

# VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CHIẾN LƯỢC ĐỌC SIÊU NHẬN THỨC CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ 3 NGÀNH NGÔN NGỮ ANH - TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC CÔNG NGHIỆP HÀ NỘI

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Nghiên cứu nhằm điều tra mức độ sử dụng thường xuyên các chiến lược đọc siêu nhận thức của sinh viên năm thứ ba ngành Ngôn ngữ Anh, Trường Đại học Công nghiệp Hà Nội (ĐHCNHN) và tìm ra chiến lược đọc siêu nhận thức được áp dụng thường xuyên hơn. Để đạt được mục tiêu nghiên cứu, tác giả đã sử dụng bảng câu hỏi khảo sát trực tuyến với sự tham gia của 80 sinh viên. Ngoài ra, để kết quả nghiên cứu đáng tin cậy hơn, tác giả còn thực hiện phỏng vấn 10 sinh viên và 3 giảng viên của khoa Ngoại ngữ phụ trách giảng dạy học phần Đọc 5. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy sinh viên sử dụng các chiến lược đọc siêu nhận thức với mức độ thường xuyên trung bình và sử dụng các chiến lược đọc thực dụng thường xuyên hơn. Bài viết hi vọng sẽ là nguồn tài liệu tham khảo giúp giảng viên và sinh viên hiểu hơn về các chiến lược đọc, đặc biệt là chiến lược đọc siêu nhận thức, qua đó cải thiện kỹ năng đọc hiểu cho sinh viên.

**Từ khóa:** các chiến lược đọc siêu nhận thức, chiến lược đọc phân tích, chiến lược đọc thực dụng, mức độ thường xuyên.

The study was conducted to investigate the frequency of using metacognitive reading strategies (MRS) by the third-year English-majored students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages (FFL), Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI). To meet the research objectives, an online survey questionnaire was administered to 80 HaUI third-year English-majored students. Besides, two interviews with ten third-year English-majored students and three instructors in the Reading 5 course were also carried out. The findings showed that the students used the MRS with a medium frequency and employed the pragmatic reading strategies (PRS) more often than analytic reading strategies (ARS). This paper is hoped to provide a valuable reference for instructors and students to have deeper understanding about reading strategies, particularly MRS, thereby improving students' reading skills.

**Keywords:** metacognitive reading strategy, analytic reading strategy, pragmatic reading strategy, frequency.

## USE OF METACOGNITIVE READING STRATEGIES BY THIRD - YEAR ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS AT HAU

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Rationale

English is now considered as the lingua franca which has widely spoken in many

countries in the world, including Vietnam.

In the context of globalization and integration, there has been an increasing demand for human resources with excellent English proficiency. However, mastering this language is an onerous task to learners. In the world of linguistics,

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listening, speaking, reading and writing skills hold equal worth. Of all these four skills, reading is considered to be one of the essential skills for learners since it is an important gateway for gaining and learning more knowledge. Reading at tertiary level requires a variety of activities such as understanding, memorizing ideas, identifying key information, synthesizing and critically evaluating a text in the academic context.

However, the fact is that many EFL students have “major difficulties” with English reading comprehension even after years of learning the English language. They can read a text but meet problems with recognizing or understanding writers’ message(s). The author of this paper has identified that those problems are also confronted by the third-year English major students of Hanoi University of Industry (HaUI) although lecturers of English Reading skills have recommended a lot of strategies including MRS for them in reading lessons. For those reasons, in this study, the author would like to examine the use of MRS by third-year English major students at FFL, HaUI in order to give them an insight about the essential strategies which need to be utilized in academic reading and contribute to their ultimate goal of improving their English reading comprehension. Also, it is expected to increase students’ awareness of significance of MRS and how to use them more effectively to enhance their reading

skills. Besides, the paper, hopefully, provides useful information for teachers and researchers in the domain of reading, in general, and teaching strategies for reading at tertiary education, in particular.

### ***1.2. Literature review***

Until now, reading strategies have been defined by different famous scholars; however, in this paper, the author will give some of their typical definitions to clarify what they are. Conceptually, reading strategies have been considered as specific, deliberate, goal-oriented mental processes or behaviors controlling and modifying the reader’s efforts to decode, understand the words, and construct the text’s meaning (Afflerbach, 2008). Meanwhile, Barnett (1988) states that reading strategies refer to the tools that are used by the readers to solve problems and acquire text information. From those researchers’ view on reading strategies, the author thinks that reading strategies are conscious actions that the readers take to achieve specific reading goals and a part of the language learning strategies which are essential factors of effective reading. Also, these strategies not only solve specific comprehension difficulties, but also help readers improve their reading comprehension ability during the process of doing reading tasks.

