READING STRATEGIES: PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS AND THEIR TEACHING PRACTICES

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Abstract

Reading is an important skill in language learning process and effective readers use strategies to cope with the text. While teaching reading, teachers should focus on and teach strategies to help learners cope with the text. Therefore, it is important to investigate prospective teacher behaviors in the classroom as they teach reading. The purpose of this study is to investigate reading strategy teaching practices of prospective teachers. It is important to determine which reading strategies the prospective English language teachers use themselves, therefore; in the first part of the study, the purpose is to investigate which strategies prospective teachers use while reading. In the second part, the purpose is to investigate what strategies prospective teachers focus on, and attempt to teach in order to improve their students' reading skill as they teach reading. The results showed that prospective teachers mostly use strategies "infer", "meaning" and "draw". Second part of the study revealed that prospective teachers have only few attempts to teach strategies.

Key Words: Metacognitive reading strategies, cognitive reading strategies, prospective teachers, teaching reading.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important skill in foreign language learning and teaching process. It provides important linguistic input for foreign language learners; moreover, it helps for further development in listening, speaking, and writing. Since reading is an important skill in language teaching and learning process, it has been investigated from different perspectives and reading comprehension gained importance. The consensus among reading educators and experts is that reading is a complex, interactive process that involves features of readers, texts and tasks (Bernhardt and Kamil, 1995; Grabe & Stoller, 2005).

As there have been many variables in reading comprehension, researchers have always tried to find ways to overcome the difficulties readers have while reading. According to Santrock (2008) when reading, the learner decodes, visualises, conceptualizes, infers, predicts, imagines, rereads, paraphrases, classifies information, guesses from the context and clarifies words by looking them up in a dictionary. In addition, while reading, an effective reader uses certain metacognitive strategies which involve goal setting, selective attention, planning for organization, monitoring, self-assessing, and regulating. Thus, for an effective reading comprehension, a reader needs knowledge about strategies, knowledge about when, how and where to use these strategies (Paris, Cross, & Lipson, 1984).

Literature Review
Oxford and Crookall (1989) define strategies as learning techniques, behaviors, problem-solving or study skills which make learning more effective and efficient. Learning strategies are procedures that help to complete a learning task. Strategies are most often conscious and goal-driven procedures when learners are coping with an unfamiliar language task in the beginning stages. Once any learning strategy becomes familiar through repeated use, it may become automatic; however most learners will be able to call the strategy to conscious awareness if there is a need (Chamot, 2005: 112). In the same way, while reading effective readers use reading strategies. These strategies help readers manage to interact with written texts, they show how readers

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comprehend a task, what textual cues readers use, how readers make sense of what they read and how they react when they do not understand (Block, 1986). The strategies involve mental manipulations of a text at word, sentence, paragraph, and text levels to enhance reading comprehension (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983).

Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) categorizes strategies into two types: (1) direct strategy, and (2) indirect strategy. Direct strategies consist of memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. Memory strategies help the learners store and retrieve new information, for example, applying images and sound to store and remember a new word a learner encounts while reading. Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, enable the learners to understand new language by different ways. Repeating words mentally to oneself to understand better if one is not sure about the meaning, use of dictionaries to look up for the meaning of a word are the examples for cognitive strategy use. Cognitive strategy involves using resources to find out the meaning of what is read in the new language, or to produce messages in the new language. The other strategy Oxford (1990) defines as direct strategy is compensation strategy. One example of compensation strategy is the learner's guessing intelligently by using linguistic clues. The learners refer to previously gained knowledge by using linguistic clues and their previous knowledge of the target language can help them understand the meaning of what is read.

According to Oxford (1990) indirect strategies are strategies that support and manage reading without directly involving the target language. They are divided into metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Oxford (1990) notes that metacognitive strategy comprises of monitoring one's own speed of reading, for example, when reading a text if readers finds the text difficult, they slow down their reading. Examples of social strategies are asking for clarification, correction and feedback and cooperating with peers and parents to understand the text better.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990), on the other hand, think that learning strategies are mental and social-affective processes, so they divide the learning strategies into three main categories: Metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective strategies.

Cognitive Reading Strategies
While reading a reader uses both cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Peacock, 2001; Rosenshine, 1997). According to Özek and Civelek (2006) cognitive strategies help to facilitate comprehension and improve learning. Cognitive strategies can be divided as the following elements: recognizing, using topics, guessing from the context, using a dictionary, writing down imagery, activating background information, summarizing, using linguistic clues, using text markers, skipping the difficult parts and repeating words or phrases. In short, cognitive strategies are related to integrating new material with background information and learners use cognitive strategies in order to acquire, learn, remember, recognize the material while reading.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) define cognitive strategies as "operating directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning." The cognitive strategies that are involved in reading activities include relating new words to a word in memory or writing down the main idea; outlining key points or making a brief summary of the text in order to comprehend the text better. O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 40) propose that "cognitive strategies include these items: repetition, directed physical response, translation, grouping, note-taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key words, contextualization, elaboration, transfer and inference.

