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[1,3,4,5]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Unversiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor, Kampus Pasir Gudang, [2]School of Foreign Studies, Hunan University of Humanities, Science, and Technology, [6,7]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Unversiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam
Email: noorh763@uitm.edu.my, zjcamy@126.com, shari348@uitm.edu.my, droha932@uitm.edu.my, aishah711@uitm.edu.my, moksoon@uitm.edu.my, ainifari@uitm.edu.my

Abstract
The boom in education industry is further supported by the added convenience of distance and online learning has encouraged adult learners to pursue their studies. Reading is the most important skill for undergraduates in higher institutions. Reading skills are required to access knowledge for learning. Reading skills are needed to write assignments in higher institutions of learning. This study is therefore done to investigate adult learners' perception of reading strategies used. The use of strategies portrays the attribution portrayed by the learners-dispositional and situational attributions. This quantitative pilot study is done to investigate adult learners' perception on their use of reading comprehension strategies. 38 adult learners taking online undergraduate courses took part in this study. The instrument used is a survey with 5 Likert scales. The survey has 2 main sections; dispositional and situational attribution. A summary of findings revealed that the dispositional attribution that is evident during reading comprehension activity are the readers' perception of difficulties they encounter and also their perception of their use of metacognitive strategies. Next, for situational attribution, this study focused on the use of (a) cognitive and (b) social-affective reading strategies among academic readers. Findings in this study bear interesting implications in the teaching of academic reading for adult learners.
Keywords: Adult Learners, Knowledge, Reading Strategies, Dispositional Attributions, Situational Attributions

Intorduction
Background of Study
The boom in education industry is further supported by the added convenience of distance and online learning has encouraged adult learners to pursue their studies. The pursuit of knowledge can be done in many ways and they are different types of knowledge that people go for. According to Rahmat et.al (2022) the types of knowledge can be connected to

different language skills. Based on figure 1, firstly, conditional knowledge is obtained through listening and speaking skills. Next, Procedural knowledge can be gained through writing skills. Finally, declarative knowledge can be gained through reading skills.
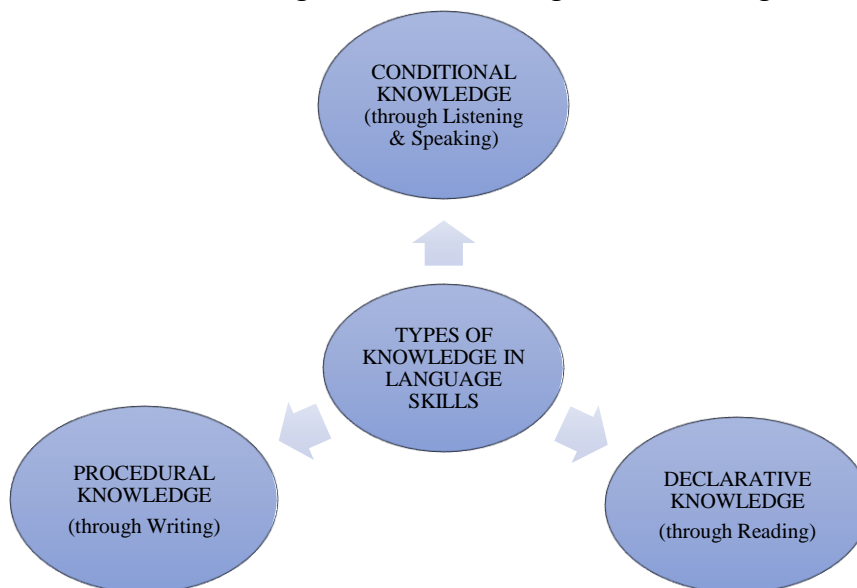

Figure 1- Types of Knowledge in Language Skills
(source: Rahmat et.al., 2022)

