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Abstract

In language learning, mastering all four skills is considered ideal. Some say speaking comes naturally, even in the learning of a foreign language. Listening sis also a language skill many link with the skills of speaking. One needs to listen to how a language sounds to be able to imitate the sounds. Writing skills ,although has been seen as a difficult skill by many, are skills that people need -be it formally or informally. Finally, comes reading skills. There are extensive reading skills where people read on a regular basis –"feeding" on information that can either be considered as leisure, formal or even academic. When it comes to academic reading, many have mixed feelings-making that of fear. Students in higher institutions will find that academic reading is an important skill that they need to master. This study is done to explore the perception of learners on reading difficulties. This study is also done to investigate the influence of reading strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective strategies on reading difficulties. Findings also revealed that there is s negative significant moderate relationship between reading difficulties with metacognitive and social affective strategies. This study adds on to the existing body of knowledge on the use of reading strategies to reduce perception of reading difficulties during reading comprehension.
Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Reading Difficulties, Cognitive Reading Strategies, Metacognitive Reading Strategies, Social Affective Reading Strategies.

Introduction
Background of Study
In language learning, mastering all four skills is considered ideal. Some say speaking comes naturally, even in the learning of a foreign language. Listening sis also a language skill many

link with the skills of speaking. One needs to listen to how a language sounds to be able to imitate the sounds. Writing skills ,although has been seen as a difficult skill by many, are skills that people need -be it formally or informally. Finally, comes reading skills. There are extensive reading skills where people read on a regular basis –"feeding" on information that can either be considered as leisure, formal or even academic. When it comes to academic reading, many have mixed feelings-making that of fear. According to Rahmat et al (2020), this fear can be caused by the choice of teaching methods that did not cater to the learners' differing needs. The fear can also stem from their reading difficulties.

Statement of Problem
Students in higher institutions will find that academic reading is an important skill that they need to master. According to Woods (2022), academic reading forms a crucial part in the life of students. This is because, regardless of what discipline of course they are pursuing in higher institutions, they need to use some form of reading skills to gain information. Nevertheless, according to Navarette (2019), research also shows that most teachers focused on assessing the reading comprehension level of their students and not on teaching them how to comprehend better.
What is the strategies of reading were taught to the learners? How can the use of readings strategies influence their perception of reading difficulties? This study is done to explore the perception of learners on reading difficulties. This study is also done to investigate the influence of reading strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective strategies on reading difficulties. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

- How do readers perceive reading difficulties?
- How does the use of cognitive strategies influence reading?
- Hod does the use on metacognitive strategies influence reading?
- How does the use of social affective strategies influence reading?
- Is there a relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies?

Literature Review
Aspects of Reading
Just like writing reading is also a difficult skill to teach for instructors and master (for learners). This is because reading skills involve other related aspects (figure 1) such as the content of reading, the reading task or even readers' use of strategies (Rahmat, 2018). To begin with, the different types of reading task require readers to use different strategies to make sense of what is being read. Next comes the content of the reading. A text can have language and vocabulary that is familiar to the reader, but if the content if unfamiliar to the reader, making sense of what is read can be difficult. Finally, readers may have been taught many strategies in the process of learning to read; but the use of inappropriate strategies can lead to misunderstanding. According to Muijselaar (2017); Rahmat (2019), there is a relationship between reading strategies and reading comprehension. The right use of reading strategies can help readers make connect with the writer in the text in the most meaningful way.
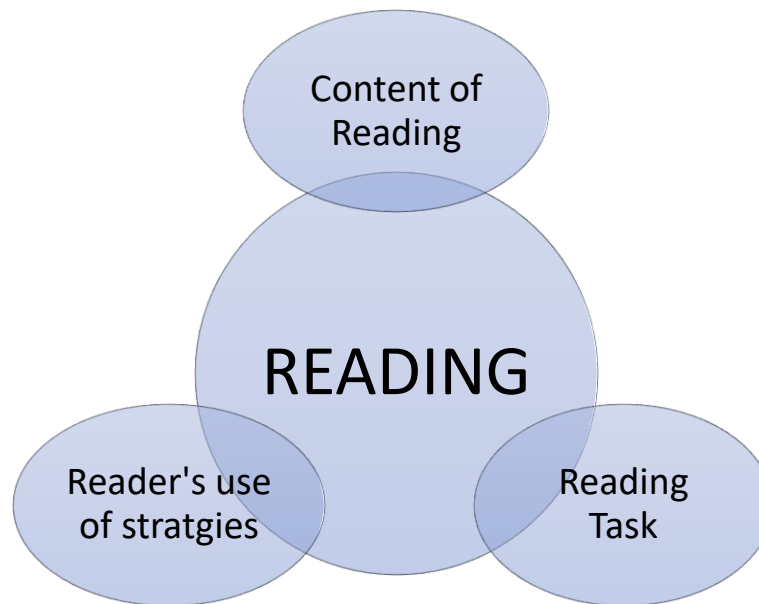
Figure 1- Aspects in Reading