Metacognitive Reading Strategies
Metacognitive strategies include both the awareness and the conscious control of one's leaning; (Schraw, 1998). Mokharti & Reichard (2002) argue that while reading, one of the most important factors that need to be emphasized is metacognitive reading strategy awareness because metacognitive reading strategy awareness facilitates reading comprehension and fosters EFL/ESL learning.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) propose eight metacognitive strategies that are the most frequently used by students with a higher reading ability. These metacognitive strategies include planning, directed attention,

selective attention, self-monitoring, self-management, delayed production, self-enhancement and self-evaluation.

In order to measure the metacognitive reading strategy use of college students, Taraban, Rynearson, and Kerr (2004) developed the Metacognitive Reading Strategy Questionnaire (MRSQ). They categorized metacognitive reading strategies into two as analytic-cognitive and pragmaticbehavioural. Analytic-cognitive component aimed at reading comprehension, and pragmaticbehavioural component aimed at studying and academic performance. The analytic-cognitive component particularly assessed students' efforts to comprehend a text. The strategies such as evaluating reading goals and inferring information were the examples of the analytic-cognitive components. The pragmatic-behavioural components involved the physical actions and included strategies such as underlining and highlighting. Taraban et al (2004) pointed out that the analyticcognitive and pragmatic-behavioural were consistent with the existing literature and research on reading strategies. Metacognitive Reading Strategy Questionnaire (MRSQ) developed by Taraban, Kerr, and Rynearson (2004) is as follows:

Metacognitive reading strategies that construct 'Analytic cognition' component of the MRSQ:
1. Evaluate. As I am reading, I evaluate the text to determine whether it contributes to my knowledge/understanding of the subject.
2. Anticipate. After I have read a text, I anticipate how I will use the knowledge that I have gained from reading the text.
3. Draw. I try to draw on my knowledge of the topic to help me understand what I am reading.
4. Back. While I am reading, I reconsider and revise my background knowledge about the topic, based on the text's content.
5. Revise. While I am reading, I reconsider and revise my prior questions about the topic, based on the text's content.
6. Consider. After I read a text, I consider other possible interpretations to determine whether I understood the text.
7. Distinguish. As I am reading, I distinguish between information that I already know and new information.
8. Infer. When information critical to my understanding of the text is not directly stated, I try to infer that information from the text.
9. Reading goals. I evaluate whether what I am reading is relevant to my reading goals.
10. Search. I search out information relevant to my reading goals.
11. Present later. I anticipate information that will be presented later in the text.
12. Meaning. While I am reading, I try to determine the meaning of unknown words that seem critical to the meaning of the text.
13. Current information. As I read along, I check whether I had anticipated the current information.
14. Strengths. While reading, I exploit my personal strengths in order to better understand the text. If I am a good reader, I focus on the text; if I am good with figures and diagrams, I focus on that information.
15. Visualize descriptions. While reading, I visualize descriptions in order to better understand the text.
16. Hard. I note how hard or easy a text is to read.

Metacognitive reading strategies that construct 'Pragmatic Behaviours' component of the MRSQ
17. Notes. I make notes when reading in order to remember the information.
18. Highlight. While reading, I underline and highlight important information in order to find it more easily later on.
19. Margin. While reading, I write questions and notes in the margin in order to better understand the text.
20. Underline. I try to underline when reading in order to remember the information.
21. Read more. I read material more than once in order to remember the information.
22. Re-read. When I am having difficulty comprehending a text, I re-read the text.

In the light of the classifications of reading strategies, the present study aims at investigating reading strategy teaching practices of teacher candidates. It is important to determine which reading strategies the prospective English language teachers use themselves, what they think of teaching reading strategies and which reading

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strategies they focus on while teaching. Are these prospective teachers able to reflect and teach their used reading strategies in their classes?

The students studying in Anadolu University Education Faculty, English Language Teaching Department will become teachers of English. In an ideal world, they would be familiar with all the challenges that affect L2 reading proficiency, they would know how to cope with problems they encounter while reading. As teacher candidates they are educated to read effectively and to cope with reading problems they may encounter as they read; thus their training sessions end up with reading strategy training and they are expected to transfer their skill in reading effectively to their teaching in their practicum classes. Specifically, in the first part of the study, the purpose is to investigate which strategies prospective teachers use while reading. In the second part, the purpose is to investigate what strategies the teacher candidates focus on, and attempt to teach in order to improve their students' reading skill as they teach reading in their practicum classes.

