

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**AN INVESTIGATION OF EFL LEARNERS' READING
STRATEGY USE**

MASTER'S THESIS

Ayman MOSULLY

**Department of Foreign Languages Education
English Language Education Program**

MARCH, 2024

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MARCH, 2024

APPROVAL PAGE

DECLARATION

I state and confirm with honour that my study titled "An Investigation of EFL Learners' Reading Strategy Use", which I submitted as a MA thesis, was written by me without resorting to any help that would be contrary to scientific morality and traditions, and that the works I used consist of those shown in the references and that they were used by referring to them. (20/02/2024)Top of Form

Ayman MOSULLY

FOREWORD

I would like to express my greatest appreciation to my thesis advisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Hülya YUMRU for all her unwavering support, patience, and vital feedback during the study. She provided me with her guidance and motivation which made this journey into a smooth and gratifying experience. She shared her experience and points of view in addition to keeping an eye on details which was extremely invaluable during the study either in her office or via online meetings to provide me with the key points that I needed to focus on.

Additionally, I owe a special thanks to Prof. Dr. Türkay BULUT for all her priceless efforts toward her MA students during her classes with thesis writing. She provided great support all the time in her office and through emails as well.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my MA teaching members who taught me the classes in a great and professional way. They provided me with all the materials and support needed to make the courses easy and fun to learn. I also thank the English instructors at Biruni University for their assistance during the study process.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support, motivation, patience, love, and warmth throughout the whole study.

March 2024

Ayman MOSULLY

AN INVESTIGATION OF EFL LEARNERS' READING STRATEGY USE

ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the four primary skills alongside listening, writing, and speaking. It involves cognitive and comprehension processes. Reading is a dynamic skill that urges learners to find and use a variety of materials and recourses. This study was conducted to reveal the type of reading strategies used by EFL preparatory university students at a foreign language department in a foundational university. The participants of this study were 65 EFL learners aged between 18 to 22 years old. The data was collected and analyzed through a questionnaire and semi-structured follow-up interviews. The findings gave an insight into the most and least reading strategies used by learners. Furthermore, it provided EFL instructors with the opportunity to focus on the learners' reading weaknesses. It also highlighted the importance of reading strategies awareness among learners and underscored the significance of acquiring reading strategies as a vital method for EFL learners to improve their reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading Strategies, Top-down, Bottom-up, Cognitive, Reading Comprehension

EFL ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN OKUMA STRATEJİ KULLANIMININ İNCELENMESİ

ÖZET

Okuma, dinleme, yazma ve konuşma ile beraber dört temel beceriden birisidir. Okuma hem bilişsel hem de kavramayı içeren bir süreçtir. Okuma, öğrencileri birçok materyal ve kaynak bulmaya zorlayan dinamik bir beceridir. Bu çalışma, bir vakıf üniversitesinde yabancı diller bölümünde, yabancı dil hazırlık sınıfında eğitim gören öğrencilerin kullandıkları okuma strateji türlerini ortaya çıkarmak için yürütülmüştür. Bu çalışmaya, 18 – 22 yaş arası, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen 65 öğrenci katılmıştır. Sonuçlar, anket ve yarı yapılandırılmış bir izlem görüşmesi ile elde edilmiştir. Bulgular, öğrenciler tarafından en çok ve en az kullanılan okuma stratejisine dair bir fikir verdi. Ayrıca, EFL öğretmenlerine öğrencilerin okuma zayıflıklarına odaklanma fırsatı sağladı. Aynı zamanda öğrenciler arasında okuma stratejileri farkındalığının önemi vurgulandı ve İngilizce öğrenenlerin okuduğunu anlamalarını geliştirmek için hayati bir yöntem olarak okuma stratejileri edinmenin önemini altı çizildi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okuma Stratejileri, Yukarıdan Aşağıya, Aşağıdan Yukarıya, Bilişsel, Okuduğunu Anlama

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL	: English as a second language
EFL	: English as a foreign language
LLS	: Language Learning Strategy
ELT	: English Language Teaching
SBI	: Strategy Based Instruction
RSI	: Reading Strategies Instruction
ZPD	: Zone of Proximal Development
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language successfully requires a great acquisition of listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. Reading is a linguistic and cognitive process including the interpretation and comprehension of written or printed words, to derive meaning, information, or knowledge from a certain text. It involves the ability to comprehend the relationship between sentences and paragraphs in addition to the implied meaning, essential messages, and contextual differences.

B. Background of the Study

Reading skill is not only an acquisition process of English knowledge, but also a link to improving other language subskills such as grammar comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and writing proficiency. It is through reading that students are exposed to authentic language usage, cultural differences, and various text genres. Reading strategies have an effective function in developing learners' reading ability to engage with complex texts, navigate unfamiliar topics, and read between the lines to get deeper meaning from the text. To achieve this goal, reading strategies are utilized to engage in comprehending passages including tactics used and controlled by the reader (Paris, Wasik, and Turner, 1991). Moreover, during learners' studies, responsive students should have the capability of comprehending, assessing, and analyzing scholarly articles, journals, and publications. University students need to acquire academic manuscripts whether they are English as a second language (ESL) or English as foreign language (EFL) learners (Levine, Ferenz and Reves, 2000). Also, Munby and Shuyun (1996) consider that English academic reading is a complex and deliberate process that allows students to be involved actively using reading strategies. Students usually use reading strategies to overcome their reading difficulties when they encounter comprehension obstacles. Hence, learners use

different methods and techniques when they solve reading tasks, and some of these methods help to better understand. Additionally, textbooks serve as aids in solidifying the learning process. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate diverse reading strategies that cater to learners' needs and support the overall learning objectives. To appeal to students across various fields of study, teachers may employ several different strategies adaptable to the requirements and preferences of different learners.

C. Significance of the Study

This study carries various potential benefits. Firstly, it facilitates students to become aware of their reading behaviors and the frequency with which they use different reading strategies when engaging with English classroom materials. This self-awareness encourages students to consider adjustments to their reading behaviors and discover ways to improve their utilization of effective strategies. Second, the study provides information about the reading methods that learners use when working with English-language materials—before, during, and after reading. By this information transfer, learners are better equipped to use appropriate reading strategies that help them comprehend the primary ideas in the texts they are reading. Thirdly, the study offers instructors insightful knowledge to understand the reading habits and techniques of their learners. Armed with this understanding, teachers can adapt their teaching approaches to facilitate a more unified reading experience for their students. Furthermore, the research elucidates how reading strategies are implemented differently based on gender and academic discipline, allowing instructors and authors to adapt their contents to the reading needs of their students. Finally, this current study can be utilized as a guide for future research, assisting scholars to grasp how students currently read and allowing a focus on addressing specific weaknesses to offer more effective ideas and teaching strategies for learners having trouble with English reading.

D. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to determine and investigate the reading methods that learners at English preparatory schools use as well as the reading techniques that learners use before, during, and after reading. Whether or not students employ the

same reading methods or different ones, the study concentrates on which reading strategies they employ the most or the least depending on their reading process. Therefore, teachers may take serious steps to assist students to practice the least reading strategies they rarely or never use.

E. Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What are the most frequently used reading strategies by students?
2. What are the least frequently used reading strategies by students?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction

Several scholars classified reading strategies as the key points of reading skills. They discovered that these strategies were different from the ones used in most classrooms. Hence, they divided reading strategies into two categories: cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies can be defined as the mental process that learners utilize to process sociolinguistic content and linguistics content (Wenden and Rubin, 1987, p.19). These strategies are used to construct relationships between learners' new and present knowledge. In addition to operating on returning information to improve learning (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). The major cognitive strategies are grouping, note-taking, translation, deduction, imagery, contextualization, inferencing, and elaboration (Brown, 2007).

On the contrary, metacognitive strategies are more related to critical thinking skills which pave the way for learners to achieve their awareness of understating the reading passage. Bishop et al. (2005, p.207-208) categorize these metacognitive strategies as the following: making connections with learners' background knowledge, analyzing the structure of the text, asking questions, evaluating, and summarizing. Hence, this chapter elaborates on the most significant reading strategy research, language learning strategies, reading comprehension, strategies-based instruction, reading instruction, reading strategy, and integration of reading strategies.

B. Reading Strategies Research

There have been a great number of studies about language learning in general and reading strategies in particular since the second part of the nineteenth century. Macaro (2006) found that learners of the second language try to perform different tasks when they use the second language. Rigney (1978) stated that learners can employ different strategies to help them acquire, store, and recall information. These

strategies are the backbone of understanding the text, doing certain tasks after reading, and the steps learners take when they are incapable of comprehending a reading text. Thanks to Singhal (2001), reading strategies are the methods that students employ to expand their horizons in reading comprehension and results. Akkakoson and Setobol (2009) carried out a study to look at the impact of reading methods on the reading comprehension of English by Thai learners.

