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## Reading strategy instruction to Vietnamese young language learners: Teachers' practices and perceptions

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### ABSTRACT

There has been a growing interest in involving teaching English to young learners in Vietnam in recent years. However, teaching English communication skills, especially reading for children, is not an easy job although reading is widely known as one of the most important skills in language learning and teaching. To overcome this difficulty, teachers are likely to implement various reaching strategies that help motivate students to read and involve them in the lessons. This paper examines the reading strategies that English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers reported using in young language learners' classes and explores their perceptions of reading strategy types that can attract students' interests. The data discussed in this paper were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The findings indicate that of 11 reading strategies, using context clues was the most frequently used and that four most favorite reading strategies that enhance students' interests in reading include games, pair work, group work, and role play.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Reading, one of the most important skills in foreign language teaching and learning, is a process of making sense of a particular text to obtain knowledge of a field by individuals. It is, therefore, an interactive activity of decoding and understanding the meaning-making process between the reader and the text (Goodman, 1965, 1967; Anderson, 2003; Alyousef, 2006; Linse and Nunan, 2006; Israel and Duffy, 2009; Shin and Crandall, 2014). Reading is also crucial for learners of English as a second or foreign language to ensure success in language learning and in other areas of learning (Lefevre, 1964; Anderson, 2003; Zhang, 2010). In order to align with the increased recognition of the need for processing information written in English, more and more foreign language centers have been founded and numerous learning materials in English become available online. This trend benefits

children in the way that they are likely to have more opportunities to approach foreign language learning in addition to their mother tongue than their parents did before. Moreover, several studies highlight the vital role of reading in children's development and their foreign language learning (e.g., Shin and Crandall, 2014). However, teaching young learners to read at an early age is a challenging task, so it requires a great deal of teachers' endeavour (Blair *et al.*, 2007).

In Vietnamese higher education, pre-service teachers (or teacher students) have not been trained approaches and techniques to instruct or work with children learners. This results in a great need for having teachers with experience in teaching English to young learners. Specifically, to better teaching English reading, teachers are to implement various strategies that can motivate learners to read and get them involved in the learning process. The

study reported in this article mainly focuses on teaching English reading strategies to young learners as reading instructions have been unnoticed.

In particular, this paper presents the reading strategies English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers reported using in their reading classes for young language learners and their perceptions of students' preferred reading strategies in the learning process. This paper is aimed to answer the research questions:

- What are the reading strategies teachers reported using in young language learners classes?
- How do teachers perceive students' interests towards the use of reading strategies?

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section reviews the literature of three concepts that are crucial to motivating learners to study reading: young language learners, reading, and reading teaching strategies.

### 2.1 Young Language Learners

The term *young language learners* (YLLs) is broadly used to indicate the children within the age span. Various researchers have different perspectives of this concept. Scott and Ytreberg (1990) assume young learners as children between the ages of five and ten or 11 while Phillips (1993) and Kalendova (2008) define young learners as children from five or six to 11 or 12 years old. Another view is that children who have not yet started to read at the age of three to six are considered as very young learners (Reilly and Ward, 1997). McKay (2006), and Shin and Crandall (2014) share similar ideas that YLLs are students between the ages of approximately five and 12 who are learning a foreign or second language. Příbilová (2008) contends that the term 'young learners' is applied for learners between the age ranges from three to 18. In this paper, the authors use the term *young learners* as children whose age range is from five to 12 years old.

### 2.2 Characteristics of young learners

Since young learners are referred to children from different ages between five and 12 years old; it is, therefore, important to consider some common characteristics of this type of learners. YLLs are believed to be able to learn or acquire a second or foreign language easily. Their learning and acquisition at this age are often incidental. On the other hand, children from seven to 12 years old can become aware of how they are learning (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990; Slattery, 2013). At this age, children develop better eye-hand co-ordination, their