Metacognitive Reading Strategy Questionnaire (MRSQ) (Taraban, Kerr, and Rynearson; 2004) was developed for assessing college students' use of the strategies for reading and reading strategies in the questionnaire are specific and detailed. Therefore; this study is based on the list of reading strategies proposed by Taraban, Kerr, and Rynearson (2004).

Specifically, the following research questions were asked in the present study:
1. Which reading strategies do prospective English language teachers use?
2. Which reading strategies do prospective English language teachers focus on in their classes while teaching reading?
3. What do prospective English language teachers think about teaching reading strategies?

METHODOLOGY

Participants
The participants of the first part of study were 60 fourth year students studying in Education Faculty, English Language Teaching Department. The participants were taking their practicum classes in the year the study was conducted, so they went to secondary schools 6 hours a week, taught an hour and observed their mentor teacher and their friends as they taught in the remaining five hours. The students gave consent to the use of their reading lesson plans and reflections for research purposes and agreed to answer questionnaires given by the researcher. In the second part of the study the participants were 12 prospective teacher that volunteered to take part in the second half of the study.

Instruments
First, to determine which reading strategies the prospective English language teachers use, Metacognitive Reading Strategy Questionnaire developed byTaraban, Kerr, and Rynearson (2004) was used. The participants were asked to respond to items using a 5-point Likert scale ranking "always use", "often use", "sometimes use", "rarely use" and "never use". In order to investigate which reading strategies the teacher candidates teach, lesson plans and reflections were analyzed, the classes were observed and videotaped and the teacher candidates were given a questionnaire at the end of the term asking about their opinions on teaching reading strategies.

Procedures
In the first part of the study, 60 prospective teachers were selected randomly and they were given Metacognitive Reading Strategy Questionnaire to find out which reading strategies they report use. After finding the scores, twelve prospective teachers that got the highest scores were selected to investigate how they teach reading strategies. The prospective teachers went to three different secondary schools to teach English within the framework of practicum class they were taking. Each teacher candidate taught at least one class each week during 12 weeks and each taught at least three reading classes during the term. They informed the researcher about the hours they would teach and the researcher went for observation on the days they taught reading. The classes were videotaped as well. After each class, the prospective teachers wrote a reflection stating what they did, what kind of activities they had and why they chose the activities they used.

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The purpose of the reflection was to find out what information they would provide in terms of their reading strategy teaching. The classroom teaching observations were used to cross check whether the prospective teachers' classroom application and lesson plan give the same reading strategy. If there was a different strategy taugt or focused in the classroom, this was noted. Not to draw the participants' attention on teaching reading strategies, they were not told that the researcher was conducting a study on their reading strategy practices. At the end of the term, each prospective teacher was given questions to determine their opinion about teaching reading strategies.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze data, the software package Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. To answer the first research question, answers in the MRSQ, which was divided into two categories: metacognitive and cognitive, were analyzed to find out the means and standard deviations. Later, to determine which strategy each prospective teacher focuses in the class, their lesson plans and reflections were analyzed. For the third research question, student answers to questions were analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the first research question "Which reading strategies do prospective English language teachers use?" the aswers to the MRSQ were analyzed to find out the mean and standard deviations. The answers are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean (M) and standard deviations (sd) of **analytic** reading strategies used by prospective English language teachers while reading.

	M	sd
1.Evaluate: As I am reading, I evaluate the text to determine whether it contributes to my knowledge/understanding of the subject.	3.05	1.26
2.Anticipate: After I have read a text, I anticipate how I will use the knowledge that I have gained from reading the text.	3.01	.88
3.Draw: I try to draw on my knowledge of the topic to help me understand what I am reading.	3.78	1.02
4.Back: While I am reading, I reconsider and revise my background knowledge about the topic, based on the text's content.	3.47	.79
5.Revise: While I am reading, I reconsider and revise my prior questions about the topic, based on the text's content.	3.14	.90
6.Consider: After I read a text, I consider other possible interpretations to determine whether I understood the text.	2.95	.87
7.Distinguish: As I am reading, I distinguish between information that I already know and new information.	3.60	.92
8.Infer: When information critical to my understanding of the text is not directly stated, I try to infer that information from the text.	3.96	1.01
9.Reading goals: I evaluate whether what I am reading is relevant to my reading goal	3.62	.90
10.Search: I search out information relevant to my reading goals.	3.77	.87
11.Present later: I anticipate information that will be presented later in the text.	3.23	.91
12.Meaning: While I am reading, I try to determine the meaning of unknown words that seem critical to the meaning of the text.	3.88	.87
13.Current information: As I read along, I check whether I had anticipated the current information.	3.01	.93
14.Strengths: While reading, I exploit my personal strengths in order to better understand the text. If I am a good reader, I focus on the text; if I am good with figures and diagrams, I focus on that information.	2.97	.99
15.Visualize descriptions: While reading, I visualize descriptions in order to better understand the text.	3.52	.78