Past Studies

The study by Banditvilai(2020) was done to investigate the effectiveness of reading strategies on reading comprehension . The participants were students of the second year English major who enrolled to study English Reading at the faculty of Liberal Arts and Science, Kasetsart University. Prior to the study, the students were trained in reading strategies. They were able to apply the strategies to their reading processes. The data were collected from a questionnaire and reading tasks and semi-structured interviews. The statistical techniques used were the mean value and standard deviation. The analysis of qualitative data and summary of key points were made from the interview. The findings were that reading strategies had a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension. The students had favourable attitudes towards skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning and they could apply these strategies to their reading processes and they helped them to comprehend the text better.

Next, Muijselaar (2017) examined the developmental relations between knowledge of reading strategies and reading comprehension in a longitudinal study. The participants were 312 Dutch children from the beginning of fourth grade to the end of fifth grade. Measures for reading comprehension, reading strategies, reading fluency, vocabulary, and working memory were administered. A structural equation model was constructed to estimate the unique relations between reading strategies and reading comprehension, while controlling for reading fluency, vocabulary, and working memory. The results showed that there was a unique effect of reading strategies on reading comprehension, and also of reading comprehension on reading strategies.

The study by Koch & Sporer (2017) was done to explore how university students who were majoring in education reacted when they were taught reading strategies. The goal of the study was to analyse whether and to what extent students would benefit from the intervention with respect to their own learning. The sample consisted of n 1⁄4 61students

who were assigned to one of two conditions: (a) an adaption of reciprocal teaching; and (b) a control group that was not taught how to teach reading strategies. The evidence-based teaching method used in the intervention condition consisted of three elements: modelling, scaffolding, and repeated practice. Training success was assessed in a pre-post-test control group design with standardized reading com- prehension and reading speed tests. To compare the development of the students in the two conditions, repeated measures ANOVAs were used. At post-test, intervention students outperformed control students in reading comprehension as well as in reading speed.

Wang (2016) explored the differences between more successful and less successful EFL readers in their comprehension performance and abilities to use reading strategies in interaction with English texts through thinking aloud while reading in pairs. Ten freshman high school students participated in pairs in four think-aloud reading tasks to think out loud for textual meaning and to answer reading comprehension questions about the texts they had read. The findings drawn from analysis of the reading scores and think- aloud protocols of the most successful pair and the least successful pair among the five pairs indicated that the most successful had scored higher on the comprehension questions and had performed think-aloud reading better than the least successful. Key differences characterizing the best pair from the weakest pair in this study were found to lie in readers' effective reading strategy use, sufficient linguistic knowledge and background knowledge, conscious monitoring of comprehension, and constant integration of textual meaning. Important implications of the results for pedagogical practices that encourage development of EFL reading skills are discussed.
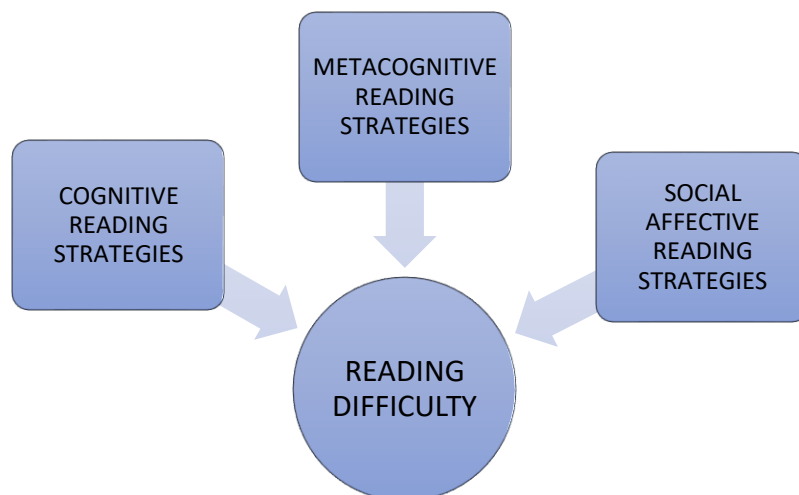
Conceptual Framework