Therefore, the outcomes showed that learners with high and medium proficiency used more strategies when reading passages than before. In other words, the post-test results of all high, medium, and low participants' reading proficiency groups were higher than their pre-test results statistically. According to Barnett (1989), reading skill is a cooperative process that combines the utilization of top-down and bottom-up strategies. Hence, learners need to employ the most suitable reading strategies to develop their reading comprehension. Learners need to integrate and apply several strategies or skills to achieve reading comprehension. Memory, metacognitive, task-taking, and social communication are all examples of reading strategies (Caverly, 1997; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo, 1985; Oxford, 1990; Zhang, 1993).

C. Language Learning Strategies

It has been approved that "strategy" can prompt the meaning of the word "tactic" since they both employ it to achieve goals. However, they are different from each other as strategies involve tactics. Hence, the idea of using the strategy is a sophisticated process, so many language experts and researchers recommend employing various methods to develop the language development process. According to Rubin (1987), language-learning strategy (LLS) is another form of language-learning process where learners' learning is built by these strategies. Therefore, LLS supports learners in enhancing their linguistic abilities because the use of these strategies develops students' knowledge and the educational process. Rigney (1978) is on the same page emphasizing his perspective that learners have the ability to acquire information and implement it in a variety of ways while using strategies. Similarly, Wenden (1987) and Schmeck (1988) indicated that the use of these strategies is considered one of the most important educational tools that have an effective role in organizing the language acquisition process for learners and play

an important role in finishing tasks as they require a set of several patterns that affect positive learning.

According to Oxford (1990), strategies are defined as a term to achieve a specific aim with a variety of steps, for example, planning and taking actions. Hence, we can emphasize the tools for relying on active participation and self-employment, which emphasizes the importance of using reading strategies in the process of language learning to improve the communicative competence of learners. Moreover, LLS deals with certain tasks taken by learners to make the learning process faster, easier, more effective, more entertaining, and more transferable to real-life situations.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) define language-learning strategies as special opinions and behaviors of processing information, which assist learners in comprehending, learning, and recalling information. As stated above, the impact of LLS in the development of language learning has a great increasing interest among researchers (Fewell, 2010). O'Malley and Chamot (1990), define strategies of language-learning as behaviors and special perspectives tackling information, which assist learners to learn, comprehend, and recall rundown. As stated above, most of the studies have been focused on the importance of language learning development due to the impact of LLS on learning (Fewell, 2010). Additionally, Cohen (2007) highlighted how learners are able to guide themselves by relying on the significance of using LLS when the teacher is not available in the classroom. At this phase, students can try to fulfill their learning objectives on their own. LLS is therefore crucial for language learners since it stimulates and supports their independent learning style. LLS is, however, considered a certain type of instrument, which is utilized in solving problems and achieving goals. It is the conscious and planned method taken by learners to facilitate and support the language learning process. Consequently, it is noticed that the impact of LLS on learners' ESL looks promotive and advantageous.

D. Reading Comprehension

It is critical to define reading in order to gain a deeper idea of what reading comprehension is and why it is essential to the reading process. Following an overview of reading in linked literature, the relevant literature is highlighted to check out the reading comprehension process.

1. Definition of Reading

The most accurate way to describe reading is as the most intricate cognitive function that humans have ever performed. The concept of reading gained a lot of attention among researchers in the ELT (English Language Teaching) field in the past twenty years. Many different views and definitions of reading have been put forward. Gates (1949) points out reading process contains the means of mental operations that include all types of thinking, such as problem-solving, reasoning, and the like. Therefore, reading is thought of as a higher-order cognitive function that involves all organized and sophisticated forms. (Hoover and Goff, 1990).

Allan and Broughton (1998) believe that reading is a complex method that depends on the learner's understanding of the meaning of the text read and has many purposes in different contexts. In line with Goodman (1995), reading is defined as the process produced by the author and understood by the reader. Therefore, it is a psycholinguistic process that begins with the author and ends with the reader. It is noteworthy that the reading process has two goals in the problem-solving process. The first goal depends on what the author intended regarding the meaning, and the second goal depends on the structure of the intended meaning itself because the reading process involves many processes and changes in the text. Therefore, the reader needs to be more competent in reading what is behind the text by focusing on the meaning figuratively not literally to understand the intended meaning.

2. The Process of Reading Comprehension

Reading is an apparent action, or an observable movement carried out by the reader. However, it demands a mental or inner process that stimulates the reader to get the intended meaning and information from the written text. Therefore, reading is not valuable if the student is not capable of understanding the rundown presented in the text. Furthermore, comprehension is fundamental to finishing the reading process since it allows one to go from following every word on a page to understanding the written text in its entirety. What this means is reading comprehension is substantial because it is thought of as a true pattern of understanding what learners are reading. Nevertheless, understanding is not as straightforward as it is described and achieved by the reader because it has a combination of different methods of mental, inner, and functional progress which starts before the beginning of reading and lasts till they

finish reading. Hence, to accomplish reading, readers need to pay more attention and effort to comprehension in means of teaching, learning, and processing.

Durkin (1993) states that reading's critical focus is comprehension since its goals are to build implications from the written text by focusing on the process of reading. To put it another way, reading comprehension definition is the definition of reading comprehension is a sophisticated interactive design that uses cognitive potential to assist the reader in getting a mental interpretation of the content of the text. Therefore, comprehension has an effective strategy to use processes as readers enhance their comprehension skills and experience valuable learning processes. Irwin (1991) projected five different phases of processes examining what takes place in reading cognitively. The terms elaborative processing, integrative processing, macro processing, micro processing, and metacognitive processing are used to portray these phases.

In *integrative processing*, there is inferencing involvement in the reader's prior knowledge which connects the information given with the readers' experienced knowledge such as cause and effect sequence and relationship. In this method and according to Walker and Meyer (1980), readers will be able to infer, summarize, and connect reasons, and make decisions to generate higher cognitive skills for the readers. Readers can apply lexical knowledge more effectively thanks to micro processing using grammatical information to generate prior knowledge, and the best way to help the reader remember the general meaning of a text, especially if it is long, is to select the text during the macro processing phase of reading. In the same way when using previous knowledge to understand the whole reading passage. *Elaborative processing* describes the expanding and analyzing of the idea because some ideas may not be provided noticeably by the passage's author. Hence, the reader should go beyond the information and read between the lines to be able to understand the inferences. In other words, readers ought to recall previous information and apply it in the reading passage. This process assists readers in achieving advanced-level comprehension. *Macro processing* is similar to reading for gist in a way that readers select the important ideas to catch and summarize the main idea of the reading text (Irwin, 1991).

Accordingly, the primary points are prioritized over certain minor nuances. The reason behind it is that this method helps readers to identify the essential points in the reading passages to develop their abilities to comprehend, classify, remember, and summarize the main points effectively. On the other hand, *metacognitive processing* conducts higher levels of thinking processes. It enables readers to observe and manage their reading process. Thus, it facilitates readers to evaluate and control their reading with a high level of awareness. As a whole, it appears understanding a written text is a normal method concerning the readers' prior knowledge, utilizing the information, making implications, and detecting the main idea of the passage. Therefore, according to Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), effective comprehension is a process focusing on connecting the topic with the readers' current knowledge which is further beyond linguistic knowledge.

To conclude, applying these reading strategies processes will assist learners in making progress in language learning. Thus, following what is just written in the reading passage seems to be insufficient to understand the written texts. In fact, it requires the process of thoughts from background knowledge to generating inferences rather than reading the text word by word.

E. Strategies-based Instruction

Learners have some difficulties in the language learning process without noticing the learning methods. Hence, different types of involvement have arisen which is moving from old-fashioned learning ways to up-to-date ones. One of the effective methods suggested to provide learners with a successful learning process is strategy-based instruction (SBI), which focuses on improving language learning by providing suitable strategies efficiently. Therefore, the development of strategy-based instruction gained a lot of interest from the researchers because it is believed to be a new approach instead of a conventional one. Its goal is to provide learners with a suitable opportunity to take part in the learning process using the most appropriate strategies.

Language learning became more student-centered in a way that the concentration is on the learners' interactions and active participation in their process of second language (L2) learning (Brown, 2002; Chamot, 2001; Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, and Robbins, 1999; McDonough, 1999). This makes L2 learners able to

organize and use reading skills methodically and efficiently by SBI. In this way, learners have the opportunity to experience the process of language learning properly.

According to Oxford (1990), SBI is considered a device to assist learners become more autonomous away from the teacher since they can apply reading strategies during their learning process. Moreover, Cohen (2011) reinforced Oxford's ideas in a way that SBI helps learners to be self-confident and keep their learning process at the development level.

F. Reading Strategy Instruction

Over the past ten years, there has been a huge surge in interest in reading strategies instruction (RSI). Since reading comprehension is taught through the application of reading techniques, it is considered an advanced function of education. Therefore, it's imperative to use effective teaching techniques in addition to understanding when, where, why, and how to use them. As a result, the greatest teaching methods for language acquisition have revolved around several hypotheses.

