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Investigating the Implementation of Metacognitive Strategies to Support EFL Students' Close Reading.

The Case of Undergraduate Students of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of The Requirements For a
Master Degree in Science of Language

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Declaration

I, **Nesrine MOHADMI**, do hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **"Investigating the implementation of metacognitive strategies to support students' close reading"** is the result of my own independent work, and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree or qualification at this or any other university or institution.

All sources have been used and referenced appropriately in accordance with academic standards.

This work was carried out under the supervision of Prof. Bechar Ahmed at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, Algeria, during the academic year 2024/2025.

Certified

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Dedication

With sincere appreciation, this dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family, whose constant encouragement, love, and support have been the foundation of my journey. To my parents for their sacrifices and endless faith in me. To my supportive friends Wissal and Hadjer, and to my constant light in life Meriem, a true blessing in a human form, who stood by my side through the highs and the lows.

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Abstract

This study investigates how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university teachers implement metacognitive strategies to enhance students' close reading abilities in academic settings. Grounded in metacognitive theory and reading comprehension frameworks, the study answered the critical pedagogical need for strategic reading instruction to create profoundly analytical engagement with a text. A mixed-methods approach helped triangulate the data derived from structured classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected EFL instructors, and questionnaire items administered to undergraduate students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. This study examines how teachers model and scaffold metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating during reading lessons, as well as the challenges faced when integrating such strategies into instruction. From a quantitative point of view using SPSS, a statistically weak positive correlation was revealed between students' use of metacognitive strategies and their engagement in close reading although it wasn't statistically significant which suggests a bigger sample. From the qualitative data view, a thematic analysis pointed out how teacher modeling and reflective questioning together with strategic feedback are crucial in raising metacognitive awareness in students. These results were supported by quantitative classroom observations to strengthen the findings. These findings highlight an instructional gap between the teaching of strategies and their application by students, suggesting the need for heightened attention to explicit and extended metacognitive reading instruction. These implications can be carried over to EFL curricula, wherein pedagogical interventions supporting metacognitive regulation might give rise to independent and critical readers. The study promotes the ever-changing discourse on metacognition in language teaching by emphasizing the teacher as the facilitator of reflective and strategic reading in university EFL contexts.

Keywords: Metacognitive strategies, close reading, strategic reading.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

APA: American Psychological Association

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

ER: Extensive Reading

SRL: Self-Regulated Learning

CR: Close Reading

MCS: Metacognitive Strategies

FL: Foreign Language

HE: Higher Education

MCQs: Multiple Choice Questions

METARESTRAP: Metacognitive Reading Strategy Training Program

TGfU: Tactical Games for understanding

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General Introduction

1. Background of the study

Cognition is the ability to learn and deal with information, including the most important mental actions-thinking, solving problems, making decisions, memory, attention, and metacognition. Metacognition, otherwise commonly identified as "thinking about thinking," encompasses both self-awareness and active regulation of one's cognitive processes. It aids a person in planning, monitoring and evaluating his thoughts processes to make learning and problem-solving more effective. While cognition focuses on the execution of mental tasks, metacognition operates above the necessary operations thus monitoring and refining those operations. For instance, a high-school student studying for an examination. As students study, they think of processes like reading and remembering important concepts. More than that, metacognition comes in when they think, "I have to write down the information in my own words to get it better," or "I have to try some practice questions to see if I understand." These strategies, showing metacognitive awareness, encourage the student to look at their own progress and refine their methods. When people are aware of how they learn, they can make notes better and apply them accordingly. For the above reasons, metacognition is an invaluable trait necessary for productive learning, granting individuals confidence, accuracy, and flexibility in their reasoning.

Within reading comprehension, metacognitive strategies are the most important under explicit instruction for using that strategies. According to Flavell (1979), metacognition is defined as a company in the light of monitoring cognitive processes through metacognitive knowledge, which is dependent on experiences, goals, and strategy-used-by an individual. Good readers normally tend to shift amongst reading strategies according to the purpose of reading and the difficulty of the material (Forrest-Pressley & Waller, 1984). Baker and Brown (1980) demonstrated that the teaching of metacognitive strategies such as self-questioning, predicting, clarifying, and summarizing would almost certainly confirm measurable gains in comprehension, especially within the population of poorer readers. The findings emphasize that effective teaching of metacognitive strategies can support students in achieving more productive regulation of reading processes, a central advantage when dealing with complex academic texts.

Metacognitive instruction would benefit the practice of close reading, in which the language, structure, and ideas of a text are interrogated analytically and demanding. Strategies for close reading, in this context, require readers to go beyond the immediate information to underlying meanings, rhetorical choices, and argumentative structures. Much work has been done on how students' metacognitive awareness and strategy-use influence their reading comprehension (Shokrpour & Fotovatian, 2009; Boulware-Gooden et al., 2007).However, while there has been a large research presence about students' use of metacognitive strategies, there has been far less focus on how such strategies have actually been taught and modeled by

the teachers themselves — particularly in university settings where the demands for academic reading are higher. Laçin and Çetin (2022) draw attention to the instructional environments that promote an emphasis on the use of metacognitive strategy, with still few studies exploring how teachers develop students' close reading skills through metacognitive instruction.

Existing literature has indicated that while metacognitive strategies taught may enhance comprehension, little research has focused on how the actual teacher puts the metacognitive strategies in practice in their reading instruction for university students. Most studies usually highlight student awareness and use of metacognitive strategies and benefits derived from them, but they lack understanding of instructional processes from where these effects emerge. For instance, Hess (2004) argues that it is very critical to examine teachers' selection and classroom implementation of metacognitive strategies for improving reading instruction; nevertheless, this line of inquiry is yet under-developed, especially in higher education. A growing concern at higher education levels regarding critical reading and textual analysis requires systematically examining how metacognitive strategies are actively considered and delivered by teachers for students' close reading.

Therefor, this research intends to discover how a university instructor implements metacognitive strategies in instruction in order to improve students in close reading. This study will investigate the teaching styles, thought processes, and practical implementation of metacognitive strategies. The outcomes of this study will aid the development of appropriate strategy-based instruction for teaching critical comprehension and close reading skill to university students.

2. Statement of the problem

Close reading is gaining importance as a critical factor in the advanced reading competition, especially for second language leaning students.According to the School of Writing, Literature, and Film at Oregon State University (2022), close reading is a process of finding as much information as you can in order to form interpretations of the text by examining both what a text says and how it says it, including its language, structure, imagery, and figurative elements. While very many studies attest to the successful effect of metacognitive strategies in development of reading comprehension skills (Flavell, 1979; Baker & Brown, 1980), the inclination has been mostly on the individual use and awareness of these strategies by students. Little focus has thus been given how such strategies are integrated into classroom instruction with teachers, especially at the EFL university levels where reading demands are advanced.

In many EFL classrooms, reading instruction often does concern mainly surface-level outcomes like vocabulary acquisition and factual comprehension. Very little emphasis is placed on the development of any deep or reflective reading practices such as close reading. Evidence

suggests that close reading necessitates metacognitive engagement that is planning, monitoring, and evaluating understanding of the text but available literature rarely investigates how teachers employ these strategies in their teaching practices (Laçin & Çetin, 2022). Most studies seem to focus either on students' metacognitive awareness or on outcomes of strategy training on comprehension without investigating instructional processes that nurture such skills. Such absence is a majorly theoretical and practical gap considering that students would be introduced into metacognitive strategies through effective teaching when it comes to real reading of academic texts.

Moreover, although frameworks such as Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) emphasize combining strategy instruction with motivating support to increase reading engagement (Guthrie et al., 2004), EFL research (especially at the university level) rarely investigates how teachers design and deliver strategy-based close reading instruction. The instruction tends to focus on comprehension questions and literal interpretations, limiting opportunities for metacognitive reflection or strategic text analysis. This sort of instruction may hinder the development of autonomous, critical, and independent readers who are able to manipulate the cognitive demands of close reading.

Hence, the current study targets that gap and investigates the implementation of metacognitive strategies in reading instruction that allows students to engage in close reading by EFL teachers at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. This study concerned itself also with teachers' instructional practices, decision-making processes while planning, monitoring, and evaluating strategies during reading activities and their possible influence on the outcomes of students. These findings thus tend to provide insights into the teacher's role in promoting the use of metacognitive strategies and serve as pedagogical implication for improving reading instruction in Algeria and similar EFL university contexts.

3. Research questions

The following research study undertakes to address the following questions:

RQ1: How do EFL university teachers implement metacognitive strategies in their reading instruction to support students' close reading?

RQ2: What challenges do EFL university teachers face when integrating metacognitive strategies into close reading instruction?

RQ3: Is there a relationship reported between the students' use of close reading strategies with metacognitive strategies in independent reading tasks

4. Research hypotheses

H_0: There is no significant relationship reported between the students' use of close reading strategies with metacognitive strategies in independent reading tasks.

H_1: There is a significant relationship reported between the students' use of close reading strategies with metacognitive strategies in independent reading tasks.

5. Research aims

General aim

This study focuses on how EFL university teachers' implementation of metacognitive strategies affect their students' close reading abilities in terms of instructional practices, challenges, and students' self-reported strategy use. Since metacognition has been known as a fundamental process that promotes deep comprehension of a text, it will also serve as a vantage point to understand teachers' approaches and their students' strategic behaviors as a means to bridge the theory-practice gap. Accordingly, this set of dimensions being investigated aims to provide improvement in the EFL-related pedagogical practices for helping students develop as skilled and autonomous readers through focused metacognitive assistance.

Specific aims

- Examine how EFL university teachers integrate metacognitive strategies into close reading instruction.
- Identify the challenges teachers encounter when implementing metacognitive strategies in close reading lessons.
- Assess the extent to which students independently employ close reading and metacognitive strategies during reading tasks, based on self-reported frequency and proficiency.
- Evaluate the implications of these findings for EFL reading curriculum, with recommendations to enhance metacognitive training and close reading outcomes.

6. Research methodology

6.1.Research approach

This study set out to investigate the implementation of metacognitive strategies by teachers of English as a Foreign Language in the university, emphasizing the students' close reading. A mixed-methods approach was taken to holistically address the research questions . The qualitative data from teachers were supplemented by quantitative data from students, thereby generating a triangulation process that accounts for understanding instruction as well as students' actions comprehensively.

6.2.Population and sample:

To investigate how EFL university teachers implement metacognitive strategies in order to support student's close reading, a sample of (4) reading comprehension teachers were purposively selected from a population of more than (50) EFL teachers at the Department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University. The four teachers were carefully chosen for the sake of collecting data about their implementation of metacognititve strategies in their classes.

In addition, in addition a sample of ... undergraduate students were randomly selected in order to answer a questionnaire about their application of close reading and metacognitive strategies in their reading tasks. The students represented both genders and different academic levels that take reading lessons in their curriculum to ensure diverse perspectives on strategy use.

6.3.Data collection tools

To comprehensively investigate teachers' implementation of metacognitive strategies and students' close reading behaviors, three primary data collection instruments were employed. First, classroom observations took place using a structured observation checklist focusing on teachers' modeling of metacognitive strategies as well as students' subsequent use of these strategies during close reading tasks. Each observation lasted 90 minutes and was documented with field notes in order to capture the instructional strategies and student behavior patterns with respect to engagement.

The second instrument used was semi-structured interviewing of EFL teachers with 8 open-ended questions. Interviews were for the actual teachers' reasons for using a given strategy, how they perceived the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies, and challenges experienced when implementing close reading instruction. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed to facilitate the effective qualitative analysis.

Finally, a students questionnaire was administered to student to assess self-reported strategy use. The instrument included a likert scale with two sections, a close reading behavior and a metacognitive strategy use the questionnaire was validated through face validity by an expert and was piloted with 7 students to ensure reliability before full implementation.

6.4.Data analysis procedures

In processing the quantitative data all compiled from the students' questionnaire, the services of the SPSS program were availed in performing descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were computed, namely, means and standard deviations, to evaluate the frequency of students' use of metacognitive strategies and close reading behaviors. For inferential analysis, Pearson's correlation was used to study the relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, thematic analysis was employed to analyze and interpret the qualitative data from teacher interviews and classroom observations.

7. Significance of the study

This investigation holds significance by systematically documenting how EFL university teachers implement metacognitive strategies in close reading instruction and how students report using these strategies; this serves as a foundation to understand current practices in authentic classroom contexts. The findings, though not of an intervention nature, will map the prevailing instruction approaches, identify potential gaps between teacher methods and student behaviors, and create a benchmark for further experimental inquiry into metacognitive strategy training. Besides capturing these dynamics through diversified modes, the study contributes empirical evidence to the EFL literacy discussions and inspires the next pedagogical development through a reference point for researchers and educators inquiring into metacognition in close reading.

8. The documentation style

The current study was carried out according to the American Psychological Association's (hereafter APA) seventh edition documentation conventions. This has been the standard format as it mirrors the conventions of educational research and applied linguistics, hence the description of the format in favor of clarity, consistency, and academic rigor in citation and reference and manuscript organization. No institution or discipline deviation from APA (7th edition) guidelines applied. All aspects of this manuscript-in (text citations, reference lists, and formatting) are strictly in conformity with the specifications.

9. Demystification of terms

To clear up the definition of some key terms that will be used in the continued research, the following section will give the operational definitions of the terms:

Metacognitive strategies: Metacognitive strategies allows students to deliberate on and reflect to some extent on their own thinking. Their position as learners makes them aware of their learning processes, thus putting them in their own position as owners of their learning. It increases the self-regulation capability and individualistic ways of self managing motivation for learning. Metacognitive activities include planning how to approach a learning task, monitoring comprehension and evaluating progress.

Close reading: intensive analytical reading process, where participant learners get immersed in the texts several times to extract layers of meaning, concentrating on textual evidence, language choices, and structural elements. This study speaks of the focused practice by EFL students utilizing strategies such as annotation, questioning, and summarization, to develop reading comprehension.

Self-regulated learning: The broader process where learners independently plan, monitor, and evaluate their reading comprehension, of which metacognitive strategies form a core component.

10.Structure of the dissertation

This present study is divided into two principal parts. The first part constitutes the theoretical background, while the second part encompasses the fieldwork, which includes the analysis, interpretation, and findings of this investigation.

Initially, the first two chapters constitute the theoretical portion. The first chapter highlights the first variable in the present study, that is, metacognitive strategies in the reading classroom. Basically, this chapter will introduce basic definitions of cognition, metacognition, trace their development within the framework of metacognitive theory, and give some of the most recognized models of metacognitive components. Furthermore, it will distinguish between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation, with particular reference to their relevance to EFL reading comprehension. Finally, previous research studies noted for discussing the implementation of metacognitive strategies in reading instruction, especially in the close-reading context, will be reviewed.

the second chapter examines the secondary variable of close reading. This chapter defines close reading comprehensively, highlights its essential characteristics and processes, and elucidates its significance to EFL academic settings. Additionally, the chapter discusses various methodologies for teaching close reading and reviews teachers' perceptions about its effectiveness. Emphasis is placed on the intersection between close reading and instruction in metacognitive strategies, thereby forming the theoretical backdrop on which this study is anchored.

The third chapter discusses the research methodology. It thus explains the reasons for and selection of specific means of data collection: classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student questionnaires. It sets out clearly the processes involved in data collection and analytical approaches; thematic analysis for qualitative data and statistical methods for quantitative data. This chapter also addresses ethical considerations and the steps taken towards valid and reliable research. It also presents, analyzes, and interprets the collected data, examining the findings in relation to the research questions. This section compares and contrasts the results from different data sources, highlighting points of convergence and divergence.

Chapter One

Metacognitive Strategies

Chapter One: Metacognitive Strategies

Introduction

Metacognition has gained an important place in educational literature, especially regarding reading instruction. It refers to learners' awareness of and control over their own thinking and learning processes, thus being able to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own comprehension while reading. Therefore, these metacognitive strategies are vital for students on their way to becoming active and reflective readers able to interact purposefully with texts, changing their reading processes as necessary for academic success.

The efficacy of metacognitive strategies for reading comprehension has long been substantiated by research. However, most studies have tended to concentrate on students' personal application and awareness of these strategies. On the contrary, little research has been directed at how teachers implement and model metacognitive strategies in the EFL university classroom. This is significant for systematically guiding advanced reading skills such as close reading an intensive analytical process whereby students examine a text rigorously in terms of its content and structure.

This chapter aims at provide a theoretical background to understand metacognitive strategies in reading classrooms. The chapter presents general concepts of cognition and metacognition, and introduces the significant models and theories, as well as components of metacognition. The chapter will describe the metacognitive strategies commonly applied in reading instruction, organized under planning strategies, monitoring strategies, and evaluating strategies, and will subsequently review studies relevant to their implementation in the classroom in relation mainly to EFL and close reading contexts.

1.1. Cognition and metacognition

1.1.1. Cognition

Cognition is at the very heart of human learning and intellectual development. It refers to the mental activities that underlie the acquisition, retention, retrieval, and use of knowledge. These include perception, memory, reasoning, attention, problem-solving, decision-making, and language comprehension. Gentner and Goldin-Meadow (2003) note the fact that language is an integral aspect of cognition, emphasizing that most human intellectual functioning is mediated by language. The knowledge of cognition is, in fact, most relevant for education, for it promises the leading answers to questions on how teaching-learning practices can be made effective by understanding how people process information and solve problems or make decisions.

From a historical perspective, the term *cognition* originates from the Latin word *cognoscere*, meaning "to know" or "to recognize" (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). Cognition was originally used to refer to how people perceive the environment around them. Cognition is defined in Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.) as "conscious mental activities; the

activities of thinking, understanding, learning, and remembering" Similarly, Bayne et al. (2019) expound on this in their argument that a condition or process is cognitive if it refers to basic mental abilities of thinking, reasoning, perceiving, imagining, and remembering. Cognition thus enables humans to make sense of the external world, process external information, construct knowledge, and communicate individual experiences to others.

In the realm of language education, cognition plays a vital role in all comprehension and production tasks. According to Hennessey (1999), higher-order cognitive skills, such as the coordinating and reasoning of intellectual resources, are essential in promoting effective learning. The engagement of cognitive ability by the learner allows processes to take place whereby he/she understands, interprets, and constructs meaning from complex academic texts. As Thenmozhi (2019) explains, cognition refers to the ability by which individuals metamorphose sensory input into meaningful information as a result of mental processes like perceiving, storing, and retrieving. It is due to all these factors that cognition becomes very important in the particular case of EFL reading, where the learner has to decode as well as critically engage with the information requiring constant activation of cognitive processes.

1.1.2. Metacognition

Metacognition, the term, was coined by John Flavell-a developmental psychologist from the U.S.-in the late 1970s to refer to a learner's awareness and regulation of one's own thinking processes. As defined by Flavell (1979), “Metacognitive knowledge is that segment of your (a child's, an adult's) stored world knowledge that has to do with people as cognitive creatures and with their diverse cognitive tasks, goals, actions, and experiences." (p. 906). What is often referred to as metacognition could loosely be viewed as "thinking about thinking," which encompasses both knowing how one learns and the strategies employed to monitor one's cognitive activities in learning (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Livingston, 2003).

Metacognition is typically divided into two interconnected components: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation. Metacognitive knowledge is awareness about one's abilities with cognition, such as knowledge about how to use strategies for learning, and understanding when and why to use them (Schraw & Moshman, 1995). Within this element of knowledge are three kinds: declarative or knowing what; procedural or knowing how; and conditional or knowing when and why. In contrast, metacognitive regulation constitutes processes that learners employ in planning, monitoring and assessing their learning (Veenman et al., 2006). Through such regulation skills, learners make decisions about how to approach a task, track their comprehension or progress, and assess the effective strategies they used.

Metacognition is fundamental to the emergence of independent, reflective, and effective learners. Research shows that students who apply metacognitive practices are doing better than their peers in school (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009). Students being taught how to use a variety of metacognitive strategies, including self-questioning, predicting, summarizing, and evaluating

their understanding, has resulted in dramatic gains in reading comprehension, problem-solving, and self-regulated learning (Teng, 2020). Close reading, a type of learning where students not only know basic comprehension but also critically analyze the organization, language, and implications of a text, is, therefore, an activity where metacognition is especially prominent (Veenman, 2017). Thus, through the promotion of metacognitive awareness, educators can teach learners to manage their learning by monitoring their reading comprehension and reflecting on cognitive strategies.

1.1.3. Historical Development of Metacognition within Learning Theories

The study of metacognition appeared as a branch of cognitive psychology roughly in the second half of the twentieth century. Particularly given John H. Flavell's foundational work, metacognition holds Flavell's (1979) coinage of the term, which he characterized as one's knowledge about and regulation of his own cognitive activities. Flavell's study indicated that cognitive monitoring and self-awareness were parts of children's learning and problem solving, setting the stage for future research regarding self-regulated learning and strategy-based instruction.

Over following decades, metacognition was elaborated and refined by researchers on the basis of varied learning theories. Brown (1987), following Flavell's model, stressed the instructional implications of metacognitive strategies particularly relevant in reading for comprehension and problem-solving. Brown urged that metacognitive skills such as planning on how to approach learning tasks, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating the success of cognitive strategies were teachable and essential to effective learning. Again at this time, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, though not called metacognition, provided an important theoretical background to emphasize the need for learners to internalize cognitive and regulatory processes by social interaction which in turn would impact the further evolution of metacognitive studies.

Upon the advancement of the field of metacognition, researchers like Schraw and Moshman (1995) proposed structured models of metacognition as they define between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation, where conceptual frameworks have also been developed as to how learners acquire and use these abilities. Later on, metacognition became a close associate to the self-regulated learning theories that Zimmerman (2002) viewed as learners being successful upon controlling the cognitive, motivational, and behavioral workings of those academic tasks. Thus the self-regulated learning-related frameworks brought metacognitive aspects like goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation directly linked to academic accomplishment and lifelong learning capacities. All these developments gave prominence to metacognition as an essential feature of modern educational psychology, especially in relation to higher education and complex reading skills like close reading (Teng, 2020; Veenman, 2017).