Figure 2- Conceptual Framework of the Study-
Is there a relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies?

Methodology
This quantitative study is done to investigate learners' perception on reading difficulties. This study is also done to explore learners' perception on the use of reading strategies. In addition to that, this study also explores if there is a relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies. The participants are 114 respondents from various social science cluster. The instrument used is s survey with 5-point Likert scale. There are 5 sections in the survey

(refer to table 1). Section A is the demographic profile. Section B has 8 items on reading difficulties, section C has 15 items on cognitive reading strategies, section D has 7 items on metacognitive strategies and section E has 6 items has 6 items on social affective strategies.

Table 1
Distribution of Items in the Survey

SECTION	VARIABLE	NO OF ITEMS
D	Reading Difficulties	8
C	Cognitive	15
D	Metacognitive	7
E	Social Affective	6
		36

Table 2 shows the reliability statistics for the survey. SPSS analysis revealed a Cronbach alpha of .736; thus showing that a high reliability for the instrument.

Table 2
Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics

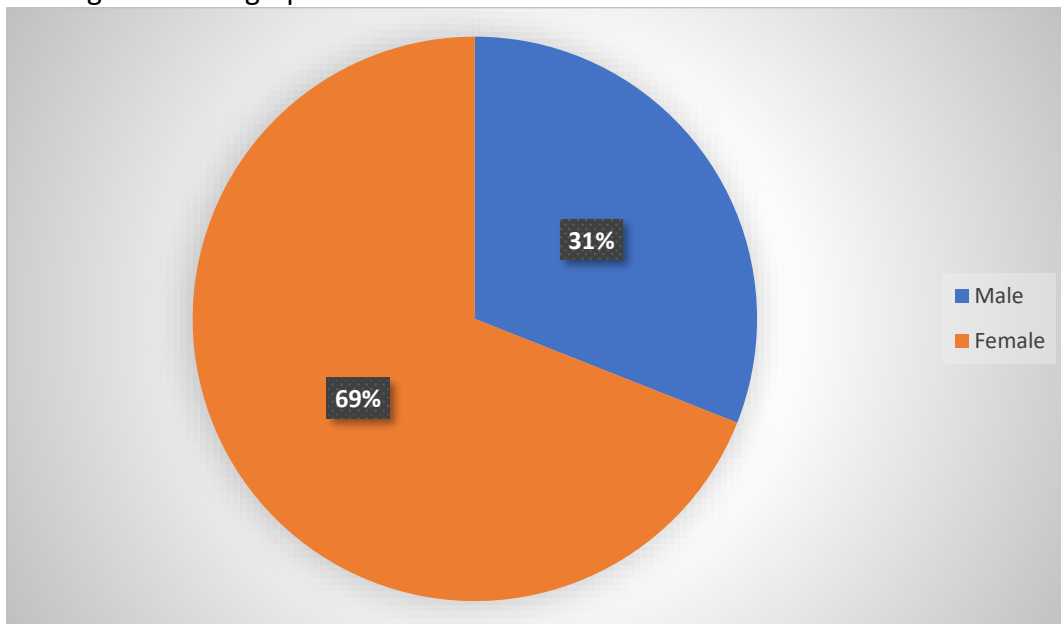| Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.736	36

Findings
Findings for Demographic Profile

Figure 3- Percentage for Gender
Figure 3 above presents the percentage for gender. 31% are male while 69% are female respondents.