pictures become more recognizable and detailed, they can do simple craft activities such as cutting, sticking and folding. Moreover, they learn how to sort, classify, match things or recognize the "odd one out." They are able to follow a story, predict what might come next, and ask question about it. Additionally, they can act as a character in the reading text. Naturally, there are children who do not really want to say anything until they are asked or willing to speak out what they think or understand (Reilly and Ward, 1997). Children are energetic and physically active. Therefore, it is important for teachers to take advantage of dynamic energy of young learners to create effective learning (McKay, 2006; Shin and Crandall, 2014). Moreover, young children are less inhibited. Specifically, they are not worried about using the language even though their proficiency is limited, and they are not afraid of participating in activities without feeling embarrassed (Reilly and Ward, 1997; Shin and Crandall, 2014). Students at this age group normally have short attention span (as little as 10 to 15 minutes) and are easily distracted by other pupils (Reilly and Ward, 1997; McKay, 2006; Shin and Crandall, 2014). Young learners like to communicate with others, and they are also interested in working and playing games with each other (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990; McKay, 2006; Shin and Crandall, 2014). Nevertheless, some children who are still self-centered may well enjoy playing alone or may not cooperate with others.

### 2.3 Reading

Reading is viewed as a process that readers decode information from a text by using their linguistic knowledge (e.g., Goodman, 1965, 1967; Griffin and Snow, 1998; Grabe, 2009; Bernhardt, 2011; Smith, 2012). Griffin and Snow (1998) claim that reading is a process of understanding meaning from printed texts through a reader's knowledge. Smith (2012) argues that reading is not a linear process; rather it is interactive because readers constantly form hypotheses, test predictions, and use their knowledge to construct meaning. More recent reading models have revealed that reading is as an interactive cognitive process in which readers interact with the text using their prior knowledge (Carrell, 1985). Anderson (2003) conceptualizes reading as an act of connecting written symbols to oral language, of structuring the meaning while interacting with text. Likewise, reading is an activity of building meaning by combining readers' prior knowledge and the information from the texts (McKenna and Robinson, 2005; Linse and Nunan, 2006; Israel and Duffy, 2009). Reading is also viewed as an interactive process between a reader

and a text in which learners are involved in processing, constructing texts, and elaborating its meaning to enhance comprehension (Paris and Hamilton, 2009; Carrell and Grabe, 2013). Drawn on these perspectives, in this study, reading is defined as an interactive process between the reader, a given text, and the context in which the reader decodes information and understand the meaning of such triad.

## 2.4 Reading Strategies

According to Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners, a strategy is considered as a plan or a method or a skill for achieving something for a long period to some extent. Færch and Kasper (1983) claim that reading strategies reveal how learners interact with the text and how it influences their comprehension. Garner (1987) defines reading strategies as what learners act to construct meaning. Reading strategies can help learners with the acquisition, storage and retrieval of information. Moreover, when readers face some comprehension problems, they can use strategies to get rid of them. To put it differently, reading strategy is defined as a plan for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Additionally, reading strategy can be viewed as the way in which readers interact with the written texts and enhance text comprehension (Rajoo and Selvaraj, 2010). As for teachers of English, reading strategies are utilized to help students become active readers who are able to be responsible for their own reading comprehension (Adler, 2004). In this paper, reading strategies are conceptualized as processes that teachers show learners how to approach a particular text and make sense of what they are going to read for comprehension.

Numerous studies have been conducted to present results supporting reading teaching strategies. For example, Klingner and Vaughn (1999) claim that the combination between reading comprehension strategy instruction and cooperative learning could promote reading comprehension, content learning and acquisition. Also, Adler (2004) holds a view that there are seven strategies that teachers can use to teach learners reading comprehension. They include monitoring, metacognition, graphic and semantic organizers, answering questions, generating questions, recognizing story structure, and summarizing information. Killen (2013) mentions nine strategies as effective for teachers: direct instruction, discussion, small-group work, cooperative learning; problem solving, inquiry, case study, role-play, and writing. Moreover, research on successful reading strategies in teaching middle-grade learners proposes three reading categories to con-

sider when planning lessons (Bolos, 2012), including interactive read-aloud, comprehension strategies, and vocabulary enrichment.