1.2. Metacognitive Theory and Models

1.2.1. Overview of Metacognitive Theory

Metacognitive theory originated due to cognitive psychology's blossoming realization of the importance of self-awareness and control in one's mental activities while engaged in learning. John Flavell's (1979) pioneering work had established metacognition as its own domain within cognitive developmental psychology, emphasizing the fact that not only are individuals engaged in cognitive activities such as thinking, remembering, and problem-solving, but they are also aware of and in control of these activities. This awareness and control of the mental processes are what characterize metacognition. Flavell's conception of metacognition held that metacognition includes "metacognitive knowledge", which is knowledge of one's cognitive processes, and "metacognitive regulation", which is the capability of monitoring, controlling, and adjusting those cognitive processes while engaged on learning tasks.

Later theorists expanded on the initial framework by Flavell by closely examining the effect of metacognitive processes on academic performance, the ability to solve problems, and theoretical underpinnings in decision making. Brown (1987) contended about metacognition in executive control; thus, he imposed that learners with cognized thinking and active self-regulation get better at solving problems. Schraw and Moshman (1995) further developed metacognitive theory through a very popular model splitting metacognition into two core dimensions: metacognitive knowledge (declarative) procedural knowledge and conditional knowledge with metacognitive regulation planning, monitoring, and evaluating. It captures the interplay between knowing about the strategies and being able to put them into practice during learning activities.

The recent theorists have given a broader view, integrating metacognition into the extensive educational psychology frameworks bringing it down to self-regulated learning (SRL) theories (Zimmerman, 2002), and being part of the higher-order thinking skills like reasoning, problem-solving, and critical reading. As argued by Teng (2020), metacognition has so broadened-from trying to explain individuals as capable of managing their own cognition to explicating how explicit metacognitive instruction might enhance performance, particularly regarding complex tasks such as reading comprehension in EFL environments. Modern metacognitive theory positions learners actively and depicts a more conscious and, therefore, planning, monitoring, and evaluating their understanding in the learning process-a more independent, reflective, and strategic learner.

1.2.2. Major Models of Metacognitive Components

1.2.2.1. Flavell’s Model of Cognitive Monitoring

Chapter One: Metacognitive Strategies

Flavell's (1979) seminal work laid the foundation for understanding metacognition. His important work sets the conceptualization of metacognition. He defined metacognition as the "knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena," thereby stressing that one can think about their thoughts (Flavell, 1979, p. 906). Flavell's model has been a key influence on instructional design. Zohar and Dori (2012) pointed out that higher-order thinking is fostered by metacognitive training, thereby promoting transfers between learning contexts. In addition, metacognitive instruction in content areas such as science and reading have led to significant increases in student achievement. Within physical education settings, promotion of students' metacognitive regulation has also proved effective. In Karpudewan and Ahmed's (2022) research, students trained in planning, monitoring, and evaluating during tactical games for understanding (TGfU) adopted not only improvement in performance but also refinement of reflective thinking skills. Flavell's schema divides metacognition into two basic components: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation (Schraw & Moshman, 1995; Liontas, 2018).

Metacognitive knowledge:

Metacognitive knowledge is knowing one's own cognitive processes. It can be divided into three types: person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge (Schraw & Moshman, 1995). Person knowledge is awareness of one by one's learning styles and limitations. Task knowledge is understanding the demand of a task. Strategy knowledge is concerning knowledge of cognitive strategies to help learning or comprehension. Such knowledge, as stated by Schraw & Moshman (1995), this type is relatively stable, early developing, and largely individual difference influenced. For instance, a language learner with the self-knowledge of having difficulty remembering vocabulary (person knowledge) may approach a new reading task with flashcards or retrieval practice (strategy knowledge), anticipating that the task will involve high demands on memory (task knowledge).In contrast to the English-speaking world, Li and Munby (1996) found out that metacognitive knowledge is crucial to reading practice for successful learners. Their study showed that those very learners tend to consciously acknowledge their limitations and strategically select a reading method to manage cognitive load during comprehension tasks.

Metacognitive regulation:

Flavell had also stressed the regulatory processes of metacognition in respect to the real-time control and orchestration of cognition (Flavell, 1979). Such processes include also planning,

monitoring, and evaluating learning activities. In this context, executive functions enable learners to adapt their cognitive strategies according to feedback and the demands of the task. Schraw and Moshman parenthesized that metacognitive regulation is more dynamic and situation-dependent than metacognitive knowledge. It calls for learners' active engagement in thinking about their learning such as determining the effectiveness of a strategy and judging their level of comprehension. Research by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) illustrates how second-language learners use these skills in practical learning environments: those learners who planned their approach before an activity, monitored their progress through it, and made an evaluation afterward obtained better comprehension and retention results.

1.2.2.2. Brown's Model of Metacognition

Ann L. Brown's model of metacognition offers a foundational framework that establishes the clear distinction between knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. In her classic work published in 1977, she brought out the idea which states that metacognition is knowing not only one's own cognitive strengths and limitations, knowing when to apply the strategy, however, knowing how and why to apply the specific strategy; a notion that she tagged as "knowing when, where, and how to remember." Brown classified knowledge of cognition into three types: declarative knowledge, which refers to knowledge of one's capabilities; procedural knowledge, which refers to knowing how to employ strategies; and conditional knowledge, which refers to knowing when and why to use them. These will help learners assess learning environments and choose appropriate cognitive tools. The further indication is that students with high metacognitive knowledge tend to have more realistic performance expectations and adapt better toward academic challenges across subjects (Stephanou & Mpiontini, 2017).

Apart from cognition awareness, Brown relies on regulatory mechanisms to govern learning actions in real time or during performance. This includes planning (setting goals and strategies prior to learning), monitoring (checking comprehension and overall progress during the tasks), and evaluating (assessing the performance afterwards to optimize future action). As found by Brown (1977), these regulation processes go with cognitive knowledge in producing an independent learner able to adapt. Furthermore, Dinsmore, Alexander, and Loughlin (2008) add to this structure by stating that metacognitive regulation is indeed a dynamic activity, continually being adjusted by performance feedback. While claiming that regulation has often found itself within other larger constructs such as self-regulation, they by saying make a case for its uniqueness as a necessary activity in any successful form of learning, especially as applied to complex learning environments.

In contrast to other works on metacognition, Brown's work highlights metamemory (knowledge and control of memory functions) as a unique portal through which to understanding the concept of metacognition in a wider sense. The research conducted by Brown demonstrated that some early forms of metamemory are indeed displayed even by young children; however,

their regulation of those processes develops along with age and experience (Brown, 1977). This emphasis on memory processes opened up a lot of avenues for applying metacognitive theory to learning and instruction over all age groups. In recent years, studies conducted by Stephanou and Mpiontini (2017) as well as Dinsmore et al. (2008) uphold that metacognitive awareness and regulation play a significant part in creating learning outcomes when learners are explicitly taught to think about and manage their thinking processes. Brown's model thus remains as a bedrock in understanding how metacognition affects academic achievement through informed, strategic, purposeful, and self-directed learning.

1.3. Metacognitive Strategies in Reading Instruction

1.3.1. Definition and Purpose

Metacognitive strategies equip readers with the tools to control and direct their reading behavior. Together, they focus on thinking about one's own thinking-a concept that has been defined by Flavell (1979) who called metacognition knowledge and regulation of one's cognitive activities. In the reading context, this is the ability to assess one's own understanding, identify difficulties, and apply remedies. Such skills are at the heart of successful comprehension, especially in the contexts of academic and second-language reading.

Flavell (1979) proposed that the turning point in cognitive growth lies in metacognitive development. This includes knowledge of three sub-types: declarative knowledge (knowing what), procedural knowledge (knowing how), and conditional knowledge (knowing when and why). Together, this awareness provides the basis for purposeful, flexible, and adaptive behavior while reading.

Whether in the effective approach to reading instruction, metacognitive strategies are employed as a bridge between passive reading and active comprehension. As indicated in a reading-from-the-Read-Naturally website: Identification of comprehension as the last and most complex stage of the five reading components is determined by the self-monitoring-reflection activities of students. Fluent and easily-word-recognizing readers are also lacking the necessary metacognitive ability to track and make meaning out of what they read, resulting in superficial comprehension (Read Naturally n.d.).

Also, they are especially important for second-language learners and students from disciplines where content load and strange vocabulary can be intimidating. According to Li and Munby (1996), academic reading is task-oriented in dealing with cognitive load, especially where linguistic-cultural barriers render easy comprehension impossible. Metacognitive strategies can enable such learners to task themselves in order to build comprehension and sustain their efforts when faced with difficulties.

1.3.2. Commonly Used Metacognitive Strategies in Reading

The most effective readers metacognitively involve themselves in the process of reading. Such engagement consists of all three phases of reading: before, during and after reading. These activities include three interrelated and overlapping types: planning, monitoring and evaluating. The continual flexible use of such strategies changes reading behavior from that of a static act to one which is dynamic, reflective and aimed at achieving goals.

1.3.2.1. Planning Strategies

Planning strategies serve as the groundwork for comprehension. Effective readers engage in mental preparation before even starting to read. They activate background knowledge, consider the text's purpose, preview content, and set specific goals. Such foresight marshals attention and prepares the reader for cognitive challenges that may come along.

Flavell (1979) defines planning as the choosing and arrangement of strategies relative to the characteristics of the task. Skilled readers do not only plan what to read but also plan how to read. For example, a reader might choose to read a difficult article in sections, or maybe note a few key thoughts along the way.

The planning is an executive function which, as Brown (1977) maintains, improves by practice and feedback. In a novice, especially a child or an L2 learner, the teacher's modeling of setting goals for reading, predicting a text structure, or formulating guiding questions may bring advantage.

Li & Munby (1996) observed that planning is particularly important for second language academic readers. Participants in their qualitative study reported the use of mental frameworks to prepare for academic texts by scanning headings and pre-reading introductions. This anticipatory work lightened the load of the denser text, which made the reader sift through with the meat of the content from the very start.

1.3.2.2. Monitoring Strategies

The metacognitive process most active and ongoing involves the monitoring of understanding during reading as it stands a temporal position between understanding and comprehension, namely confusion, In fact, corrective tasks may involve either rereading, slowing down, or stopping to identify vocabulary one does not know or even altering predictions and expectations.

The reciprocal teaching model of Palincsar and Brown (1984) firmly held the foundation of teaching strategy for monitoring. The four principal activity components, questioning, summarization, prediction, and clarification, are carried out through guidance from student-led discussions; so students engage in all four core activities. These activities help to evaluate understanding and show how to face difficulties in real time. They write: "Monitoring one's

progress while reading, to test whether one can pinpoint and retain important material, provides a check that comprehension is progressing smoothly" (p. 121).

Many authors, such as Magnusson et al. (2018), warn that students read without seriously engaging with the meaning-making process. In Swedish classrooms, comprehension strategies could be found, but there was little sustained explicit instruction by teachers on how to monitor comprehension. Hence, many of the students were unaware of when and how to correct their errors while reading.

Monitoring should not be taken merely as a problem control, but it should also ensure continuous engagement with the learning activity while avoiding cognitive drift. Karpicke et al. (2009) seem to indicate that students who monitor their study activities by engaging in self-testing or restating passages aloud are better able to retain and comprehend material over sustained periods.

1.3.2.3. Evaluating Strategies

The process of analyzing is only done at the end of a reading, at which point a reader must think about what he has learned so far, how well he has used the strategies, and to what end he has achieved with reading. Evaluation strategies for reading would often enable a reader to determine what he has learned, what areas are missing in his knowledge, and how to approach reading in a different manner in the future.

The study of Korotaeva (2014) highlights that evaluation covers all aspects of summarizing, comparing the expected and actual results, and judging the clarity and reliability of the text. An investigation of students pursuing a dual major in education and psychology revealed that comparing a student's perceived learning against what was expected led to retention of more content and high self-regulated learning behaviors.

Evaluations are also linked to metacognitive confidence. In Brown's observation (1977), readers that regularly evaluate develop more insight into their strengths and weaknesses. This allows them to transfer successful strategies into new contexts while avoiding the repetitious use of ineffective ones.

Retrieval practice, self-testing and summarizing, according to Karpicke et al. (2009), is one of the most effective evaluative strategies. For this reason, many students shy away from it because it is effortful and exposes what they do not yet know. But, as the authors state, "The act of retrieving information from memory has a potent effect on learning, enhancing long-term retention of the tested information" (p. 471).

Finally, Li and Munby (1996) report that second-language learners regularly used a variety of post-reading strategies, such as journaling and paraphrasing, to reinforce comprehension and

reflect on challenges. Through these reflective activities, students could engage at a deeper level in their work while also preparing for future academic tasks.

1.4. Metacognitive Awareness in Reading Comprehension

Metacognitive awareness, defined as an individual's awareness and control of their own cognitive processes, is an important piece of the puzzle for reading comprehension, especially in the contexts of academic and second language (L2) studies. Planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's reading behavior are part of Metacognition, which allows readers to come at texts strategically. This awareness is "considered as the key factor for proficient strategic reading since learners with metacognitive awareness could consciously direct the reasoning process and use strategies effectively while reading and they can access and apply these strategies and reasoning to future reading tasks easily" (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2012, p. 894).

The theory of metacognition has two major components: knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition (Baker and Brown, 1984; Schraw and Dennison, 1994). Knowledge of cognition refers to knowledge of strategies and conditions for using those strategies, which is often referred to as declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge. On the other hand, regulation includes planning, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating effectiveness. Carrell (1989) stated: “students who think they use those strategies considered most productive (i.e., perceived strategy use) actually do read through context better and understand more than do those who do not think they use such strategy” (p. 123).

Wang (2015) supports this framework, emphasizing that metacognitive knowledge includes “to readers’ knowledge of their cognitive resources, which contains three components of declarative knowledge (“knowing that”), procedural knowledge (“knowing how”), and conditional knowledge (“knowing when and why”) for arising readers’ awareness of appropriate strategy use” (p. 28).

Research has investigated the roles of strategic awareness and self-monitoring in skilled reading. Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) emphasize that "strategic awareness and monitoring of the comprehension process are critically important aspects of skilled reading" (p. 432). They elaborate on reading as a "cognitive enterprise" in L1 or L2, with a requirement for readers to purposefully management appropriate strategies based on their understanding of the task (p. 433). Skilled readers, unlike novices, "would engage in planful thinking, flexible strategies, and periodic self-monitoring," as opposed to an unskilled reader, who "often seem oblivious to these strategies and the need to use them"(p.433).

Furthermore, Yüksel and Yüksel (2012) found that “skilled readers are more able to reflect on and monitor cognitive processes while reading” (p. 895), confirming that metacognitive awareness differentiates strong from weak readers.

Chapter One: Metacognitive Strategies

Various instructional approaches, including the think-aloud protocol, play an important role in enhancing learners' metacognitive awareness. Wang (2015) conducted think-aloud tasks with Taiwanese EFL students, wherein students indicated that “reading aloud and thinking aloud help me much to distinguish the uncomprehended parts in the text from what I have understood” (p. 33). In Wang’s study, participants reported that their awareness of their reading strategies increased following the intervention, “Part of the change needed is then for focused attention on these issues with an instructional methodology integrating the think-aloud technique for strategy acquisition and gradually increasing metacognitive awareness of strategy use, so promoting learners’ reading performance in both their reading for meaning and learning from reading” (p. 36).

These findings affirm earlier assertions by Carrell (1989), who highlighted the need for explicit instruction in strategy use, stating that “inefficient readers who enhance their awareness of the nature of reading and of their own reading strategies will ultimately be better readers” (p. 128)

Metacognitive awareness is undoubtedly compensatory for second language learners when they face obstacles in the language system. Goh (1997) notes that successful listeners and readers in L2 monitor their understanding consistently and effectively and "realize what effective strategies to execute, how to use them, and when and where to apply and evaluate them" (Wang, 2015, p. 29).

Carrell (1989) similarly determined that more proficient L2 readers used top-down, global strategies to predict the content of a reading passage and recognize the structure of a text. In contrast, the less proficient readers were found to be more dependent on local bottom-up decoding, often without quite being aware of their more general comprehension goals, which Carrell described as the “short-circuit” phenomenon in L2 reading (p. 128).

Considering the paramount importance of strategic awareness, educators should incorporate metacognitive instruction into reading curricula. Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) suggest that tools such as the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) can be used by educators to assess students' awareness of global, problem-solving, and support strategies and plan instruction accordingly. Besides, "Part of the change needed is then for focused attention on these issues with an instructional methodology integrating the think-aloud technique for strategy acquisition and gradually increasing metacognitive awareness of strategy use, so promoting learners’ reading performance in both their reading for meaning and learning from reading" (Wang, 2015, p. 36).

Ultimately, teaching students reflection on reading strategies leads to an extension of transferring those skills across diverse contexts and texts. Metacognitive readers are therefore not only much better prepared to meet academic reading tasks, but will also develop to become independent learners capable of accommodating various literacy demands.

1.5. Metacognition and close reading

close reading is an interpretive practice while it calls for conscientious infiltration within a text's structure, content, and implied meaning. That is, while it is present in much literary analysis, there are other implications in academic circles for close reading (it can be critical comprehension, interpretation of, and of course evaluating textual claims offers. This calling for metacognition) or else "thinking about thinking" is an important resource or ability for such interpretive depth. It is an awareness reader has of their cognitive processes and their regulation of those processes before, during, and after reading (Flavell, 1979; Furnes & Norman, 2015). Cognition-regulation is foundational for close reading, which is often predicated on a co-assess and readjustment between often ambiguous and overwhelmingly dense texts.

According to Pressley and Gaskins (2006), “good readers are massively strategic before, during, and after reading” and they “construct a meaning that is partially in the text and partially in reaction to the text based on the reader’s prior knowledge and dispositions” (p. 100). It describes the kind of involved, revising engagement toward words that close reading is demanding all of these activities. In these actions, readers will often employ previewing, questioning, inferencing, and rereading-all of which are cognitive operations relying on monitoring one's metacognitive.

Close reading is characteristically underscored by its attention focused on comprehension with all subtlety- something inherently linked with what Pressley and Afflerbach call ‘constructively responsive reading’. It involves that reading construct interpretations and integrate prior knowledge when evaluating coherence on the passage (Pressley & Gaskins, 2006). In their observations, skilled readers frequently pause to “consider the various parts of the text (the introduction, examples, final remarks) and their relationships to one another” (p. 101), which is clearly given in close reading's purpose of structural and rhetorical awareness.

Enhancing metacognitive training would appear to significantly empower such proficiencies. Mohseni, Seifoori, and Ahangari (2020) demonstrated in their research that students' comprehension regarding tough texts, mostly the argumentative and cause-effect genre, could be increased by metacognitive strategy training and becoming aware of critical thinking skills. They argued that readers who develop awareness of strategies “can try to infer the meaning of the text by using metacognitive strategies and critical thinking skills” instead of halting their comprehension when challenges arise (p. 2). Hence actually this kind of reading has rendered the readers capable of the kind of prolonged interpretive work required by such texts.

The METARESTRAP intervention system named as Metacognitive Reading Strategy Training Program applied by Razı and Çubukçu (2014) also included the objective of improving clarity for students regarding aspects of textual cohesion, coherence, and structure. They found that "METARESTRAP significantly fostered reading comprehension skills by providing

awareness of metacognition along with declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about metacognitive reading strategies" (p. 288). The three forms of such knowledge who apply it, how to use such strategies, and when to do so mirror the deeper attention and flexible engagement that close reading involves.

Wolfgang Iser (1978), in his work The Act of Reading, offers a theoretical link between metacognitive awareness and aesthetic reaction. He argues that meaning in literature is cocreated by the reader's interpretive interaction with it. Hence, "The reader's act of 'realizing' or interpreting a text, of making it consciously one's own, whatever the period of its creation, is the focal point" (as cited in O'Hara, 1979, p. 88). This interpretive realization refers exactly to the metacognitive orchestration, anticipation, reflection, synthesis-which both Iser and contemporary literacy scholars note to be essential for understanding complex texts.

Metacognitive support is effective for fostering critical engagement, even in populations that may have trouble with reading, like students with dyslexia. Furnes and Norman (2015) say that "dyslexic readers showed insight into their reading problems, but less general knowledge of how to approach text reading" (p. 273). When appropriate scaffolding was provided, however, there was no difference in their ability to judge their reading compared to that of typical readers. Thus, the interpretive demands of close reading can be within reach for struggling readers with metacognitive support.

In addition, Abromitis (1994) maintains that any instruction in understanding needs to train regulatory skill and strategic flexibility in students: "A metacognitive analysis of the task puts the reader in control of the situation; it encourages flexible and adaptive thinking, and if necessary, modification of the reading process to fit the known purpose for reading" (p. 8). This kind of reading adjustment is also critical to close reading, which frequently requires returning and focusing on changing meaning and structure.

Taken together, these studies point at the fact that the close reading does not solely emphasize textual attention but also metacognitive awareness of how the reader is processing, judging, and responding to the particular material. Through direct instruction and reflective practice, readers can be trained to develop both self-awareness and strategic command necessary to engage in close reading regardless of reading proficiency.

Conclusion

This chapter has set the basis for a beginning description of metacognition, which has been considered an important part of learning and understanding, specifically with regard to the teaching of reading. Based on Flavell's early work, metacognition has emerged as both the understanding of one's cognitive processes and the ability to control these processes via strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Thus, the model put forth by Flavell and later theoretically refined by others, such as Schraw and Moshman, stands for a two dimensional model, wherein metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation are defined and both are essential for an effective process of self-directed learning. Metacognitive strategies have also shown a significant impact on students' reading comprehension in the area of reading instruction, as most of them are language learners. Statistics have shown that students who use metacognitive strategies become better readers as well as independent and reflective learners. These findings suggest an increasing agreement that metacognitive instruction should mark academic practice. This chapter has, at last, proven the conceptual and practical importance of metacognition as a framework to understand how learners think about, control, and optimize their learning processes. A few of these arguments set the stage for the following chapters, which will concentrate more on the research on metacognitive awareness and reading comprehension and provide empirical evidence for its integration in educational settings.