Findings for Reading Difficulties
This section presents data to answer research question No 1: How do readers perceive reading difficulties? In the context of this study, reading difficulties refer to difficulty in understanding, lack of focus, no interest in reading, no aid in reading, and problems in vocabulary.
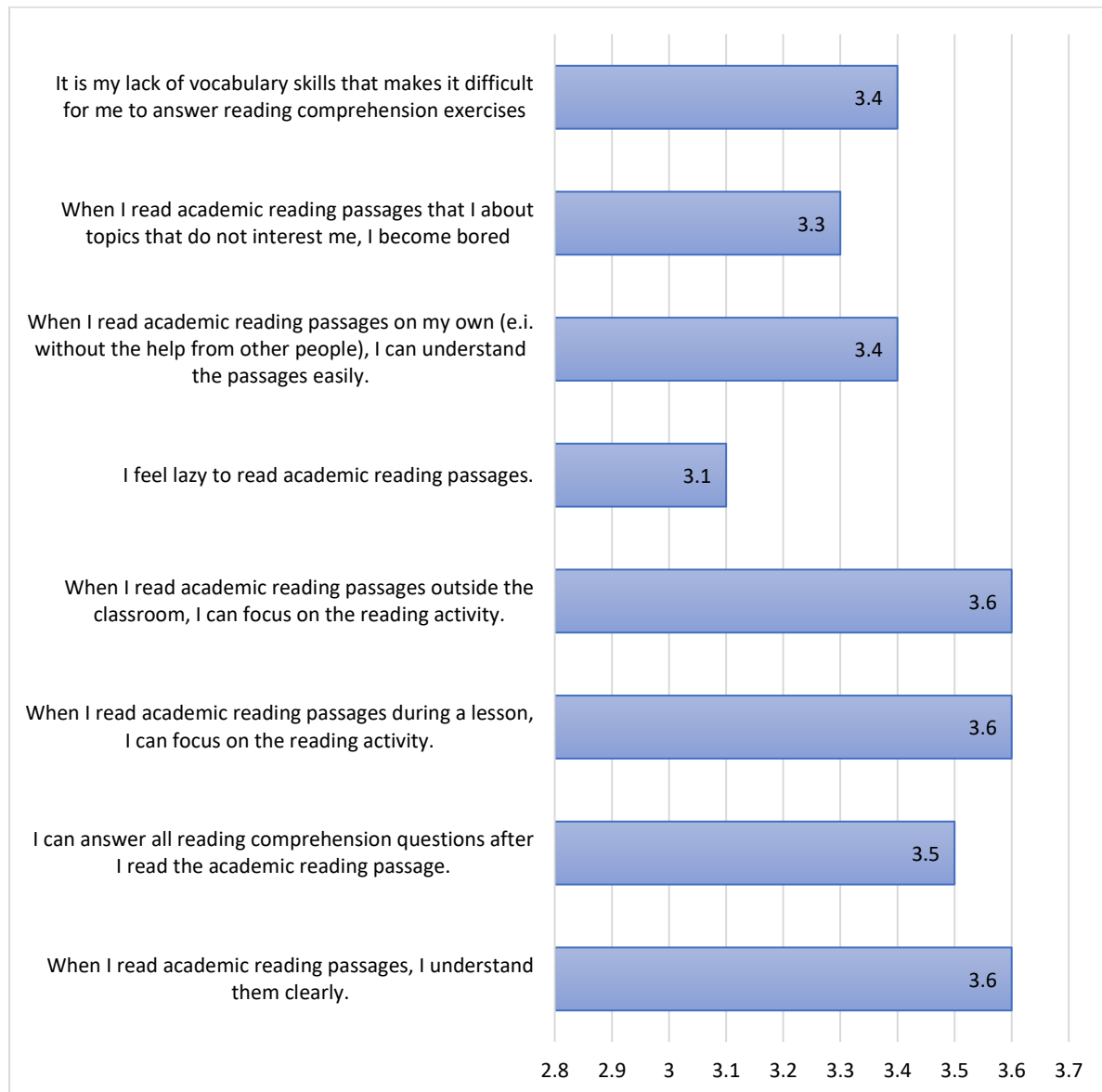

Figure 4- Mean for Reading Difficulties

Figure 4 shows the mean for reading difficulties. Three items had the same 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." Next, the item "can answer all reading comprehension questions after I read the academic reading passage." Had a mean of 3.5 .