As previously stated, several suggestions can be used for language learning by utilizing convenient training strategies for reading. However, RSI has two major characteristics, which are direct clarification and scaffolding. In order to make the tactics easier for learners to grasp, the first suggestion suggests that teachers explicitly explain them using examples when and how to use the strategies. This method uses read-out-loud or think-out-loud techniques to help students understand reading strategies and make them as lucid as feasible.

According to (Anderson, 1999; Bimmel, 2001; Kern, 1989; Pearson and Fielding, 1991), pointing out why one uses reading strategies is a crucial first step; otherwise, methods of teaching reading will not boost the aim of simplifying learning. Also, teachers need to provide direct clarification by summarizing the positive outcomes of utilizing strategies of reading and guiding students to use the correct strategy in the correct context. Additionally, teachers should provide learners with opportunities to evaluate their strategy use rather than depending on the teacher's assistance most of the time (Sinatra, Brown and Reynolds, 2001). Therefore, direct clarification provides students with opportunities to gain awareness

of the right strategy to use naturally and enhance their independence in the learning process (Paris, et al. 1991).

Scaffolding, on the other hand, is the second suggestion that conveys the focus from the teacher to the learner's application of reading strategies (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, Pearson, 1991; Paris et al., 1991) since scaffolding makes learning easier, it is seen as a crucial benefit of reading strategy education. As a matter of fact, Vygotsky's Social-Cognitive Theory develops the term scaffolding which focuses on how the process of development should be tested rather than obtained. Vygotsky claims that the language development process starts at birth and lasts till death. During life long, the learning process is developed by social interactions with other learners which stimulate progression, and he calls it the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD) which shows the gap between what a child needs to do on their own and under an adult's supervision. Therefore, Wood, Bruner, and Ross employed the term "scaffolding" in the process of learning to show the similarities between the phases of the language development process that children go through and parental supervision.

G. Reading Strategies

Reading, as a skill, doesn't require learners to know the meaning of all the words to understand the text. Readers can encounter some challenges when distinguishing between reading and comprehension. To grasp the text, derive important concepts, and draw connections between the ideas presented in the written text, readers must employ specific tactics. Duke and Pearson (2002) state that proficient readers use specific techniques to better understand the reading content. for example, connecting the text with background knowledge, organizing ideas, making inferences, and understanding the author's purpose. Consequently, the most important tools for helping readers improve their understanding and learning of the material are effective techniques. Being an excellent reader is said to involve using a variety of reading techniques. As a result, reading methods will be discussed in the part that follows in terms of the learning processes such as pre-, while-, and post-reading (Paris et al., 1991; Wallace, 1992).

1. Pre-reading Strategies

One of the most important reading methods for practicing reading and preparing the learner before starting to read the material is known as the pre-reading method. In other words, these strategies involve the readers in the topic, trigger their prior knowledge, and check the concept and the vocabulary of the passage before the reading process. According to Wallace (1992), using visuals, asking questions, and brainstorming help readers comprehend the text more deeply and get them ready for the next level. Consequently, the benefits of applying pre-reading techniques help students to perform active participation in the class through the reading process and stimulate readers' cognitive processes (Beers and Kyle, 2003). According to Farr, Koop, and Kamras (2010), strategies of pre-reading are valuable due to readers' concentration on activating their background knowledge which assists them to make predictions and connections. A learning theory called *Schema* grounds readers' perception of their comprehension. Anderson and Pearson (1998) developed the theory of Schema which was defined as the knowledge that readers retain in their minds based on a complex pattern of mental formations. Therefore, a reader's deeper schema is correlated with their wider mental formation. Considering what was mentioned previously about schema, pre-reading strategies started to gain a huge interest because they help readers make connections between the knowledge they have and the text. Therefore, some sub-skills can be applied in the pre-reading stage. For example, making predictions by reading the title, skimming the main idea, asking-answering questions, reading the headings and subheadings, using visuals to understand what the reading passage is about, and getting the main idea from reading the first and last sentence of the reading passage.

2. While-reading Strategies

In the process of while-reading a text, teachers encourage the learners to engage in performing different activities like answering questions, grasping the main ideas, identifying challenging parts of the reading, matching certain ideas with different parts of the text, etc. This procedure assists readers prepare techniques of comprehension during the reading stage such as connecting the relationships and noticing comprehension, and so forth (Farr, Kopp, and Kamras, 2010). However, while-reading techniques embrace reading techniques independence as readers endeavor to understand the reading passage as they read. While reading the text,

reading strategies prompt readers to focus on different objectives, for example, tackling different parts of the passage, answering some critical questions, highlighting the topics, contrasting their prior pre-reading predictions with the actual ones in the text content, focusing on the development that would occur in the future, and so forth. As a result, utilizing reading strategies helps readers achieve multiple goals and guides them strategically to have better reading processes.

3. Post-reading Strategies

When the reader finishes the reading material, this does not mean that he has fully comprehended the ideas of the text. Hence, the core objective of post-reading instruction is to expand the knowledge of the activities performed in the while-reading stage which assists readers in conducting the main ideas of the reading passage in their words. This method encourages readers to gain the ability to understand the concept of the whole reading passage. Summarization is the most proper technique in the post-reading stage. Recapitulating the entire text is a useful and beneficial tactic that can be implemented in a variety of ways (Babbitt, 1996). Some recommended activities for the post-reading stage are answering comprehended questions with peers in pair or group work, organizing events, comparing charts or maps that were done in the previous stage, and so on.

H. Integration of Reading Strategies

There are two primary distinctions in the methods of teaching reading in concerned literature one of them is to teach these strategies as an integrated portion of the lesson while the other one is to teach it separately. Most scholars (Pearson and Fielding, 1991; Chamot and O'Malley, 1987) agreed that teaching reading methods should be integrated into the curriculum. As a result, there are a few guidelines and standards for how reading methods should be included in the instruction. One of the most important elements of integrating reading strategies is to know what strategies are taught or students are familiar with. Chamot (1993) and Oxford (2002) suggest that teachers should be familiar with the curriculum involved to make sure that students will be able to use these strategies in their reading passages correctly and accurately. Furthermore, teachers may learn about the strategies that their students apply during their learning process. To apply this, teachers are recommended to

conduct certain strategies such as surveys, interviews, think-aloud modules, and so on (Chamot, 2004). Some researchers, (Grabe and Stoller, 2002; Nunan, 2002), suggest that teachers should take into consideration students' opinions about the strategies they apply and the strategies that are suitable for the students' learning process. Hence, the teachers need to select certain strategies while selecting the reading text.

As mentioned earlier, choosing strategies for reading have also an important role in fitting the students' needs, goals, and levels. Otherwise, it will be difficult for students to process the instructions they are learning (Janzen and Stoller, 1998; Sinatra et al., 2001). However, it is suggested to take into consideration the students' background knowledge, demands, and readiness while choosing the strategies for reading lessons. In this way, it is vital that teachers may encourage students to gain awareness to employ the correct strategy to have fruitful reading strategy instructions and have successful learning processes.

All in all, teachers need to be aware of the new circumstances and techniques that the new generation is familiar with to adopt the correct strategy to make shifts in students' learning process.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Introduction

This section presents the methodologies employed in this current study. It starts with stating the study's research design, giving information about the participants, presenting data collection instruments utilized in the study, and lastly, sharing the data collection and analysis process.

B. Research Design

This study aimed to determine the most and the least reading strategies frequently utilized by the participants of this study. A questionnaire and semi-structured follow-up interview were employed in this present study. In this study, we employed quantitative and qualitative research methods to gather and evaluate the participants' data. According to Williams (2011), quantitative and qualitative research employ strategies of investigation, for example, questionnaires and interviews are used to collect data on pre-established instruments that provide statistical data. In quantitative research techniques, numerical data is used to produce statistical findings in the last part of the study while in qualitative research techniques, an interview was employed to have an in-depth exploration of what learners think when they utilize reading strategies during the learning process.

C. Participants

This study was conducted at the Foreign Languages Department, Biruni University which provides English lessons to the students enrolled in different majors where the language of instruction is English. Hence, students study English for one year as a preparatory course to be able to start their major in English in the following year. The participants of this study are 65 students, 22 males and 43 females aged between 18 – 22 years old. All the participants passed in English Place Test and were assigned a B1 English proficiency level according to The Common

European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The participants' native language is Arabic and Turkish. They are undergraduate students enrolled in different fields at the university. Most participants stated that they could not have the chance to apply what they had learned outside the classrooms, nor did they practice English during school time.

Table 1 Participants' Age Distribution.

Age	f	%
18	24	36,9
19	19	29,2
20	12	18,5
21	7	10,7
22	3	4,7
Total	65	100,0

f=frequency %= percentage

Table 3.1 illustrates that the participants were university students with various ages ranging from 18 to 22. To explain elaborately, 24 participants (36,9%) were at the age of 18, and 19 participants (29,2%) were at the age of 19. While 12 participants (18,5%) were at the age of 20, only 7 participants (10,7%) were at the age of 21, and 3 participants (4,7%) were at the age of 22.