Chapter Two

Close Reading

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Chapter Two: Close Reading

Introduction

In a time information overload when the learner is frequently confronted with demanding texts in all fields, the act of deeply and critically reading became an essential skill. Because of that, close reading has developed into a prominent instructional approach aimed at training readers to distill shades of meaning, analyze textual structures, and engage in interpretive thinking. This chapter will take on the theoretical foundation and practice of close reading, placing it and its interaction with metacognitive strategies for the development of genuinely self-thoughtful and critically-thinking readers. At its raw foundation, close reading entails an intense concentration on the text itself, on its language, on its structure, on its meaning, and on refusing to move toward premature generalizations with personal answers. The process involves purposeful repeated readings of the text, with each reading aimed at unfolding deeper grasping of the layers. Therefore, in a strict sense, close reading is technically aligned with metacognitive processes; it is a learned method or discipline that involves rigorous cognition. Readers have to lay out a plan for reading a text, monitor what they comprehend while reading it, and evaluate the interpretation of information once they finish reading. These are exactly the things that serve as components of metacognitive regulation in the previous chapter. Furthermore, close reading intersects with many aspects of teaching under current academic standards, such as the Common Core, which stress evidence-based interpretation, vocabulary development, and critical thinking. Closing the loop with, say, a metacognitive perspective puts the method of close reading behind comprehension, as well as behind awareness of learners regarding their own processes. This kind of awareness becomes paramount in settings where students are made to negotiate disciplinary texts and develop transferable avenues toward life-long learning. This chapter will discuss those basics of close reading, their application in classroom practice, and their relationship with metacognitive instruction. Drawing on current research and pedagogical models, this discussion illustrates the potential of close reading as both a reading strategy and a cognitive scaffold, allowing students to be strategic, metacognitive, and resilient readers.

Defining close reading

Close reading stands as a thorough, sustained methodology for interspersing the act of deep attention to linguistic, structural, and rhetorical features within the text. Where general reading, for instance, aims at grasping content or overviewing themes, close reading is a deliberate and recursive focus on the construction of meaning within the language of the text itself. It is an interpretative act, worthy of its words and worthy of its words: It shall not engage prematurely in generalizations, paraphrases, or draw from contextual or biographical information.

In educational contexts, close reading is often defined in pragmatic terms. Flygare (2018) offers a clear, practice-oriented definition, describing close reading as “a way to drill down into a selected text and approach what an author is doing on a deep level” (p. 3). He emphasizes that

the goal is to observe the author's formal choices, such as diction, syntax, imagery, and structure, and their cumulative effects on meaning. Close reading was historically conceived as the central method of literary study during the early 20th century under the sway of New Criticism. Scolars like I. A. Richards and Cleanth Brooks had come to formulate a manner of reading that foregrounded and emphasized the internal structure of the literary text to the utter exclusion of all historical dimension and all reference to the author. DuBois (2003) observes that this school instead engendered a mode of reading which sought to extract complexity and ambiguity not from external references but from the structure and language of the text itself. Here, the text is treated as an autonomous aesthetic realm, and it is now the task of the reader to uncover the intricacies of that realm through disciplined attention to language.

Modern scholars, meanwhile, have emphasized that close reading cannot simply be considered a formalist enterprise. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2006) insisted that close reading cannot be considered apart from ideological and rhetorical questions: One cannot not close read.... For any given interpretive act of addressing a text's language does necessarily pose to the very subject accountable for the interpretation the question of power, identity, and meaning, "language is there because we want to touch another. The infant invents a language. The parents learn it. By way of this transaction, the infant enters a linguistic system that has a history before its birth and will continue to have a history after its death."(p. 1611). This particular strain of close reading puts stress on different questions about the texts, implying that scrutiny of language itself may reveal the supposition embedded in cultural and philosophical texts.

Similarly, Battersby (2020) argues that close reading today involves more than linguistic sensitivity; it also involves more epistemological and affective dimensions. Close reading demands not just technical skill but a willingness to dwell in ambiguity and uncertainty, and to engage emotionally with the text's provocations. This perspective considers close reading as an act of critical inquiry that respects a text's resistance to fixed meaning-a mode of reading that embraces complexity rather than seeks to resolve it.

In teaching practice, close reading is essentially a set of scaffolded procedures that include analyzing texts in order to engage students in a meaningful way with difficult ones. According to Dollins (2016), the processes of close reading include such things as rereading, annotating, questioning, and discussing as a means of considering how thematic material is developed, what an author meant, or what effect was intended rhetorically. She emphasizes that close reading enables readers to become curious investigators of the text rather than passive recipients of information, "Close reading is a process that helps readers understand both the sur- face and the deeper levels of complex text. The premise of close reading involves multiple interactions with text to examine what it says, how the author has said it, and what it means (p. 1).

The task of close reading thus never ceased to exist alongside the arts. It has also lived and breathed alongside the humanities and social sciences, where critical analysis of texts is

necessary. According to Taylor et al. (2018), close reading permits scholars to attend to micro-phenomena of texts, even as fields dominated by large-scale taxonomies and distant reading methodologies. Their multiscalar approach is one that integrates both scales to assess how close reading can reveal the subtle nuances of language, narrative, and representation in historically relevant texts.

Crucially, close reading remains foundational to critical thinking. According to Elder and Paul (2009), it forms one of the core components of the so-called “substantive literacy”: to read, write, and think in disciplined, rigorous, and reflective ways. They say that “developing the intellect presupposes the ability to read closely and write substantively,” tying close reading to larger educational goals such as analytical reasoning and problem-solving (p. 286).

Close reading consists of selecting a group of interpretive possibilities and applying them methodically to the formal elements and strategies put forth by a literary text. It becomes both an intellectual and emotional process, as the reader traces meaning derived from the text itself and stays receptive to the complexities and contradictions posed by language. It is simultaneously a skill, an attitude, and an ethic toward language.

2.1. Characteristics of Close Reading

Close reading is distinguished by a set of intellectual and procedural characteristics from more casual, general, or instrumental reading processes. Close reading, at its core, involves methodical attention to text language, an internal and recursive engagement, and interpretive depth. Close reading features promote understanding of text but also form the basis for reflection, critical inquiry, and reflective thought. Such characteristics form the bedrock of a reading approach that puts depth ahead of speed, theory ahead of simplification, and interpretive rigor before shallow exploitation.

One of the most consistent characteristics of close reading is that it offers several opportunities to return the reader's attention back to the text itself. Close reading does not allow for outside equipment for meaning, such as summaries, author biographies, or historical contexts. In the words of Flygare (2018), students must "focus on the formalist elements of the text for creating meaning," including how the words, syntax, structure, and literary devices affect and impact their understanding (p. 3). This inward-looking analysis in turn requires the reader to see the text as a discrete, self-contained unit whose meaning must be uncovered through direct observations and speculations.

Close reading is not really a linear process but seems rather recursive. It rereads chunks of texts time and again from one angle and interpretation focus to another. Dollins (2016) stresses that close reading often starts with a literal comprehension level but as the reading progresses, students become investigators, noting patterns, returning to complex passages, and

reevaluating earlier interpretations. This iterative engagement is important because meaning often will not arise on the first seeking of it; this may be ever more so in a text with figurative language, ambiguity, or multilayered themes.

As a frequently overlooked aspect, close reading depends crucially on the reader's sensitivity to sentence-level structures. According to Mesmer and Rose-McCully (2018), close reading entails an "unpacking the implicit relationships within and across sentences," and they remark that students often have difficulty with complex syntactic structures, anaphoric references, and logical connectors such as "however" or "despite" (p. 452). The detailed level of attention prevents the understanding from being compromised by mere fluency at the surface level. Instead, close reading lays bare the subtle operations through which language produces meaning.

Close reading creates an analytical stance toward a given text. That is, where information is presented on its face, readers are encouraged to examine the language and form of the text. Cultivating substantive literacy means developing the capacity to read that is clear, accurate, relevant, and deep (Elder & Paul, 2009). These are the sorts of questions readers trained in close reading will ask: What is this image's function? Why at this moment does the author change tone? How does structure support the message? This set of critical questions fosters a certain way of thinking and the process steps beyond summary and into the realms of interpretation.

Close reading is not intended to resolve all ambiguities but to stay within them. DuBois (2003) and Battersby (2020), each from their own perspective, assert that one of the defining traits of close reading is the embracing of complexity and resistance to being reduced to various readings. DuBois notes that close reading is the method best suited for encountering ambiguity, irony, and paradox, whereas, according to Battersby, close reading gives methodological openness to writings or entities resisting full comprehension. In that manner, close reading is, in some sense, not just a mental process but also an epistemological attitude: a way of relating to texts that considers doubt and multiple meanings as assets rather than liabilities.

Whereas close reading originated in the study of literature, the methods have now been used through disciplines and genres. Taylor et al. (2018) maintain that close reading remains central to the identification of nuances in narrative voice and rhetorical positioning, especially when used in conjunction with distant reading, in fields such as digital humanities and history. Their multiscalar theory posits ways that close reading can fit alongside computational approaches to derive multidimensional meanings for historical texts.

2.2. The Processes Involved in Close Reading

Close reading is a structured, yet flexible process involving several interrelated stages. Proceeding through these stages, the reader is cognizant in initial comprehension, then moves

onto interpretation, and finally into critical reflection as mentioned in different studies as Hoover and Gough' work in the simple view of reading (1990). Though some teaching models posit close reading as a step-based, linear process, in practice, the process tends to be somewhat recursive, with the reader moving back-and-forth between literal understanding, analysis and reflections upon gaining fresh insights. Slightly different models of the process have been proposed by Student and Teacher alike; however, three main processes consistently remain: literal understanding; interpreting and analyzing; and forming textual connections and reflections.

2.2.1. Literal Understanding

The foundation of any close reading is accurate literal comprehension. This step is the parse of the text's explicit content or what is plainly said in a text before we ever may engage in discussing what is implied or suggested. A literal understanding would therefore consist of identifying word meanings, phrase meanings, or syntax of sentences; in brief, the literal process would be to comprehend the passage in the simplest manner, concerning its structure and narrative.

Flygare (2018) stresses that "the reader first wants to understand plot, literal meaning, and other surface-level concerns". in other words, when the readers first see the text, they often wonder what is happening, which can involve questions related to plot, setting, and the very literal meaning of individual sentences (p. 4). But reaching that understanding is not always automatic, especially in cases of texts that are syntactically complex or abstract in language. Students have recurrent problems with sentence-level issues, such as anaphora, appositives, or multiple terms for the same concept, and all these can confuse literal meaning (Mesmer & Rose-McCully, 2018). They urge that instruction in close reading must teach and provide opportunity to practice these types of sentence skills as these are a prerequisite for higher-level interpretation.

Dollins (2016) reinforces the sentiment further by emphasizing that close reading must root for comprehension prior to evolving the actual critique. Readers must be grounded in the literal before they can build interpretation or extend meaning into writing or conversation. Thus, this very first stage is not a matter of passively gliding over the text. Instead, one must adhere to the slow reading of the text, at times even going as far as decoding intricate syntax and vocabulary as an integral part of understanding the meaning of the text.

2.2.2. Interpretation and Analysis

A reader undergoes another stage when literal comprehension is established: one that considers meaning through literary, rhetorical, and stylistic aspects relevant to the construction of a text. The reader asks questions on the how and why of the text construction: How does the author use figurative language to create emotion? Why is an author to structure a text in one way and not in another? What is the tone, and how does that interact with the message?

This process has been described by Elder and Paul (2009) as crucial toward building critical literacy: readers must “monitor how they are reading as they are reading-distinguishing between what they understand in the text and what they do not understand." (p. 291). Such an advanced level of demand is placed upon the reader's own mental agility, which involves holding multiple ideas in mind, challenging initial impressions, and synthesizing details across the passage.

Close reading at this level involves dwelling in ambiguity and remaining open to such complexities (Battersby, 2020). Texts harbor contradictions or paradoxes that leave us with no ready-made interpretive options. These tensions must be carried by the readers who are not willing to give away any kind of resolution. Likewise, DuBois (2003) states that close reading makes possible the detection and elucidation of ambiguity, irony, and paradox, which are typical features of literary language.

2.2.3. Textual Connection and Reflection

The final process in close reading involves connecting textual analysis to broader themes, personal experiences, or socio-political contexts. While close reading traditionally emphasized textual autonomy, contemporary perspectives argue that thoughtful reflection and connection are essential for a fuller understanding of a work’s significance. Nicholson (2017) presents the principle through the lens of drama and performance, proposing that close reading creates evaluative sensitivity: a faculty that not only renders the reader capable of interpreting but also emotionally and morally reacting to a work. Thus, the evaluative stage leads farther than an academic analysis toward the affective domain of how the text provokes, challenges, or reaffirms the beliefs and experiences of the reader.

In this manner, Spivak (2006) extends the ethical implications of close reading. According to her, it is an act of ethical responsibility wherein deep attention to language in political or philosophical texts counteracts their oversimplification and erasure. This reflective process commands the readers to consider marginal voices, implicit ideologies, and silenced perspectives, thus making close reading both a cognitive and ethical act versus civil engagement.

Flygare (2018) very well formulates this statement in an educational context: "Close reading allows the reader to participate with the author in his or her project, not simply as a receiver but as a thinking, feeling, responding, and intelligent human being." (p. 6). In other words, reflection is not separate but forms an integral part of interpretation by asking, In other words, what does this mean for me, for us, or for the world? According to Taylor et al. (2018), it is at this particular stage that close reading acquires a value surpassing literary studies. When reflection and connection are brought into the picture, close reading can stand as a transdisciplinary tool that may enhance interpretive insight with texts of historical, cultural, and philosophical nature.

2.3. The Importance of Close Reading in EFL Contexts

Close reading has a heavy emphasis in EFL education, as its effectiveness lies in the development of reading comprehension, academic literacy, and language. Given that EFL students often struggle due to minimum exposure to English in real contexts, close reading gives them an opportunity to structure and strategically engage with texts in deep processes such as vocabulary, syntax, discourse patterns, and rhetorical strategies. At the very least, close reading cultivates learners as reflective and independent readers who can analyze texts precisely and with awareness in line with critical pedagogy.

2.3.1. Academic and Pedagogical Significance

In the EFL context, close reading is academically important in the sense that it helps develop a text-based comprehension as well as critical thinking. Grabe and Yamashita (2022) contend that for a second language, higher-order cognitive strategy reading is indispensable in shaping deep comprehension. Intense reading, such as close reading, promotes such strategic processing by requiring learners to pay attention to details of language use, structure, and meaning within texts (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2018).

Close reading reinforces more fundamental educational objectives: fluency, vocabulary building, and syntactic awareness. Nation and Macalister (2021) stressed that learners indeed more so profit from a balance of meaning-focused and language-focused input, and close reading obviously works well to focus attention on lexis, syntax, and text cohesion. If done appropriately, close reading instruction improves language proficiency, while at the same time increasing metacognitive awareness among learners so that they can self-monitor comprehension in different contexts and apply flexible reading strategies (Habók & Magyar, 2019).

From a pedagogical perspective, close reading is the core scaffolded passageway to critical literacy. According to Wallace (2003), reading in EFL contexts should have ultimate objectives that stand beyond attaining linguistic competence, reading rather should imbue a critical awareness of text ideologies and cultural assumptions. Close reading, when integrated with some writing or discussion sessions, controls the learner's access to the sociopolitical facets of language, more so in texts where language elements bear argumentative or persuasive interaction. Furthermore, according to Dakin (2013), engaging in close reading enables significant improvement in comprehension and confidence when working with complex academic texts. In an era of rigorous standards and high-stakes assessments, close reading served as a trusted way to meet academic benchmarks while simultaneously developing transferable skills in analysis and interpretation.

2.3.2. Challenges Faced by EFL Learners in Close Reading

While it may have numerous pedagogical values, close reading presents some specific challenges for EFL learners, which are often various linguistic, cognitive, and affective in nature. The first is limited vocabulary knowledge, which prevents EFL learners from effectively decoding and analyzing texts. According to Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018) "Along with that, lack of understanding might be as a result of insufficient knowledge of vocabulary" (p. 32). In other words, insufficient vocabulary, especially academic or discipline-specific vocabulary associated with a student's majors, is an unavoidable hurdle in the comprehension of reading materials imposed on EFL university students.

In addition to vocabulary limitations, close reading is impaired by difficulties in syntactic processing and discourse structure recognition. Many EFL learners find cohesion markers, clause complexity, or inferential comprehension difficult to grasp, all of which are needed to factor in implicit meanings in a text (Chandran & Shah, 2019). Nation and Macalister (2021) argue that learners may default to surface reading strategies that restrict attention to textual subtleties, should they not receive focused instruction on syntactic and rhetorical features.

Motivational factors and prior reading experience may put further strains on close reading efforts. According to Grabe and Yamashita (2022), L2 readers have few backgrounds information in the target language and thus have less ability to draw inferences or use schematic knowledge. Furthermore, low confidence or the memory of past failures can inhibit a learner's persistence and willingness in approaching close reading.

The environment and methods of teaching also have their roles. The MultiBriefs article Close Reading with English Learners: Challenges (2023) emphasizes that many EFL students may be unaccustomed to close reading requirements such as annotating texts, rereading, and questioning. When teachers assume students have been taught such strategies beforehand, ill-instruction and irregular results may follow. The article highlights providing strong modeling of reading processes with a gradual release of that responsibility to students as especially important in classrooms where language proficiency is uneven. Comprehension may be affected by the very last thing we can mention: the cultural and linguistic distance between the learner's L1 and English. A text genre that is heavily dependent on cultural references or idiomatic expressions and rhetorical conventions unfamiliar to the learner may cause an additional layer of difficulty (Wallace, 2003). In such cases, close reading needs to be paired with culturally responsive teaching methods to heighten background knowledge and cross-cultural literacy.

2.4. Methodologies for Teaching Close Reading

The teaching of close reading in EFL contexts necessitates an integration among cognitive strategy instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, and metacognition and academic language development. Central to current research is that students are supported to go beyond

surface-level understanding and into working with the complexity of a text, questioning authorship, and meaning making through interaction with the text.

2.4.1. Strategy-Based Teaching Approaches

Explicit strategy instruction is the basic methodology for teaching close reading, with an emphasis on those strategies that encourage comprehension monitoring. Spörer, Brunstein, and Kieschke (2009) recommend reciprocal teaching (RT), a scaffolded small-group process that focuses on summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. Their findings conclude that "students who practiced reciprocal teaching in small groups outperformed those in traditional instruction on standardized reading comprehension tests" (p. 272). This technique encourages students to actively interact with the text and gives the learner some measure of autonomy in a structured collaborative setting. Similarly, Klingner (2004) notes that "good readers connect new text with past experiences, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize," yet traditional assessments do not shed light on whether students actually use these strategies effectively (p. 59). Thus, an instructional focus should be placed on training students in metacognitive strategy development along with content comprehension.

2.4.2. Culturally Responsive Strategy Integration

The other important thing for close reading methodology is the matter of culturally responsive teaching. Bui and Fagan (2013) developed an Integrated Reading Comprehension Strategy (IRCS) which combines prediction, story grammar, and cooperative learning within a multicultural curriculum. They found that this strategy has a significant effect on students' comprehension of reading, word recognition, and story recall, especially among English learners. This is consistent with culturally sustaining pedagogy, which acknowledges students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as legitimate in the learning process. Bridges-Rhoads (2010) explains this necessity with reflective practice, recounting her own classroom experiences in which her students appeared disengaged or resistant to reading. She frames it by describing how the infusion of culturally meaningful texts like The House on Mango Street offered some authentic student engagement, noting, "I found that space the day my love of Cisneros's book forced me to seriously imagine some possible answers" (p. 232).

2.4.3. Critical Thinking Strategy Training

Close reading also thrives when aligned with critical-thinking training. Fahim, Barjesteh, and Vaseghi (2012), for instance, argue that CT development directly enhances reading comprehension; they report that “The development of critical thinking (CT) skills has become a key goal for educators in first and second language contexts. There is evidence that the use of such activities has still not become widespread in a number of ELT situations. One reason for this may be lack of awareness about how levels of thinking can be conceptualized in ELT activities.” (p. 140). Thus, using frameworks like Facione’s taxonomy, an instructor might

illumine for the students how to analyze claims, infer authorial bias, and evaluate textual arguments, skills that are essential to close reading.

2.4.4. Use of Authentic and Scaffolded Materials

The type of instructional materials chosen will greatly determine the degree of students' engagement with close reading tasks. Kung (2017) found that learner motivation and metacognitive strategy use positively correlated with authentic reading materials, which are relevant both culturally and contextually. His study proposes that EFL learners prefer metacognitive to cognitive knowledge while working with real-world texts, the latter of which develops comprehension as well as confidence.

Nation (2009) supports a four-strand categorization of reading instruction: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. According to him, close reading should come under intensive reading lessons that guide students through grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and genre features.

2.4.5. Extensive Reading as a Complementary Practice

Although close reading does allow for different interpretations by the reader (thus requiring the conscious reader to engage with the text in-depth), fluency and vocabulary teaching is often given with extensive reading. Suk (2016) states that one cannot overlook intensive reading and extensive reading (a combination of methods taught to students) since their use jointly helped the students to outperform the control groups in reading comprehension, rate, and vocabulary acquisition. An ER environment provides for repeat exposure without any pressure, allowing language learners to internalize the relevant structures and proceed to close reading through simple analysis.

2.4.6. Building Academic Language

For close reading and EFL settings to be effective, academic language must be explicitly taught. Zwiers (2014) emphasizes the need for the intentional teaching of academic language necessary for the expression of higher-level thinking across all subjects. He further stresses that instruction in language should be embedded in every close reading session to support students in unpacking challenging syntax, discourse markers, and abstract words necessary for critical interpretation.

Through structured discussion, scaffolding, and targeted language modeling, teachers can help EFL learners navigate disciplinary texts. These methods not only aid comprehension but also prepare students for the linguistic demands of academic writing and dialogue.

Conclusion

Close reading, as underscored in this chapter, constitutes far more than a mere literary analysis tool, it is a disciplined, strategic reading practice geared ostensibly toward deep comprehension and critical engagement with a text. Following a set of criteria, the close reading considers attention to language, structure, and meaning, requiring learners to slow down and reflect on what a text says to consider how it says it and why those choices count. When mixed with metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating, close reading becomes an empowering cognitive mechanism. It nurtures a student to become more aware of their thinking, more intentional in their reading, and more capable of navigating meaning in the face of difficult texts. The chapter has highlighted the theoretical foundations and classroom applications of close reading, emphasizing its cross-disciplinary nature and aligning it with standards that require analytical reasoning with evidence from texts. More significantly, it illustrates how close reading fosters the growth of independent reflective readers who can interrogate texts, question assumptions, and confidently face the demands of academic and real-world literacy. Within this scope, educators work to prepare students for navigating today's complex learning environments. Close reading and metacognition form one of the most potent tools for the generation of literacy and lifelong learning.