In Shin and Crandall's (2014) work, they suggest 11 reading strategies. These include predicting, monitoring, confirming, connecting, questioning, skimming, scanning, distinguishing, using context clues, paraphrasing or summarizing, and visualizing.

Although these investigations have provided literature for reading teaching strategies which can be used in teaching English reading for younger and older learners, the results are not applicable in Vietnamese teaching context.

While some researchers (Song, 1998; Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001; Duke and Pearson, 2002; Salataci and Akyel, 2002; Piller and Skillings, 2005; Duke *et al.*, 2011; Bolos, 2012; Semtin and Maniam, 2015) have conducted various studies in reading strategies, the existing literature does not particularly take into account teaching strategies to young learners within the teaching and learning context of English in Vietnam. Therefore, the study reported in this paper draws upon Killen's (2013) and Shin and Crandall's (2014) reading strategies to examine whether these strategies listed below are appropriate in teaching reading to young learners in Vietnam and which strategies teachers perceived that students are most interested in. Fifteen strategies were mentioned in this study: direct instruction, discussion, small-group work, role-play, writing, monitoring, confirming, connecting, questioning, skimming, scanning, distinguishing, using context clues, visualizing, and prediction.

## 3 THE STUDY

This study is aimed to explore reading strategies teachers reported using in their young learners' classes as well as their perceptions on strategies students were most interested in. This study was a descriptive study that establishes the naturalness of the phenomenon to gain a complete picture of the study under investigation (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative data using questionnaires were used to examine reading strategies used by teachers. To deepen understanding of the teachers' perceptions of students' preferred reading strategies, interview data were conducted.

Questionnaires are commonly used as a major means of collecting quantitative preliminary data. Questionnaires are considered to be a comparatively cost-effective tool to obtain large amount of information from a large number of participants in a short period of time (Creswell, 2012, 2014). In addition, questionnaires can be used to supplement

the qualitative data, and hence, the data analysis is internally consistent and coherent (Malhotra, 2006; Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003; Creswell, 2012). As a result, in this present study, the qualitative data were collected from questionnaires delivered to 63 EFL teachers. Each questionnaire includes two sections with the introduction of the aims of the study at the beginning. The first section consisted of background information of participants/ teachers (age, gender, place of work and year(s) of teaching experience). The major part of the questionnaire included 39 items in which there were statements of reading strategies teachers used. Diefenbach and his colleagues (1993, cited in Cummins and Gullone, 2000) state that a seven-point scale is likely to provide more choices than a five-point scale. Therefore, these items were categorized into 15 clusters of teaching reading strategies. The questionnaires were designed using a seven-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always) to examine the reading strategies that the teachers in the present study used in their YLL classes.

McNamara (1999) indicates that interviews are particularly useful for understanding the story behind a participant’s experiences as well as pursuing in-depth information around the topic. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) also state that interview is used as a way to obtain detailed information of a subject or topic. These interviews may have some questions to gather basic factual data on participants such as age and gender, but usually they focus more on the participant's thoughts, feelings, experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and preferences (Turner, 2010). Therefore, an open-ended interview was conducted to gain in-depth understanding of the reading strategies teachers reported using in their YLLs’ classes. Additionally, the in-

terview data were utilized to explore teachers’ perceptions of the strategies that students were most interested in. Five teachers who worked in foreign language centers, schools, and university participated in the interviews.

## 4 FINDINGS

### 4.1 Quantitative Analysis

To investigate the reading strategies reported using by EFL teachers in their young learners’ class, a questionnaire was utilized. The data collected from the questionnaire were subjected to SPSS version 16.0 and proved to be reliable ( $\alpha = .69$ ). The descriptive statistics was run on the mean score of the frequency use of reading strategies, and the result was shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Frequency of reading strategies used**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
MEAN	63	3.00	5.74	4.70	.54

The one-sample t-test was run on the frequency of reading strategies reported by EFL teachers in instructing English to YLLs and the test value 4.0. The result shows that there was a significant difference between the mean score of teachers’ reported use of reading strategies in instructing English to young language learners ( $M=4.70$ ) and the test value 4.0, the accepted mean for average ( $t= 10.13$ ;  $p=.00$ ). The frequency of the reading strategies reported using by teachers in instructing English to young language learners was high.