Many researchers therefore assume that students seem not to overcome their reading problems due to lack of reading strategies. They prove the importance of

reading strategies and their role in enhancing reading comprehension in their studies. For example, McNamara et al. (2009a) states that “reading strategies are useful and beneficial for learners with lower reading skill”. Mokhtari & Reichard (2002) also indicates that unsuccessful learners must be supported to use effective reading strategies as they are often unaware of their own cognitive process. Thus, reading strategies play a vital role to the academic success of EFL learners, especially undergraduates. Previous studies on learners’ metacognitive aspects of reading strategy use also reveal that successful readers generally display a higher degree of metacognitive awareness, which enables them to use reading strategies more effectively and efficiently than their unsuccessful peers (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001; Zhang, 2001).

In spite of different categories of MRS from several famous scholars, the author will give some typical classifications in this study. First and foremost, based on Israel’s classification (2007), MRS are categorized into three groups: planning (pre- reading), monitoring (during reading), and evaluating (post-reading) strategies, and each group has a variety of strategies that require readers’ metacognitive processing. Secondly, Taraban and Rynearson (2004) who develop the metacognitive reading strategy questionnaire (MRSQ) point out that MRS are subdivided into two types: analytic reading strategies (ARS)

(analytic-cognitive component) aimed at reading comprehension and pragmatic reading strategies (PRS) (pragmatic-behavioral component) aimed at studying and academic performance. In specific, the analytic-cognitive component particularly involve students’ efforts to comprehend a text. The strategies like evaluating reading goals and making inferences are the examples of the analytic-cognitive component. The pragmatic-behavioral components relate to the physical actions and practical methods for finding and remembering information from the text such as underlining and highlighting. The MRSQ is used to reveal strategy employment in university settings in general and mainly address the strategy use of university students in particular. Thirdly, MRS are classified into three subcategories: Global Reading Strategies, Problem Solving Strategies and Support Reading Strategies (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002); Semtin & Maniam, 2015 as cited in Ali & Razali, 2019). Finally, according to Allen (2003), MRS are divided into five elements: (1) relate the text to reader’s own lives, (2) determine which facts are important and unimportant, (3) summarize information, (4) fill in details and draw inferences, and (5) ask questions. In brief, although there are different ways to classify MRS, the researcher will opt for the model of Taraban et al. (2004). The main reason is that this model is particularly designed to measure using MRS of English speaking

students when interacting with academic materials. In addition, the author sees that the third-year English major students usually employ reading strategies including MRS to do reading tasks in authentic reading materials. Hence, the author will apply this model in her study.

Numerous studies on MRS have been done by different researchers in the world. In 2017, Abu-Snoubar carried out a study of using MRS among EFL students at Al-Balqa Applied University based on their academic field of study. The results showed that the participants are high users of the overall MRS and employ the strategies in the following order: problem-solving, support and global. In the same year, Abu-Snoubar also conducted a study of gender differences in employing MRS on 86 EFL students at different levels of proficiency and various academic fields of study at Al-Balqa Applied University to bridge a gap of English knowledge. He adopted the Survey of Reading Strategies (adapted from Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002) in his research. Its findings indicated that participants are high users of the overall MRS with no significant gender differences in the strategies used. Both males and females in this study used problem-solving strategies most, followed by support strategies and global strategies. On the other hand, Maasum and Maarof (2012) employed the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory designed by Mokhtari and

Reichard (2000) in their study explicating MRS in academic texts. With the participation of 41 EFL undergraduates at a public university, the study showed positive results that students were moderate to high users of MRS, and problem solving strategies were used most, followed by global and support strategies.

In Vietnam, Tran (2016) implemented a study titled “Effects of frequency of use of metacognitive reading strategies on reading comprehension achievement of English majors” which aims at finding out English major students' frequency of using MRS as well as the relationship between students' MRS and their academic English reading comprehension achievement. He used MRSQ developed by Taraban, Kerr, and Ryneason (2004). His research findings showed that the participants use the MRS in medium level, and these strategies have positive relationships with academic English reading comprehension achievement.