D. Data Collection Instrument

The study's data was gathered through a "Reading Strategy Questionnaire", which was developed by Oxford et al., (2004) and in a later stage adapted by Uzunçakmak (2005). All the information and data about learners' report use of reading strategies was gathered accordingly. The questionnaire was built using a five-point Likert scale from number 1 which means (*Never*) to number 5 which means (*Almost always*). The questionnaire had 45 items in total grouped under three categories: before-reading, while-reading, and post-reading strategies. Items from 1 to 6 are concerned about strategies employed pre-reading the text, for example, predicting the reading passage, asking-answering questions, checking the unfamiliar vocabulary, and using sub-skills techniques such as skimming or scanning. Items 7 to 43 are concerned with the while-reading strategies employed in the text, for example,

reading silently, guessing, highlighting, marking, and searching for answers. Finally, items 44 and 45 are concerned with strategies employed after reading the text, for instance, summarizing the text and evaluating the author's point of view.

Two phases were applied in this study to reach the research questions. Phase one was a questionnaire administered to the students to gather data on the utilized reading strategies. The questionnaire took around 15 to 25 minutes to be completed. All learners' answers were used for research purposes only. The process of gathering data was effective and beneficial because the questionnaire statements were reliable with the participants' English language level. Phase two was a semi-structured follow-up interview. This stage was important because it provided a great chance to get closer to the learners, share their opinions about reading in detail, and hear from them about the challenges they face while using strategies in reading. This interview enriched the research with valuable ideas and information collected from the learners.

E. Data Collection Procedures

The first stage of data collection procedures was to get an approval letter from Istanbul Aydin University, Turkey. After that, I requested permission from the foreign language department of Biruni University, Istanbul. After receiving permission from the department, I started my research. Before disseminating the questionnaire, the students were advised that their responses would solely serve research intentions. The questionnaire took fifteen to thirty minutes to complete. The data-gathering phase proceeded smoothly and efficiently as the questionnaire items matched the English proficiency level of the participants consistently.

F. Data Analysis

In the current study, descriptive statistics were used to analyze and examine the data collected from the questionnaire using SPSS version 29 (SPSS Inc. USA) while descriptive analysis was used to analyze semi-structured follow-up interview

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Introduction

This study concentrates on the most and the least reading strategies frequently utilized by English language students. In this chapter, the findings of this study gathered from the questionnaire along with the semi-structure follow-up interview are presented in three major sections in detail including reading strategies used during pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading.

B. Findings related to the Pre-Reading Strategies

This section provides insights into the highest and the lowest pre-reading strategies employed by the participants of the study. Table 4.1 reveals the responses given to the questionnaire items in detail from item 1 to item 6.

Table 2 Ranking of Pre-Reading Strategy Use

No	Statement	N		R		S		O		Aa	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	I use the title to help predict the contents.	1	1,5	1	1,5	9	13,8	19	29,2	35	53,8
5	I pay attention to visuals such as graphs, pictures, or tables.	1	1,5	3	4,6	12	18,5	15	23,1	34	52,3
4	I look through the text to spot specific information such as dates, names, or numbers.	0	0,0	3	4,6	11	16,9	19	29,2	32	49,2
3	I skim it first, and later I read for details.	1	1,5	3	4,6	8	12,3	25	38,5	28	43,1
6	I use my prior knowledge about the topic to predict the content.	1	1,5	1	1,5	16	24,6	25	38,5	22	33,8
2	I consider what type of text it is, such as a newspaper article, a scientific paper, or a novel.	0	0,0	11	16,9	18	27,7	21	32,3	15	23,1

Note: Aa = almost always; O = often; S = sometimes; R = rarely; N = never; f = frequency; % = percentage

Table 4.1 indicates that Strategy One, with the first rank, emerged as the highest strategy employed regularly by students. Among the 65 students surveyed, 35 students (53,8%) reported *almost always* paying attention to the title of the reading passage to predict the content. Additionally, 19 students (29,2%) indicated *often* they utilized Strategy One, while 9 students (13,8%) reported they *sometimes* applied this strategy. There is 1 student (1,5%) stated he *rarely* employs this strategy, and 1 student (1,5%) reported he *never* applied this strategy. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, all students mentioned that they always read the title of the reading text to predict the content and what the passage is about.

Strategy Five takes the second rank among pre-reading strategies applied by students. The results showed that 34 students (52,3%) were revealed to *almost always* look at the reading passage's graphics such as pictures, tables, and charts before they read the text. While 15 students (23,1%) *often* employ Strategy 5, just 12 students (18,5%) *sometimes* use this reading strategy. Among other participants, Strategy Five was found to be *rarely* used by 3 students (4,6%); just 1 student (1,5%) *never* used this strategy at all in his reading process. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 9 students mentioned that they always pay attention to visuals and titles to predict the content of the reading text.

The third rank among other pre-reading strategies employed is Strategy Four. The outcome provided by 32 students (49,2%) *almost always* looking through the reading passage to highlight important details, for example, exact names, numbers, and certain dates. 19 students (29,2%) reported *often* applying Strategy Four; 11 students (16,9%) mentioned they *sometimes* focus on numbers and dates. Only 3 students (4,6%) informed they *rarely* look at the reading text's details; however, the outcome showed that none of the participants selected *never*. This finding is in line with the responses given to the semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 8 students mentioned that they always concentrate on numbers, dates, and names.

Strategy Three takes the fourth rank among other most applied pre-reading strategies. The reason is that 28 students (43,1%) reported *almost always* skimming at first and later reading the whole passage for more details. While 25 students (38,5%) indicated they *often* employ this method, 8 students (12,3%) mentioned they

sometimes apply this reading method. Although 3 students (4,6%) *rarely* utilize Strategy Three, only 1 student (1,5%) *never* takes advantage of this strategy.

Strategy Six takes the fifth position among mainly applied pre-reading strategies. The outcomes are nearly identical to Strategy Three. In this strategy, 22 students (33,8%) reported *almost always* using their prior knowledge to connect their information to the existing reading content. Among the participants, 25 students (38,5%) indicated they *often* apply this strategy before starting to read the passage while 16 students (24,6%) selected *sometimes* as the apply this strategy. 1 student (1,5%) *rarely* applies this strategy, and 1 student (1,5%) *never* utilizes it.

Strategy Two was determined to be the last regularly utilized pre-reading strategy. The responses illustrated that 15 students (23,1%) *almost always* considered what type of text they were reading such as newspapers, stories, novels, or scientific papers. In this strategy, it is found that 21 students (32,3%) mentioned they *often* apply this method and 18 students (27,7%) *sometimes* go through this strategy. Although 11 students (16,9%) reported they *rarely* follow this method, the outcome illustrated that none of the participants selected *never*.

This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 6 students mentioned that they consider what the type of the reading text is.

As a result, and according to the responses provided in Table 4.1, the strategies utilized before the reading process showed that the highest frequent strategies applied by the participants are in this respective order: *using the title of the text to anticipate the reading passage content (Item 1)*; *paying attention to the reading passage visuals, for example, pictures and tables (Item 5)*; *scanning the reading passage to locate important and specific information (Item 4)*; *skimming the reading passage at first and later reading for more details (Item 3)*; *using their background knowledge to predict the reading content (Item 6)*; *considering the text's genre (Item 2)*. It is very crucial to answer the study's questions here. Hence, the most repeatedly pre-reading strategy employed by participants is *using the title of the text to anticipate the reading passage content (Item 1)*, and the least repeatedly pre-reading strategy employed is *considering the text's genre (Item 2)*. Although the number of participants of the least repeatedly pre-reading strategy is not as low as expected, it is important to highlight the least strategy applied in this section.

C. Findings Related to While-Reading Strategies

This section presents the outcome of the most preferred while-reading strategy utilized by the participants in the process of reading comprehension. Table 4.2 illustrates the utilization of the while-reading strategy ranking and order according to the participants of this study.