Chapter Three

Data Analysis and Interpretation

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Introduction

The focus of this study is to discover how EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers employ the use of metacognitive strategies for close reading instruction on students, as well as to explore the connection between the self-reported metacognitive strategy usage and close reading behavior of students. More specifically, the study aims to explore teacher practice, challenges, and student engagement with metacognitive/close reading strategies in an EFL environment. This chapter details the practical part of this study, thus providing an outline and justification for research methodology, sampling procedures, and data collection tools. Instruments are found first, with detailed description as to their intent, structure, and manner of administration. Second are very detailed accounts and discussions of the results of data gathered. Finally, the chapter closes off with a reflection on research limitations, provision of pedagogical recommendations, and possibilities for further studies.

3.1. Research method

In these research works, a mixed method approach was employed due to the nature of the study, which intends to explore and describe the means of metacognitive strategies that EFL University teachers use in reading instruction and their relation to student close reading behavior. The study necessitates acquiring both qualitative and quantitative data to develop a fuller grasp of classroom practices, constraints on instruction, and strategic reading behavior of students. Interpreting the two types of data simultaneously allows for a richer understanding of the phenomena under investigation, thus increasing the validity and reliability of the research findings. Thus, to carry out the objectives of the study and provide sufficient answers to the research questions, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed. Therefore, this study was designed as a case study; the complexity of the topic and the exploratory nature of the research gave rise to focusing on a particular group of second-year EFL students and university teachers at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra as the subject of investigation.

3.2. Population and sampling

Six teachers from the Department of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra were purposively chosen for interviewing. The selection of teachers was based on two criteria. First, all six teachers are currently teaching reading modules, which are directly related to this study's target. Second, two of the teachers have been teaching reading for more than three years at the university level, allowing them to provide valuable insights about the use of metacognitive strategies and the fostering of students' close reading skills. Their professional background and classroom experience hence allow an understanding of how these strategies are being implemented in real life and what issues may come up.

As for the student participants, a group of 35 students at the undergraduate level was randomly selected for questionnaire administration. This randomization procedure was conducted to achieve an unbiased representation of students across varying degrees of academic reading exposure levels. Since the study will not attempt to generalize to the whole student population but rather to explore trends and generate insights within a defined context, it was considered that this sample size was sufficient. The selection of students at the undergraduate level was well considered, as these students are concurrently in the early stages of academic reading strategy development, including close reading and metacognitive awareness, which are of critical interest to this research. Thus, the sampled students were expected to give and develop answers that would contribute meaningfully to addressing the research questions.

3.3. Data collection tools and procedures

The present study employs three data collection tools: a structured questionnaire for students and a semi-structured interview for teachers and a structured classroom observation sheet. The data gathered were used to answer the research questions and to test the hypothesis, in order to determine the relationship between metacognitive strategy use and close reading behaviour for students.

3.3.1. Teachers' interview

3.3.1.1. Aim of the teachers' interview

The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to identify the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers regarding their implementation of metacognitive strategies in their reading classes and to find out if they think it has anything to do with their students' close reading performance. This data gathering tool was chosen because probing is the most effective way to obtain detailed information. The researcher was able to understand the importance and involvement of metacognitive strategy use and close reading behaviour in an EFL context by speaking and interacting with teachers directly as they discussed and explained these concepts from a concrete practical perspective through their own experience with students. Thus, conducting in-person interviews offered a number of benefits; the researcher gathered a rich amount of comprehensive and precise data.

3.3.1.2. Description of the teachers' interview

To investigate how metacognitive strategies are defined and implemented in EFL reading teaching, a semi-structured interview was constructed and conducted among a sample of reading instructors. The interview aimed at gathering in-depth qualitative data about teachers' experience, perception, and teaching practice on the use of metacognitive strategy planning, monitoring, and evaluation within close reading behaviour. The interview consisted of ten open-ended questions that were spread across four theme-based categories. The first part explored teachers' classrooms context and backgrounds, and provided key data regarding the

environment in which they operate. The second part explored the embedding of metacognitive strategies into reading instruction, allowing participants to clarify whether the strategies are taught explicitly or implicitly, and how they are embedded in different stages of a reading lesson. The third section posed questions to elicit teachers' reflective questioning regarding their teaching practice and students' self-reported metacognitive activity. The final section posed questions concerning teachers' opinions regarding the perceived effects of strategy instruction, challenges it presents for them, and its integration into the EFL class more effectively. The interview was planned in terms of theoretical metacognition models, i.e., Flavell's (1979) and Schraw and Moshman's (1995) models, and according to global research goals of the study. English language interviews were given to the participants with audio recording using the participants' permission and later transcription for analysis. Data obtained were analysed for themes using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach to establish recurring themes and patterns summarizing general practice and diverging perceptions among teachers.

Figure 1 Table showing the phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Note: Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.35

3.3.1.3. Validating and piloting the teachers' interview

The interview was validated by the supervisor and prof. Chelli Saliha as an expert in the field of methodology. The interview was piloted with two teachers in which they provided their feedback about it.

3.3.1.4. Analysis of the teachers' interview

Qualitative data within this study was interpreted using an interpretive approach, founded on a belief that meaning is co-constructed through interaction with data. Qualitative analysis is fundamentally about the process of comprehending human experience by eliding significant patterns, concepts, and insights. For Richards (2009), this entails the researcher remaining close to data, interpreting it by empathic immersion to elide subtle understandings. The approach taken in this study aligns with Terre Blanche et al.'s (2006) opinion that qualitative research entails "making the strange familiar and the familiar strange" (p. 321), demanding an oscillatory movement between description and interpretation, and between wholes and parts, in order to construct a believable and truthful portrait of the phenomenon under investigation.

Analysis of data was undertaken following the constant comparative method, in which units of meaning across the dataset are compared systematically to form categories and ultimately themes. The objective was to balance proximity to the context, so that readers and participants can recognize authenticity, with analytical distance to gain new insights (Merriam, 2002; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The process was structured into five recursive and overlapping stages: familiarization and immersion, coding, theme induction, elaboration, and interpretation and verification.

3.3.1.4.1. Familiarization and immersion

Normally, in interpretive qualitative research, data analysis begins at the time of data collection and continues throughout as a continuous process. Being engaged with the interview transcript allowed me to internalize the content, tone, and nuances as conveyed by the participants. Before data researchers officially move to analyze the data, contend Mertens (2005) and Terre Blanche et al. (2006), they should already have an intuitive sense of the data. For this study, I read the interview transcripts multiple times to gain a good sense of the content and to begin to discern early patterns and meanings.

3.3.1.4.2. Coding into themes

The second step was coding the data in an organized manner. This included coding significant pieces of text and assigning descriptive codes that symbolized emerging ideas or concepts (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Every code was a tag for recurring behaviors, beliefs, or practices in metacognitive instruction and close reading. The process was inductive, allowing themes to be constructed from the data and not predetermined. As Merriam (2002) and Terre Blanche et al. (2006) advise, this step puts the data to tangible bites that make evident within the answers what patterns exist there.

3.3.1.4.3. Inducing themes

Following coding, I began to identify higher-order themes that captured the essence of related codes. I used words directly extracted from the participants' responses in order to preserve authenticity when naming the categories (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Guided by the constant comparative approach, I made constant comparisons of emerging codes with earlier codes to formulate refined categories and identify core themes. According to Merriam (2002), this process involves comparing incident to incident and incident to theme in an attempt to construct a meaningful thematic framework. Charmaz (2006) further explains that this

comparison, which occurs iteratively, works to collapse overlapping categories into more conceptual themes. Ultimately, the themes that emerged were those that recurrently appeared across a number of participants and appeared salient to the research questions.

3.3.1.4.4. Elaboration

After themes had been developed, I reviewed the data a number of times in order to refine and deepen the thematic framework. This elaboration is a more focused scrutiny of both the data and the existing coding framework in order not to lose subtlety and nuance. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) describe this step as one of extracting "the finer nuances of meaning" (p. 326). At this stage, I was prepared to entertain the possibility that new knowledge could be created, modifying or expanding the coding scheme as necessary to fit more profound understandings.

3.3.1.4.5. Interpretation and checking

The final phase of the analysis was working out the meaning of the themes in light of the aims and existing literature in the study background. This constituted condensing emergent patterns to a reasonable description that would provide an explanation of the phenomena investigated. Berg (2009) states qualitative analysis is "a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation... to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings" (p. 338). I ensured that the interpretations were grounded in the data, and consistent with the participants' intended meanings. I also checked the themes across interviews to confirm their recurrence and relevance, to provide findings that are both trustworthy and meaningful.

3.3.1.5. Interpretive Analysis of the Teachers' Interview

The six overarching themes found within this study are: implicit versus explicit use of metacognitive strategies, metacognition embedded in reading phases, strategy-driven student engagement, challenges in implementation, teacher professional development needs, and adaptation and creativity in teaching. The themes are identified from rich qualitative data generated during semi-structured interviews of the EFL reading teachers. They are the constantly recurring ideas, concerns, and practices frequently addressed by the interviewees.

Under each of the broad themes, a number of sub-themes were identified. These sub-themes represented specific patterns or practices that were shared across a number of interviews and were grouped into more general thematic headings to signify the collective meaning. The broad themes and the associated sub-themes are shown in Table 2.

Table 1 Introduction of Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme	Sub-Themes
1. Implicit vs. Explicit Use of Metacognitive Strategies	- Unintentional use of strategies. - Lack of formal terminology. - Natural/spontaneous implementation.
2. Metacognition Embedded in Reading	- Pre reading as planning.

Phases	- During reading as monitoring. - Post reading as evaluating.
3. Strategy-Driven Student Engagement	- Relevance and familiarity as triggers of engagement. - Freedom and participation in strategy application. - Engagement through multimodal and creative strategies.
4. Challenges in Implementation	- Lack of student preparedness or motivation. - Environmental and logistical constraints. - Mismatch between strategy complexity and student level.
5. Teacher Professional Development Needs	- Desire for training and formal preparation. - Need for and coherence among teachers.
6. Adaptation and Creativity in Teaching	- Use of and visual based readings. - reading across disciplines as a strategy choice. - varying instructional techniques to sustain engagement.

3.3.1.5.1. Theme 1: Implicit vs. Explicit Use of Metacognitive Strategies

One of the most prominent themes to emerge from the interviews was the tendency for teachers to make implicit use of metacognitive strategies as opposed to explicit use. Although all participants affirmed the presence of planning, monitoring, and evaluating in reading instruction, they regularly indicated not recognizing or naming these strategies explicitly in lessons. Their use was generally intuitive and contingently embedded in classroom practice as opposed to considered or stated. This part answers the first research question: "How do EFL university teachers implement metacognitive strategies in their reading instruction to support students' close reading?"

Unintentional use of strategies

The majority of the teachers described their use of metacognitive strategies as spontaneous and effortless, emerging spontaneously to meet the needs of teaching without engaging in systematic lesson planning. For instance, one teacher stated: "Sometimes I use them spontaneously. I do not plan, for example, to use that particular metacognitive strategy, but it is the task that requires it. So, a matter of awareness, for sure, as a teacher of reading and writing, I have read a lot about cognitive and metacognitive strategies. So, when it comes to the implementation, as I said, I have not, for example, planned this in my lesson plan, saying that, for example, for this task students are going to implement this cognitive or metacognitive strategy. So, as I said, it is very natural and I find that the task requires this strategy." *(teacher3)*.

This quotation evidences a larger trend in which strategy use is not the result of deliberate design but of an experienced teacher's response to student need in the course of a lesson. This spontaneity demonstrates professional intuition but also calls attention to a lost opportunity for modelling self-regulation strategies more intentionally.

Lack of formal terminology

Another common theme that arose was the absence of systematic pedagogical vocabulary used in class talk. Teachers would understand what metacognitive strategies are, but not always what they are theoretically. One teacher explained: “Can you believe that I don’t have names, by the way, I am not naming a strategies, I adopt them, I use them...” *(teacher 1)*

This implies a divide between pedagogic practice and academic theory. The teachers are clearly employing strategies in keeping with metacognitive models, but without the conceptual terminology which they can utilize to instruct these strategies in an overt fashion, or quantify them appropriately. At times, this disparity stems from the teachers' own background or the comparatively recent addition of reading as a separate subject: “I know it is a good strategy, but the specific name or term, exactly no.” *(teacher 5)* This further reinforces the idea that while practice is strong, the terminological and theoretical framing of metacognition is often underdeveloped among teachers.

Natural/spontaneous implementation

Others deliberately refrained from using strategy labels to maintain lessons on course and students' focus. Metacognitive strategies were labelled as being taught "smoothly" rather than formally. As was noted by one of the teachers: “We do this implicitly. We do this in a very smooth way. Smooth way, yes. We have never said that, ‘listen, we are going to start talking.’ No. It goes like this.” *(teacher 1)*

Another teacher echoed: “I never tell them ‘we are practicing planning.’ I may just say we are brainstorming, but that’s it.” *(teacher3)* This approach likely helps students engage with content without being overwhelmed by vocabulary. However, it hinders students' abilities to transfer those strategies to independent contexts, especially since they are not necessarily even aware a strategy is being introduced. The risk here is that students apply skills to in-class work but do not gain metacognitive awareness or ownership over the skills in less structured learning environments.

3.3.1.5.2. Theme 2: Metacognition Embedded in Reading Phases

A widespread pattern across all interviews was the manner in which teachers naturally divided their reading teaching into three general phases: pre-reading, while reading, and after reading. While few used the specific terms planning, monitoring, and evaluating, all defined classroom practice in accordance with these metacognitive categories. Teachers demonstrated

an intense intuitive understanding of how to facilitate students through the stages, incorporating strategy use into lesson planning even when they did not work it out in theory.

Pre-Reading as Planning:

All six teachers discussed starting lessons with activities that get students ready to read mentally. This phase was always described in terms that fall within the metacognitive process of planning, getting students to access background, establish expectations, and familiarize themselves with the topic or text features.

For instance, in Interview 3, the teacher explained: "A reading lesson for me starts with brainstorming… I discuss with students a number of related questions to the text. The aim is to activate their schema. What do they already have in mind about this topic?"

Here, too, the instructor not only prepares the lesson but also encourages students to prepare their participation—a key metacognitive action. The notion of developing from where students are already is an acknowledgment that learning takes place best when connected to prior knowledge structures.

Similarly, in Interview 5, the teacher described a more deliberate form of preparation: "I ask them, before you read the text, you read about the text. And you read about the author… This is what I prefer working on or calling planning… You prepare yourself before you read the text."

The quote evidences the manner in which strategic text interaction is developed before reading actually happens, suggesting the sense of consciousness of being ready intellectually and emotionally to understand. This form of planning is not merely procedural; it's reflective and individualized, mirroring that the teacher conceives reading as an experience, not as an assignment.

In Interview 6, another teacher stated: "In the pre-reading, I try to give them some questions… related to their background knowledge… just to check their prerequisite knowledge of this topic." This reinforces the consistent application of planning strategies across the sample, where pre-reading becomes a space for mental rehearsal and goal-setting, even if it is not labelled as such.

Other teachers supported this pattern. For example, in Interview 4: "Sometimes I start by asking some preparatory… questions to make the students pay some attention to the text." And in Interview 1: "They are highly useful in terms of making students interested in the material… So it's very hard work to choose, to teach them a material that they will accept."

All of these practices reflect a converging belief that student preparation enhances engagement and understanding, aligning directly with the principles of metacognitive planning, even if not framed that way explicitly.

During-Reading as Monitoring:

In contrast to the more active pre-reading and post-reading phases, the during-reading phase, the metacognitive analogue of monitoring, was far less explicit in teachers' descriptions. Most participants described the latter phase as providing comprehension questions, true/false exercises, or matching work. While these activities do supply surface-level support for information processing, they do not necessarily educate students to engage in active, self-regulated monitoring of their understanding while reading.

For instance, teacher 3 outlined a typical procedure: “While reading, I often accompany this step with certain questions. Questions like comprehension, vocabulary-driven questions. Mainly true and false activity. Matching. These are activities not to challenge students' comprehension or critical reading abilities. But they are meant to help them understand the text.”

This approach illustrates that questions are utilized more as directions rather than a way of letting students realize their process of thought or determine breakdowns in comprehension. While these framework questions may enable initial comprehension, they place students in a passive role, where comprehension is assessed from the outside and not upheld from the inside. Similarly, in Interview 6, the teacher described the use of targeted reading questions: “They just try to pinpoint the information required by the question… They don’t need to read the whole text, but they just select the paragraph… and try to find the information.”

This task-based approach encourages scanning for answers rather than reading the text comprehensively or becoming aware of gaps in comprehension. In this case, students may learn to retrieve information without ever stopping to think about whether or not they actually understand the material overall. Even in more creative formats, like the use of visuals described in Interview 1, monitoring remains indirect: “We don't read the lecture, we study the visuals… we use the visuals and we study them and we extract the whole lecture.”

Although this method introduces a multimodal approach to interacting, it nonetheless does not explicitly teach students how to track and fix understanding, nor does it require students to assess their level of understanding as they make their way through the material. Teacher 5 similarly noted: “When you read, you connect ideas. Get involved with the text.” This statement hints at engagement but lacks specificity on how students are taught to identify confusion, re-read purposefully, or adjust their strategies while reading, key components of metacognitive monitoring.

Post-Reading as Evaluating

After reading, instructors consistently reported that they assign activities that promote reflection, synthesis, and evaluation, all functions of the final metacognitive step. Some of these activities are summarizing, paraphrasing, writing reactions, and assessing understanding, often targeting reinforcing learning and promoting critical thinking.

Teacher 3 offered a detailed post-reading process: “Once we finish with the while reading… I often want to consolidate and to check students' understanding via a final step called post-reading… It could be, for example, a summarizing task… or further discussion about the topic.” This is demonstrated clear alignment in measuring for an understanding, asking students to reflect on what they learned and to what extent they understood it. It also reiterates that assessment extends beyond correctness, it involves meaning-making

Teacher 5 provided an explicit interpretation of the strategy: “Evaluating, you can use strategies as in summarizing, paraphrasing your own words, reflecting with what you've read.” This framing links metacognitive evaluating to authentic classroom activities that move students from understanding to expression, one of the core goals of close reading.

In Interview 1, the teacher elaborated on using rhetorical analysis as an evaluative tool: “I have taught them how to summarize. I have taught them how to figure out the message of the writer. We have focused on the rhetorical appeal of the writer… to make them know that they can build a relationship with the writer.” This demonstrates that evaluation goes beyond checking for factual accuracy; it includes interpreting intent, reflecting emotionally, and constructing meaning, all of which foster deep reading and student agency. Interview 6 added: “In the post-reading, I give them, most of the time, written tasks related to the topic… I ask them to try to develop the theme related to the reading task.” This provides evidence that teachers value reflection and synthesis, helping students evaluate what they’ve read in personal and contextual ways.

3.3.1.5.3. Theme 3: Strategy-Driven Student Engagement

A recurring and highly stressed theme throughout the findings was that students' engagement is largely shaped by the relevance, presentation, and strategy-based planning of the reading lesson. Teachers consistently reported that when strategic instruction is tied to students' interests, multiple approaches are utilized, and students are granted some level of ownership within the reading process, then students are more likely to participate meaningfully. Although this interaction wasn't consistently framed as an outcome of metacognitive teaching for its own sake, it was clear that planning, reflection, and the deployment of adaptive strategies were elements facilitating enhanced student engagement.

Relevance and Familiarity as Triggers of Engagement

Many participants indicated that students are more motivated when what is being learned is meaningful to them directly or is well-known to their own culture. This participation is tied to the planning phase of metacognition, in which access to prior knowledge and association with prior experience enhances motivation and understanding.

In Interview 4, the teacher noted: “I believe, and this is what I have all the time believed in, students seem to be engaged more in what they are really interested in. I mean, if you bring a topic into the classroom and that topic covers a part of their daily… interest, they seem to be

more engaged in it than the other lessons." This quote illustrates how emotional and personal relevance acts as a motivator and supports the idea that students' cognitive effort increases when they care about the topic. It also shows that teachers are aware of how strategic text selection can serve as a form of engagement.

Similarly, in Interview 5: "They get engaged when the topic is familiar or about their daily life. Whenever I give something an example about this, they get engaged. Whenever you sometimes get out of the box, they get engaged." This reinforces the role of topical alignment and contextual familiarity in drawing students into deeper reading engagement. It also hints at the power of imaginative and student-centered planning, teachers who select content with learners' identities in mind are more likely to spark strategic thinking.

Freedom and Participation in Strategy Application

Other teachers explained that students learn more if given some freedom in how they approach reading tasks, or if lessons are made more interactive or collaborative. These strategies support metacognitive engagement by giving students a sense of responsibility for controlling their progress and making decisions as they learn.

Teacher 1 provided a striking example: "I give them some freedom in the class to move from one place to another, sit wherever they want. I don't fire students when they come late to the class. All these, to me, are really very helping to proceed in teaching reading as a course." Although not directly labelled as metacognitive, this pedagogical flexibility promotes a sense of ownership and autonomy, which are prerequisites for self-regulated learning.

In Interview 3, the teacher described active group engagement through strategic reading activities: "I have noticed that students are highly engaged whenever they are given a task to do, especially if this task is a group task. So when I ask them, for example, to highlight the main ideas in the text and to summarize the text… they become very engaged and very interested." Here, the connection between motivational elements and strategy instruction is direct, highlighting, summarizing, and group assessment are all metacognitive habits, and the teacher can easily perceive an identifiable link between those strategies and students' motivation.

Engagement Through Multimodal and Creative Strategies

Teachers also emphasized that students are open to visual, auditory supports, and creative presentation, all of which are oriented towards strategic comprehension, particularly for challenged learners with dense text content. These materials allow students to follow their meaning and assimilate material, making reading less abstracted and more interactive.

Teacher 1 explained: "Can you believe that we don't read the lecture, we study the visuals? This is our lecture… I prepare lectures always with visuals. I prefer visuals so much. We use the visuals and we study them and we extract the whole lecture."