Findings for Cognitive Strategies

This section presents data to answer research question No 2: How does the use of cognitive strategies influence reading? In the context of this study, cognitive reading strategies involve making connections, making predictions, asking questions, visualising, monitoring and clarifying, and summarising and synthesising. It also involves determining what's important and also analysing the author's intention.

Figure 5- Mean for Cognitive Strategies
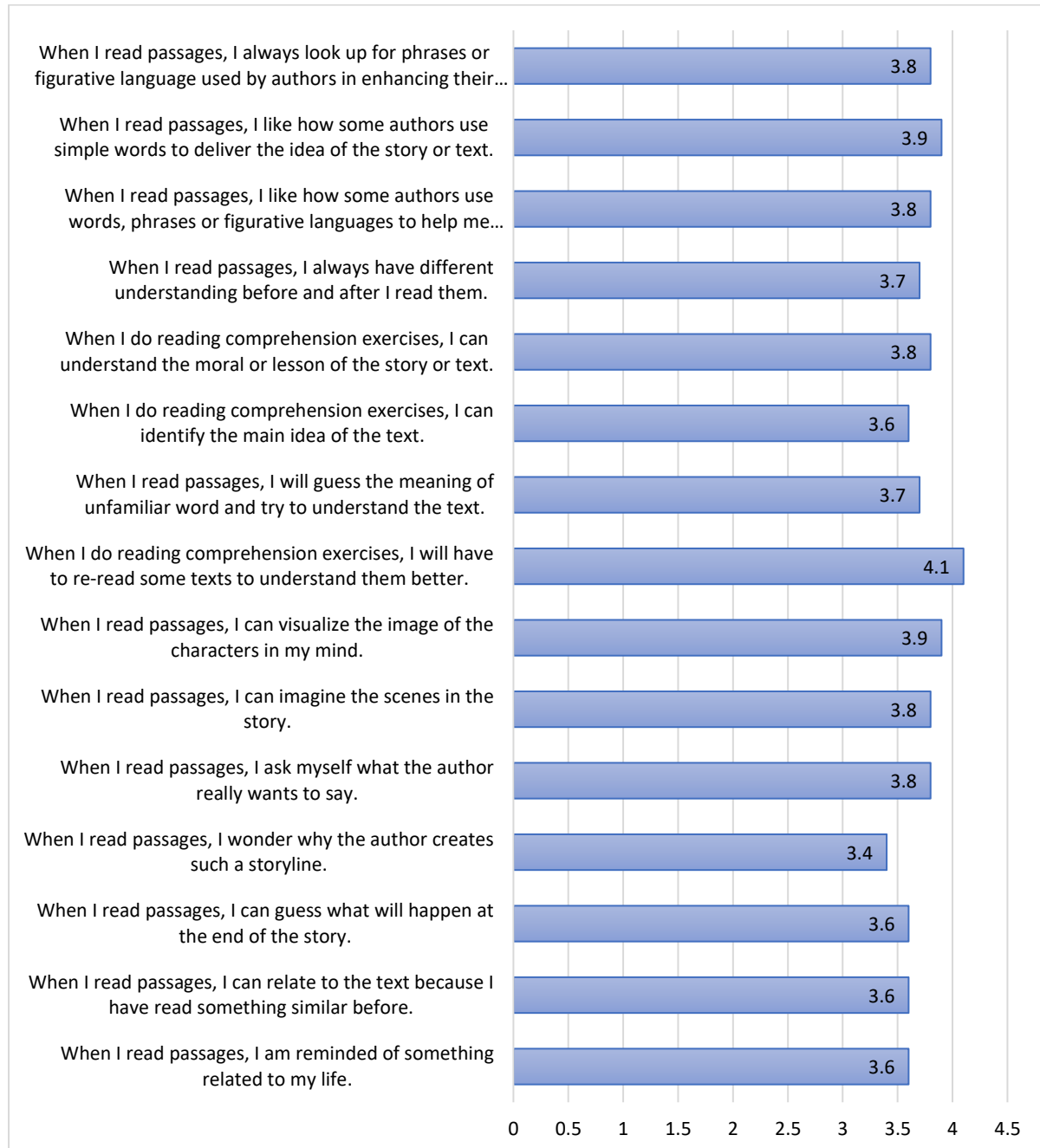
Figure 5 shows the mean for cognitive strategies. The highest mean is 4.1 for the item "When I do reading comprehension exercises, I will have to re-read some texts to understand them better.". This is followed by two items with a mean of 3.9 and they are "When I read passages, I can visualize the image of the characters in my mind" and "When I read passages, I like how