Table 3 Ranking of While-Reading Strategy Use

No	Statement	N		R		S		O		Aa	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
15	I change reading speed depending on the difficulty of a text.	1	1,5	2	3,1	11	16,9	18	27,7	33	50,8
30	I try to connect information within the text.	0	0	1	1,5	8	12,3	24	36,9	32	49,2
14	I continue reading even if I have difficulty	0	0	1	1,5	11	16,9	23	35,4	30	46,2
20	If I don't understand something such as word or phrase, I guess its meaning using clues from the text.	0	0	4	6,2	14	21,5	19	29,2	28	43,1
12	I start reading from the first paragraph and read all the way through the last paragraph.	0	0	3	4,6	14	21,5	21	32,3	27	41,5
29	If I'm having trouble, I go back to previous sentences.	0	0,0	5	7,7	12	18,5	22	33,8	26	40,0
8	I pay attention to the beginning and the end of each paragraph.	0	0	7	10,8	15	23,1	19	29,2	24	36,9
11	I translate each sentence into my native language.	0	0	11	16,9	19	29,2	12	18,5	23	35,4
23	I underline important parts.	1	1,5	4	6,2	18	27,7	19	29,2	23	35,4
25	I go over difficult parts several times.	2	3,1	2	3,1	19	29,2	20	30,8	22	33,8
37	I pay attention to linking words such as "however" and "besides" so that I can understand the structure.	0	0	1	1,5	12	18,5	30	46,2	22	33,8
43	I read the comprehension questions first and then read the text.	2	3,1	6	9,2	12	18,5	23	35,4	22	33,8
18	I link the content with what I already know.	1	1,5	3	4,6	22	33,8	18	27,7	21	32,3
24	I mark important parts, using colored pens or drawing stars.	7	10,8	8	12,3	12	18,5	18	27,7	20	30,8
9	I focus on the tense of a verb, such as present tense and past tense	5	7,7	5	7,7	14	21,5	22	33,8	19	29,2
21	If I don't understand something such as word or phrase, I guess its meaning using information I know about the topic.	0	0	0	0	19	29,2	27	41,5	19	29,2
32	I follow the line I am reading with my finger or my pen.	6	9,2	8	12,3	15	23,1	17	26,2	19	29,2
40	I try to figure out the main idea of each paragraph.	2	3,1	5	7,7	21	32,3	18	27,7	19	29,2

Table 3 (Con) Ranking of While-Reading Strategy Use

No	Statement	N		R		S		O		Aa	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
28	I try to understand the meaning without translating the text into my native language.	2	3,1	6	9,2	19	29,2	20	30,8	18	27,7
38	I write down key words.	3	4,6	10	15,4	20	30,8	14	21,5	18	27,7
10	I try to understand the meaning of every word in a text	6	9,2	7	10,8	17	26,2	18	27,7	17	26,2
39	I try to distinguish between factual sentences and the writer's subjective opinions in the text.	6	9,2	9	13,8	18	27,7	15	23,1	17	26,2
19	I try to understand the meaning of an unknown word by dividing it into parts.	6	9,2	8	12,3	14	21,5	21	32,3	16	24,6
42	I pay attention to indirectly stated ideas and try to make inferences about them.	4	6,2	8	12,3	16	24,6	21	32,3	16	24,6
27	I make a picture in my mind about what the text is saying.	4	6,2	6	9,2	16	24,6	24	36,9	15	23,1
31	I ask questions related to the text or what I have read.	1	1,5	11	16,9	21	32,3	17	26,2	15	23,1
16	I read aloud the difficult parts of a text.	11	16,9	9	13,8	18	27,7	13	20,0	14	21,5
22	I check what each pronoun refers to.	4	6,2	11	16,9	21	32,3	15	23,1	14	21,5
36	I try to confirm or disconfirm the predictions, guesses, or inferences I have made	4	6,2	7	10,8	22	33,8	18	27,7	14	21,5
7	I pay attention to parts of sentences such as phrases and clauses.	1	1,5	5	7,7	23	35,4	23	35,4	13	20,0
13	I pay attention to sentence structure, such as subjects and objects	7	10,8	10	15,4	13	20,0	22	33,8	13	20,0
33	I use slashes to divide a sentence grammatically.	17	26,2	10	15,4	16	24,6	10	15,4	12	18,5
34	When I cannot understand a sentence even if I know every word, I skip that sentence.	12	18,5	16	24,6	10	15,4	15	23,1	12	18,5
41	I try to distinguish between the main idea and the supporting details in the text.	3	4,6	9	13,8	16	24,6	25	38,5	12	18,5
35	I predict what will come next.	5	7,7	8	12,3	20	30,8	21	32,3	11	16,9
17	I skip unknown words.	9	13,8	14	21,5	19	29,2	15	23,1	8	12,3
26	I read aloud the entire text.	15	23,1	13	20,0	16	24,6	13	20,0	8	12,3

Note: Aa = almost always; O = often; S = sometimes; R = rarely; N = never; f = frequency; % = percentage

Table 4.2 indicates that Strategy Fifteen took the first rank among while-reading strategies and emerged as the highest strategy employed regularly by students. Among 65 participants, 33 students (50,8%) reported *almost always* change their reading speed according to the reading text's difficulty. On the other hand, 18 students (27,7%) indicated they *often* change their reading speed while 11 students (16,9%) mentioned they *sometimes* apply this method. The results showed only 2

students (3,1%) *rarely* use this method, and just 1 student (1,5%) *never* applied any strategy while reading the passage. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, all students indicated that they changed their reading speed according to the difficulty of the reading passage.

Strategy Thirty took the second rank applied by participants with 32 students (49,2%) reporting they *almost always* try to make a connection between the text they are reading and their prior knowledge. Although 24 students (36,9%) stated they *often* apply this method while reading, just 8 students (12,3%) reported they *sometimes* utilize this method. Surprisingly, 1 student (1,5%) mentioned he *rarely* goes through this strategy while no students selected *never*. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 9 students mentioned that they connect the information of the reading text with their background knowledge.

As for Strategy Fourteen, the results showed that 30 students (46,2%) reported *almost always* reading the passage even when there were difficult lexis or phrases. However, 23 students (35,4%) indicated they *often* apply this strategy whereas 11 students (16,9%) mentioned they *sometimes* utilize strategy 14. On the other hand, just 1 student (1,5%) selected he *rarely* chose this strategy while no students selected *never*. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 3 students mentioned that they continue reading the passage even though there is a lot of difficult vocabulary.

According to Item Twenty, only 28 students (43,1%) reported they *almost always* read for gist to predict the main idea and have a clearer picture of the reading passage whenever they do not understand certain parts of the text. 19 students (29,2%) mentioned they *often* apply this method whereas 14 students (21,5%) reported *sometimes* they use this method. Just 4 students (6,2%) selected they *rarely* utilize this strategy while no students selected *never*. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, all students mentioned that they try to guess the meaning of the difficult word from the context while reading the passage.

For Strategy Twelve, the outcomes showed that 27 students (41,5%) reported they *almost always* start reading the passage line by line till the end in sequence. Also, 21 students (32,3%) identified they *often* read the passage in this way whereas

14 students (21,5%) *sometimes* apply this strategy. Just 4 students (4,6%) *rarely* employ this method whereas no students selected *never*. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 3 students mentioned that they read the passage from the beginning till the end.

The outcome for strategy Twenty-Nine showed that 26 students (40,0%) reported that *almost always* they check the previous sentences when they cannot understand a certain point during the reading process. 22 students (33,8%) indicated they *often* apply this method while 12 students (18,5%) *sometimes* use this method through reading the text. Only 5 students (7,7%) reported they *rarely* employ this method whereas none of the students selected *never*.

According to the results, Strategy Eight received more attention than usual. Among the participants, 24 students (36,9%) reported they *almost always* focused on the first and last sentence of each paragraph because the first sentence captured their attention, and the last one provided a conclusion to the paragraph whereas 19 students (29,2%) *often* applied this technique. 15 students (23,1%) *sometimes* utilized this method while 7 students (10,8%) *rarely* went through this way while reading the passage. None of the students selected *never*.

According to Item Eleven responses, the results showed that 23 students (35,4%) indicated they *almost always* translate most sentences into their first language while 12 students (18,5%) *often* translate sentences while reading the passage. 19 students (29,2%) *sometimes* apply this method, and 11 students (16,9%) reported they *rarely* use the translation method. None of the students selected *never*.

The outcome for Item Twenty-Three indicates that 23 students (35,4%) *almost always* underline the most crucial sentences in the reading passage to organize their ideas while 19 students (29,2%) *often* use this method while reading the text. 18 students reported they (27,7%) *sometimes* apply this technique whereas 4 students (6,2%) *rarely* highlight certain sentences. On the other hand, only 1 student (1,5%) *never* applies this method.

According to Strategy Twenty-Five, it is found that 22 students (33,8%) *almost always* examine and read the difficult paragraph many times to have full comprehension of the text whereas 20 students (30,8%) *often* go through this method. The results showed that 19 students (29,2%) *sometimes* use this technique.

Just 1 student (1,5%) *rarely* uses this method while no students *never* read difficult parts of the reading passage.

The outcomes showed that Item Thirty-Seven had an unpredictable percentage in employing this method. Among participants, 22 students (33,8%) *almost always* concentrate on linking words and conjunctions to understand the connections between sentences and comprehend the reading passage. Unexpectedly, 30 students (46,2%) reported they *often* apply this technique while reading the passage while 12 students (18,5%) *sometimes* apply it. Just 1 student (1,5%) *rarely* uses this method while no students *never* focus on the conjunctions in the reading passage.

For Item Forty-Three, the results showed that 22 students (33,8%) indicated they *almost always* read the questions at the beginning before reading the whole passage to have an idea a general idea before reading. 23 students (35,4%) *often* read the questions while 12 students (18,5%) *sometimes* apply this while-reading method. On the other hand, 6 students (9,2%) mentioned they *rarely* use this technique whereas just 2 students (3,1%) *never* employ this reading method.