In short, it can be drawn that in the global context, a lot of metacognitive reading strategies-related studies have been carried out with different objectives. However, there have been few studies in employing MRS in Vietnam in general and at HaUI in particular as well. For those reasons, the study seeks to fulfill the gaps in the field of academic reading strategies for English major students with the ultimate aim of improving reading comprehension.

### 1.3. Aim and objectives of the study

The study is to investigate the use of MRS of the third- year English major students at HaUI. There are several objectives of the study as follows:

- To research the frequency of using MRS of the third-year English major students at FFL, HaUI in practice;
- To find out which MRS are more frequently used among the third-year English major students at FFL, HaUI.

To reach these goals, the study addressed the following questions:

Question 1: How often do the third-year English major students at FFL, HaUI use the metacognitive reading strategies?

Question 2: Which metacognitive reading strategies are more frequently used by the third-year English major students at FFL, HaUI?

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To address those questions, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect the data. The participants of the study were 80 third-year English major students of intake 12 and three lecturers of Reading 5 at FFL, HaUI. The students are expected to reach B2 level at the end of the 15-week Reading 5 Course. In the two in-class lessons per week, they have been introduced a variety of IELTS sample reading tasks such as Multiple choice questions, Yes-No-Not Given

questions, Summary completion, Matching headings, or Short answers and provided tips or reading strategies as well as exercises to practise. At home, they have been required to use Cambridge Practice Tests and Road to IELTS to practice their reading skills by themselves. The researcher also employed two data collection instruments, namely an online survey questionnaire and interviews for students and teachers. The survey questionnaire is designed on the basis of the MRSQ by Taraban, Kerr, and Rynearson (2004) and a 5-point Likert type scale. The MRSQ is used to measure the student participants' frequency of using MRS in the reading process. It includes 22 items used to assess two factors, namely ARS (16 items) and PRS (6 items). A 5-point Likert type scale is used to rate the participants' frequency of using the strategies. Items are scored 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for respective responses: Never Use, Rarely Use, Sometimes Use, Often Use, and Always Use. This scale is without a neutral point to avoid not answering straightly to rate each item. In general, there are three major phases of data collection procedure which was conducted within week 13 and week 14 of the course.

Phase 1: The researcher sent the participants a link directed to the online survey questionnaire as the standard Google form to fill in for analysis. This online survey questionnaire had instructions in details to ensure them

understand how to answer each item in the MRSQ and was stated that this is not a test with the “right” or “wrong” answers and their honest responses are essentially important to ensure the validity of the study. The confidentiality would be also respected. After taking approximately 10 minutes to complete the online survey questionnaire, the results would be recorded and automatically sent to the author.

Phase 2: Based on the results of collected data from the online survey questionnaire, the researcher chose 10 out of 80 students who had left their contact information and accepted the interview to reassert the reliability of online survey questionnaire. Besides, in order to maximize the amount of collected information, the criteria for selecting student-interviewees are students from different classes, students with similar or different answers from the majority. During the 15-20 minute interview, some extra questions would be asked if the participants’ answers were not clear enough.

Phase 3: A semi-structured interview was implemented with three lecturers teaching Reading 5 Course. The purpose of this interview is to compare the student

interview results, mainly in terms of the frequency of applying MRS to do reading tasks and which type of MRS used more often by students. During the time of interview, the researcher also asked more related questions based on teachers’ answers to make clearer. Each interview lasted around 20-30 minutes. The interviews with students and teachers were conducted in English and recorded to support the process of data analysis.

The data collected from the survey were both counted and transferred into percentage, then they were shown in tables, bar charts to easily compare.

### 3. RESULTS

The major results of the study are summarized as follows:

**Question 1:** How often do the third-year English major students at FFL, HaUI use the metacognitive reading strategies?

To measure the student participants’ frequency of using MRS, the author calculated the overall average percentage of the students’ ARS and PRS use because ARS and PRS are sub-types of MRS (Tarabanet al., 2004) which are described above. The results then are presented in Figure 3.1 below:

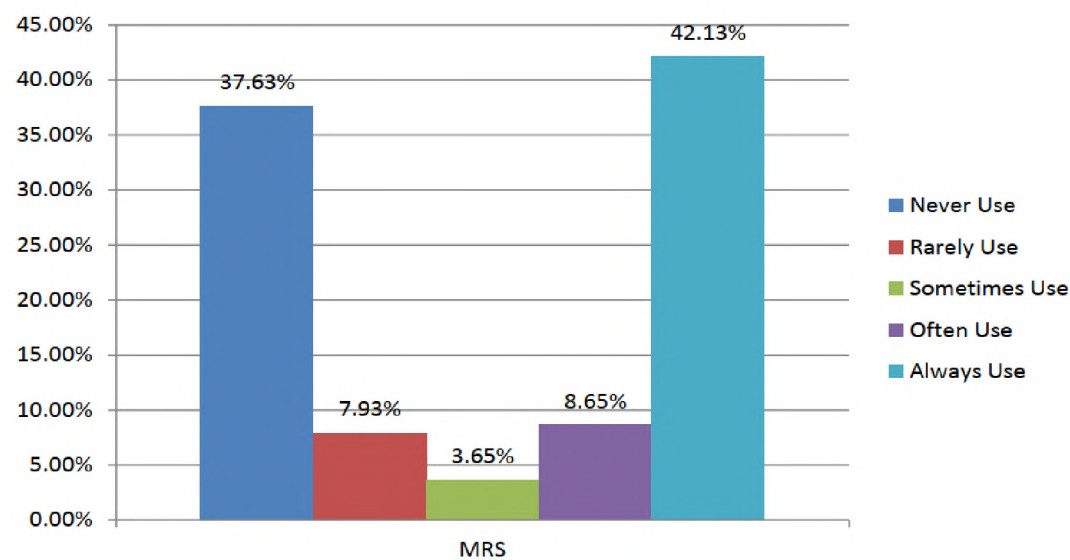


Figure 3.1: The average percentage of the students' MRS use

As can be seen from figure 3.1 that the rate of the students always using MRS was the highest (42.13%), followed by those never utilizing the MRS with 37.63%. Meanwhile, the percentages of those often, sometimes, and rarely employing the MRS were not high, at below 10%.

The results of the online survey questionnaire to the students are relatively consistent with those of interviews for the students and teachers. To illustrate, 9/10 students said that they always re-read reading materials when they cannot understand the text, just one student said No to this question because of not having enough time to return previous questions in class, but would re-read it when being done at home. This seems to suggest that the students tend to delve into the strategies which are appropriate for their reading goals and reading levels when they have time, although the number of

those having this opinion is not high. For teachers, as being enquired that the students' frequency of using these strategies at home, all of them did not make sure about that. They then explained that they recommend their students using MRS while doing reading tasks in class and at home as well, but they could not absolutely control their students' extra-reading at home. In addition, there are different types of reading strategies to different reading tasks such as summarizing, monitoring comprehension, using graphic organizers, predicting, making interferences, questioning, passage-level comprehension strategies, fluency strategies, word- level decoding strategies, and text selection strategies. It can be pointed out that the students' frequency of using MRS is uncontrollable because it depends heavily on how proactive students are. Furthermore, the teachers also suggest their students



employing MRS while doing reading exercises at home to enhance their reading comprehension; and it is true to say that it is not easy for them to know which strategies are used. Even, using these strategies of students in class seems struggling for teachers to intervene. Also, students have to automatically understand which reading strategy should be used for each reading task. Consequently, they think that their students' frequency of employing MRS at a rate of 60%, equally to often.

In short, the above results from the online survey questionnaire for the students and the two interviews with the students and teachers demonstrate that the third-year English major students use MRS with a medium frequency.

**Question 2:** Which metacognitive reading strategies are more frequently used by the third-year English major students at FFL, HaUI?

In order to find out which MRS are more frequently employed by the students, the author will compare the students' frequency of using the ARS and PRS. The figure 3.2 below indicates that the vast majority of the respondents always adopted the PRS which constituted 69.17%, compared to the percentage of those always using the ARS with around 15%. Likewise, there was approximately 2% more respondents often deploying the PRS than the ARS (9.38% and 7.81% respectively). In addition, the rate of those never using the ARS was significantly higher than that of those never applying the PRS, 62.97% opposed to 12.29%. Similarly, the proportion of those rarely using the ARS nearly doubled that of those rarely utilizing the PRS (10.27% against 5.63%). Also, the percentages of those sometimes using both PRS and ARS were insignificant. Therefore, it can be found that the figure for those routinely employing the PRS is higher than that of the ARS.