There are different types of reading performance in the classroom (face-to-face or even online). Some people read for information so the reading is relaxed. Some read for extra knowledge-the reading is not stressful. Based on figure 2, there are two main types of reading performance in class and they are (1) oral and (2) silent reading (Brown, 2001). Oral reading performance is usually done at early readings stages where readers practiced their pronunciation to be more fluent readers. As learners progress in level (and age), classroom reading is mainly concentrated on the silent type. Silent reading can be categorised further into extensive and intensive. Extensive reading involves getting quick information or even reading for pleasure. Readers use strategies such as skimming , scanning and global. Next, intensive reading involves the learners making use of their linguistic knowledge and content knowledge to make sense of the reading. Some examples of intensive reading would be academic reading , reading comprehension activities, and many more.
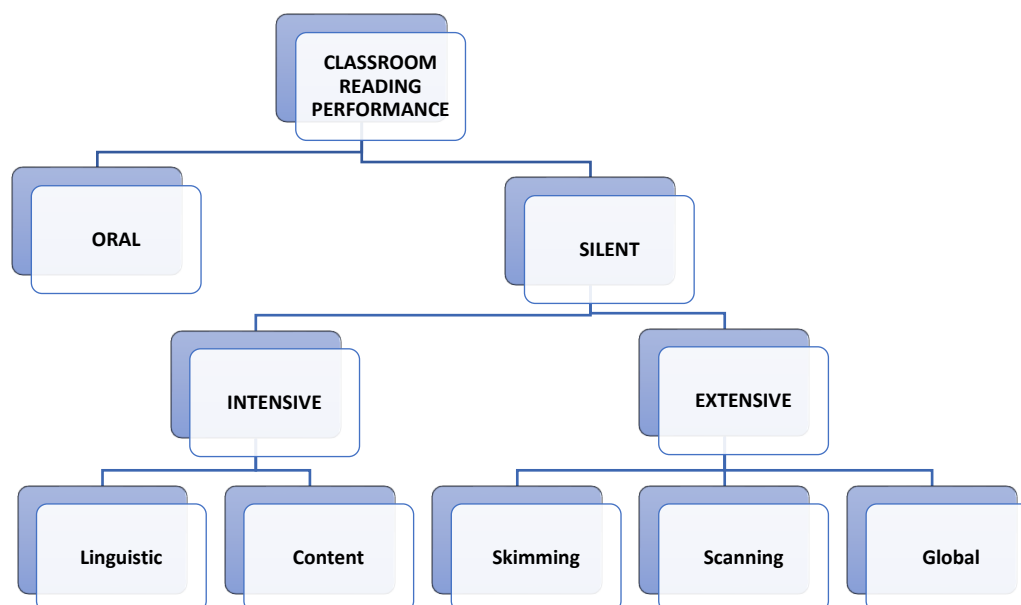
Figure 2- Classroom Reading Performance (source: Brown, 2001, pg 312)

Statement of Problem

Reading is the most important skill for undergraduates in higher institutions. Reading skills are required to access knowledge for learning. Reading skills are needed to write assignments in higher institutions of learning. The very nature of reading has made many learners fear reading According to Rahmat et al (2020), in, fear of reading can be seen as belonging to a cycle. For some readers, the fear of reading gave them top-down anxiety. Top down reading anxiety refers to readers' fear for the lack of background and cultural knowledge; and even their general reading ability. On the other hand, bottom-up reading anxiety refers to the readers feeling inadequate in terms of their vocabulary and grammar. The readers also may not be fond of classroom reading. This fear may be caused by the choice of teaching method that did not cater to their needs. Furthermore, ESL readers of academic text sometimes fear reading because of their perceived fear. This perceived fear may stem from their reading difficulties. The difficulties may come from top-down or bottom-up anxiety. The anxiety will then hinder them from reading for knowledge.

In addition to that according to Zhou (2017), as far as academic reading is concerned, adult readers have worries relating to comprehension, unfamiliar topics, unknown pronunciation, and feeling uncomfortable reading aloud were identified as major sources of FL reading anxiety. This is also agreed by Rahmat (2019) who also discovered that some fear of reading stem for lack of backbground and cultural knowledge. Some stem from text-specific characteristics, and some from perceived lack of vocabulary and grammar.

As such, the study by McHardy et al (2020) concluded that there need to be studies to explore metacognitive awareness and strategy use in among adult learners. This study is therefore done to investigate adult learners' perception of reading strategies used. The use of strategies portrays the attribution portrayed by the learners- dispositional and situational attributions. This study is done to answer the following questions;

- How does dispositional attribution influence the use of reading strategies?
- How does situational attribution influence the use of reading skills?

Literature Review

Adult Learners and Reading Strategies

Adult learners are known to use a variety of strategies when they read. Among some of the strategies are cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies (Majid et al., 2010). Cognitive strategies are described as the mental steps or operations that readers use to process linguistic and sociolinguistic content of the text. It involves the direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials and hence, the learners perception of situational attribution. Next, metacognitive strategies involve the things that readers od to regulate their use of reading strategies. It also involves the things that readers do to regulate their use of the reading strategies and to evaluate their reading and consist of knowledge about and regulation of cognitive processing. This involves the use of dispositional attribution on the part of the readers. Next, affective strategies are strategies that readers use to focus their attention, maintain concentration , manage performance anxiety , establish and maintain motivation in the reading task. Social-affective strategies includes the readers using strategies to lower their anxiety , encourage themselves, asking question, working cooperatively with others and also emphasising with others. This involves the readers using situational attribution.