The outcome of Item Eighteen showed that 21 students (32,3%) reported they *almost always* connect the reading passage content with the ideas in their minds. 18 students (27,7%) indicated they *often* apply this method whereas 22 students (33,8%) *sometimes* make connections in their reading. 3 students (4,6%) *rarely* utilize this technique while 1 student (1,5%) *never* uses it.

According to Item Twenty-Four, the results of the study showed that 20 students (30,8%) *almost always* highlight the most crucial portions of the reading passage to be able to organize their ideas and return to them. 18 students (27,7%) *often* employ this method while 12 students (18,5%) *sometimes* highlight important sections. 8 students (12,3%) *rarely* use this technique while 7 students (10,8%) *never* apply this method at all.

For Item Nine among participants, 19 students (29,2%) *almost always* concentrate on functions and grammatical structures such as verb tenses. However, 22 students (33,8%) *often* utilize this method, and 14 students (21,5%) reported that they *sometimes* use this strategy while they are reading the passage. On the other hand, 5 students (7,7%) *rarely* apply this method, again 5 students (7,7%) *never* use

this while-reading method.

Item Twenty-One showed an interesting outcome among other responses. 19 students (29,2%) indicated they *almost always* employ the information they know about the topic if they find difficulties in understanding certain vocabulary or expressions. Surprisingly, 27 students (41,5%) *often* use this method while 19 students (29,2%) *sometimes* apply it. On the other hand, none of the students selected *rarely* and *never* for this item.

The outcomes of Item Thirty-Two matched the outcomes of Item 21. It is reported that 19 students (29,2%) *almost always* use their pen, pencil, or finger to track the lines and sentences they are reading. 17 students (26,2%) *often* apply this method whereas 15 students (23,1%) *sometimes* use a tool to track their reading. Also, 8 students (12,3%) *rarely* utilize this technique while 6 students (9,2%) *never* use any tool while reading the passage.

According to Item Forty, 19 students (29,2%) indicated that they *almost always* try to discover the main point of each paragraph of the reading passage. 18 students (27,7%) *often* employ this method while 21 students (32,3%) *sometimes* figure out the major points of each paragraph. 5 students (7,7%) *rarely* go through this strategy whereas 2 students (3,1%) *never* use it.

The outcome of Item Twenty-Eight showed that 18 students (27,7%) reported they *almost always* pay attention to the meaning of the vocabulary or statements from the context without using a translator or dictionary. 20 students (30,8%) *often* apply this method when they read the text while 19 students (29,2%) *sometimes* use this technique. On the other hand, 6 students (9,2%) *rarely* try to comprehend the text without translation while 2 students (3,1%) *never* utilize it.

The responses of Item Thirty-Eight showed that 18 students (27,7%) *almost always* write down the crucial lexis when they are reading the passage to help them organize the important points. 14 students (21,5%) *often* take notes during the reading process while 20 students (30,8%) *sometimes* use this method. 10 students (15,4%) *rarely* apply this method whereas 3 students *never* use it.

According to Item Ten, 17 students (26,2%) indicated they *almost always* attempt to understand the meaning of every single lexis to have full comprehension of the reading passage. 18 students (27,7%) *often* employ this method whereas again

17 students (26,2%) *sometimes* use it. 7 students (10,8%) reported they *rarely* try to comprehend the meaning of each word while 6 students (9,2%) have *never* applied this strategy.

The outcome of Item Thirty-Nine showed that 17 students (26,2%) *almost always* separate the objective statements and the author's independent opinion within the reading passage. 15 students (23,1%) reported they *often* employ this method when they read the text whereas 18 students (27,7%) *sometimes* use this technique. On the other hand, 9 students (13,8%) mentioned they *rarely* apply this technique while 6 students (9,2%) *never* used it.

For Item Nineteen, 16 students (24,6%) reported that they *almost always* divide the words into small parts to understand their meaning when they are reading the passage. 21 students (32,3%) *often* apply this technique while 14 students (21,5%) *sometimes* utilize this method. 8 students (12,3%) indicated they *rarely* divide the words into small parts whereas 6 students (9,2%) *never* use it.

According to the responses, Strategy Forty-Two showed 16 students (24,6%) indicated that they *almost always* focus on the hidden messages by the author and make reasonings between them. 21 students (32,3%) *often* apply this strategy while 16 students (24,6%) *sometimes* use this technique. On the other hand, 8 students (12,3%) indicated they *rarely* make inferences between ideas whereas 4 students (6,2%) *never* utilize it.

The responses given to Item Twenty-Seven showed that 15 students (23,1%) reported that they *almost always* try to picture in mind the messages delivered in the reading passage. 24 students (36,9%) *often* apply this strategy while 16 students (24,6%) *sometimes* utilize it. However, 6 students (9,2%) reported that they *rarely* visualize the point in the text whereas 4 students (6,2%) *never* use this method.

For Item Thirty-One, the outcome showed that 15 students (23,1%) *almost always* create comprehension questions after they read the passage to have a full idea of the text. 17 students (26,2%) mentioned they *often* utilize this method while 21 students (32,3%) *sometimes* apply it. 11 students (16,9%) indicated they *rarely* ask questions concerning the reading passage whereas 1 student (1,5%) *never* asked questions.

The outcome of Item Sixteen revealed that 14 students (21,5%) reported they *almost always* peruse aloud the challenging sections of the reading passage. 13 students (20,0%) *often* employ this strategy when they read the text while 18 students (27,7%) *sometimes* use this method. On the other hand, 9 students (13,8%) indicated they *rarely* read out loud whereas 11 students (16,9%) *never* employed this method.

For Item Twenty-Two, the results showed that 14 students (21,5%) indicated that they *almost always* investigate every pronoun's reference to have a better understanding of the doer or object. 15 students (23,1%) *often* employ this method while 21 students (32,3%) *sometimes* use this technique. 11 students (16,9%) reported that they *rarely* look at the pronouns' references whereas 4 students (6,2%) *never* applied this strategy.

The outcome of Item Thirty-Six showed that 14 students (21,5%) reported they *almost always* check whether their predictions about the topic match what is provided at the end of the reading passage. 18 students (27,7%) indicated that they *often* apply this strategy whereas 22 students (33,8%) *sometimes* apply it. However, 7 students (10,8%) *rarely* check their predictions and inferences while 4 students (6,2%) *never* use this method.

The responses given to Item Seven revealed that 13 students (20,0%) indicated that they *almost always* concentrate on sentence structure phrases and clauses such as prepositional phrases, infinitive, gerund, independent, and dependent clauses. 23 students (35,4%) stated that they *often* employ this strategy; besides 23 students (35,4%) *sometimes* apply it. 5 students (7,7%) *rarely* focus on sentence structure while 1 student (1,5%) *never* used this method.

For Item Thirteen, the results showed that 13 students (20,0%) reported that they *almost always* concentrate on the sentence syntax such as subject, verb, and object to have a better understanding of the reading passage. 22 students (33,8%) mentioned they *often* apply this method while 13 students (20,0%) *sometimes* use this technique. 10 students (15,4%) stated they *rarely* employ this method whereas 7 students (10,8%) *never* focused on syntax.

The outcome for Item Thirty-Three revealed that 12 students (18,5%) indicated they *almost always* split sentences using signs to realize the grammatical structures. 10 students (15,4%) *often* employ this strategy while 16 students (24,6%)

sometimes use it while reading. On the other hand, 10 students (15,4%) reported they *rarely* use slashes to split sentences whereas 17 students (26,2%) *never* applied it.

For Item Thirty-Four, the outcomes showed that 12 students (18,5%) indicated that they *almost always* avoid some sentences in the reading passage when they are not able to understand their meaning. 15 students (23,1%) selected *often* follow this method while 10 students (15,4%) *sometimes* use this technique. However, 16 students (24,6%) *rarely* skip some sentences while reading whereas 12 students (18,5%) *never* used this method. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 3 students mentioned that they skipped the sentence they did not understand and kept reading the passage.

The outcome of Item Forty-One showed that 12 students (18,5%) reported that they *almost always* differentiate between the major ideas and their supporting sentences in the reading passage. 25 students (38,5%) *often* employ this method while 16 students (24,6%) *sometimes* use it. On the other hand, 9 students (13,8%) indicated they *rarely* attempt to differentiate between the major ideas and their supporting sentences whereas 3 (4,6%) students *never* applied this strategy. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, all students mentioned that they found the main idea and connected it with the other paragraphs' main ideas in the same reading passage.

According to Item Thirty-Five, 11 students reported that they *almost always* guess the ideas or the events coming in the next paragraph. 21 students (32,3%) *often* employ this strategy whereas 20 students (30,8%) *sometimes* use this technique. However, 8 students (12,3%) indicated that they *rarely* guess what is coming during the reading process while 5 students (7,7%) *never* applied this method. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 9 students mentioned that they guessed what would happen in the next paragraph before starting to read it.

Regarding Item Seventeen, the responses indicated that 8 students (12,3%) *almost always* skip strange vocabulary while reading the passage. 15 students (23,1%) reported that they *often* employ this strategy whereas 19 students (29,2%) *sometimes* utilize it. 14 students (21,5%) *rarely* skip unfamiliar vocabulary while 9 students (13,8%) *never* skip any word. This finding is also in line with the responses

given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 2 students indicated that they skipped unknown vocabulary while reading the text.