In order to identify types of reading strategies teachers reported using, the descriptive statistics was run on the mean score of the 15 clusters in the questionnaire. The result was briefly illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Frequency of reading strategies reported to use**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Using Context Clues	63	3.00	7.00	5.51	0.85
Connecting	63	2.00	7.00	5.37	1.06
Questioning	63	2.67	6.67	5.25	0.88
Prediction	63	1.00	7.00	5.13	1.32
Skimming	63	1.00	7.00	5.10	1.20
Distinguishing	63	3.00	7.00	5.06	0.94
Direct Instruction	63	3.00	6.67	4.84	0.75
Visualizing	63	1.67	7.00	4.76	1.23
Confirming	63	2.33	6.33	4.60	0.94
Discussion	63	1.00	7.00	4.47	1.22
Small Group Work	63	2.00	6.67	4.46	0.96
Role-Play	63	1.00	7.00	4.26	1.23
Writing	63	1.00	6.33	4.13	1.13
Monitoring	63	2.00	6.33	4.09	0.81
Scanning	63	1.50	6.50	3.59	1.12

As can be seen from Table 2, the mean score of frequency of reading strategies teachers reported using in terms of variables ranged from 3.59 to 5.51 with high standard deviations from 0.75 to 1.32 among participants' responses to variables. The one-sample t-test was run on the mean scores of the frequency use of reading strategies of each variable and the test value was 4, the average scale. The results show that the reading strategies use

reported by teachers was distributed in three different scales in frequency.

For the variables of using context clues, connecting, questioning, prediction, skimming, distinguishing, direct instruction, visualizing, confirming, discussion and small group work, the result showed that the mean scores of frequency of reading strategies reported using were different from the test value 4 (Table 3). The frequency of those reading strategies reported using was high.

**Table 3: Means of reading strategies in high level of frequency**

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	SD
Using context clues	14.05	62	.00	5.51	0.85
Connecting	10.20	62	.00	5.37	1.06
Questioning	11.38	62	.00	5.25	0.88
Prediction	6.77	62	.00	5.13	1.32
Skimming	7.33	62	.00	5.10	1.20
Distinguishing	9.02	62	.00	5.06	0.94
Direct instruction	8.91	62	.00	4.84	0.75
Visualizing	4.87	62	.00	4.76	1.23
Confirming	5.08	62	.00	4.60	0.94
Discussion	3.04	62	.00	4.47	1.22
Small group work	3.78	62	.00	4.46	0.96

With regard to role-play, writing, monitoring, the results indicated that the mean scores of frequency of reading strategies reported using ( $M_r= 4.26, SD= 1.23, M_w= 4.13, SD= 1.13, M_m= 4.09, SD= 0.81$ ) were not different from the test value 4 ( $t= 1.67, df= 62, p= 0.10; t= .93, df= 62, p= 0.35; t= .89, df= 62, p= 0.37$ ). The frequency of using role-play, writing and monitoring in instructing English to YLLs were moderate.

Regarding scanning, the result indicates that the mean score of frequency of reading strategies teachers reported using ( $M= 3.59, SD= 1.12$ ) was different from the text value 4 ( $t=-2.92, df= 62, p=.00$ ). The frequency of using scanning in instructing English to YLLs was low.

An analysis from the questionnaire reveals that 11 reading strategies were most frequently used in teaching young learners. In order to investigate the most frequently-used strategy among those, the one-sample t-test was run on the mean score of the frequency use of reading strategies of each variable in this group and the test value was 5.51 (the mean score of using context clues reading strategy as well as the highest mean score of the group). The results show that there was not any significant difference between the mean score of the connecting reading strategies ( $M_c= 5.37, SD= 1.06$ ) and the text value 5.51 ( $t= -1.08, df= 62, p= .28$ ). The results shown in Table 3 reveal that context clues were used as frequently as connecting reading strategies.

