



## **USAGE OF READING STRATEGIES BY KAZAKHSTANI EFL STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Reading comprehension is considered as the basis of learning in various educational programs for the development of writing, vocabulary, and grammar. Therefore, foreign language instructors should teach pupils strategies for improving their reading skills. This article gives a general overview of how learners regulate learning strategies. It explores the use of reading strategies, elucidates strategies for high-frequency use as well as low-frequency use, and discusses their implications for classroom teaching. The data were collected using a questionnaire that included 40 Likert questions on a five-point scale, and participants were asked to circle on a scale from "Never" (1) to "Always" (5), depending on their position. The results show that students' average strategy usage is in the medium range, indicating that they are not regular strategy users. The study's findings suggest that instructors and curriculum developers should pay more attention to strategies for reading instruction. The results of the study might be helpful for informing the language teachers about the merits of strategy-based instruction and how helpful it can be in instructing language skills particularly reading skill.

*Keywords:* reading comprehension, strategy-based instruction, foreign language reading, strategic reading, reading instruction, learning strategies, teaching reading skills, English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

### *Introduction*

A guaranteed way to help students retain the content is to teach reading skills in English lessons. If students do not have a repertoire of reading abilities that can be applied to any text, they are being shafted in their education. To teach students to read successfully, teachers should ensure that they are not merely producers of information on a particular text, but also teachers of reading strategies.

Many teachers already include skill development to some extent in their classrooms; however, taking some time to explain and actively involve students in the process will ensure that skill development remains at the forefront of learning. As a result, students will not only improve their reading skills but also grasp how to become better readers. Children who are taught comprehension strategies grow into flexible thinkers who can apply a number of strategies to a range of texts, allowing them to better comprehend those texts. In other words, the more strategies



the reader knows, the more information will be obtained from the text.

The aim of the article is to discuss how learners regulate reading strategies, because good reading skills are essential for students learning every foreign language. In comparison to other ways of learning, most scholars believe that reading has the potential to increase learner interaction, knowledge retrieval, and information retention. Reading comprehension is one of the key goals specified in many education programmes [1], hence reading plays an essential part in L2 curricula. In several instructional methods to enhance vocabulary, writing, grammar, and general language courses, reading comprehension is seen as the foundation of teaching [2].

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 22% of pupils have major difficulties interpreting texts at even the most basic level [3]. These difficulties may be due to instructors' misunderstanding that reading a material smoothly and without mistakes equates to easy comprehension [4]. As a result, these teachers avoid teaching useful skills that learners need to figure out the text, rather focusing solely on the content of the text [5]. Since reading comprehension is a complex, multidimensional interplay between text, reader, context, and activity, it necessitates a supportive educational atmosphere to encourage strategic reading [6].

The object of this study is to explore the use of reading strategies, and clarifying the strategies for high and low frequency use. Students who discover how to get around the language learning task will find it much simpler to study a foreign language. As a result, in order to assist pupils in learning a language more successfully and efficiently, teachers might teach them specific language-learning strategies. Foreign language teachers should teach students strategies that they can use to improve their skills. Teachers of foreign languages should give pupils strategies for improving their skills. Understanding how students grow as strategic learners, as well as how the instruction of strategies combines naturally with other components of teaching reading, requires an understanding of the many instructional methodologies used in classrooms [7].

This article gives a general overview of how learners regulate their learning. Struggling readers require more instruction in comprehension skills since they are unlikely to find them on their own [8]. Students showed a good attitude toward strategy training, and it was successful in improving their academic reading comprehension [9]. Although many reading study focuses on young readers or college students, little is known about secondary school students' comprehension techniques for constructing meaning from complicated texts [6].

This article is a contribution to correcting this situation by questioning high school students



and determining what strategies students use. Summing up, this study is aimed at analyzing the current use of reading strategies by Kazakh EFL students.

#### *Data collection tool and Method*

In compliance with the General Data Protection Requirements (GDPR), the study took into account all ethical research requirements. The survey was completely anonymous, and participation is entirely voluntary. The study participants were 58 students who study in the 11th grade of secondary school. The age of the participating respondents ranged from 16 to 17 years, by gender, 32 male and 26 female students.

The method of data collection in this study is an online questionnaire conducted in November 2021 via Google Forms. Participants received instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Students were informed about the purpose of the survey and asked to freely express their opinion. The usage of reading strategies by students was investigated in this study. The study's questionnaire included 40 Likert questions on a five-point scale, and participants were asked to circle on a scale ranging from Never (1) to Always (5) depending on their position. The data was collected, and the mean of every item were calculated.

#### *Results and Discussion*

According to the findings, students' average strategy usage is in the medium range, indicating that they are not regular strategy users. Items with a mean of 3.5 or above are considered high-use, whereas items with a mean of 2.5 or lower are considered low-use. Those in the middle are classified as medium range.

Table 1 summarizes ten high-frequency strategies. According to the answers majority of the students predict what a text is about according to its title, adjust the prediction about the text while reading, use context clues to understand the meaning of words, and use graphs, tables, charts in text to increase understanding.

Reading strategies	M
Scanning for highlighted words or expression	3,58
Asking how the main idea/purpose is related to previous paragraph	3,49
Focusing on meaning, not form	3,40
Read silently	3,35
Visualizing	3,28



Reviewing to summarize text meanings	3,21
Use graphs, tables, charts in text to increase understanding	3,19
Prior knowledge (Relating meaning to what is already known)	3,68
Predicting	3,75
Summarizing the main idea of a text after reading	3,62

Table 1. Strategy Use: High Frequency

Table 2 presents eight low-frequency use strategies, among which such strategies as drawing graphs and tables to help understand the text, summarizing the main idea of a text after reading, having a reading plan, and reading English newspapers, magazines or books after class.

Reading strategies	M
Self-questioning	2,37
Reading aloud	2,31
Self-test after reading	2,18
Paraphrase to better understand the text	2,15
Planning	1,93
Reading English newspapers, magazines or books after class	1,86
Taking notes	1,72
Draw graphs and tables to help understand the text	1,65

Table 2. Strategy Use: Low Frequency

### *Conclusion*

This study investigates Kazakh secondary school students' use of reading strategies. Although the sample of the study is not wide and large, the study gives an idea of the overall picture of the use of the strategy among schoolchildren in Kazakhstan. The results of the survey reveal that pupils are unaware of "strategies," emphasizing the importance of strategy-based training in the classroom.

The study's implication is that instructors and curriculum creators should pay greater



attention to strategy-based reading education. This article considers only the case of one Kazakh school in a small group of pupils, and it would be more useful to evaluate and analyze the results of primary schools where children need more constant support, and rural schools from remote regions. In Kazakhstani context vocabulary, the meaning of phrases, paragraphs, and texts, as well as reading skills such as scanning and skimming, are the primary emphasis of teachers. However, via strategy-based training, greater emphasis should be placed on goal-oriented and strategic reading.

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