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some authors use simple words to deliver the idea of the story or text.". Five items had the same mean of 3.8 and they are "When I read passages, I ask myself what the author really wants to say", "When I read passages, I can imagine the scenes in the story.", "When I do reading comprehension exercises, I can understand the moral or lesson of the story or text.", "When I read passages, I like how some authors use words, phrases or figurative languages to help me create mental images" and "When I read passages, I always look up for phrases or figurative language used by authors in enhancing their style of writing".

Findings for Metacognitive Strategies
This section presents data to answer research question No 3: How do the use on metacognitive strategies influence reading? Metacognitive strategies include planning, monitoring and evaluating.
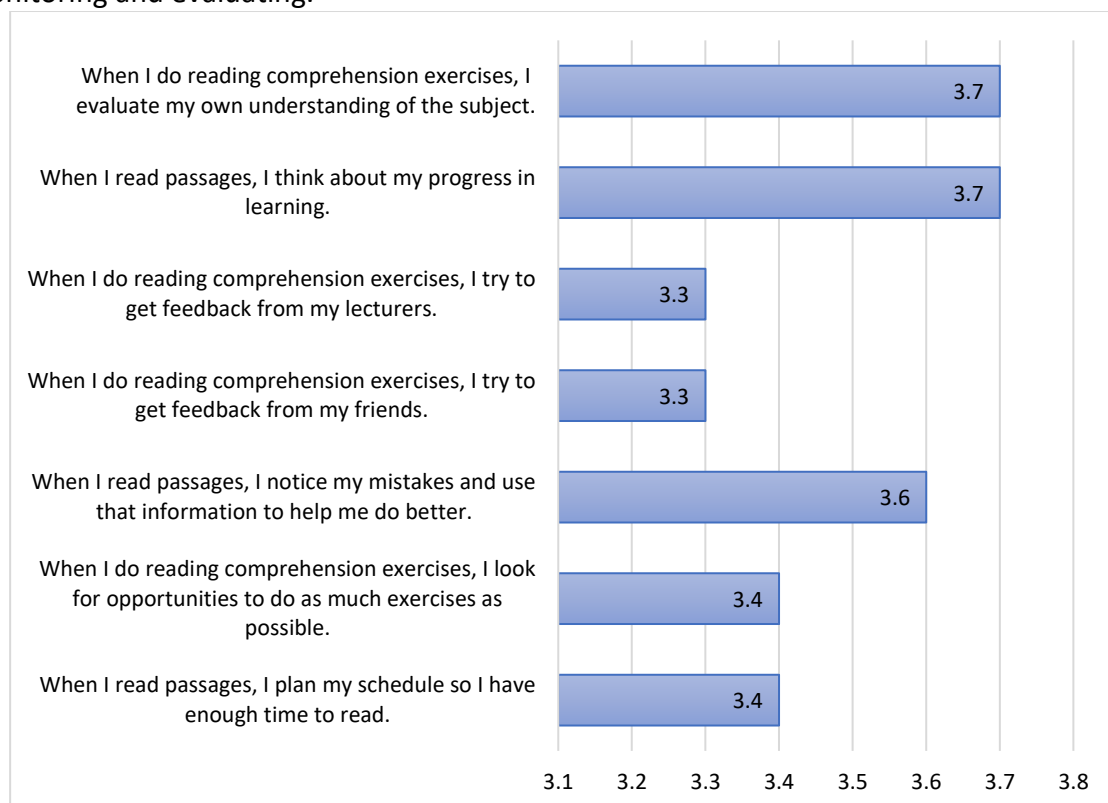