Past Studies

The study by McHardy et al (2020) investigated (a) the strategies used by less-skilled adult readers that best predict word reading performance on standardized reading tests and (b) word reading strategies that less-skilled adult readers used, as well as the extent to which these reports correlated with direct observations of reading behaviours. Findings showed that readers relied phonological processing more when they read. These were also the two strategies that were most poorly understood by the readers and the strategies are use of analogy and use of letter patterns. The findings emphasize the need for programs to incorporate methods to increase metacognitive awareness and strategy use in adults with reading difficulties.

Arepin & Sulaiman (2020) investigated students' fear in academic reading as well as the influence of perceived difficulties in their reading comprehension. Data from 25 respondents were analyzed quantitatively using Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) developed by (Saito et al., 1999). The objectives of the study are to examine the influence of students' fear and perceived difficulties in academic reading. The findings of this study reveal that factors such as background and culture, general reading ability, vocabulary, grammar as well as teaching method can make readers fear reading. The results of this study bear interesting implications towards the teaching and learning of academic reading in English as a Second Language.

The study by Zhou (2017) examined the foreign language (FL) reading anxiety level of learners of Chinese as a FL (n = 76) in the United States. Data from an FL reading anxiety survey, a background information survey and a face-to-face interview indicated that there was no significant difference in reading anxiety level among four course levels. In general, Chinese L2 learners experienced a medium level of reading anxiety. 100- and 400-level students experienced higher levels of reading anxiety compared to 200- and 300-level students. A regression model with background variables such as years of learning Chinese, heritage learner status, the number of foreign languages learned, and time spent in China significantly predicted learners' reading anxiety levels and explained 15% of the variance in their reading

anxiety. Worries relating to comprehension, unfamiliar topics, unknown pronunciation, and feeling uncomfortable reading aloud were identified as major sources of FL reading anxiety.

McKoon and Ratcliff (2016) investigated how adults with poor reading skills use lexical knowledge. Data was collected scores form on standardized IQ tests and standardized reading tests used commonly in the education literature. The findings point to the feasibility and utility of combining a test of word knowledge, lexical decision, that is well-established in psycholinguistic research, a decision-making model that supplies information about underlying mechanisms, and standardized tests. The goal for future research is to use this combination of approaches to understand better how basic processes relate to standardized tests with the eventual aim of understanding what these tests are measuring and what the specific difficulties are for individual, low-literacy adults.

The study by Nasab & Motlagh (2015) looked at how learners' exact attention can be in line with learning meaningfully and bring about remarkable changes in the learning ability of upper-intermediate EFL learners through employing certain learning strategy items with the aim of enhancing reading scores and consequently injecting into learners a sense of satisfaction with their work. Additionally, this study aimed to investigate the relationship of metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies with EFL learners' reading comprehension. To this end, the study employed a quasi-experimental design with a placement test as a proficiency test to find the homogeneity of groups. Each group received one main strategy and then, according to Oxford (1990) training model, the students were exposed to those strategies accompanied with reading comprehension texts. Learners' progress and also the relationship of those strategies with reading comprehension were measured during the sixteen sessions of teaching and employing the strategies. Independent sample T-Test with Pearson correlations indicated that metacognitive group significantly outperformed the other groups, so metacognitive strategies were more in line with EFL learners' reading comprehension.

Kucukoglu (2012) conducted and action research to study the effective reading strategies in order to improve reading skills in language classes. The study is an action research applied to a number of 14 students in an intermediate level integrated skills course. The main question of the study is Would reading strategies help students in reading comprehension strategies?" the results of the study indicate that the students had an improvement to a great extend have been tutored about the reading strategies. The results of the reading awareness scale and my personal experience showed that there was a lack of knowledge in the area of reading strategies in my students at the beginning of the study. The students had a lack of knowledge and practice in reading strategies however after a comprehensive study, there was an improvement in their success.

Conceptual Framework
This study is rooted from attribution theory by (Kelly, 1967). Nevertheless to in the context of this study, the theory is being scaffolded with the strategies in reading by Nasab & Motlagh (2015), and the strategies are metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective strategies. According to Fiske & Taylor (1991), attribution theory deals with how the person uses information to arrive at causal explanations for events. The theory also examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to forma causal judgement. There are two

types of attribution that makes up this theory. According to Kelly (1967), dispositional attribution is the process of assigning a behaviour's cause to internal characteristics while situational attribution assigns the behaviour's cause to an event or situation outside the individual's control.