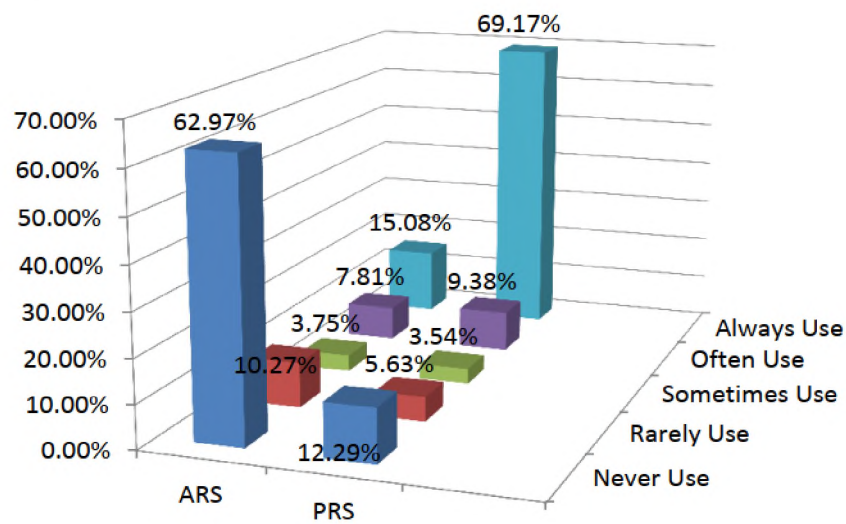


Figure 3.2: Comparisons of the students' frequency of using ARS and PRS



The research findings of the online survey questionnaire to the students are rather compatible with these of interviews for the students and teachers. Through the interview with 10 students, the researcher realizes that seven out of ten students have a relatively good understanding of and have quite been frequent in handling MRS, particularly PRS while doing their reading tasks. These results seem to show that using notes, highlighting, underlining, writing in the margin of texts and re-reading will help students be able to return and review previous questions more easily and gain high results more quickly as they might find it easier to understand the text. Deploying items in the PRS might be more suitable and reasonable when taking reading tests with limited time. Besides, adapting items of the PRS will take more time to complete, thus using these strategies at home might be better. This is because they can practise these strategies much more when having more free time, notably at home.

Like the students' answers, all teachers indirectly agreed that their students mainly use the PRS in their reading tests. They said that when they score their students' reading tests, they have seen a lot of notes, circles, highlight and even some small numbers in both sides of exam papers. The semi-structured interviews with the teachers imply that it is easier for teachers to know the students' frequency of using the PRS through external signs such as underlines, circles and small

numbers because the ARS are mainly related to internal factors like reading goals. In addition, utilizing more habitually the PRS than the ARS might prove that the students are less likely to fully master MRS. Thus, the researcher thinks that students can achieve better results in their reading tests if they know how to equally take advantage of both ARS and PRS.

In summary, the above research findings from the online survey questionnaire for the students and the interviews with the students and teachers show that the third-year English major students employ PRS more frequently.

#### 4. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of the present study demonstrate that the students have a basic understanding of the importance of MRS while facing academic reading texts. The findings seem to imply that learners should know how and when to use the MRS' sub-types – ARS and PRS to comprehend academic texts more effectively in practice. The metacognitive awareness and control is considered as the key elements of proficient and strategic reading, which enable them consciously monitor their reading process and execute appropriate actions to achieve their reading comprehension goals (Auerbach & Paxton, 1997). Therefore, as for pedagogical implications for teachers of English as a foreign language, the study suggests that they should integrate both

sub-types of MRS in particular as well as various reading strategies in general into their reading lessons over a period of time to train their students become strategic and successful readers. It is recommended that teachers should raise awareness of reading strategies by teaching students why, when and how to apply them into reading tasks.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study is an attempt to find out the HaUI third-year English major students' frequency of using the MRS and the more frequently used metacognitive reading strategies. Collected data from online survey questionnaire for students and interviews with the teachers and students revealed that the HaUI third-year English major students used the MRS with a medium frequency and they used the PRS more frequently.

In conclusion, the third-year English major students positively used the MRS, especially PRS to enhance their reading skills. Such positive employment of the PRS in particular and MRS in general helps not only students recognize more clearly about effective strategies they should employ to get reading goals, but also the teachers tailor their teaching methods to suit students' reading levels.

However small scale, this study is expected to contribute to an understanding about reading strategies, particularly MRS. Therefore, the teaching staff of reading skills can take it into consideration to help

students at FFL, HaUI and other higher education institutions in Vietnam improve this skill.

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