Figure 6- Mean for Metacognitive Strategies

Figure 6 presents the mean for metacognitive strategies. Two items had 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, is 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 Social Affective Strategies
This section presents data to answer research question No 4: How does the use of social affective strategies influence reading? Social affective strategies include asking for help, cooperating and taking risks.
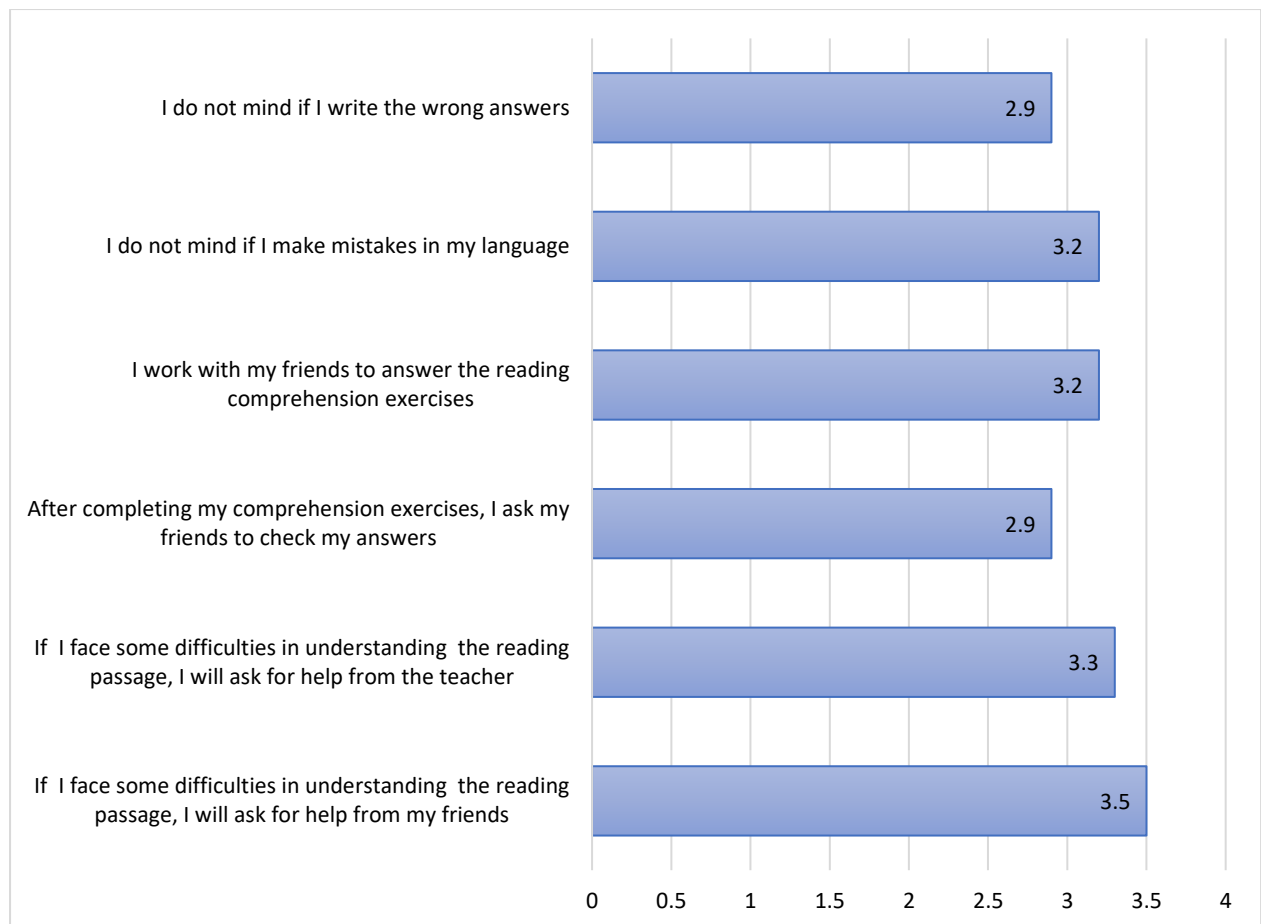
Figure 7- Mean for Social Affective Strategies