The outcome of Item Twenty-Six revealed that 8 students (12,3%) *almost always* read the whole passage out loud whereas 13 students (20,0%) *often* apply this method. 16 students reported that they *sometimes* read the passage out loud while 13 students (20,0%) *rarely* apply this strategy. 15 students (23,1%) *never* read out loud. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 2 students mentioned that they read aloud the whole passage from the beginning till the end.

To conclude, and regarding the responses shown in Table 4.2, the strategies employed during the reading process showed that more than half of the participants (50,8%) selected Strategy Fifteen which was *I change reading speed depending on the difficulty of a text*. It was given the first and most regularly utilized while-reading strategy. The second strategy selected by participants was Strategy Thirty which was *I try to connect information within the text*. The third strategy employed during the reading process was given to Strategy Fourteen which was *I continue reading even if I have difficulty*. The next strategy was given to Strategy Twenty which was *If I don't understand something such as word or phrase, I guess its meaning using clues from the text*. The last strategy applied by participants (41,5%) was given to Strategy Twelve which was *I start reading from the first paragraph and read all the way through the last paragraph*. Therefore, it is understood from the results above that most students are aware of the top-down reading strategy. It assists them in activating their prior knowledge to predict the meaning of new vocabulary from the context, guess the main idea of the reading passage, make a connection between what they know with what they read, and incorporate their learning with their acquiring while reading the text.

Accordingly, the least regularly applied of the five while-reading strategies was Strategy Twenty-Six, *I read aloud the entire text*, and Strategy Seventeen took the same lowest number of participants (12,3%). The following strategy was given to Strategy Thirty-Five, *I predict what will come next*. The last two strategies Thirty-Four, *When I cannot understand a sentence even if I know every word, I skip that sentence*, and Strategy Forty-One, *I try to distinguish between the main idea and the supporting details in the text*, had the same percentage of participants (18,5%).

Hence, the results showed that participants lack the skills in some top-down and bottom-up strategies. These strategies need to be the teacher's focus to assist learners learn and practice more about predicting the ideas, understanding vocabulary from the context, and learning more about the major ideas and supporting ones.

D. Findings Related to Post-reading Strategies.

This section reveals the findings of the participants' preferences for post-reading strategy use in reading comprehension. Table 4.3 shows the ranking order of post-reading strategy use according to the participants of this study.

Table 4 Ranking of Post-Reading Strategy Use

No	Item	N		R		S		O		Aa	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
44	I summarize it in my own words.	1	1,5	3	4,6	18	27,7	23	35,4	20	30,8
45	After reading the text in detail, I evaluate the text and the writer's viewpoint.	4	6,2	5	7,7	22	33,8	23	35,4	11	16,9

Note: Aa = almost always; O = often; S = sometimes; R = rarely; N = never; f = frequency; % = percentage

Table 4.3 showed that the most common strategy regularly employed by learners is Strategy Forty-Four. The outcome of the post-reading strategy showed that 20 students (30,8%) *almost always* make a summary of the whole reading passage using their own words. 23 students (35,4%) *often* apply this strategy whereas 18 students (27,7%) *sometimes* apply this method. On the other hand, 3 students (4,6%) *rarely* make a summary of the text while 1 student (1,5%) *never* used this technique. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 6 students mentioned that they summarized the whole reading passage using their own vocabulary.

Item Forty-Five showed the least common strategy regularly utilized by students. The outcomes showed that 11 students (16,9%) *almost always* evaluate the author's point of view after reading the whole passage. 23 students (35,4%) *often* apply this strategy whereas 22 students (33,8%) *sometimes* employ it. However, 5

students (7,7%) *rarely* evaluated the author's point of view while 4 students (6,2%) *never* applied this strategy. This finding is also in line with the responses given to semi-structured interviews. Among 10 students, 5 students mentioned that they evaluate the author's opinion and point of view.

To sum up, and according to the responses illustrated in Table 4.3, the strategies utilized after the reading process showed that Strategy Forty-Four, *I summarize it in my own words*, was the most regularly employed whereas the least one was Strategy Forty-Five, *after reading the text in detail, I evaluate the text and the writer's viewpoint*. In other words, students need to concentrate on reading comprehension sections to have a better understanding of the author's view besides their personal view.

V. CONCLUSIONS

A. Introduction

This chapter summarizes the current study and provides the conclusion of this research in addition to further research and recommendations. This study aimed to investigate the English foreign language students' reading strategy use.

B. Overview of the Study

The main purpose was to indicate the most and the least regularly employed reading methods and strategies by the learners. This study had 65 participants who were studying English at Biruni University. The participants' mother tongue was Turkish and Arabic. Their English level was B1 according to (CEFR). The instrument employed to collect the data was the "Reading Strategy Questionnaire", which was developed by Oxford et al., (2004) and in a later stage adapted by Uzunçakmak (2005). SPSS software version 29 was used to analyze the quantitative data of the study and descriptive analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Two research questions were examined to attain the goal of the study which are: (1) What are the most frequently used reading strategies by students? (2) What are the least frequently used reading strategies by students?

C. Conclusions

The first primary research question concentrates on identifying the most frequent reading strategies employed by students to have a better understanding of the reading materials. The findings of the study showed that pre-reading strategies were employed by most of the students in respective sequences: *I use the title to help predict the contents, I pay attention to visuals such as graphs, pictures, or tables;* in addition to, *I look through the text to spot specific information such as dates, names, or numbers.* The results from pre-reading strategies showed that the students are aware that these strategies develop their reading comprehension. Furthermore, their

English language teachers could consider teaching the students the correct and most useful pre-reading strategies to help them have effective reading comprehension.

The results of the while-reading strategies revealed that the five most while-reading strategies utilized by students were four top-down strategies and one bottom-up strategy. The first most employed strategy was changing the speed of the reading according to the difficulties of the reading passage to be able to understand the passage point completely. The second most employed strategy among the students was connecting the ideas in the reading passage to generate a full understanding of the topic in sequence. The third most used strategy was that students kept reading the passage even though there was certain difficult vocabulary. The fourth most used strategy was *If I don't understand something such as word or phrase, I guess its meaning using clues from the text*. This finding was in line with Uzunçakmak (2005) who conducted a study on successful and unsuccessful readers. She found out that successful readers tend to utilize top-down reading strategies because they focus on the meaning rather than the form. Successful readers activate their background knowledge and predict the meaning of the difficult words through the reading context. The fifth most employed while-reading strategy was reading the whole passage from the beginning till the end. This finding was in line with Zafar (2021) who conducted research on the most and least frequent reading strategy use. In her findings, she discovered that 65% of her participants employed bottom-up while-reading strategy in their reading process. To sum up, regarding the first research question, the conclusion of this present study revealed that most participants employed top-down strategies rather than bottom-up strategies during their reading processes.

Upon reviewing the students' responses to post-reading strategies employment, we found that only 30,8% of the participants *summarized the reading passage using their own words* while 16,9% of the participants *evaluated the text and writer's point of view after reading the whole passage*. In light of this finding, we understand that more than half the students do not pay attention to the final stage of reading. In other words, upon reading the passage, students think that they have achieved their reading goal. However, teachers could assist their students in practicing some post-reading strategies. For instance, thinking in pairs, retelling the reading passage using their words, organizing pictures, asking-answering related

questions, and using exit tickets tasks such as cloze test, multi-choices, and true/false questions.

The second primary research question focused on determining the least frequent reading strategies utilized by students. According to participants' responses, the least frequent pre-reading strategy employed by students (23,1%) was considering the reading text type such as newspaper, magazine, article, novel, story, or academic article. Although the responses to this strategy were very few, students were aware of using top-down strategies instead of bottom-up strategies.

The finding of the while-reading strategies revealed that the five least while-reading strategies used by students were three top-down strategies and two bottom-up strategies. Top-down strategies were *When I cannot understand a sentence even if I know every word, I skip that sentence, I try to distinguish between the main idea and the supporting details in the text, I predict what will come next*. Considering these selections, students tend to employ these while-reading strategies as their least option when they are reading the passage. Therefore, they need to practice these strategies and make them their first option because around 18% of all participants used these strategies. The least two bottom-up while-reading strategies utilized among participants (12,3%) were skipping the unfamiliar vocabulary and reading aloud the whole reading passage. These techniques are not extremely beneficial for their reading-learning processes. They employed these techniques because they were not aware of the negative aspects of their reading skills development, or they were used to learning these strategies during their school life.

As a result, the pre-reading strategies that were the least employed by the students in a respective order are (1) *I read aloud the entire text*, (2) *I skip unknown words*, (3) *I predict what will come next*, (4) *I try to distinguish between the main idea and the supporting details in the text*, (5) *when I cannot understand a sentence even if I know every word, I skip that sentence*. It is understood from these findings that students should be concerned about learning how to develop these bottom-up techniques to top-down ones. In other words, instead of reading the whole text aloud, they can read it silently with more concentration on the main idea of the passage. Furthermore, they can try to understand the meaning of difficult vocabulary from the context instead of skipping them so that they have barriers in comprehending the reading passage.