This method brings something more than interaction, it builds the student's ability to make meaning across modes, a valuable asset in both monitoring and testing comprehension. Pictures are not just a tool for engaging lessons; they become a planned route into challenging texts.

Teacher 6 supported this approach: “Sometimes I give them MCQs, sometimes paraphrasing, sometimes I give them vocabulary tasks… I try to vary. As I said, variety is the spice of life.” Varying instructional format and strategy appeals to different learner preferences and maintains attention, which in turn encourages students to remain cognitively active throughout the lesson, a key condition for effective strategy use.

3.3.1.5.4. Theme 4: Challenges in Implementation

While all of the instructors in the study demonstrated an awareness of the benefits of metacognitive approaches, they also identified significant and persistent challenges that hampered the regular and effective application of these approaches to EFL reading instruction. These challenges fell into three general categories: student-based obstacles, institutional or logistical obstacles, and instructional issues related to student readiness and pacing. Although most of the instructors were ready to use strategies instinctively, their ability to do this effectively was often undermined by external conditions or by the perceived difficulty of cultivating reflective habits in underprepared students. This part answers the second research question: “What challenges do EFL university teachers face when integrating metacognitive strategies into close reading instruction?”

Low Student Motivation and Preparedness

The most frequently named impediment to effective strategy implementation was students' preparation, interest, or motivation. Teachers of all levels constantly complained about students' lack of motivation or restricted commitment to reading activities, especially in first-year university students, who were persistently portrayed as passive, indifferent, or even misplaced in the field of English studies.

In Interview 4, the teacher openly questioned whether some students belonged in the program: “Look, generally, first-year students do not show great interest. To the extent that I sometimes ask myself the question: have they chosen English as a major at the university freely, or was it imposed on them by somebody else? I mean their parents.” This sense of separation between students and their subject was referred to as a major barrier to the application of metacognitive strategies, which require intrinsic motivation, focus, and self-regulation skills, the very skills that can be lacking in learners lacking interest.

Similarly, in Interview 5, the teacher emphasized how students arrive unprepared: “Perhaps some students come to class unprepared at all. Which is something I don't like. They come sometimes without papers or the text or print something. Some students come over there

unmotivated. So we are going to start motivating them first." This reflects a reactive posture, where time and effort must first be spent on re-engaging students emotionally and behaviorally, delaying the opportunity for deeper strategy instruction.

Environmental and Logistical Constraints

Besides the motivation of students, teachers also mentioned logistical and infrastructural issues that made it difficult to apply metacognitive techniques. Some of these included overcrowded classrooms, lack of technological or physical means, and environmental distractions that disrupt concentration and consistency in instruction.

In Interview 6, the teacher highlighted time and class size as significant barriers: "It's time-consuming, especially in overcrowded groups… to try to use… every skill, and try to evaluate each student." While the teacher positively reacted to metacognitive methods, the pressure of instruction in enormous classes with little time made it hard to apply the strategies solely or across the board. The problem is even more pronounced where courses require student reflection or feedback, activities that are hard to duplicate in crowded classrooms.

In Interview 5, the teacher emphasized how even minor disruptions affect teaching: "When it is hot. When the sound is over there. The window doesn't close. And so on and so forth. It seems to be simple or unnecessary elements. But they are. Especially the third one. Evaluating. This is the step in which I find students getting less engaged." Here, we see that basic environmental discomfort diminishes both student engagement and the teacher's ability to apply strategies like evaluation that require focus, patience, and cognitive energy.

Mismatch Between Strategy Complexity and Student Level

Several instructors also wondered if students, particularly in junior years, are ready for metacognitive instruction, depending on their study background and what they might expect. There was a collective sense that strategic thinking is complex and maybe more than the current reach of students who were accustomed to rote or surface reading.

In Interview 3, the teacher admitted hesitation to label strategy use explicitly: "I never tell them 'we are practicing planning.' I may say this is brainstorming. But for first-year students, I believe that these concepts are somehow complex and they need further understanding." This signals that teachers often simplify or avoid theoretical explanations, potentially underestimating students' capacity to engage metacognitively if properly guided.

Interview 2 also touched on the difficulty of getting students to understand deeper reading skills, despite efforts to introduce them: "Students still do not handle the strategies of reading… They still do not know what is the aim of reading… They still do not differentiate between different types of texts and different aims of texts." This has the implication that, while teachers may be eager to promote strategic reading, they must first spend significant time establishing students' foundational literacy and comprehension, which delays or limits time spent on high-order metacognitive development.

3.3.1.5.5. Theme 5: Teacher Professional Development Needs

During the interviews, the respondents manifested a clear need for professional training to accommodate training in learning, employing, and educating metacognitive strategies. Although most teachers demonstrated a strong intuitive grasp of how to support students' reading growth, they frequently reported a lack of formal training, common resources, and institutional direction on educating metacognition in reading courses. This is their plea for collaboration, training, and curriculum assistance so that they may have more confidence and competence in teaching metacognition.

Desire for Training and Formal Preparation

Most of the teachers freely acknowledged that their knowledge of metacognitive study strategies is mostly acquired through practice or self-instruction, rather than education or training sessions. This leads to uneven application and uncertainty whether they are executing items properly. Some participants noted the need for dedicated workshops or pedagogical support to further prepare them to instruct reading and metacognition application.

In Interview 1, the teacher described this gap plainly: “We are teachers, we need to be taught. Even if we are teachers, we are students at the same time. Why not bring teachers from abroad? Why not make workshops and training sessions for teachers of reading?” This quote reflects the sentiment that while teachers are willing and even eager to improve their practice, they lack structured opportunities to learn how to do so in a metacognitive framework. It also suggests that institutional support does not exist or is not attuned to their actual classroom needs.

A similar perspective was shared in Interview 3: “What helps teachers is training (formal or informal. And what helps teachers is reading) to read about the experience of other teachers, other researchers, other scholars. Before implementing strategies, we need to read about them, research them.” Here, the teacher identifies both a two-way demand: professional reading and community-based learning. This is also a sign of a more profound desire (pedagogical literacy) to not only use strategies but to understand their theoretical foundation, effectiveness, and variations.

In Interview 6, the same point was emphasized more practically: “You have to practice… try to plan lessons using these metacognitive skills… and see whether it works, what are the weaknesses, what are the positive points… then modify or adapt to each group.” This is a trial-and-error approach on the basis of situation rather than selection. Educators are more likely to try things than to implement tried techniques, which can contribute to heterogeneity of student outcomes and a sense of isolation in instructional selection.

Need for Collaboration and Coherence Among Teachers

In addition to training at the teacher level, several participants pointed to the need for coordination and curriculum consistency among teachers. Teachers would complain about there

being no coordinated manner of teaching reading or metacognitive strategies, resulting in inconsistency within classrooms and confusion among learners.

Interview 5 made this especially clear: “Teachers until now have not agreed on what to teach exactly… Normally we should agree on what to teach… what are the skills that we have to teach to our students. We should choose specific texts, specific lessons, specific practices, specific skills to work on.” This indicates a lack of coordination or institutional agreement on what reading instruction would be, and where metacognition has its place. Without common vision and materials, teachers have to define their own for themselves, and that causes fragmentation and confusion.

In Interview 2, the teacher similarly stressed the importance of curricular integration: “Reading is not just skimming and scanning… it’s deeper than this, and they basically need this course… but even among teachers, I see different understandings of what it should be.” This points to an institutional gap in curriculum design and pedagogical dialogue. Teachers appear to be working toward the same goal, but with inconsistent tools, expectations, and levels of expertise.

3.3.1.5.6. Theme 6: Adaptation and Creativity in Teaching

Despite constraints and challenges, teachers were highly accommodating and innovative in the way they presented reading, particularly in their efforts to adapt to students' requirements and render texts readable. The majority employed adaptive, multimodal, and interdisciplinary strategies to help students access the content. While these accommodations were not always framed in metacognitive terms, they were inclined to promote metacognitive development indirectly, by making students think tactically, visually read, and engage with contexts.

Use of Multimodal and Visual-Based Reading

One of the most enduring examples of creative practice was the embedding of visual or multimodal texts, which enabled students to read for meaning in excess of conventional print. Visuals were not merely seen by teachers as supports to understanding, but as means of promoting analytical ability, for example, reading charts, deciphering graphs, or assessing implied meanings in pictures.

In Interview 1, the teacher explained a highly visual approach to reading: “We don't read the lecture, we study the visuals. This is our lecture… I prepare lectures always with visuals… we use the visuals and we study them and we extract the whole lecture.” This strategy makes reading an active process of decoding, recreating close reading and evaluative strategies in metacognition. Creative use of visual images forces students to construct meaning, not receive it, and therefore encourages higher levels of involvement and strategic processing.

Similarly, in Interview 5, the teacher described incorporating different types of texts to help students adapt their approach: “I taught them some strategies like multimodal reading,

when they read texts with pictures, with graphs… how to analyze numbers, how to analyze, for example, images and graphs." This use of multimodal content serves not just to diversify material but to teach students how to shift strategies based on text format, a critical metacognitive skill that requires flexibility, awareness, and task evaluation**.**

Reading Across Disciplines as a Strategic Choice

Others reported using texts from other professional or academic disciplines (such as politics, medicine, or psychology) to engage students in the use of transferable reading strategies. In doing so, students came to realize that reading was not confined to literature, but to disciplinary thinking and terminology as well.

Teacher 5 provided a clear example: "I taught them reading across disciplines… not to limit yourself to only English language teaching… In order to take this information, you have to make sure from where you get the information and how you get it." This interdisciplinary practice promotes critical evaluation, source analysis, and genre awareness, all of which are in harmony with metacognitive evaluation. Although this approach was based on creative pedagogy rather than metacognitive theory, it ultimately promotes students' ability to transfer their reading practices to different text types and contexts.

Varying Instructional Techniques to Sustain Engagement

Teachers also pointed to regularly altering their lesson plans in order to avoid boring students and accommodating different learning styles. Not only were these adjustments forward-thinking but also facilitate metacognition by offering learners a chance to think through several paths towards and away from texts.

Interview 6 emphasized this clearly: "Sometimes I give them MCQs, sometimes paraphrasing, sometimes I give them vocabulary tasks… I try to vary. As I said, variety is the spice of life." This range of content starts to introduce students to different modes of text processing from literal comprehension to synthesis and expression, each of which engages planning, monitoring, or evaluation in some capacity. Rather than being guided by a lockstep lesson plan, the teachers are allowing the students to try out different strategies, compare outcomes, and set up preferences, a critical component of building self-regulated learners.

In Interview 3, the teacher added: "Even if I use the same activity, I try to change it from one group to another, and from one semester to another, depending on the level of students and their feedback… I always try to improve it." This also demonstrates the teacher's willingness to iteratively and adapt, acting as a model of metacognitive behavior in itself. Teachers contemplating their own practice and adjusting based on outcomes not only improve instruction but demonstrate the same type of self-evaluation they wish to encourage in students.

3.3.2. Students' questionnaire

3.3.2.1. Aim of the students' questionnaire

The purpose of the students' questionnaire was to gather information on their opinions and ideas regarding their own metacognitive strategy use and close reading behaviour as well as finding the connection between the two. Because it saves time and effort and makes it easier to collect a sizable number of replies, a structured questionnaire was chosen and created and it was administered to the students manually and printed giving them the suitable amount of time to fill in.

3.3.2.2. Description of the students' questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed and administered in order to answer the third research question (To what extent do EFL university students differ in their self-reported frequency of using close reading strategies compared to metacognitive strategies in independent reading tasks?). It was created and printed to be administered to undergraduate students and it consists of three sections. The first section was about "general information" it consists of 4 questions aiming to collect general information about the participants including the number of years studying English, level of study (first or second year), frequency of reading academic texts in English, and self-assessed reading ability. This information serves to contextualize the responses and identify potential patterns related to students' academic level and language exposure. The second section was about students "close reading behaviour" it consists of 10 statements in form of likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", and it's devided into three subsections: (A) *Literal Understanding* (3 items), (B) *Interpretation and Analysis* (6 items), and (C) *Textual Reflection* (1 item). The items aim to assess how students approach texts in terms of identifying key ideas, analyzing textual structure, and connecting texts to broader meaning or personal experience. The third section was also in a form of a likert scale and it was about students' use of metacognitive strategies and it evaluates the extent to which students apply metacognitive strategies while reading. It is divided into three subcategories reflecting Flavell's (1979) model of metacognition: (A) *Planning* (2 items), (B) *Monitoring* (3 items), and (C) *Evaluating* (3 items). These items investigate students' awareness and regulation of their reading processes before, during, and after reading.

3.3.2.3. Validating and Piloting the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was validated by the supervisor who reviewed it and made some comments, mostly including rewording some of the questions to make them more precise and understandable. Additionally, the questionnaire was given to nine people from the chosen sample. In order to finalize the questionnaire, the researcher considered the feedback and criticisms received during validation and piloting.

3.3.2.4. Cronbach's Alpha reliability test

To find out the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. Rather than performing a single alpha test on the overall instrument, the reliability

check was conducted separately for each subsection and section. This is good practice since the questionnaire has various constructs, namely, Close Reading Behavior and the three stages of Metacognitive Strategy Use (Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluating). Each of these sections taps different metacognitive or cognitive aspects, and aggregating all the items into a single scale would be conceptually inappropriate and statistically misleading. Individual analysis for each section maintains the internal consistency as the reliability of each individual construct, thereby providing more valid and interpretable results.

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of each questionnaire section, with values ≥ 0.70 considered acceptable, values between 0.60 and 0.69 regarded as questionable but tolerable for exploratory research, and values < 0.60 indicating poor reliability (George & Mallery, 2003)

Close reading behavior

A) Literal understanding

Table 2 Reliability test of the Literal Understanding findings

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.683	.692	3

This alpha value indicates moderate internal consistency. Though it is a bit below the conventional cut-off of 0.70, this is acceptable in exploratory research, especially given the low item number. The scale does appear to be measuring literal comprehension reliably, but might be developed or expanded in future studies.

B) Interpretation and analysis

Table 3 Reliability test of the Interpretation and Analysis findings

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.796	.811	6

This alpha value reflects good internal consistency, suggesting that the items measuring interpretation and analytical reading skills are reliably assessing a single underlying construct.

Metacognitive strategy use:

A) Planning

Table 4 Reliability test of the Planning findings

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.220	.275	4

This alpha is very low, indicating poor internal consistency among the planning items. This suggests that the four items may not be measuring the same construct consistently, possibly due to item wording, student interpretation, or conceptual ambiguity.

B) Monitoring

Table 5 Reliability test of the Monitoring findings

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.812	.812	5

This value indicates very good internal consistency. The monitoring items are highly reliable and appear to measure a coherent construct related to real-time comprehension checking and text engagement.

C) Evaluating

Table 6 Reliability of the Evaluating findings

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.820	.824	3

This alpha also demonstrates strong internal consistency. Despite the small number of items, the evaluating section functions as a reliable scale for assessing students' reflective reading strategies.

3.3.2.5. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

To answer the third question and test its hypotheses, the data from the student questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 27). SPSS is a statistical software for editing, describing, and analyzing data from various sources, including scientific research, databases, Google Analytics, and website log files. SPSS supports all standard structured data file formats, including spreadsheets (MS Excel or OpenOffice), plain text files (.txt or.csv), relational databases (SQL), and Stata and SAS. This software let researchers efficiently summarize and organize data, resulting in accurate results.

Section One: General Information.

Question 1: For how long have you been studying English?

The table below demonstrates the frequencies and percentages of the students' answer to this question.

Table 7 Students' years of learning English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**8 years**	12	34.3	34.3	34.3
	more than 8 years	23	65.7	65.7	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 7, the majority of participants (65.7%) reported studying English for more than 8 years, while 34.3% indicated that they had studied English for 8 years. This

suggests that all students had substantial exposure to the English language prior to completing the questionnaire.

Question 2: Level of study

Table 8 Students' Level of Study

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**First Year**	18	51.4	51.4	51.4
	Second Year	17	48.6	48.6	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 8, the sample was nearly equally divided between first-year and second-year undergraduate students. Specifically, 51.4% of respondents were in their first year of study, while 48.6% were in their second year.

Question 3: How often do you read academic texts in English?

Table 9 Students' Frequency of Reading Academic Texts in English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Rarely**	13	37.1	37.1	37.1
	Sometimes	19	54.3	54.3	91.4
	Often	3	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 reveals that more than half of the students (54.3%) reported reading academic texts in English “sometimes.” A smaller proportion, 37.1%, indicated they “rarely” read such texts, while only 8.6% stated they read them “often.”

Question 4: How would you rate your reading ability in English?

Table 10 Students' Reading Ability in English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Poor**	5	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Fair	15	42.9	42.9	57.1
	Good	15	42.9	42.9	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Regarding self-assessed reading ability, Table 10 shows that the majority of students rated their reading ability as either "fair" (42.9%) or "good" (42.9%). Only 14.3% of the participants rated their reading ability as "poor."

Section two: Close reading behaviour

This section examines students' reported use of close reading strategies. The statements are categorized into three subgroups: literal understanding, interpretation and analysis, and textual reflection. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), and the results are presented with frequencies from the bar charts, followed by the mean and standard deviation.

Item A: Literal understanding

Figure 2 Students rating of their Literal Understanding Behaviour

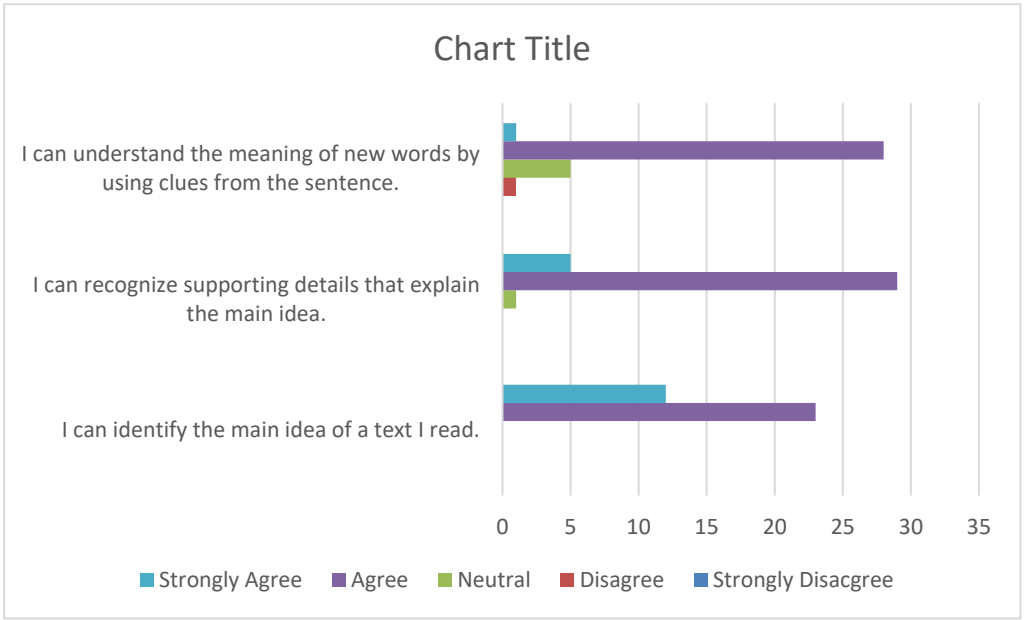

Table 11 Perceived rating of students' Literal Understanding Behaviour

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can identify the main idea of a text I read.	35	4.34	.482
I can recognize supporting details that explain the main idea.	35	4.11	.404
I can understand the meaning of new words by using clues from the sentence.	35	3.83	.514
Valid N (listwise)	35		

Statement 1: I can identify the main idea of a text I read.

According to the bar chart, a large proportion of students selected Agree (23) and Strongly Agree (12). The item received a mean score of 4.34 with a standard deviation of 0.48, indicating that most students expressed a high level of confidence in identifying the main idea.

The high mean indicates that students mostly agreed or strongly agreed on this statement, having a great deal of confidence to distinguish between main ideas. The low standard deviation is an indicator that responses were near the mean, meaning most students held this opinion consistently with little variation.

Statement 2: I can recognize supporting details that explain the main idea.

The majority of students selected Agree (29), followed by Strongly Agree (5). The mean score was 4.11 and the standard deviation was 0.40, suggesting consistent agreement with this behavior among the participants.

This also shows high agreement among students, with the majority of responses within the Agree category. The extremely low standard deviation shows that there was a high degree of consensus, students were almost uniform in responding with confidence when naming supporting details.

Statement 3: I can understand the meaning of new words by using clues from the sentence.

The most frequent responses were Agree (28) and Neutral (5). The mean was 3.83 and the standard deviation was 0.51, reflecting moderate confidence in using context clues for vocabulary understanding.

The mean near 4 is moderate to high agreement, i.e., students are very confident in the use of context clues. The higher standard deviation reflects slightly more range in students'

responses, with some students perhaps less sure or perhaps less consistent in employing this strategy.

Item B: Interpretation and analysis

Figure 3 Students' rating of their Interpretation and Analysis Behaviour

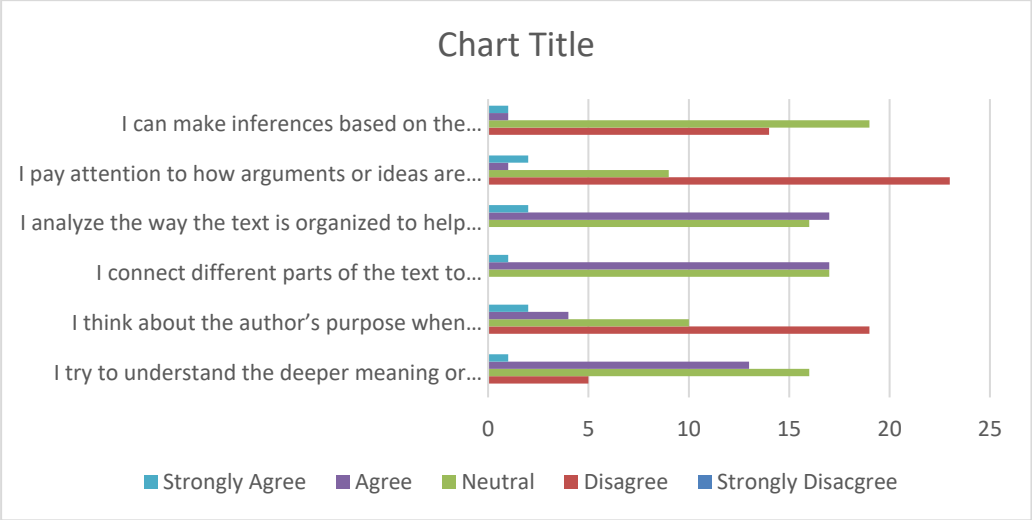

Table 12 Perceived rating of students' Interpretation and Analysis Behaviour

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I try to understand the deeper meaning or message behind a text.	35	3.29	.750
I think about the author's purpose when reading a text.	35	2.69	.900
I connect different parts of the text to understand the overall meaning.	35	3.54	.561
I analyze the way the text is organized to help me understand it better.	35	3.60	.604
I pay attention to how arguments or ideas are developed across paragraphs.	35	2.49	.818
I can make inferences based on the information in the text.	35	2.69	.676
Valid N (listwise)	35		

Statement 4: I try to understand the deeper meaning or message behind a text.