Figure 7 presents the mean for social affective strategies. The highest mean is 3.5 for the item "If I face some difficulties in understanding the reading passage, I will ask for help from my friends". This is followed by the mean of 3.3 for the item "If I face some difficulties in understanding the reading passage, I will ask for help from the teacher".

Findings for Relationship between Reading Difficulties and Reading Strategies
This section presents data to answer research question No 5: Is there a relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies? To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between reading difficulties and reading strategies, data is anlaysed using SPSS for correlations. Table 3 shows there is no association between reading difficulties and cognitive strategies.

Table 3
Reading Difficulties and Cognitive Strategies

Correlations

		DIFFread	COGNITVE
DIFFread	Pearson Correlation	1	.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.238
	N	114	114
COGNITVE	Pearson Correlation	.111	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.238	
	N	114	114

Next, table 4 shows the corelations between reading difficulties and metacognitive strategies. Corelations analysis shows that there is a moderate negative significant association between reading difficulties and metacognitive strategies (r= -.305***) and (p=.001). The coefficient is significant at the .05 level. According to Jackson (2015), positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. The stronger the positive correlation, the more likely the stocks are to move in the same direction. There is a moderate negative relationship between reading difficulties and metacognitive strategies.

Table 4
Reading Difficulties and Metacognitive strategies

Correlations

		DIFFread	METACOGNITVE
DIFFread	Pearson Correlation	1	-.305**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	114	114
METACOGNITVE	Pearson Correlation	-.305**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	114	114

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows the analysis of correlations for reading difficulties and social affective strategies. . Corelations analysis shows that there is a moderate negative significant association between reading difficulties and social affective strategies (r=-.315***) and (p=.001). The coefficient is significant at the .05 level. There is a moderate negative relationship between reading difficulties and social affective strategies.

Table 5
Reading Difficulties and Social Affective Strategies

Correlations

		DIFFread	SOCIALaffective
DIFFread	Pearson Correlation	1	−.315[**]
	Sig. (2–tailed)		.001
	N	114	114
SOCIALaffective	Pearson Correlation	−.315[**]	1
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.001	
	N	114	114

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2–tailed).

Conclusion
Summary of Findings and Discussion
A summary of the findings show that one of the main reasons for learners to perceive reading as difficult is the way reading activities are carried out in the classroom. When it comes to using cognitive strategies, learners were practice repeated reading to better understand the text. This is also reported by Koch & Sporer (2017) who also found that repeated reading is a common practice of learners during reading comprehension tasks. Next, when it comes to using metacognitive reading strategies, learners would evaluate their own understanding as they read. The study by Wang (2016) also reported that one effective reading strategy is for the learners to consciously monitor their reading and understanding. The process of reading is made less stressful when learners learn to use reading strategies as they read. According to Banditvilai (2020); Muijselaar (2017), the use of reading strategies have positive effect on students' reading comprehension.
Findings also revealed that the use of metacognitive and social affective reading strategies has negative effects on learners' reading difficulties. In layman's terms, this means the use of metacognitive and social affective strategies actually reduced learners' reading difficulties. Using these two strategies helped learners make better sense of their reading comprehension tasks.

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestion for Future Research
From the angle of the learners in higher institutions of learning, reading is a natural process. Reading comprehension is an activity that requires learners to make answer reading comprehension successfully. So, reading instructors need to fill in the gap between reading and answering reading comprehension tasks by teaching the reading strategies as part of the reading process. This is because according to Navarette (2019), research also shows that most teachers focused on assessing the reading comprehension level of their students and not on teaching them how to comprehend better. Future researchers could look into how readers actually use reading strategies. Perhaps qualitative studies that explore what readers do when they read , and how readers behave when they attempted reading comprehension questions could be done to understand how readers use different reading strategies when they read.

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