts, and graphs					
21	skim the whole passage					
22	scan the passage for finding specific details of interest					
23	create my own questions before reading					
24	look up unknown words in a dictionary					
25	reread the same passage in different sources					
26	write the unknown words into parts to understand the meaning					
27	write down the meaning of the text					
28	take notes of some meaningful parts on a flash card					
29	write down key words					
30	write the short version of the story in my own language					
31	underline or highlight key words, main idea or important parts of the passage					
32	mark the important parts with an asterisk (*)					
33	guess the meaning of known word from linguistic clues such as prefix, suffix, word order and so on					
34	guess the story by using clues from background knowledge					
35	guess the meaning of words from context clues					
36	ask the meaning of unknown words from someone					
37	ask someone to explain parts of the passage I do not understand					
38	discuss the story with a friend or group of friends					
39	discuss the story with someone who knows the story well					

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What subject do you teach? Or what is your specialist in teaching?

2. What class or grade do you teach?

3. Are classes included both genders (female and male)?

4. How do you teach reading session to your students?

5. Do you tell your students that they have to understand reading strategies?

6. What strategies do you follow? And how many strategies are there?

7. What strategies are the most useful while teaching?

8. Are students aware of the strategies they are using?

9. Do students know what reading strategies are?

10. What strategies do the students always use?

11. Do the students have their own strategies? If yes, what are they?

12. What difficulties and problems do you face while you teach students the reading strategies?

13. What are the main problems of students regarding reading English texts?

14. What are the main problems that students always face while reading English texts?

15. Do they students their reading problems by your teaching strategies?

16. Do students have their own strategies to solve their problems?

17. Have you ever had a student who asked you to teach him/her any reading strategies?

18. Have you ever had a student who used different reading strategies that you didn't teach him/her before?

19. What strategies do you use to solve students' problems and difficulties?

20. Do you have any experience regarding student's reading problems? If yes, how did you deal with it?

21. Do you have any example that a student himself /herself solve his/her problem?

22. Concerning gender, which sex, do you think, use more strategies?

23. Do they use the same strategies, or not?

24. Do they have the same problems, or not?

25. Do they have the same strategies to solve their problems, or not?

Appendix C

Significant Differences of Reading Strategies Use Based on Grades

Reading Strategies	Grade	F-Score	Mean	S.D	Sig.
I imagine or have a picture of word or story in mind	1st	3.067	3.19*	1.153	.029
	2nd		3.61	1.238	
	3rd		3.46	1.110	
	4th		3.91	.984	
I think of a character in the reading passage to someone I know	1st	3.953	3.64*	.932	.009
	2nd		3.09	1.170	
	3rd		2.79	1.288	
	4th		3.32	1.394	
I convert group of word into a picture, chart, or Diagram	1st	3.631	3.21*	1.001	.031
	2nd		2.93	1.162	
	3rd		2.77	.994	
	4th		2.50	.952	
I make a semantic map of the words or story by using related words or pictures	1st	3.036	3.12*	.968	.006
	2nd		2.50	1.027	
	3rd		2.56	1.147	
	4th		2.77	1.075	
I connect the sounds of a new word with its image (picture) in order to remember the meaning of the word	1st	4.316	2.93*	1.197	.049
	2nd		3.59	1.240	
	3rd		2.83	1.018	
	4th		3.41	1.300	
I write the new word and definition on flashcards	1st	2.666	3.14	.977	.001
	2nd		3..39*	1.201	
	3rd		2.92	.964	
	4th		2.80	1.173	

I reread parts I enjoy or meaningful to me.	1st	5.760	3.07*	1.117	.022
	2nd		3.08	1.327	
	3rd		3.27	1.067	
	4th		3.93	.974	
I re-skim to find details.	1st	3.285	3.00*	.698	.037
	2nd		3.50	1.169	
	3rd		3.23	1.036	
	4th		2.61	.910	
I reread the whole text	1st	2.895	2.90	1.210	.025
	2nd		3.15	.928	
	3rd		3.23	1.280	
	4th		2.61*	.998	
I reread only parts that I do not understand	1st	3.206	3.50	1.059	.005
	2nd		3.67	.969	
	3rd		3.06*	1.248	
	4th		3.64	.998	
I scan the passage for finding specific details of interest	1st	4.439	2.79	1.116	.007
	2nd		3.65*	1.386	
	3rd		3.08	.986	
	4th		3.18	1.018	
I look up unknown words in a dictionary	1st	4.186	3.21*	.951	.013
	2nd		3.91	1.132	
	3rd		3.38	1.064	
	4th		3.80	1.173	
I underline or highlight key words, main idea or important parts of the passage	1st	3.679	3.07	1.113	.013
	2nd		3.83*	1.235	
	3rd		3.25	.934	
	4th		3.55	1.320	

I guess the meaning of unknown word from linguistic clues such as prefix, suffix, and word order	1st	3.104	3.50*	1.110	.028
	2nd		3.11	1.223	
	3rd		2.77	.928	
	4th		3.07	1.246	
I ask someone to explain parts of the passage I do not understand	1st	3.589	3.12	.670	.015
	2nd		3.67*	1.156	
	3rd		3.06	.932	
	4th		3.11	1.262	

Appendix D

Approval Letter of Using Questionnaire

From: am mother&care <am042@hotmail.com>
To: Serbest Sherif <serbest_sherif@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2013 7:32 AM
Subject: RE: permission to use questionnaire

I am very appreciated that you are interested in my questionnaire. I don't hesitate to share it for you. And, I would like you to use it for the study only; not allow for business. Moreover, when you use it, please refer to me (as a researcher). Thank you so much for your attention.

Date: Tue, 3 Sep 2013 03:19:52 -0700ou
From: serbest_sherif@yahoo.com
Subject: permission to use questionnaire
To: am042@hotmail.com

Dear Pangsapa
My name is Sarbast Sharif Yousif and I am studying Master in English Language Teaching Program/ English department at Near East University. My address is Nicosia, Cyprus and contact number is +905338422826.

I need to get permission from you so as to use Questionnaire that you have used in your master thesis project about reading problems and strategies. The purpose of using your questionnaire is to help me to complete my study and my master thesis, since my master topic fits with your master topic which is about A STUDY OF ENGLISH READING PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES. So I am going to apply it in English classes.

I hope I can have your acceptance email back, please.
Thanks for your help

Sarbast Sh. Yousif
English Department
College of Arts
Near East University
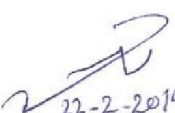Nicosia, Cyprus
September 3, 2013

Appendix E

Approval letter by the Faculty of Humanities, Zakho University

أقــــــلـــيـم كـــوردسـتــان- الــعــراق		هـەریـــمـا كـــوردسـتـــانـیّ- عیـراق
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي		وەزارەتا خویندنا بالا وتوژینـەوەی زانـستی
رئـــاسـة جـامـعـة زاخـو		سـەروكـاتـیـا زانـكـویـا زاخـــو
قسم اللغة الانكليزية		پشكا زمانیّ ئینگلیزی

Kurdistan Regional Government –Iraq
Ministry of Higher Education &Scientific Research – University of Zakho – FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
English Language Department

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that (Sarbast Sharif Yousif) is allowed to collect data in Zakho University/Faculty of Humanities /English Language Department.   He distributed questionnaires among students and had interviews with instructors of the English language department.

22-2-2014

Dr. Aveen Mohammed Hasan
Head of English Language Department
Faculty of Humanities
University of Zakho, Iraq-Zakho
E-mail Address: a.m.hasan79@gmail.com