The bar chart showed varied responses, with neutral (16) and then Agree (13) being the most frequent. The mean score was 3.29 and the standard deviation was 0.75, indicating that students occasionally attempt to interpret deeper meanings.

The average is in the center of the scale, reflecting a tendency towards being neutral or having moderate agreement. The rather high standard deviation indicates that there is variation in responses, i.e., while some students are engaging in more profound interpretation, others are not, reflecting inconsistency in the act.

Statement 5: I think about the author's purpose when reading a text.

The most common responses were Disagree (19) with the highest selection and then Neutral (10). The mean was 2.69 with a standard deviation of 0.90, showing less consistent engagement with authorial intent.

The low mean shows general disagreement or neutrality, indicating that students in general do not tend to consider authorial intention very often. The high standard deviation shows responses were highly diverse, indicating widespread variation in how students approach this kind of analysis.

Statement 6: I connect different parts of the text to understand the overall meaning.

Most responses clustered around neutral (17) and agree (17). The item received a mean of 3.54 with a standard deviation of 0.56, indicating moderate engagement with textual coherence.

This measure indicates moderate agreement, implying that most students do attempt to integrate information throughout the text. The moderate standard deviation means that although most students responded in the same way, there is some variation present, not all of them consistently use this integrative approach.

Statement 7: I analyse the way the text is organized to help me understand it better.

The bar chart indicates most students selected Agree (17), followed by Neutral (16). The mean was 3.60 and the standard deviation was 0.60, reflecting a generally positive response to this analytical behavior.

This mean reflects moderate to strong agreement, showing students have some awareness of structural analysis. The standard deviation is modest, indicating moderate consistency across student responses.

Statement 8: I pay attention to how arguments or ideas are developed across paragraphs.

The most common responses were Disagree (23) followed by Neutral (9). The mean score was 2.49 and the standard deviation was 0.82, suggesting that this behavior is less frequently practiced.

The low mean suggests that the students are more likely to disagree or be neutral, suggesting that keeping track of idea development is a poor skill. The relatively high standard deviation suggests that the range of answers is wide, suggesting that while some students may do well at this, others are not demonstrating this skill.

Statement 9: I can make inferences based on the information in the text.

The responses were mostly centered around Neutral (19) followed by disagree (14). The item had a mean score of 2.69 and a standard deviation of 0.68, indicating a moderate but inconsistent application of inferencing.

The mean indicates there is little agreement or neutrality, that students are not confident inferencers. The moderate standard deviation indicates responses were somewhat diverse, some disagreement and some unsure or neutral.

Item C: Textual reflection

Figure 4 Students rating of their Textual Reflection Behaviour

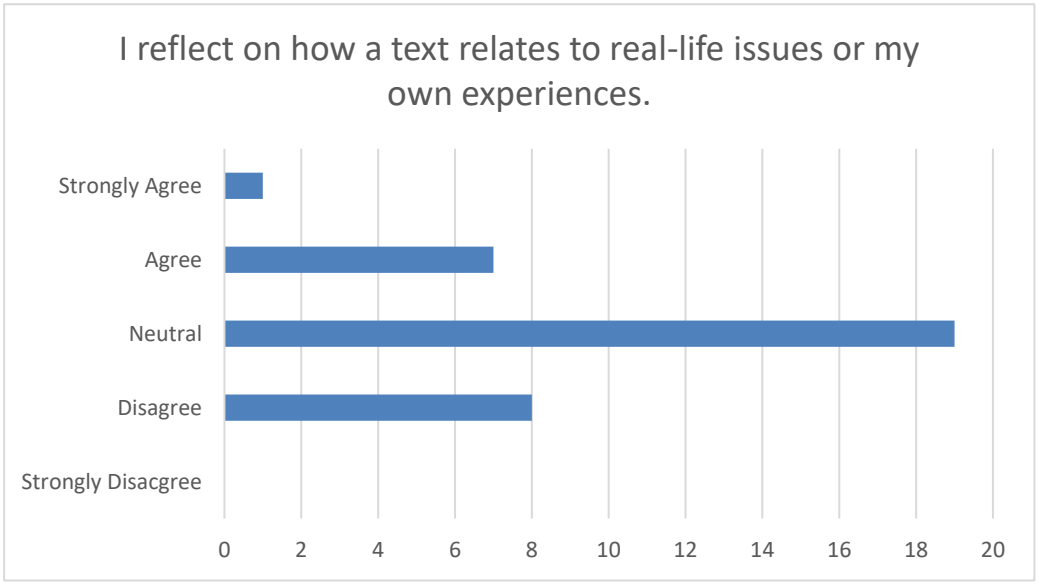

Table 13 perceived rating of student's Textual Reflection Behaviour

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation

I reflect on how a text relates to real-life issues or my own experiences.	35	3.03	.747
Valid N (listwise)	35		

Statement 10: I reflect on how a text relates to real-life issues or my own experiences.

Most students responded with "neutral" (19) and then "disagree" (8) while a similar number chose "agree" (7). The mean score was 3.03 and the standard deviation was 0.75, reflecting moderate levels of personal reflection while reading.

The mean lies exactly at the neutral center, which implies no bias either direction towards concord or discord. The relatively large standard deviation suggests a wide range of scores with some students responding reflectively to a degree and others possibly not connecting text to themselves at all.

Section 3: Metacognitive strategy use

This section examines students' reported use of metacognitive reading strategies. The statements are categorized into three subgroups: Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluating. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), and the results are presented with frequencies from the bar charts, followed by the mean and standard deviation.

Item A: Planning

Figure 5 Students rating of their use of Planning Strategies

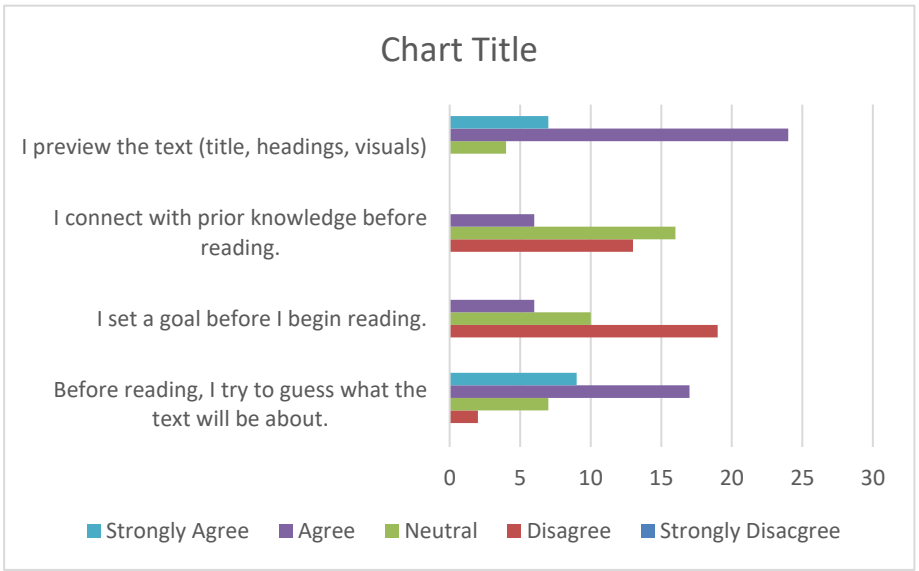

Table 14 Perceived rating of students' use of Planning Strategies

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Before reading, I try to guess what the text will be about.	35	3.94	.838
I set a goal before I begin reading.	35	2.63	.770
I connect with prior knowledge before reading.	35	2.80	.719
I preview the text (title, headings, visuals)	35	4.09	.562
Valid N (listwise)	35		

Statement 1: Before reading, I try to guess what the text will be about.

According to the bar chart, the majority of students responded with *Agree (17)* or *Strongly Agree (9)*. Fewer students selected *Neutral (7)*, while only a small number chose *Disagree (2)* or *Strongly Disagree*. The mean score was 3.94 and the standard deviation was 0.84, indicating that students generally agree with using prediction as a pre-reading strategy.

The high mean suggests that students frequently engage in previewing as a planning strategy. The low standard deviation indicates strong consistency, meaning most students reported similar behavior with little variation.

Statement 2: I set a goal before I begin reading.

The most common response was *Disagree (19)*, followed by *Neutral (10)* and *Agree (6)*. The mean score was 2.63 and the standard deviation was 0.77, showing that students tend to disagree or remain neutral, indicating limited use of goal-setting before reading.

This mean indicates moderate to high agreement, which means most students are employing this predictive approach. The slightly higher standard deviation indicates some variability, which means some students are employing this technique less than consistently.

Statement 3: I connect with prior knowledge before reading.

Responses were spread across *Neutral (16)*, *Disagree (13)*, and *Agree (6)*. Only a few students chose *Strongly Agree*. The mean score was 2.80 and the standard deviation was 0.72, which reflects a neutral stance regarding this preparatory strategy.

Low mean implies that students rarely have goals, a basic element of metacognitive planning. Moderate-to-high standard deviation implies a large range of responses, with inconsistency, some students have goals, yet most do not, or are uncertain.

Statement 4: I preview the text (title, headings, visuals).

Most students selected *Agree* (24) and *Strongly Agree* (7). Only 4 chose *Neutral*, and no student strongly disagreed. The mean score was 4.09 and the standard deviation was 0.56, showing a strong tendency toward agreement with this effective planning behavior.

The average tells us that using prior knowledge is a poor habit among students. The moderate standard deviation again points to inconsistency: while there are students who attempt to apply prior knowledge, there are numerous others who do not or have no inclination for it.

Item B: Monitoring

Figure 6 Students' rating of their use of Monitoring Strategies

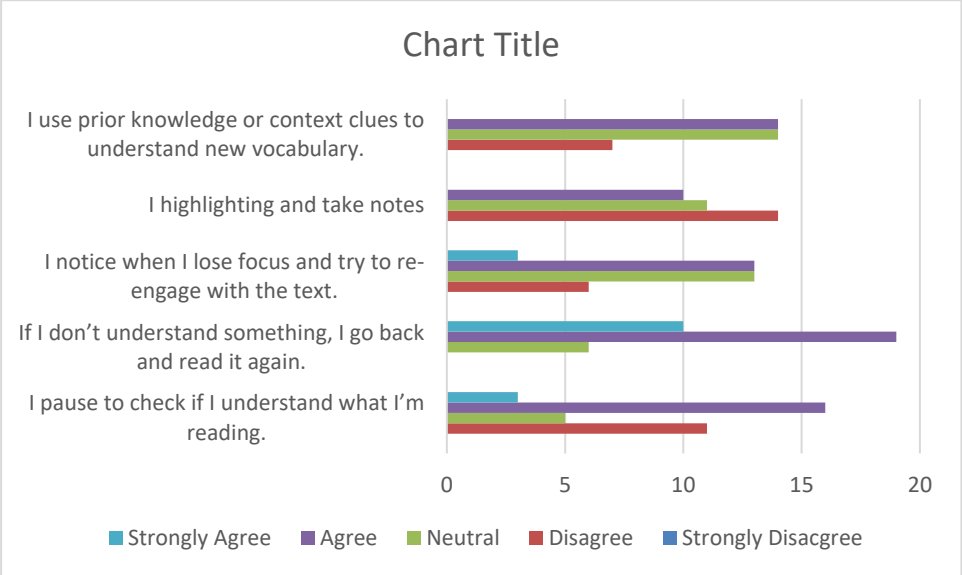

Table 15 Perceived rating of students' use of Monitoring Strategies

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I pause to check if I understand what I'm reading.	35	3.31	1.022
If I don't understand something, I go back and read it again.	35	4.11	.676
I notice when I lose focus and try to re-engage with the text.	35	3.37	.877
I highlighting and take notes	35	2.89	.832

I use prior knowledge or context clues to understand new vocabulary.	35	3.20	.759
Valid N (listwise)	35		

Statement 5: I pause to check if I understand what I'm reading.

Bar chart results showed responses mainly in *Agree (16)* and *Disagree (11)*, with fewer in *Strongly Agree (3)* and *Neutral (5)*. The mean was 3.31 and the standard deviation was 1.02, reflecting a neutral to agree pattern of comprehension monitoring.

A near midpoint mean suggests that self-monitoring during reading is substandard or inconsistent. The large standard deviation accounts for the fact that student behavior is extremely variable some check themselves frequently, while others rarely or never check themselves.

Statement 6: If I don't understand something, I go back and read it again.

The most frequent responses were *Agree* (19) and *Strongly Agree* (10), with very few students choosing lower-scale options. The mean score was 4.11 and the standard deviation was 0.68, indicating that students agree with rereading as a monitoring strategy.

This high mean suggests that rereading is a normal monitoring technique for students. The moderate standard deviation suggests that there is quite a stable response, but there are some students who do not utilize this as frequently.

Statement 7: I notice when I lose focus and try to re-engage with the text.

Responses were mostly *Agree* (13) and *Neutral* (13), followed by *Disagree* and *Strongly Agree*. The mean score was 3.37 and the standard deviation was 0.88, suggesting that students generally agree, though variation exists.

This average indicates moderate use of self-correction over intervals of loss of focus, but not as strong as rereading for comprehension. The higher standard deviation points to visible variation, there are students who actively refocus, but others will continue reading without checking for understanding.

Statement 8: I highlight and take notes.

The bar chart showed most students selected *Disagree* (14), with others choosing *Neutral* (11) or *Neutral* (10). The mean score was 2.89 and the standard deviation was 0.83, placing this behavior in the neutral range.

This is an implication that annotating or mark-up is not very common. The moderate variability suggested by the standard deviation indicates that even though there are some students who practice this strategy, the majority of them do not apply this active monitoring strategy.

Statement 9: I use prior knowledge or context clues to understand new vocabulary.

The highest number of responses were *Neutral* (14) and *Agree* (14), with fewer selecting *Disagree (7)*. The mean score was 3.20 and the standard deviation was 0.76, reflecting neutral to slight agreement.

This shows moderate agreement, which means that students use this strategy sometimes. The standard deviation has a small variation, meaning that some do this as a habit, but others may use translation or even skip unfamiliar words.

Item C: Evaluating

Figure 7 Students' rating of their use of Evaluating Strategies

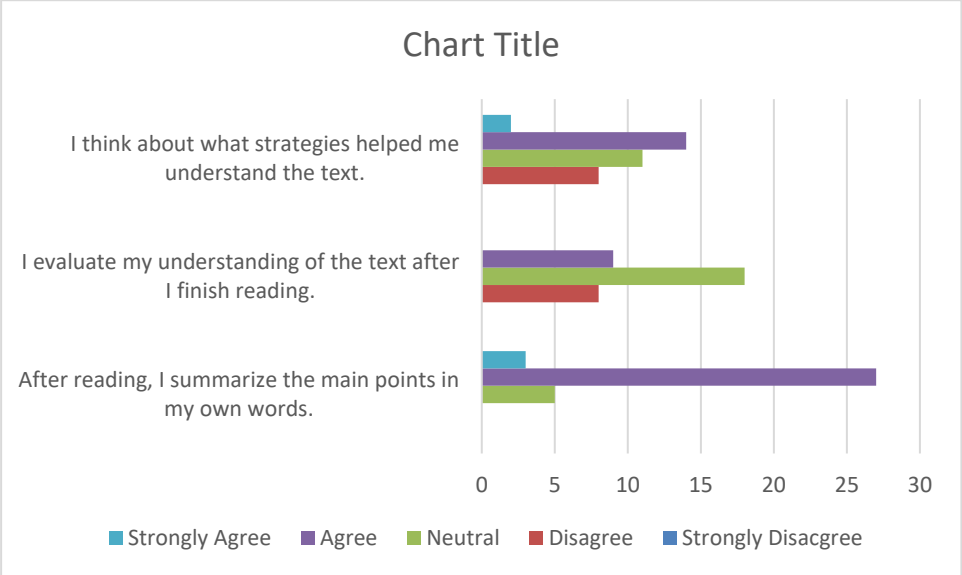

Table 16 Perceived rating od students' use of Evaluating Strategies

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
After reading, I summarize the main points in my own words.	35	3.94	.482
I evaluate my understanding of the text after I finish reading.	35	3.03	.707
I think about what strategies helped me understand the text.	35	3.29	.893

Valid N (listwise)	35

Statement 10: After reading, I summarize the main points in my own words.

Bar chart data showed that 27 students selected *Agree* and 5 *Neutral*, with very few selecting Strongly Agree (3). The mean was 3.94 and the standard deviation was 0.48, indicating a strong agreement with this post-reading behavior.

The high mean reflects strong engagement with summarizing, an important evaluating strategy. The low standard deviation indicates very consistent behavior across students, suggesting this is a well-practiced skill.

Statement 11: I evaluate my understanding of the text after I finish reading.

Responses were most commonly *Neutral* (18) and *Agree* (9), followed by 8 *Disagree*. The mean score was 3.03 and the standard deviation was 0.71, suggesting that students hold a neutral position regarding this self-evaluative practice.

This test indicates students are inconsistent or neutral in measuring their own understanding. The moderate standard deviation verifies the interpretation, answers are spread out, with some students thinking after reading, but others not necessarily consistently.

Statement 12: I think about what strategies helped me understand the text.

The most selected response was *Agree* (14), followed by *Neutral (11)* and fewer at other ends of the scale. The mean score was 3.29 and the standard deviation was 0.89, placing it within the neutral to agree range.

A slightly higher mean means there is some thought going into strategy use, but not by all of the students in the group. The high standard deviation indicates that some students do think, while others may not even realize they are employing strategies at all.

3.3.2.6. Testing the normality of distribution

In order to statistically analyze the normality of distribution of a data set at hand, the statistical test of normality, namely the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, was run in IBM-SPSS 27 software. Testing for normality of the distribution assists me to determine which appropriate statistical test and procedure to follow for further analysis, and hence it largely reflects the credibility of the analysis. Alternatively, in data analysis involving quantitative data, tests of normality such as the Shapiro-Wilk and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests are usually applied to verify whether a certain data set follows a normal distribution or not (Amrate, 2021). The Shapiro-Wilk test is employed for testing the normality of distribution for small sample sizes (n= <50), whereas the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality is preferably used in bigger sample sizes (n= ≥50) (Amrate, 2021). The normality tests are of course used to find out

whether or not the variables significantly differ according to the normal distribution, the procedure bringing forth two statistical hypotheses corresponding to the test results:

H0: The close reading behavior / metacognitive strategy use are not statistically significantly different from the normal distribution.
Ha: close reading behavior / metacognitive strategy use are statistically significantly different from the normal distribution.

The results of the test are displayed in the following table where Sig. stands for the level of significance.

Table 17 Test of Normality of the Data Distribution

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	**df**	**Sig.**	**Statistic**	**df**	**Sig.**
Close Reading Behaviour	.208	35	.001	.795	35	.000
Metacognitive Strategy Use	.089	35	.200*	.984	35	.883

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

While interpreting the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, it is important to note that if the p-value is above 0.05 (Sig. > 0.05), the data are considered to be normally distributed, and thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_0). Conversely, if the p-value is below 0.05 (Sig. < 0.05), the data are not normally distributed, and H_0 is rejected. According to the results, the p-value for close reading behavior was Sig. = 0.000, indicating that the data are not normally distributed, and therefore, H_0 is rejected. In contrast, the p-value for metacognitive strategy use was Sig. = 0.883, which is above the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that the data are normally distributed, and thus, we fail to reject H_0.

3.3.2.7. Testing the correlation

As the normality assumption was not met for one of the variables, that is, Close Reading Behaviour, which showed significant deviation from normality (Shapiro–Wilk p = .000), a non-parametric test needed to be used. Although Metacognitive Strategy Use was normally distributed (p = .883), both variables need to meet the normality assumption for Pearson's correlation. Therefore, to establish the validity and reliability of the analysis, Spearman's rank-order correlation was the most appropriate statistical test to be used. Spearman's test does not insist on normality of data and is more relevant in examining monotonic relations between

variables, which makes it more suitable to the nature of the present dataset. The results of this test are shown in table 18 below.

Table 18 Correlation results between Metacognitive Strategy Use and Close Reading Behaviour

			Close Reading Behaviour	**Metacognitive Strategy Use**
Spearman's rho	**Close Reading Behaviour**	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.259
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.134
		N	35	35
	Metacognitive Strategy Use	Correlation Coefficient	.259	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.134	.
		N	35	35

A Spearman-rank ordering suggested a low positive relationship between metacognitive strategy use and close reading behavior whilst being weakly demonstrated with a ρ-value of .259 (p-value of .134, n = 35). Another way to interpret this is the fact that the level of statistical significance was not observed at the 0.05 level even; therefore, the relation in this sample might have been found by chance. While some positive trend is noted, having a bigger participant would have thrown more light on whether there is a real association or not.

3.3.2.8. Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire:

An analysis of the student questionnaire yielded useful information on how undergraduate EFL students comprehend and apply close reading behavior and metacognitive strategy. Through extensive scrutiny of all sections and items with descriptive statistics, normality testing, reliability analysis, and correlation testing, a comprehensive understanding of the reading behavior of students was unveiled.