Figure 3 presents the conceptual framework of the study. This study explores the balance between the role of dispositional and situational attribution with respect to the use of strategies during reading comprehension. To begin with, readers depend on their dispositional attribution to begin the reading comprehension activity. However, the dispositional attributes of the reader can both hinder (perception of difficulties) or facilitate (use of metacognitive strategies) their reading comprehension. Next, situational attribution can facilitate the reading comprehension. Readers use cognitive strategies to make sense of the reading text. They also use social-affective strategies to help in their understanding.
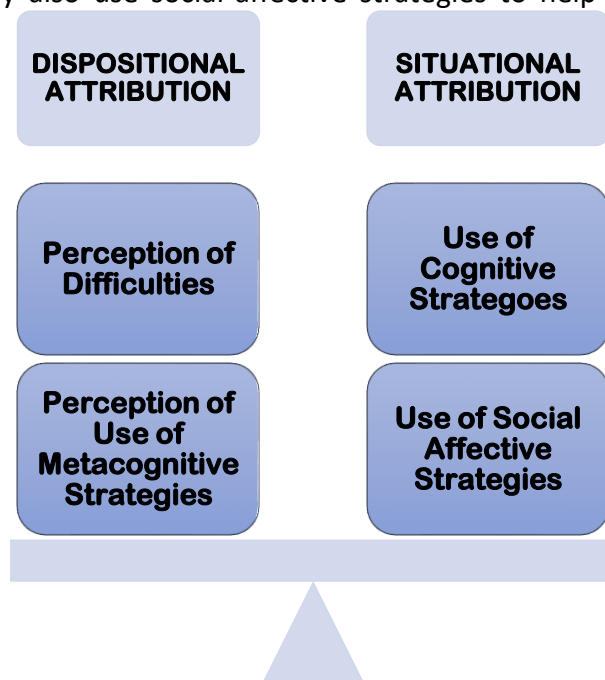

Figure 3- Conceptual Framework of the Study-
Balance of dispositional and situational attribution in reading comprehension.

Methodology

This quantitative pilot study is done to investigate adult learners' perception on their use of reading comprehension strategies. 38 adult learners taking online undergraduate courses took part in this study. The instrument used is a survey with 5 Likert scales. The scales used are no 1-never, 2 almost never, 3 sometimes, 4-almost every time, and 5-every time. The items in the survey is adapted from Nasab & Motlagh (2015) reading comprehension strategies. Table 1 shows the distribution of items in the survey.

Table 1
Distribution of Items in the survey

ATTRIBUTION	READING STRATEGIES	NO. OF ITEMS
DISPOSITIONAL	Perception of Difficulty	8
	Metacognitive	7
SITUATIONAL	Cognitive	15
	Social-Affective	6
		36

Table 2 shows the reliability statistics for the survey. SPSS analysis showed a Cronbach alpha of .736 ; thus showing a high external reliability for the instrument used. Further SPSS analysis was done to report the mean scores to answer the two research questions for this study.