The findings of the study showed that the least regularly employed post-reading strategy by the students was that they evaluate the author's opinion after reading the whole passage. This strategy got 16,9% of the participants. Although it is a top-down strategy, students need to be more careful to utilize this method after reading the passage to comprehend the text appropriately.

The findings of the current study are in line with the researcher Zafar (2021). The researcher investigated the most and least frequently reading strategies used by Afaghan students. She found in her study that most learners employ top-down strategies rather than bottom-up strategies. Uzunçakmak's (2005) research was about successful and unsuccessful readers. In her study, she discovered that successful readers tended to use top-down strategies while unsuccessful readers employed bottom-up ones. A different study conducted by Abi (2014) revealed that employing a reading strategy use may not have successful results on students' reading levels in short-term training. Therefore, a long-term process will add great value to students' reading performance. Zare and Othman (2013) conducted further research in which they sought to understand how reading strategy employment changes over time among ninety-five Malaysian learners. In a separate research, Zare (2013) delved into the comprehension achievements and the reading strategies of eighty Iranian learners. This finding is reliable with several earlier studies, Talebi (2009), Akkakoson and Setobol (2009), and Wichadee (2011). They found that instruction in reading strategies likely enhances learners' employment of these strategies. Another study conducted by Malcolm (2009) revealed that skilled learners tended to utilize metacognitive reading strategies during their language learning process while less skilled learners attempted to translate the reading passage into their native one. Hence, skilled learners are aware of employing reading strategies to have a better understanding of the reading text, get the main ideas, evaluate the text, and summarize the author's point of view. Madhumathi and Ghosh (2012) conducted a study on Indian EFL learners to find out whether they employ reading strategies as a habit during their learning process or whether their English proficiency level plays a role in this subject. The above-mentioned studies underscore the significance of acquiring reading strategies as a vital method for EFL learners to improve their reading comprehension. They emphasize the necessity for students to adopt these effective strategies and take practical measures to enhance their reading skills. This

enables them to access sufficient input and facilitate output generation more effortlessly during language learning.

D. Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations in this current study. One limitation is that the total number of participants was 65 students; hence, the findings of this study cannot be generalized among all university students. There may be a change to increase the number of participants into the whole EFL students at the university to collect more exact results. Thus, the outcome and the results of this study are applied to the participants of this study but not in general. Additionally, the limited number of participants and time restriction in which reading strategy instruction was applied could be for a long-term process to have more reliable outcomes. In other words, the questionnaire was used for the participants' current reading knowledge. It would be more efficient if the participants took 12 weeks to complete several reading materials such as reading passages, short stories, novels, and academic articles. This method could be helpful to prepare students to practice reading and in a later stage, to find out which reading strategy was employed more than the other accurately.

Another limitation is that the results from the reading strategy questionnaire may be inaccurate because students are not familiar with the strategies provided or they have not learned these reading strategies during their learning process. Therefore, students may select any option in the questionnaire if they do not understand the strategy or are not aware of the functionality of the selected strategy while reading the text. As a result, responses may not be stable or reliable.

E. Further Recommendations

The findings of this study prove that there is a positive employment of reading strategies among the participants. Turkish students showed a great level of understanding of the reading methods and techniques used whether consciously or unconsciously. Hence, according to the findings and limitations of the study, recommendations for future studies can be made. First, students should be aware of the importance of EFL reading in their daily lives. They can be provided with short reading materials such as short stories, news articles, and reading passages from their

textbook for a certain period of time to practice reading in English. Later, the questionnaire will be answered by the students stating the strategies they used during their reading process. Second, the number of students can be increased and applied to one or more than one university, and the results can be compared according to each university.

This study will pave the way for other researchers to conduct a related study using different data collection and analysis methods to have comparisons according to nationality and gender. For example, the study can be conducted on different participants from different countries studying in foundational and state universities in Türkiye. Also, the researchers can take into account the participants' gender to find out whether male or female participants read more and apply these strategies during their reading process. The results can also be divided or organized as successful and unsuccessful readers who gain the highest score of top-down strategies employed rather than bottom-up ones.

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VII. APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: READING STRATEGY QUESTIONNAIRE

Reading Strategy Questionnaire (Oxford et al., 2004) and adopted by Uzunçakmak (2005)

Table 5 Before I read a text,

No.	Statement	N	R	S	O	Aa
1.	I use the title to help predict the contents.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I consider what type of text it is, such as a newspaper article, a scientific paper, or a novel.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I skim it first, and later I read for details.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I look through the text to spot specific information such as dates, names, or numbers.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I pay attention to visuals such as graphs, pictures, or tables	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I use my prior knowledge about the topic to predict the content	1	2	3	4	5

Table 6 While I am reading a text,

No.	Statement	N	R	S	O	Aa
7.	I pay attention to parts of sentences such as phrases and clauses.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I pay attention to the beginning and the end of each paragraph.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I focus on the tense of a verb, such as present tense and past tense	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I try to understand the meaning of every word in a text	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I translate each sentence into my native language.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I start reading from the first paragraph and read all the way through the last paragraph.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I pay attention to sentence structure, such as subjects and objects	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I continue reading even if I have difficulty	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I change reading speed depending on the difficulty of a text.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I read aloud the difficult parts of a text.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I skip unknown words.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I link the content with what I already know.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I try to understand the meaning of an unknown word by dividing it into parts.	1	2	3	4	5

20. If I don't understand something such as word or phrase, I guess its meaning using clues from the text.	1	2	3	4	5
21. If I don't understand something such as word or phrase, I guess its meaning using information I know about the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I check what each pronoun refers to.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I underline important parts.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I mark important parts, using colored pens or drawing stars.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I go over difficult parts several times.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I read aloud the entire text.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I make a picture in my mind about what the text is saying.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I try to understand the meaning without translating the text into my native language.	1	2	3	4	5
29. If I'm having trouble, I go back to previous sentences.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I try to connect information within the text.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I ask questions related to the text or what I have read.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I follow the line I am reading with my finger or my pen.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I use slashes to divide a sentence grammatically.	1	2	3	4	5
34. When I cannot understand a sentence even if I know every word, I skip that sentence.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I predict what will come next.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I try to confirm or disconfirm the predictions, guesses, or inferences I have made	1	2	3	4	5
37. I pay attention to linking words such as "however" and "besides" so that I can understand the structure.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I write down key words.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I try to distinguish between factual sentences and the writer's subjective opinions in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I try to figure out the main idea of each paragraph.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I try to distinguish between the main idea and the supporting details in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I pay attention to indirectly stated ideas and try to make inferences about them.	1	2	3	4	5
43. I read the comprehension questions first and then read the text.	1	2	3	4	5

Table 7 After I read a text,

No.	Statement	N	R	S	O	Aa
44.	I summarize it in my own words.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	After reading the text in detail, I evaluate the text and the writer's viewpoint.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for answering the questionnaire.

APPENDIX B: Semi-Structured Follow-Up Interview Questions

1. Can you provide more details about the specific reading strategies you mentioned earlier?
2. Do you have a preferred reading strategy that you tend to use most often? Why?
3. Are there any reading strategies you've picked up from others that you've found particularly useful?
4. Are there any reading strategies you're interested in trying out or improving upon in the future?

APPENDIX C: ETİK ONAY FORMU

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 30.12.2023-106409



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Sayı : E-88083623-020-106409
Konu : Etik Onayı Hk.

30.12.2023

Sayın Ayman MOSULLY

Tez çalışmanızda kullanmak üzere yapmayı talep ettiğiniz anketiniz İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Etik Kurul Komisyonu'nun 28.12.2023 tarihli ve 2023/13 sayılı kararıyla uygun bulunmuştur.

Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

Dr.Öğr.Üyesi Alper FİDAN
Müdür Yardımcısı

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Belge Doğrulama Kodu : BSL4PZJ21C Pin Kodu : 09372

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Work Experiences

- Prep EFL Instructor, Biruni University 2023 – present, Istanbul, Türkiye
- High School English Teacher, İhramcizade Koleji 2020 –2023, Istanbul
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- EFL Teacher, English Time Language School 2016 – 2020, Istanbul
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- English Business Teacher, GNR Business Institute 2018 – 2020, Istanbul
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- English Teacher, Hangzhou International School 2013 – 2015, Hangzhou, China.
- English Teacher, Cambridge International School 2011 – 2013, Aleppo, Syria

Language Skills

- Excellent commands (Listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and communication skills in English, Arabic, and Turkish.
- Good command and communication skills in Japanese and Chinese.

Interests and Skills

Educational Turkish platforms, critical thinking, organization, teamwork, reading books, learning new languages, and self-education.

Projects

- Mun Speaking Conferences, Model United Nations 2018 – 2020
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- Academic English Writing, University of California, Irvine 2020
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