

**Strategy Preference
of Vietnamese college students
when reading English texts**

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Reading Strategies

➤ **Definition:**

Deliberate actions that the reader actively employs in order to avoid comprehension failures and accomplish reading goals.

(Cohen, 1990; Garner, 1987; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002)

➤ **Types of reading strategies**

Various systems of classifying reading strategies

Mokhtari and Sheorey's Classification (2002)

1. **Global** (metacognitive) strategies:

monitor/manage the reading process

e.g. having a reading purpose

2. **Problem solving** (cognitive) strategies:

tackle reading difficulties

e.g. re-reading when text becomes difficult

3. **Support** strategies:

tools to aid reading comprehension

e.g. note-taking, using reference materials

Main Findings of Prior Research on ESL Learners' Reading Strategy Use

Proficient vs. Struggling Readers

More mature and more proficient readers:

- are more able to regulate the reading process
- employ a wide range of strategies more frequently

Younger and struggling readers:

- have less metacognitive awareness
- use less strategies and use them less effectively

(Baker & Brown, 1984; Garner, 1980)

ESL learners' preferences of reading strategies

- ESL learners' preferences of reading strategies are related to different factors, including backgrounds, reading experience, L1 reading proficiency, language proficiency, genders, etc.
- ESL learners of various L1s and backgrounds show both **similarities** and **differences** in their preferences of reading strategies.

Two prominent tendencies in preferences of strategy types among different ESL learners

- **The strongest preference for support strategies:**

e.g. ESL learners in the US (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001), Iranian ESP learners (Jafari & Shokrpour, 2012), Hungarian ESL learners (Sheorey & Baboczky, 2008)

=> Support strategies: tools to compensate for the lack of linguistic competence in comprehending a text (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001)

- **The strongest preference for problem-solving strategies:**

e.g. Chinese ESL learners (Zhang & Wu, 2009); Thai adult English learners (Typamas, 2012); Indian ESL learners (Madhumathi & Ghosh, 2012)

- ESL learners are quite diverse in their preferences of individual reading strategies.

e.g. While **Indian ESL learners** least preferred the two strategies like *thinking in both English and L1*, *translating from English to L1*, **Iranian ESP students** strongly preferred them. (Madhumathi & Ghosh, 2012; Jafari & Shokrpour, 2012))

=> The diversity of preferences of reading strategies suggest that ESL learners' strategic behaviors may differ under the influence of their L1s and educational and cultural backgrounds.

Why the Study?

- Lack of empirical research about reading strategy use by Vietnamese ESL college students;
- Evidence about similarities and differences in the preferences of reading strategies among different groups of ESL learners

The Study

Research Questions

1. What is Vietnamese ESL learners' preference for reading strategy type when reading English texts?
2. What is Vietnamese ESL learners' preference for individual reading strategies when reading English texts?

Participants

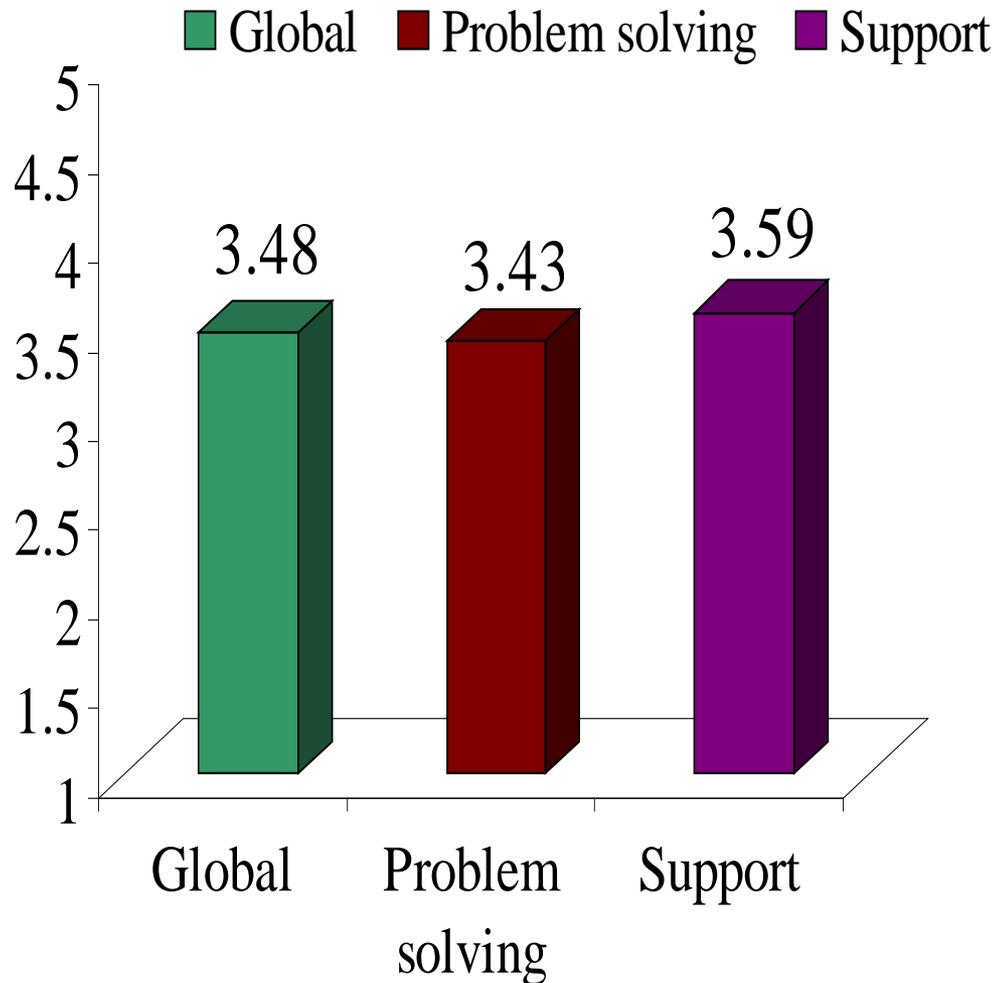
Demographic Background	32 Vietnamese ESL learners
Age	20 - 21
Gender	2 males & 30 females
Education Level	College students majoring in English Teaching
Length of English Education	about 10 years
English Proficiency Level	Upper-intermediate