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16.Hard: I note how hard or easy a text is to read.	2.38	.92

The findings in Table 1 illustrate that the most frequently used analytic reading strategies are Infer (M: 3.96), Meaning (M: 3.88) and Draw (M: 3.78). The results show that most prospective teachers try to infer the information from the text (Infer), try to determine the meaning of unknown words that seem critical to the meaning of the text (Meaning) and draw on their knowledge of the topic to help them understand what they are reading (Draw) as they read. On the other hand, the results show that most prospective teachers rarely use strategies like Hard, Consider and Strengths to understand the text while reading.

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of how prospective teachers report they use pragmatic reading strategies.

Table 2: Mean (M) and standard deviations (sd) of **pragmatic** reading strategies used by prospective English language teachers while reading.

	M	sd
17. Notes: I make notes when reading in order to remember the information.	2.50	1.15
18. Highlight: While reading, I underline and highlight important information in order to find it more easily later on.	3.58	1.08
19. Margin: While reading, I write questions and notes in the margin in order to better understand the text.	2.95	1.06
20. Underline: I try to underline when reading in order to remember the information.	3.70	1.05
21. Read more: I read material more than once in order to remember the information.	3.20	1.14
22. Re-read: When I am having difficulty comprehending a text, I re-read the text.	3.90	1.08

According to the results, the most frequently used pragmatic reading strategies are Re-read, Underline and Highlight; the least frequently used strategies are Notes and Margin.

In the second part of the study, 12 prospective teachers volunteered. The lesson plans of the prospective teachers were analyzed and their attempts to focus on reading strategies were underlined and categorized. The attempts to teach strategies were in the form of phrases, full sentences or questions. The attempts to teach strategies were underlined and categorized by the researcher and these attempts and categories were given to a colleague who teaches practicum classes in the same department to check whether there is a problem with the category and whether the phrase, sentence or question is really an attempt to teach strategy. Inter-rater reliability was calculated by using a "point by point" method and it was calculated as .93. Recordingss of classes were also analyzed and it it was checked whether prospective teachers really apply what they wrote in their plans. Through decicion making and student questions some lesson plans got different forms, the researcher identified strategy teaching in the classroom and these were added to the analyses of lesson plans.

The results of the analyses of lessons showed that prospective teachers have few attempts to teach metacognive strategies which were categorized byTaraban, Kerr, and Rynearson (2004). When they attempted to teach strategies, most frequently focused strategy is "Infer: When information critical to your understanding of the text is not directly stated, try to infer that information from the text". The examples of attempts to teach "Infer" are as follows in the videotapes of classes:
T1: (teacher): If this information is not given in the text, we can infer it, right?
T2: What can you infer from this sentence?
T3: What do we infer from this paragraph about the environment?
T4: This information is not given in the text but we can get it from what is said in the paragraph.
T5: The answer is not given directly in the paragraph but you can find the answer by reading the other sentences.
The other strategy that prospective teachers focused when teaching was "Meaning". The following examples shows the attempts to teach meaning.

T1: Find the meaning of the words on the board as you read.
T2: While reading find the meaning of these unknown words.
T3: What does "skimpy" mean? Read the sentence and guess the meaning.
T4: Help your friend to find the meaning, let's guess its meaning, look at the paragraph again.

Prospective teachers reported in the MRSQ that they use strategies Infer (M: 3.96), Meaning (M: 3.88) and Draw (M: 3.78) most frequently. According to the analyses of the lessons, the prospective tearchers tried to teach strategies "Infer" and "Meaning". This result shows that prospective teachers try to teach what they use, what they are familiar with.

Moreover, prospective teachers did not have much attempt to teach stragies "Strengths", "Consider", "Evaluate" and "Visualize". There are only a few instances that prospective teachers focused on these strategies. As for the "analytic" reading strategies, the results illustrated that prospective teachers preferred to focus on "highlight" as in the example.
T1: While reading, I underline the important information.
T2: Underline the new words so that you can study later.