Table 2
Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.736	36

Findings
Findings for Dispositional Attribution
This section presents data to answer research question1: How does dispositional attribution influence the use of reading strategies? Readers depend on their dispositional attribution to begin the reading comprehension activity. However, the dispositional attributes of the reader can both hinder (a-perception of difficulties or facilitate (b-use of metacognitive strategies) their reading comprehension.
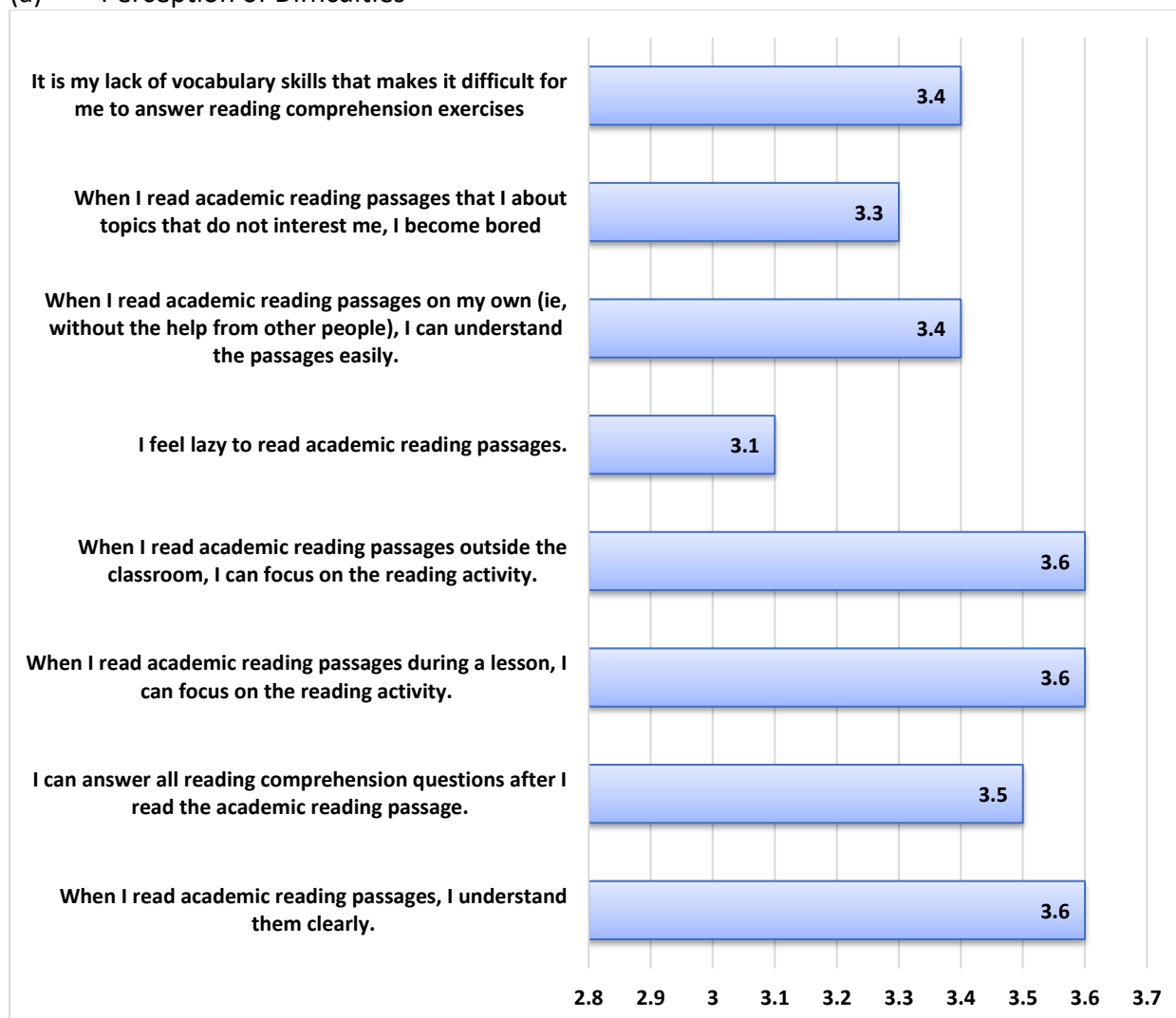
(a)   Perception of Difficulties

Figure 4- Mean for Perceived Difficulty

Figure 4 presents the mean for perceived difficulty. Readers perceive difficulties in several ways. Firstly, they perceive that they will have difficulty if understanding . They also felt that their lack of focus made it difficult for them to understand the reading comprehension. Three items share the highest mean of 3.6 and they are "When I read academic reading passages, I understand them clearly", "When I read academic reading passages during a lesson, I can focus on the reading activity", and "When I read academic reading passages outside the classroom, I can focus on the reading activity". This is followed by the mean of 3.5 for the item "I can answer all reading comprehension questions after I read the academic reading passage"