Research Instruments

Instruments	No. of items	Categories of items	Scoring
SORS (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002)	30 reading strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 13 global▪ 8 problem solving▪ 9 support	5-point Likert scale (1 Never to 5- Always) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 3.5 or higher: High▪ 2.5 - 3.4: Medium▪ 2.4 or lower: Low

Results and Discussion

Frequency of use of three types of reading strategies



- **14** strategies: high freq.
- **16** strateies: medium freq.
- **0** strategies: low freq.

Most and least frequently used strategies by Vietnamese ESL college students

	Mean	Frequency
Most frequently-used strategies		
Underlining or circling information in the text	4.53	High
Picturing/visualizing information	4.16	High
Having a purpose in mind when reading	4.15	High
Making guesses about the content of the text	4.06	High
Least frequently-used strategies		
Reading aloud when the text becomes difficult	2.91	Medium
Paying closer attention when text becomes difficult	2.66	Medium
Using tables, figures, and pictures	2.47	Medium

Vietnamese ESL college students' use of reading strategies

➤ Overall, Vietnamese ESL college students have a fairly frequent use of reading strategies.

Possible Explanation:

- Transfer of L1 reading strategies
- Reading experience after 10 years English Education
- Possible effect of the teacher training program on the participants' metacognitive awareness

In comparison to other groups of ESL learners

- Vietnamese ESL college students joined many other ESL learner groups in the preference of support strategies.
- ⇒ Support strategies may play a role in L2 reading.
- Vietnamese ESL learners' preferences for reading strategies both similarize and differentiate from other ESL learner groups.
- ⇒ Effect of L1s and backgrounds
- ⇒ Universality and uniqueness of ESL learners
(Mokhtari & Reichard, 2004)

Limitations & Recommendations

- A small sample without no balance of genders
 - Frequency of use might not be reported accurately.
 - Frequency of use is only one aspect of strategy use.
- ⇒ Future research should triangulate data from different instruments (e.g. interviews, observations, think-alouds).

Conclusions and Implications

- Vietnamese college students are moderately strategic when reading English texts.
- Vietnamese college students share the same preferences of reading strategies with certain groups of ESL learners.

Pedagogical Implications:

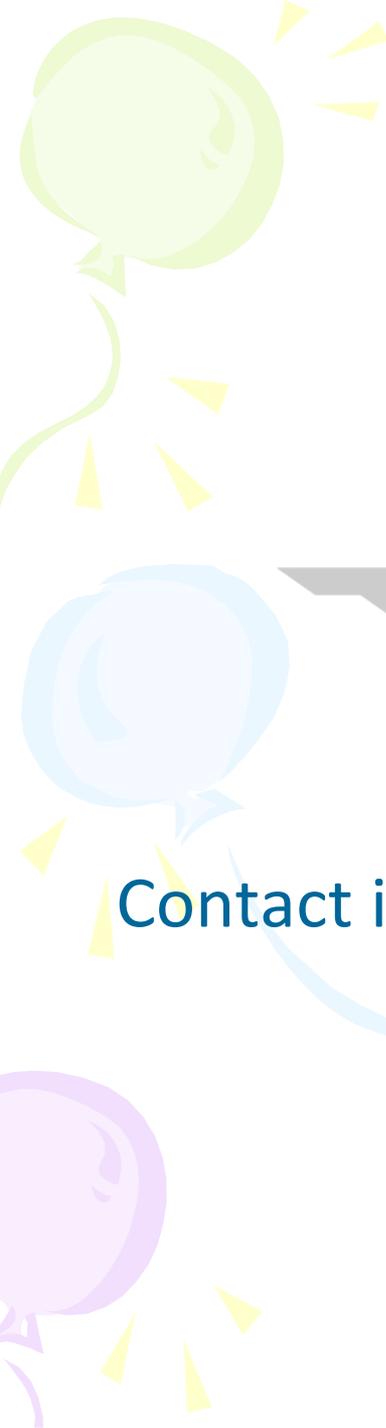
- Reading strategy instruction should consider both universality and uniqueness of ESL learners' preferences for strategy use.
- Using the SORS to assess learners' use of reading strategies beginning of the semester to make a proper plan for strategy training.

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Thank you!

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