The classroom observations and analyses of the lesson plans showed that prospective teachers focused on teaching some strategies that were not focused in the MRSQ. For example:
T1: Look at the paragraph quickly and find when he invented the telephone.
T2: Read the paragraph and check whether the sentences on the board are in the text.
T3: Read the paragraph, find the main idea and underline it.
T4: What conclusion can we draw from the paragraph?
T5: Summarize the paragraph.
T6: What is the most appropriate title for this text?

For the third research question "What do prospective English language teachers think about teaching reading strategies?" they were given the following questions at the end of the term.

"1. Do you think the students in your classes have acquired knowledge of reading strategies?
A. Yes, enough B. Some but not enough C. A little D. Not at all
2. Do you think lack of using reading strategies will inhibit students' achievement in reading comprehension test?
A. Greatly B. Not so much C. A little D. Not at all
3. Do you think reading strategies teaching is important?
A. Very important B. Important C. Not so important D. Hardly important
4. Do you think it is necessary to teach reading strategies in class?
A. Very necessary B. Necessary C. Not so necessary D. Not necessary at all
5. How often do you teach reading strategies in classroom?
A. Always B. Sometimes C. Rarely D. Never
6. Do you think you know how to teach reading strategies in class?
A. Yes, definitely B. Yes, but not so much C. A little D. Have no idea".

Answers given to these questions show that most of the prospective teachers think their students acquired knowledge of reading strategies but not enough. Most of them think that lack of using reading strategies will inhibit students' achievement in reading comprehension test greatly. This result shows that prospective teachers are aware of the importance of teaching reading strategies. Most of the prospective teachers think reading strategies teaching is important is very important. For the question "How often do you teach reading strategies in classroom?" most of the teachers answered "sometimes". For the last questions most of the prospective teachers answered "yes, but not so much". These results indicate that prospective teachers are aware of the importance of teching reading strategies, but their applications in the classroom show that they do not focus on teaching strategies in the classroom so much.

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CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to find out how the prospective teachers use reading strategies themselves as they are reading, how frequently they focus on and try to teach strategies as they teach and what they think about teaching reading strategies.

The results of the study revealed that prospective teachers use some of the analytic strategies given by Taraban, Kerr, and Rynearson (2004) as they read. Among the analytic and pragmatic strategies, prospective teachers use "Infer"," Meaning", " Draw", "Re-read" and "Underline". Prospective teachers' teaching practices reveal that they attempt to teach "Infer" and "Meaning". This result indicates that prospective teachers try to teach what they already use themselves as readers. Moreover, their teaching practices show that prospective teachers do not deal with strategies like "Strengths", "Consider", "Evaluate" and "Visualize". When they are asked about their practices about reading strategies, prospective teachers declare that teaching reading strategies is important and they sometimes attempt to teach strategies.

Prospective teachers studying in Education Faculty, ELT Department are educated to use metacognitive and cognitive strategies in their reading classes. As Block and Pressley (2002) note widespread agreement among scholars that students should be taught cognitive and metacognitive processes and that, regardless of the program used, instruction should include modeling, scaffolding, guided practice, and independent use of strategies so that students develop the ability to select and implement appropriate strategies independently and to monitor and regulate their use. Therefore, students are well aware of the importance of using strategies to help comprehension in the reading process. Moreover, in their third year at the faculty, they have a methodology class which aims at teaching prospective teachers how to teach reading. The main focus of this class is to help them learn the stages of teaching reading and learn how to prepare appropriate lesson plans.

 The choice of strategies depends on the type of text being read. Depending on the nature of texts, strategies such as vocabulary strategies, activating background knowledge, inferencing, rereading, self-questioning, monitoring comprehension, identification of main ideas, drawing conclusions and summarising are likely to aid the understanding of the texts (Harvey and Goudvis, 2007). Students in secondary schools need to be taught how to read texts so that they can struggle when they attempt to read to learn. Strategy instruction could begin as early as possible. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers consider teaching strategy instruction to their students. For teachers to teach strategy instruction, they need to learn it themselves so as to interact with students at the appropriate time and place while reading a text with them (Zhang & Wu, 2009). In this case, teacher educators should help prospective teachers to become better reading teachers and help them learn how to teach reading strategies. Effective reading can be taught and in order to help prospective techers achieve better teaching ways of reading it is suggested that how to teach reading strategies should be incorporated into teacher education program.

FUTURE RESEARCH

In order to help students become better language learners and better readers, we need to train better teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct studies on how to teach reading strategies, for example, it could help teacher educators to teach strategies explicitly or implicitly.

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