(b)   Use of Metacognitive Strategies
During reading, readers use metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring and evaluating.
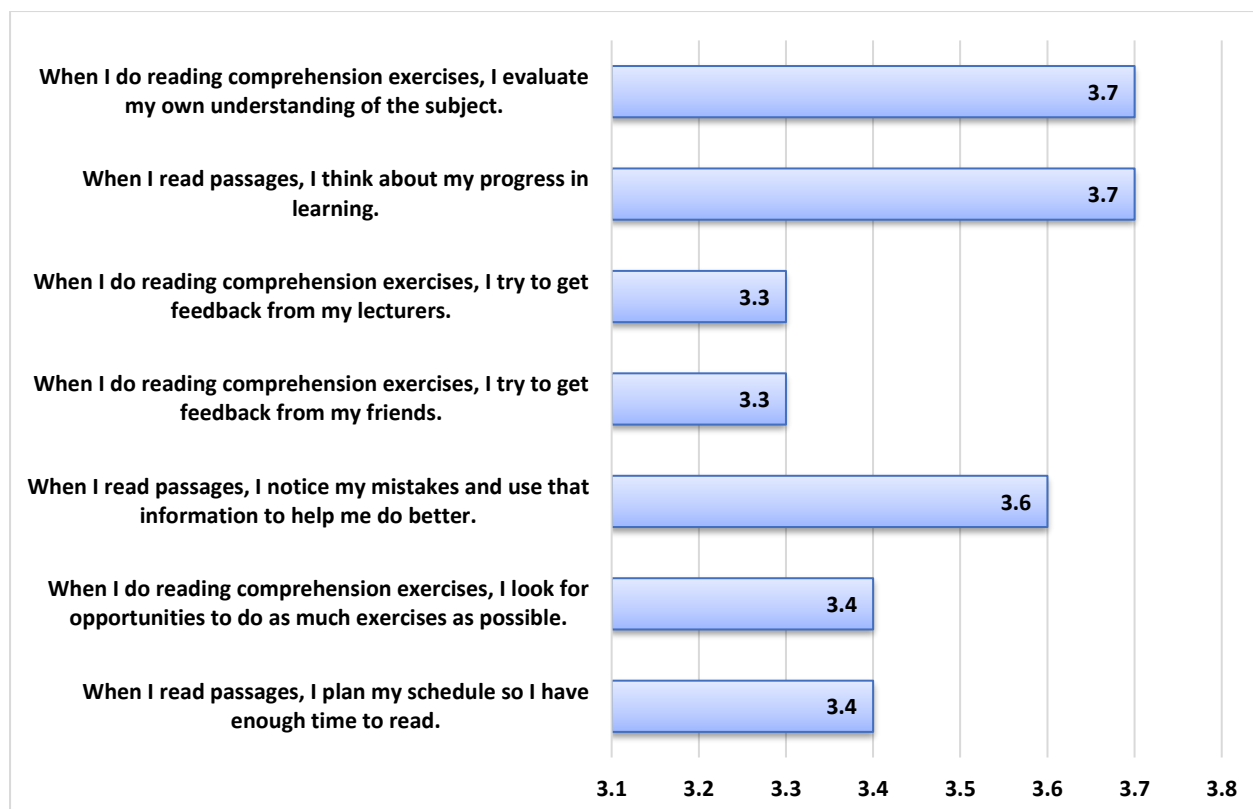
Figure 5- Mean for Metacognitive Strategies

Figure 5 shows the mean for metacognitive strategies. Two items share the highest mean of 3,7 and they are "When I read passages, I think about my progress in learning" and "When I do reading comprehension exercises, I evaluate my own understanding of the subject". Next The item "When I read passages, I notice my mistakes and use that information to help me do better." Had a mean of 3.6.