The findings from the questionnaire give a general indication of how Mohamed Khider University of Biskra EFL students perceive and enact metacognitive strategies during close reading. According to the findings, the students are fairly confident in basic level reading comprehension skills but practice higher-order analysis and metacognitive regulation in a uneven and, in some cases, minimal.

Most students seem to be at ease with literal reading activities like finding main ideas and identifying supporting details. These basic skills are reported consistently as strengths

throughout the sample, indicating that students are highly practiced in surface reading. Yet, as reading activities shift toward deeper interpretation and critical thinking, the findings reveal a noticeable drop in confidence and consistency. Skills such as analytically examining the development of arguments, determining an author's purpose, or drawing inferences from textual clues are practiced so much less often and less confidently. Differences of this kind suggest that students' close reading abilities are stronger at the literal or concrete level than at the interpretive or analytical level.

Also, when prompted to think about how texts connect to wider contexts or to their own experiences (an essential part of close reading) most students are neutral or uncertain. What this suggests is that maybe they can understand content but are not as comfortable with the process of reflective reading or creating personal or real-world connections out of what they read.

The findings on metacognitive strategy use are varied. Students report using some strategies more than others, especially those that are more procedural or observable in nature. For instance, the overwhelming majority of students report previewing the text or attempting to predict what the text will be about before reading. These activities show some awareness of planning as a function of reading, but deeper kinds of planning (like goal-setting or activation of prior knowledge) occur much less often. This uneven pattern suggests that there are some metacognitive activities present, but some others require further development.

During reading, students are more likely to employ monitoring strategies, namely rereading difficult parts of text. This seems to be their primary way of addressing comprehension problems. Other self-checking habits, such as being aware of when they lose focus or using note-taking as a strategy, are not being practiced to any large degree. This indicates that students' approach to keeping track of their understanding is more reactive (rereading when confused) rather than proactive (tracking concentration, note-taking, or questioning).

Students generally do report, after reading, summarizing the main ideas, a positive indication of evaluative thinking. But fewer students do actively reflect on their learning or decide which methods worked best. These findings reveal that post-reading reflection does occur but is limited and not yet developed as a deliberate metacognitive habit.

The internal reliability in the responses from the questionnaire supports these trends. Student responses to interpretation and evaluation items are more reliable than those to planning items, suggesting perhaps a greater awareness of knowing what monitoring and evaluating understanding means as opposed to planning strategically in anticipation of reading. The low reliability in the planning portion only serves to confirm that such strategies may be underutilized or not properly comprehended by students.

Statistical testing also guaranteed that even with the weak positive trend between metacognitive strategy usage and close reading behavior, it is not statistically significant. This might be either because of the small population size or due to differences among students' perception and usage of the strategies. The trend nevertheless suggests that the people who use metacognitive strategies more frequently also present in close reading behavior. And that answers the third research question: “Is there a relationship reported between the students' use of close reading strategies with metacognitive strategies in independent reading tasks?” And it confirms the Alternative Hypothesis.

When combined, these findings indicate that students would benefit from more explicit instruction in metacognitive strategy as well as close reading. Students do possess some general skills and strategies, but many of these are inconsistently applied or underdeveloped. Building metacognitive awareness can enable students to pursue more effective reading of complex texts, to read more richly for meaning, and to gain greater control over their own reading processes.

3.3.3. Classroom observation sheet

3.3.3.1. The aim of the classroom observation sheet

The main objective of the observation sheet was to procure direct evidence of how metacognitive strategies are implemented in reading instruction within actual classroom settings. To achieve this, the questionnaire and interview tools rely on self-reported evidence from students and teachers. On the other hand, the observation sheet is constructed to denote actual teaching practice and student engagement during reading lessons.

This instrument was designed to obtain the degree to which instructors used metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, and evaluating) within instruction, and how students reacted to those strategies in close reading activities. In particular, the observation targeted indicators like whether teachers assisted students in setting reading goals, asked them to reflect on their understanding while reading, and encouraged post-reading evaluation strategies like summarizing or discussion of strategies.

In general, the classroom observation sheet served to verify and support questionnaire and interview data by offering immediate, contextual insight into the instructional environment. It helped determine if metacognitive strategy use was sustained, explicit, and embedded within the reading process, and if the strategies were positively affecting student activity and understanding in reading activities.

3.3.3.2. Description of the classroom observation sheet

The classroom observation sheet was designed as a structured checklist to document the frequency and occurrence of the implementation of metacognitive strategies in reading instruction in EFL classrooms. It was designed to track both teacher and student engagement,

more specifically, application of metacognitive strategies that support close reading. The observation tool is made up of four broad categories, and each of these addresses a unique phase of the process of reading or area of focus. These are: Planning Phase (Before Reading), Monitoring Phase (During Reading), Evaluating Phase (After Reading), and Student Engagement in Close Reading. Each category contains a set of observable behaviors that correlate well with well-documented aspects of metacognitive use of strategy, so that one can make a clear and consistent evaluation across several classes.

In the Planning Phase, the observer is encouraged to look for teacher actions which activate students' readiness to read. They are things like helping students connect with previous knowledge, establishing the purpose of reading exercise, helping in goal-setting, and encouraging previewing of the text (e.g., titles, headings, pictures).

The Monitoring Phase focuses on strategies used during reading. This area involves whether or not the teacher has students take notes and highlight, makes students re-read tough passages, makes students think while reading, and has students figure out vocabulary using prior knowledge or context clues. These behaviors are most critical in assisting students to self-regulate their own understanding when they read.

The Evaluating Phase captures post-reading strategies. The observers note if the teacher requires summarizing or paraphrasing, encourages reflection on the reading process, provides feedback or elicits peer feedback. These provide opportunities for students to assess what they have learned and how they proceeded to finish up the reading task.

The final section, Student Engagement with Close Reading, measures students' behaviors and engagement reflecting close reading. They consist of attention and interest during reading tasks, active participation in discussion, recalling evidence from the text, and use of strategies such as annotating or highlighting during reading.

Each behavior across all sections is rated on a three-point scale: Not Observed, Partially Observed, or Clearly Observed. This scale provides flexibility in capturing different levels of strategy implementation and student responsiveness without requiring subjective judgment beyond the defined behaviors.

Generally, the design of the observation sheet allows for a systematic, evidence-based assessment of how metacognitive strategies are incorporated into reading instruction in the classroom and how, in turn, students approach texts. It adds strength to data gathered through the questionnaire and interviews as it allows for a real-time, observable element to the investigation.

3.3.3.3. Validating and piloting the classroom observation sheet

The classroom observation sheet was validated by the supervisor and Prof. Chelli Saliha who reviewed it and made some comments, mostly including rewording some of the statements to make them more precise. It was also piloted with two classrooms to check if the sheet seems to observe what should be observed and that it's all clear.

3.3.3.4. Analysis of the classroom observations

This section presents the analysis of data gathered through the use of classroom observation sheet, a direct measure to evaluate EFL teachers' actual implementation of metacognitive reading instruction strategies. Unlike the questionnaire that had documented students' self-reports of what they did, the observation sheet documented observable instructional classroom practices and student responses in live instructional settings. Its aim was to find out how frequently and effectively teachers incorporated planning, monitoring, and evaluation methods into teaching and to what extent students employed close reading behaviors as a result.

The observation checklist was conducted across six reading lessons with different teachers and groups, covering the first- and second-year undergraduate EFL classes. Each item on the sheet was rated using a three-point scale of Not Observed, Partially Observed, or Clearly Observed. The ratings were coded numerically (1–3) to facilitate quantitative analysis. Data obtained were submitted to basic descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, in order to measure the general frequency and consistency of metacognitive strategy use. Frequencies and bar charts were also used to explain the most and least occurring behaviors.

Planning Phase (Before Reading)

Figure 8 Perceived rating of Teachers' Observed Behaviour During the Planning Phase

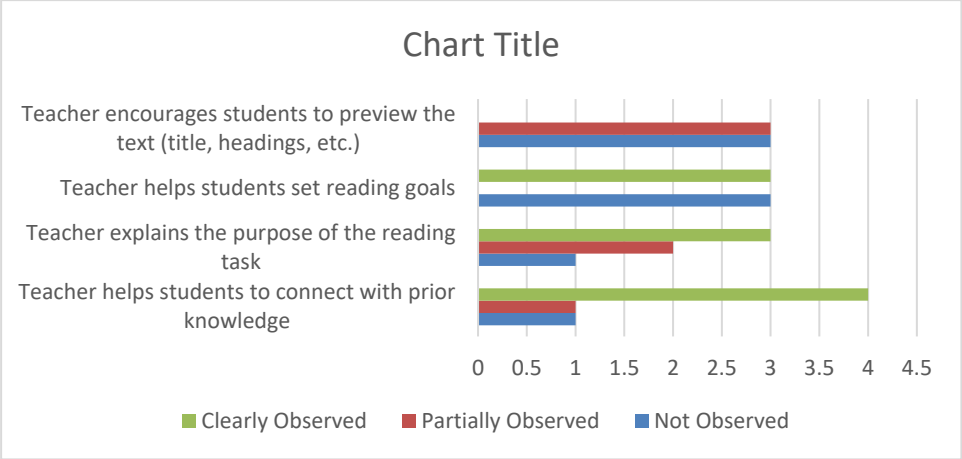

Table 19 Perceived rating of Teachers' Observed Behaviour During the Planning Phase

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher helps students to connect with prior knowledge before reading.	6	2.50	.837
Teacher explains the purpose of the reading task.	6	2.33	.816
Teacher helps students set reading goals.	6	2.00	1.095
Teacher encourages students to preview the text (title, headings, visuals)	6	1.50	.548
Valid N (listwise)	6		

Statement 1: Teacher helps students to connect with prior knowledge before reading

This practice was most frequently observed at the "Partially Observed" to "Clearly Observed" level. The mean (2.50) reflects a moderate level of enactment, and the relatively high SD (0.837) reflects variability: some teachers undoubtedly used this approach, others only partially or not at all.

Statement 2: Teacher explains the purpose of the reading task

This behavior was exhibited to a moderate extent (Mean = 2.33), with the responses ranging between partial and full implementation. Once again, the SD (0.816) indicates variation in teacher behavior, some teachers explained the task very clearly, while others did not emphasize it consistently

Statement 3: Teacher helps students set reading goals

This method was utilized sporadically. The 2.00 mean shows that it was used halfway on average, but the very high SD (1.095) shows enormous deviations, some teachers may not have practiced it at all, and others used it fairly well.

Statement 4: Teacher encourages students to preview the text

This strategy was not often employed, and the mean fell between "Not Observed" and "Partially Observed." The low SD of 0.548 reflects similar results—most observations indicated that this behavior was not strongly present.

Monitoring Phase (During Reading)

Figure 9 Perceived rating of Teachers' Behaviour During the Monitoring Phase

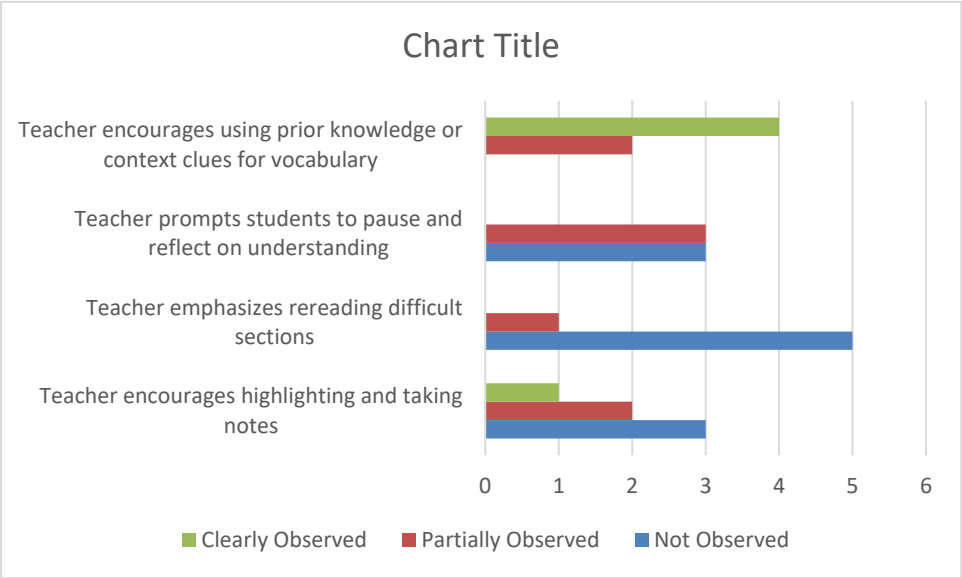

Table 20 Perceived rating of Teachers' Behaviour During the Monitoring Phase

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher encourages highlighting and taking notes.	6	1.67	.816
Teacher emphasizes on rereading difficult sections of the text	6	1.17	.408
Teacher prompts students to pause and reflect on their understanding.	6	1.50	.548
Teacher encourages students to use prior knowledge or context clues to understand new vocabulary.	6	2.67	.516
Valid N (listwise)	6		

Statement 1: Teacher encourages highlighting and taking notes

This was observed at a low to moderate level, and the SD (0.816) suggests variation: some teachers encouraged note-taking more than others.

Statement 2: Teacher emphasizes rereading difficult sections of the text

This was rarely observed. The mean is very close to "Not Observed," and the low SD shows consistency across classrooms, meaning most teachers did not apply this strategy.

Statement 3: Teacher prompts students to pause and reflect on their understanding

This strategy was minimally present, with half of the responses likely being "Partially Observed." The relatively low SD indicates uniformity in the observation: most teachers did not fully implement this technique.

Statement 4: Teacher encourages students to use prior knowledge or context clues to understand new vocabulary

This was the most consistently applied strategy in this section, leaning toward "Clearly Observed." The low SD (0.516) means that most teachers did use this behavior regularly.

Evaluating Phase (After Reading)

Figure 10 Perceived rating of Teachers' Observed Behaviour During the Evaluating Phase

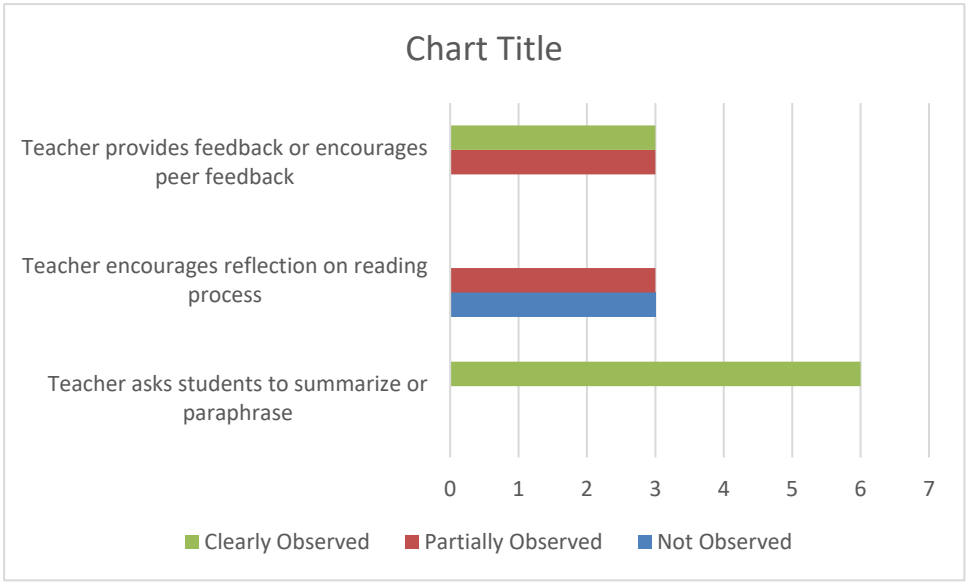

Table 21 Perceived rating of Teachers' Observed Behaviour During the Evaluating Phase

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher asks students to summarize or paraphrase what they've read.	6	3.00	.000

Teacher encourages students to reflect on their reading process (e.g., what helped or didn't)	6	1.50	.548
Teacher provides feedback or encourages peer feedback.	6	2.50	.548
Valid N (listwise)	6		

Statement 1: Teacher asks students to summarize or paraphrase what they've read

This strategy was clearly observed in every session. The perfect mean (3.00) and zero SD reflect uniform and consistent application across all observed classes.

Statement 2: Teacher encourages reflection on reading process

This was minimally used, with results showing limited engagement with reflective practice (Mean = 1.50). The consistent SD (0.548) suggests most teachers either did not use it or used it only partially.

Statement 3: Teacher provides feedback or encourages peer feedback

This was observed at a moderate level (Mean = 2.50), and the relatively low SD (0.548) implies this practice was fairly consistent, though not always at a "Clearly Observed" level.

Student Engagement with Close Reading

Figure 11 Perceived rating of the Observed Engagement of Students During the Reading Session

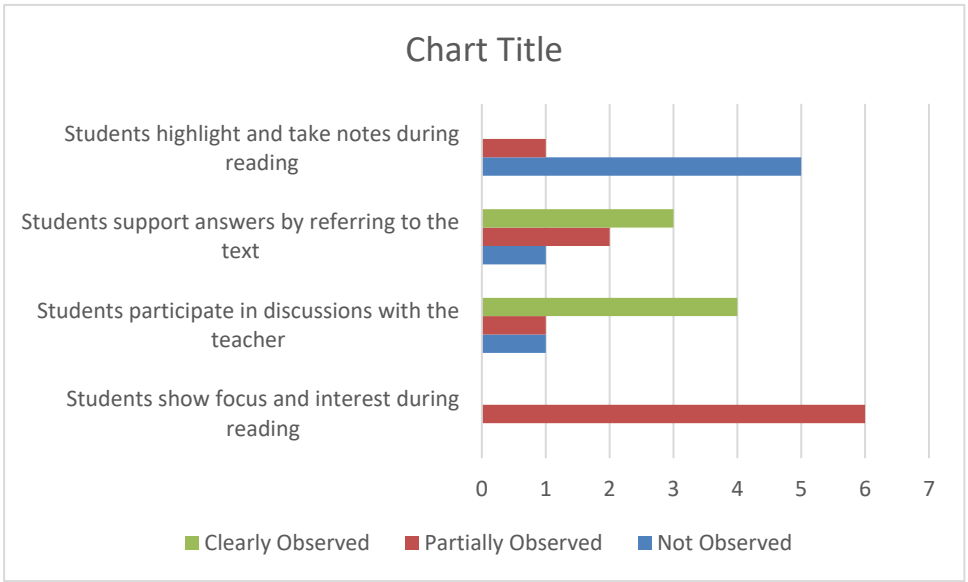

Table 22 Perceived rating of the Observed Engagement of Students During the Reading Session

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students show focus and interest during reading activities.	6	2.00	.000
Students participate in discussions with the teacher about the text.	6	2.50	.837
Students support their answers by referring back to the text.	6	2.33	.816
Students highlight and take notes during their reading.	6	1.17	.408
Valid N (listwise)	6		

Statement 1: Students show focus and interest during reading activities

This was partially observed in every session. The uniform mean and zero SD indicate no variation: students were engaged, but not at the highest level.

Statement 2: Students participate in discussions with the teacher about the text

This behavior was moderately to clearly observed, though the higher SD (0.837) indicates variation, some groups participated more actively than others.

Statement 3: Students support their answers by referring back to the text

There was moderate evidence of students engaging in text-based reasoning. The SD (0.816) reflects some inconsistency between groups.

Statement 4: Students highlight and take notes during their reading

This behavior was mostly absent, with very little variation. Students were generally not observed using note-taking strategies during reading.

3.3.3.5. Interpretation of the classroom observations

The classroom observation did reflect varied levels of observation of metacognitive strategy in the three instructional phases, planning, monitoring, and evaluating, and student observable behavioral engagement which strengthens the findings of the interview and answers the first research question. While some of the strategies were probably practiced on a routine

basis, others were possibly less practiced or practiced inconsistently by classrooms. Overall, the assessing phase was the most effective. The teachers utilized students in post-reading activities on a daily basis, namely summarizing and paraphrasing, and this was clearly visible in all sessions and received the highest potential mean rating of 3.00 without any variation across classrooms. In addition, teacher and peer-led feedback practices were available to a certain level, with evidence of some effort towards reflective follow-up and integration of understanding. Planning showed modest implementation. Teachers regularly helped students make connections to previous knowledge and announced the purpose of the reading activity, although with some variation from session to session. Goal-setting and previewing the text were weaker in comparison, however. These behaviors were either implemented irregularly or effectively overlooked, as reflected in their lower mean scores and, for goal-setting, the greatest variability (SD = 1.095) among all planning-related behaviors. The monitoring phase was the weakest and least stable element of teaching. Support tactics for students while going through the activity of reading, rereading difficult parts, note-taking, and pausing to reflect on comprehension, were not frequently observed. All these activities had low mean ratings ranging from 1.17 to 1.67, which implied they were seldom used or only occasionally observed. Only one monitoring strategy, one that was causing the students to use context clues and background knowledge to read vocabulary, was reliably and effectively implemented, its higher mean of 2.67 and low standard deviation (SD = 0.516) reflecting this. The general absence of monitoring strategies reflects a lack of the active scaffolding that readers are receiving as they read, which can disrupt their ability to decode and understand complex reading materials in the moment. Regarding student engagement, the observations indicated that students were average in attention and engagement during reading activities, especially during discussion and when they were asked to explain answers using textual supports. In contrast, highlighting and note-taking behaviors indicative of deeper interaction with the text were rarely exhibited and consistently low across sessions (mean = 1.17, SD = 0.408). This is in line with poor modeling of these behaviors by teachers throughout the monitoring interval. n short, although teachers demonstrated strength in post-reading activity and some planning aspects, the lack of reading monitoring strategies is a primary instructional gap. Achieving this point more effectively (through frequent implementation of guided rereading, comprehension checking, and student engagement) would likely enhance students' general ability to manage their understanding while reading, and facilitate improved close reading skill acquisition.

3.4. Discussion and Synthesis of Findings

3.4.1. Integrated findings

After presenting the results and findings of the three tools, this section provides triangulated synthesis of information gathered through the three instruments: students'

questionnaire, teachers' semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation. The aim here is to synthesize student and teacher insights and triangulate them with real classroom behaviors with the aim of illuminating the status of metacognitive strategy use in teaching EFL reading and its impact on close reading behavior.