Findings for Situational Attribution
This section presents data to answer research question2: How does situational attribution influence the use of reading skills? In the context of this study, situational attribution refers to the use of (a) cognitive and (b) social-affective reading strategies.
According to Nasab &, Motlagh, (2015), cognitive strategies includes making connections, making predictions, asking questions while reading, visualising, monitoring and clarifying, summarising and synthesizing, determining what is important, and also analysing author's intention.
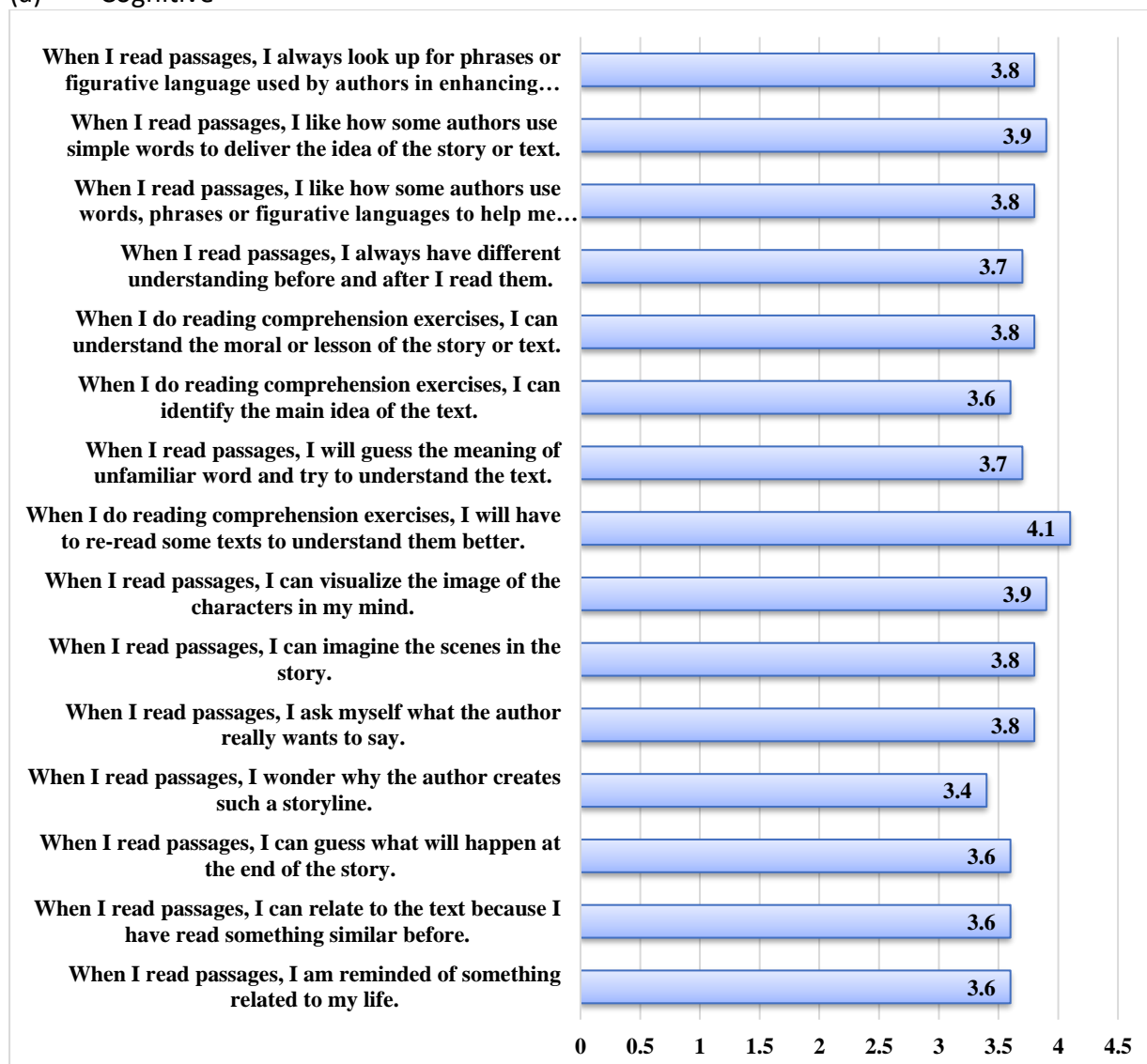
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(a)   Cognitive

Figure 6- Mean for Cognitive Strategies

Figure 6 shows the mean for cognitive strategies. The highest mean is 4.1 for "When I do reading comprehension exercises, I will have to re-read some texts to understand them better". Next, the items "When I read passages, I can visualize the image of the characters in my mind" and also " When I read passages, I like how some authors use simple words to deliver the idea of the story or text" have a mean of 3.9.

(b)   Social Affective

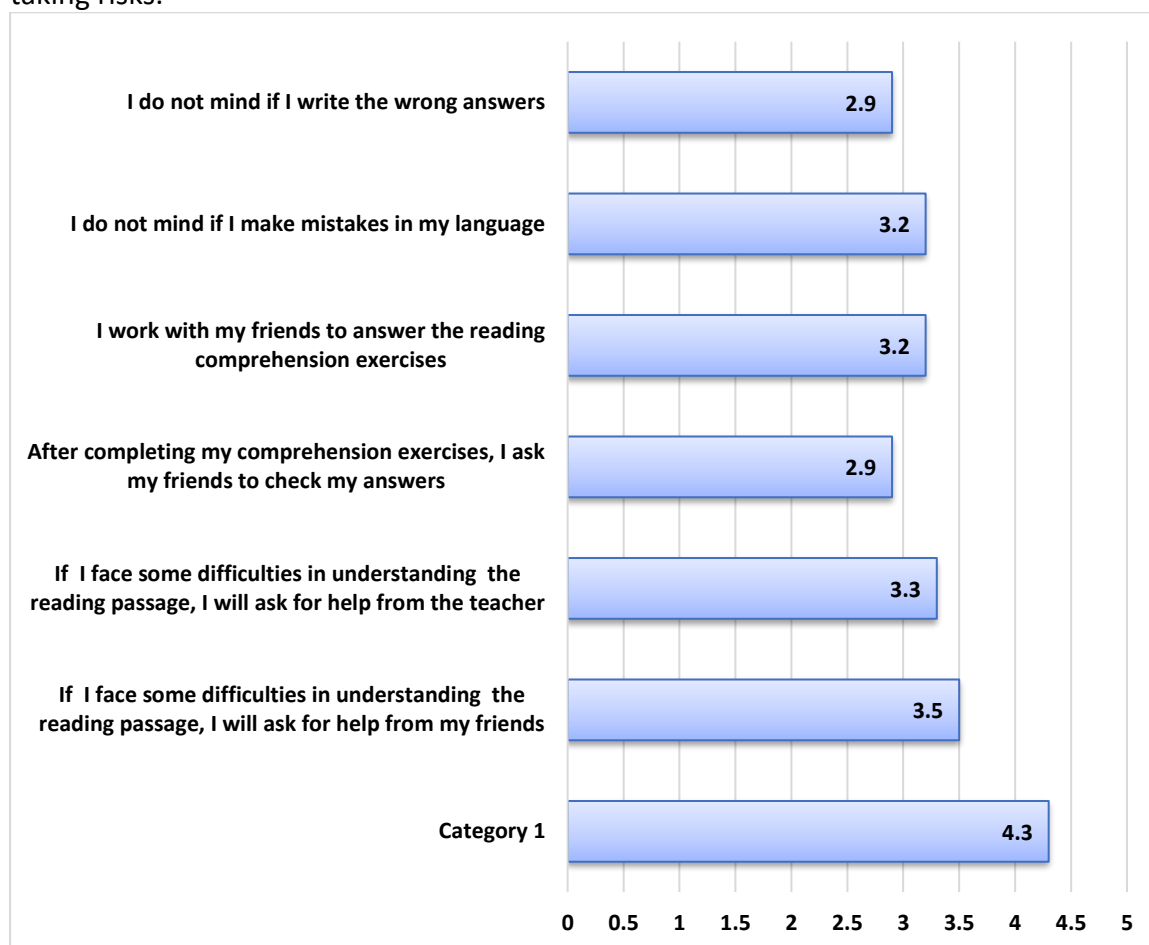In the context of this study, social affective strategies refer to asking for help, cooperating and taking risks.

Figure 7-Mean for Social Affective Strategies

Figure 7 shows the mean for social-affective strategies. The highest mean is 3.5 for "If I face some difficulties in understanding the reading passage, I will ask for help from my friends". Next, the item "If I face some difficulties in understanding the reading passage, I will ask for help from the teacher" had a mean of 3.3.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings and Discussion

This section summarises the findings to focus on the two research questions;

- How does dispositional attribution influence the use of reading strategies?
- How does situational attribution influence the use of reading skills?

In the context of this study, the dispositional attribution that is evident during reading comprehension activity are the readers' perception of difficulties they encounter and also their perception of their use of metacognitive strategies. Interestingly, their difficulties stem from their attitude towards reading academic texts for reading comprehension. Next, for situational attribution, this study focused on the use of (a) cognitive and (b) social-affective reading strategies among academic readers. As mentioned, the attitude of the readers made them face reading difficulties or even difficulties (ease of) in the use of strategies to do reading comprehension. The dispositional attributes then influences the way the readers perceive

their situational attribution. Situational attribution involves the readers' ability to relate to the reading texts through the use of cognitive strategies and social affective strategies. The study by Zhou (2017) showed how adult learners are concerned with situational factors in reading comprehension which may hinder their focus on the comprehension task.

Table 3 shows the total mean score for attribution balance in this study. The summary shows that readers focussed more on the situational (mean=3.5) attribution than dispositional (mean=3.3) attribution.

This means that the adult learners in this study were able to set aside their dispositional attributes to focus their attention on using cognitive and social affective strategies to complete their reading comprehension task.

The table also indicates that adult readers need to learn to use more metacognitive strategies. This is also agreed by McHardy, Chapman, & O'Neill (2020) whose studies concluded that adult learners lacked the use of metacognitive strategies.

Table 3
Total mean for Attribution Balance

Total mean for dispositional attribution	3.3
Total mean for situational attribution	3.5

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research
The findings in this study bear interesting implications for instructors of reading in general, and adult readers in particular. Readers need to be taught specific focus on the use of metacognitive strategies, and cognitive strategies. Reading task for practice especially could be made in group so learners get to benefit using social-affective strategies. Future studies could focus on analysing qualitative data to know how readers use specific reading strategies and why they use the strategies. Think aloud protocol could be carried out to collect data on what readers do when they attempt to make sense of reading using specific strategies.

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