In all three instruments, a consistent pattern appears wherein there is uneven and largely implicit use of metacognitive abilities in the EFL reading class. While the questionnaire showed that students are reasonably skillful in literal reading basic skills such as identifying main idea and supporting details, interviews and observation show that higher-level skills (particularly interpretation, evaluation, and self-regulation) are underdeveloped or rarely practiced.

By students' own account, from questionnaire evidence revealed here, literal understanding (e.g., identifying main points, deducing vocabulary from context) had high mean ratings. More complex cognitive processes, including examination of text structure, understanding authors' purpose, or consideration of personal relevance, had relatively low scores. Notable is that students rated only moderate confidence in using metacognitive strategies, particularly planning. Items of a planning sort such as goal-setting and connecting prior knowledge worked poorly, but monitoring (e.g., rereading) and assessing (e.g., summarizing) did better, though once more inconsistent.

Teacher interviews, on the other hand, were consistent in relating these student-reported inconsistencies. Teachers generally verified use of metacognitive strategies during the reading phases (planning, monitoring, and evaluation), but most reported that it was spontaneous, intuitive, or "implicit" rather than having been taught explicitly. The evidence leans towards a reliance on heavy teacher experience and improvisation rather than systematic instruction. Instructors rarely used technical or metacognitive terminology during class and did not explicitly teach students to classify or consider the strategies being employed. Therefore, while strategies may be modeled or presented during class, students are not necessarily equipped to recognize, commit to memory, or transfer these skills outside of the class context.

Classroom observation confirmed this implicit trend. Observable metacognitive behaviors (goal setting, activating previous knowledge, or summarizing) did take place but varied extensively in frequency and clarity across classrooms. While others of planning and assessing action were "clearly observed" in certain sessions, others were marked as "partially" or "not observed" to signify a lack of steadiness Notably, previewing texts and summarizing after reading were more commonly implemented than mid-reading monitoring strategies like note-taking or self-questioning. Similarly, student engagement during close reading activities varied, more active in visual and group activities lessons and passive with thick, teacher-led readings.

The triangulated evidence points to a tight interrelation of strategy instruction and student engagement. More diverse and visually-supported instructional methods were found to report greater student engagement, which was also supported in observations. Student feedback, in turn, suggests that engagement is higher when texts are current and tasks are interactive. The finding underscores the necessity for adaptive, multimodal instruction, which was less forthcoming in more conventional, text-based classrooms.

A second cross-cutting issue is teacher expectation-student ability mismatch. While students generally exhibit surface-level understanding capabilities, underdevelopment in interpretive and reflective reading reveals a shortfall in instructional design and direct modeling of metacognitive behavior. Teachers recognized the mismatch but associated it mainly with external factors (overcrowded classes, poor motivation, and insufficient training) rather than with pedagogic considerations within their control. But the finding that students self-report doubt in implementing strategies such as goal-setting, reflection, and establishing relationships suggests the need for more intentional scaffolding and explicit strategy teaching.

The positive (albeit weak and not statistically significant) correlation between metacognitive strategy use and close reading behavior in the questionnaire suggests a latent relationship that could be untangled with a larger sample or stronger intervention. Teachers who systemically integrated metacognitive strategy instruction more fully tended to see more responsiveness on the part of students, confirming the value of making these strategies explicit and consistent.

3.4.2. Gaps in the Data

Despite rich results, there are certain main gaps that surface across the datasets. Firstly, there is not much explicit strategy teaching to exclude student awareness and transference of metacognitive strategies. The students are observed to use some strategies independently or automatically but not frequently as part of a systematized process for reading texts. This is partly an attribute of teachers' own conceptual lack of training, as teachers themselves have an intention to teach metacognitively "intuitively" without applying theoretical terms or structure to anchor instruction.

Second, mid-reading monitoring strategies (e.g., questioning, focus-checking, annotating) are underrepresented across all tools. While pre-reading and post-reading strategies are afforded some attention, the middle phase, where comprehension is being actively constructed and maintained, is afforded less, both in teaching and learning. This diminishes students' abilities for self-correction, monitoring their progress during reading, or becoming active meaning-makers suggesting that the lack of monitoring during reading would effect students’ analytical approaches with the text.

Third, institutional and contextual constraints, such as class size and curriculum with too little explicit room for strategy instruction, were frequently cited by teachers but not explicitly measured or addressed in the classroom observations. This suggests a need for system support (not just teacher will) on infusing metacognitive training as a supported normal aspect of reading instruction.

Finally, even if the tools have powerful evidence for instruction needs and classroom dynamics, the longitudinal development (how students' use of strategies develops over time, or how intervention might affect their development) is largely unexplored. Longitudinal or experimental design could clarify causal links and demonstrate the effectiveness of explicit metacognitive training over a long period.

3.5. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

As with any research, this research was also faced with several limitations that could have influenced the scope and level of its findings. Time constraints ensured data collection was short-term and precluded the use of a longitudinal approach that could have better followed students' evolving metacognitive and close reading abilities through time. With a longer study period and additional classroom visits, there would have been a more vivid portrait of teaching routines and students' advancement.

Another important restriction is related to the use of self-reporting methods such as interviews and questionnaires. While these tools provided valuable data regarding participants' perceptions and sentiments, these are subjective and may not reflect actual classroom behavior. Participants could have overestimated or misestimated their strategy use. Furthermore, with only a few participating teachers and observed lessons, fewer varied views were obtained in the study. As well as the number of the sample that couldn’t be as large as it is required due to the critical time since it was the end of the year and not many students were present to participate.

Despite these limitations, the research was successful in identifying EFL reading class teaching practices of metacognitive strategies and uncovering prominent areas of challenge. Triangulation of data from multiple sources added validity to findings, while further studies are needed to verify and generalize them.

For future research, it would be best to utilize more objective data collection tools, e.g., classroom observations or performance-based assessments, as supplements to self-report information. Researchers could also conduct intervention-based or longitudinal studies on the direct impact of metacognitive strategy instruction on the reading achievement of students. Having a larger sample size with more diverse institutions and teachers would also enhance future findings' generalizability and richness.

3.6. Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications

From the outcomes of this study, a number of considerations can be put forward for students, teachers, and educational stakeholders involved in teaching and learning reading in EFL university contexts. These are not intended as hard-and-fast prescriptions but as potential directions that can possibly facilitate the evolution of additional metacognitive strategy use and close reading habits.

To begin with, it would be beneficial for EFL learners to grow greater awareness of their own reading processes step by step. Greater awareness of the way they read preparation, monitor for comprehension, and reflect on what they have read can help them read more strategically. Students also stand to gain from reading more actively through texts by employing close reading strategies, which may involve annotating, questioning, or summarizing. These behaviors, as time passes, might facilitate greater understanding

To begin with, it may be beneficial for EFL students to become increasingly aware of their own reading processes. Attending more closely to how they plan for reading, monitor their comprehension, and reflect on what they have read might cause them to approach texts more strategically. Students may also benefit from actively engaging with texts more by close reading approaches, such as annotating, questioning, or summarizing. These habits, in the long run, can support deeper understanding and a more confident approach to academic reading. It is also worth stimulating students to reflect back across their learning experiences, what works best for them, where they get stuck, and how they might change their approaches in future reading assignments.

Pedagogically, a few instructors may be interested in making metacognitive strategies more explicit and intentional in instruction. While numerous instructors use such strategies implicitly, giving students more explicit instructions about how and why particular reading strategies are being used might make utilization of these tools easier for students. Gradually introducing strategy-based instruction and within the context of students' current capabilities may generate better comprehension and promote autonomy. Teachers might also be able to try varying forms of instruction (e.g., cooperative activities or the use of visual and multimodal resources) that can raise levels of motivation and help respond to different learning styles. Self-analysis of one's own pedagogy and chances for professional development, whether through collaboration or further reading, may also prove helpful here.

Finally, the development of students' close reading skills and metacognitive awareness appears to be facilitated by an overall, shared effort of the teaching and learning community. Though every context has its own specific needs and constraints, taking into account current practices and looking for new opportunities might be in a position to contribute meaningfully to ongoing development of EFL reading pedagogy. It is

Conclusion

This chapter integrated findings from different data sources to examine the use of metacognitive strategies in EFL reading instruction. Through triangulation, it provided a deeper understanding of how and to what extent these strategies are used and perceived by students and teachers. The integration of quantitative and qualitative tools provided an overall view of classroom practices, issues, and areas for improvement. This detailed analysis paves the way for drawing informed conclusions and making practical recommendations.

General conclusion

This dissertation aimed to investigate how EFL university teachers implement metacognitive strategies in reading teaching to enable close reading in students, with particular emphasis on instructional strategies, noted difficulty, and self-reported student action. Based on a mixed-methods method that linked classroom observation, teacher interviews, and questionnaires to students, this study offered a triangulated and context-sensitive understanding of the dynamics at play in a real university EFL setting.

The research revealed that while both students and teachers engaged with metacognitive strategies to a certain degree, they did so implicitly and inconsistently. Teachers would sometimes model these strategies informally in teaching without naming and modeling them expressly, thereby limiting students' awareness and independent application. Students, meanwhile, possessed relatively good literal reading skills but they didn’t have good critical reading habits such as interpretation, evaluation, and strategic monitoring, skills essential to close reading.

Responding to the first research question, findings show that teachers do employ metacognitive strategies during reading phases (planning, monitoring, and evaluating) but primarily in an unsystematic and spontaneous way. The second research question, concerning the difficulties that face teachers, was clearly responded to by revealing several obstacles, including crowded classrooms, students' low motivation, time deficiency, and an absence of training in strategy-based instruction. Regarding the third research question, although there was no statistically significant relationship between students' self-reported use of metacognitive and close reading strategies as per quantitative analysis, a positive trend was observed, suggesting that greater use of metacognitive strategies can facilitate more effective close reading when explicitly taught.

In completing a void in the literature with an account of how instructors use metacognitive strategies, rather than student use of metacognitive strategies, this research is a valuable addition to the EFL pedagogy literature. It highlights the need for explicit metacognitive teaching, more structured instructor preparation, and curriculum alignment that facilitates rich and reflective reading. These findings are in line with calls for a shift from implicit modeling to intentional, theory-based classroom practices that empower students to be independent, strategic readers.

Pedagogically, the research defends the value of metacognitive strategy application not merely as an add-on to teaching but also as a foundational component of teaching reading. It produces practical knowledge that can be implemented in teacher education programs, curriculum planning, and classroom teaching in EFL contexts, particularly in universities.

General Conclusion

Future studies could build on this foundation by examining intervention-based studies that teach explicit metacognitive strategy instruction to teachers and then measure the impact on students in the long run. Performing other studies could also examine the effect of repeated exposure to such instruction on the development of students as close readers and independent learners.

In short, the study emphasizes that the fostering close reading in EFL learners entails not only expert instruction of reading texts but also a conscious focus on students' reflection upon and regulation of their reading processes. In this perspective, teachers are not only facilitators of comprehension but also mentors of metacognitive awareness, a function central to shaping proficient, reflective readers in the classroom context.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Teachers' Interview on the Use of Metacognitive Strategies in Reading Classes

Question 1: Can you briefly describe your teaching experience in reading and current teaching context?

Question 2: Metacognitive strategies refers to methods used to help students understand the way they learn; in other words, it means processes designed for students to 'think' about their 'thinking'. these strategies go under three major strategies: planning, monitoring and evaluating.

-How do you see metacognitive strategies fitting into your reading instruction practices.

Question 3: Can you walk me through how you usually teach a reading lesson? At what points do you use metacognitive strategies?

Question4: Can you share an example of a time when you felt students were highly engaged during a reading lesson? What strategies were you using?

Question 5: Are you aware of your use of metacognitive strategies during the class?

Question 6: Do you explicitly use metacognitive strategies (e.g., planning, monitoring, evaluating) in your reading lessons ? comment.

Question 7: what is the students attitude towards your use of metacognitive strategies?

Question 8: What kind of impact do you think metacognitive instruction could have on EFL Students?

Question 9: What challenges do you face when trying to apply metacognitive strategies in your teaching?

Question 10: To the best of your ability, what could help teachers apply these strategies more effectively?

Appendix B: Students' Questionnaire: Close Reading and Metacognitive Strategy Use

Dear students,

This questionnaire is an attempt to collect data for the accomplishment of a master dissertation on **"Investigating the Implementation of Metacognitive Strategies to Support Students' Close Reading."** You are kindly requested to fill it in by ticking (√) the appropriate answer about the strategies you use in close reading. There is no right or wrong answer, so please consider the questions carefully as your input is valuable to this research. Rest assured that your responses will remain anonymous and will be used for research purposes only.

Thank you for your time and effort.

By Mohamdi Nesrine

Supervised by: Pr. Ahmed Bechar

Academic year: 2024/2025

Appendices

Section One: General Information

Please fill in the following information:

1. **For how long have you been studying English?**
   ☐8 years ☐ more than 8 years
2. **Level of Study:**
   ☐ First Year ☐ Second Year
3. **How often do you read academic texts in English?**
   ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Very often
4. **How would you rate your reading ability in English?**
   ☐ very poor ☐ poor ☐ Fair ☐ good ☐ excellent

Section Two: Close Reading Behavior

A. Literal Understanding

No.	Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1	**I can identify the main idea of a text I read.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	**I can recognize supporting details that explain the main idea.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	**I can understand the meaning of new words by using clues from the sentence.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. Interpretation and Analysis

No.	Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
4	**I try to understand the deeper meaning or message behind a text.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5	**I think about the author's purpose when reading a text.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	**I connect different parts of the text to understand the overall meaning.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	**I analyze the way the text is organized to help me understand it better.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	**I pay attention to how arguments or ideas are developed across paragraphs.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	**I can make inferences based on the information in the text.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C. Textual Reflection

No.	Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
10	**I reflect on how a text relates to real-life issues or my own experiences.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section Three: Metacognitive Strategy Use

A. Planning

No.	Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

Appendices

1	**Before reading, I try to guess what the text will be about.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	**I set a goal before I begin reading.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	**I connect with prior knowledge before reading.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	**I preview the text (title, headings, visuals)**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. Monitoring

No.	**Statement**	**1 Strongly Disagree**	**2 Disagree**	**3 Neutral**	**4 Agree**	**5 Strongly Agree**
5	**I pause to check if I understand what I'm reading.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	**If I don't understand something, I go back and read it again.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	**I notice when I lose focus and try to re-engage with the text.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	**I highlighting and take notes**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	**I use prior knowledge or context clues to understand new vocabulary.**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C. Evaluating

Appendices

No.	Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
10	After reading, I summarize the main points in my own words.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	I evaluate my understanding of the text after I finish reading.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	I think about what strategies helped me understand the text.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix C: Classroom Observation Checklist

Observers' name:..... **Date: .....**

Class level:..... **Group:.....**

Observation Checklist: Teachers' Use of Metacognitive Strategies in Reading Classes

1. Planning Phase (Before Reading)

Observed Behavior	Not observed	Partially observed	Clearly observed
Teacher helps students to connect with prior knowledge before reading.			
Teacher explains the purpose of the reading task.			
Teacher helps students set reading goals.			
Teacher encourages students to preview the text (title, headings, visuals)			

2. Monitoring Phase (During Reading)

Observed Behavior	Not observed	Partially observed	Clearly observed
Teacher encourages highlighting and taking notes.			
Teacher emphasizes on rereading difficult sections of the text.			
Teacher prompts students to pause and reflect on their understanding.			

Teacher encourages students to use prior knowledge or context clues to understand new vocabulary.				

3. Evaluating Phase (After Reading)

Observed Behavior	Not observed	Partially observed	Clearly observed
Teacher asks students to summarize or paraphrase what they've read.			
Teacher encourages students to reflect on their reading process (e.g., what helped or didn't)			
Teacher provides feedback or encourages peer feedback.			

4. Student Engagement with Close Reading

Observed Behavior	Not observed	Partially observed	Clearly observed
Students show focus and interest during reading activities.			
Students participate in discussions with the teacher about the text.			
Students support their answers by referring back to the text.			
Students highlight and take notes during their reading.			

Appendix D: Introduction of themes and coding process

Theme	Description	Supporting Codes	Illustrative Quotes
1. Implicit vs. Explicit Use of Metacognitive Strategies	Teachers often integrate metacognitive strategies naturally during lessons but rarely name or explain them explicitly to students.	- Implicit strategy use - Spontaneous application - Avoidance of formal terminology	"We do this implicitly… We have never said 'listen, we are going to start talking.'" *(Interview 1)* "Sometimes I use them spontaneously. I do not plan… but the task requires it." *(Interview 3)* "I use them but I don't name them… I adopt strategies, I don't label them." *(Interview 1)* "I know it is a good strategy, but the specific name or term, exactly no." *(Interview 5)*
2. Metacognition Embedded in Pre-, During-, Post-Reading Framework	Strategies are integrated across three key stages: pre-reading (planning), during-reading (monitoring), and post-reading (evaluation/reflection).	- Brainstorming - Highlighting - Summarizing - Reflection - Planning before text - Monitoring comprehension	"Pre-reading is planning. During reading is connecting ideas. Post-reading could be summarizing or reflection." *(Interview 3)* "We start with visuals. Then we extract the whole lecture — it's part of how they understand." *(Interview 1)* "I ask them to read about the author

			before they read the text — that's planning." *(Interview 5)* "I use paraphrasing, opinion writing, and vocabulary tasks as post-reading activities." *(Interview 6)*
3. Challenges in Implementation	Teachers face barriers such as low motivation, logistical constraints, and classroom management — especially with first-year students.	- Low engagement - Unprepared students - Classroom limitations - Overcrowded groups - Fatigue and lack of focus	"They come sometimes without papers or the text… unmotivated." *(Interview 5)* "If they don't follow you… you lose. Your lecture is boring. It's hard." *(Interview 1)* "First-year students do not show great interest… sometimes I wonder if they chose English freely." *(Interview 4)* "It's time-consuming, especially in overcrowded groups." *(Interview 6)*
4. Teacher Professional Development Needs	There's a strong call for training, peer collaboration, and curricular support to help instructors apply strategies more effectively.	- Training need - Methodological support - Shared teacher resources	"We are teachers; we need to be taught… Why not bring teachers from abroad?" *(Interview 1)*

		- Curriculum alignment	"Before implementing strategies, we need to read about them, research them." *(Interview 3)* "Teachers need to agree on what to teach… we still haven't unified the course." *(Interview 5)* "Practice makes perfect. Try to apply them, see what works." *(Interview 6)*
5. Strategy-Driven Student Engagement	Metacognitive strategies enhance engagement, especially when paired with familiar topics, interactivity, and ownership of learning.	- Relatable content - Group learning - Visual/multimodal materials - Real-world relevance	"They were highly engaged when I used visuals — we studied the lecture through them." *(Interview 1)* "Students get engaged when the topic connects to their daily life or interests." *(Interview 5)* "When the topic is interesting, and the style is simple, they are very engaged." *(Interview 6)* "When they summarize in groups, they stay focused and help each other." *(Interview 3)*

6. Adaptation and Creativity in Teaching	Teachers creatively adjust texts and tasks using visuals, interdisciplinary materials, and diverse formats to improve comprehension and participation.	- Reading across disciplines - Multimodal reading - Visual aids - Flexible methods - Gamified/interactive content	"I taught them reading across disciplines — medical texts, literary texts… how to adapt." *(Interview 5)* "I use MCQs, paraphrasing, synonyms — variety makes lessons enjoyable." *(Interview 6)* "We don't read the lecture, we study visuals and extract the whole thing." *(Interview 1)* "I vary activities — vocabulary, summarizing, and visual interpretation." *(Interview 6)*

الملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية تطبيق مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية في الجامعات لاستراتيجيات الوعي ما وراء المعرفي بهدف تعزيز قدرات الطلاب على القراءة التحليلية العميقة في السياقات الأكاديمية. تستند الدراسة إلى نظرية الوعي ما وراء المعرفي وإطار القراءة، وجاءت استجابةً لحاجة تربوية ملحة لتدريس استراتيجي للقراءة يحقق تفاعلاً تحليليًا معمقًا مع النصوص. استخدمت الدراسة منهجية متعددة الأساليب (Mixed-Methods) لتجميع البيانات المستمدة من ملاحظات صفية منظمة، ومقابلات شبه مهيكلة مع ستة مدرسين مختارين عمدًا، بالإضافة إلى استبيانات وزعت على طلاب المرحلة الجامعية في جامعة محمد خيضر – بسكرة. تناولت الدراسة كيفية قيام المعلمين بنمذجة ودعم استراتيجيات الوعي ما وراء المعرفي مثل التخطيط، والمراقبة، والتقييم أثناء دروس القراءة، إلى جانب التحديات التي تواجههم عند دمج هذه الاستراتيجيات في التدريس. ومن الناحية الكمية، أظهرت نتائج التحليل الإحصائي باستخدام برنامج SPSS وجود علاقة ارتباطية ضعيفة إيجابيًا بين استخدام الطلاب لاستراتيجيات الوعي ما وراء المعرفي وانخراطهم في القراءة التحليلية، لكنها لم تكن ذات دلالة إحصائية، ما يشير إلى ضرورة استخدام عينة أكبر. أما من الجانب النوعي، فقد أظهرت نتائج التحليل الموضوعي أن نمذجة المعلم، وطرح الأسئلة التأملية، إلى جانب التعليقات الاستراتيجية، تُعد عناصر أساسية في رفع وعي الطلاب بما وراء المعرفة. وقد دعمت نتائج الملاحظات الصفية الكمية هذه الاستنتاجات، مما أضفى قوة إضافية على النتائج. تسلط هذه النتائج الضوء على وجود فجوة تربوية بين تدريس الاستراتيجيات وتطبيقها الفعلي من قبل الطلاب، ما يشير إلى ضرورة التركيز بشكل أكبر على تعليم صريح ومستمر لاستراتيجيات القراءة المعتمدة على الوعي ما وراء المعرفي. ويمكن أن تُترجم هذه النتائج إلى برامج تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، من خلال تدخلات تربوية تدعم التنظيم المعرفي الذاتي، ما قد يُنتج قرّاء مستقلين ونقديين. وتعزز الدراسة النقاش المتجدد حول ما وراء المعرفة في تعليم اللغات من خلال التأكيد على دور المعلم كميسّر للقراءة التأملية والاستراتيجية في سياقات التعليم الجامعي.