**Table 4: The most frequently reading strategies used**

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	SD
Connecting	-1.08	62	.28	5.37	1.06
Questioning	-2.37	62	.02	5.25	0.88
Prediction	-2.30	62	.03	5.13	1.32
Skimming	-2.70	62	.01	5.10	1.20
Distinguishing	-3.79	62	.00	5.06	0.94
Direct instruction	-7.18	62	.00	4.84	0.75
Visualizing	-4.84	62	.00	4.76	1.23
Confirming	-7.64	62	.00	4.60	0.94
Discussion	-6.77	62	.00	4.47	1.22

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	SD
Connecting	-1.08	62	.28	5.37	1.06
Questioning	-2.37	62	.02	5.25	0.88
Prediction	-2.30	62	.03	5.13	1.32
Skimming	-2.70	62	.01	5.10	1.20
Distinguishing	-3.79	62	.00	5.06	0.94
Direct instruction	-7.18	62	.00	4.84	0.75
Visualizing	-4.84	62	.00	4.76	1.23
Confirming	-7.64	62	.00	4.60	0.94
Discussion	-6.77	62	.00	4.47	1.22
Small Group Work	-8.75	62	.00	4.46	0.96

Regarding questioning, prediction, skimming, distinguishing, direct instruction, visualizing, confirming, discussion and small group work, the results illustrate that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of those strategies and the test value 5.51 (the mean score of using context clues reading strategy). Context clues were used more frequently than the others.

Quantitative data collected from the questionnaires indicate that using context clues, connecting, questioning, prediction, skimming, distinguishing, direct instruction, visualizing, confirming, discussion and small group work were reported frequently

being used in teaching to YLLs. Of strategies listed, context clues and connecting information were the most frequently reported strategies by teachers.

#### 4.2 Qualitative Analysis

In order to gain insights into the EFL teachers' reported data with regard to strategies that attracted students' interests, qualitative data were collected through interviews. The interviewees were selected based on two criteria: the frequency of teachers' reading strategies reported using and their years of teaching experience. Information of interviewees is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Selection of interviewees**

Level of frequency	Frequency of using reading strategies	Years of teaching experience
High	Interview 1 (Binh) (M <sub>1</sub> = 5.72)	1
	Interview 3 (An) (M <sub>2</sub> = 5.36)	1
Moderate	Interview 4 (Tai) (M <sub>4</sub> =4.00)	7
Low	Interview 2 (Chau) (M <sub>5</sub> = 3)	4
	Interview 5 (My) (M <sub>3</sub> = 3.72)	5

Five teachers were invited to participate in the study. In particular, two teachers who had less than one year of teaching experience reported using reading strategies most frequently or in other words, at a high level. One teacher who had seven years of teaching experience was at moderate level. Two teachers, who had four and five years teaching experience respectively, reported using reading strategies the least frequently. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms to ensure the confidentiality.

The purpose of the interviews was to explore teachers' perceptions of students' interests in learning English reading and which strategies were students' favorites. Therefore, the participating teachers were firstly asked to reveal students' attitudes toward learning English reading. Then, the teachers were required to present their use of reading strategies that students liked best. The data from the in-

terviews indicate that students did not like studying English reading. Therefore, games, group work, pairs and role play were commonly used reading strategies reported by participating teachers in order to enhance students' reading interests.

##### 4.2.1 Students' interests toward English reading

Four participating teachers shared the similar views that students did not like learning English reading. In particular, two interviewees said that students found reading boring and difficult.

*In my opinion, children are likely to prefer listening and speaking to reading because reading is quite difficult for them* (Binh, Interview Extract 1).

*They do not like English reading skill very much because this skill is quite boring* (Chau, Interview Extract 2).

Some participating teachers thought that students' interests toward English reading depended on some factors such as teachers' method, their awareness of the nature of reading, the existing curriculum, students' characteristics, the reading content, and teachers' implementation of integrated skills). These teachers also reported some uncertainty in the way they unfolded their students' preference in reading language content.

*It depends on how teachers design teaching activities and whether reading skill is integrated with other skills (Binh, Interview Extract 2)*

*It is difficult to conclude children's characteristics or attitudes towards this subject matter. It is also affected by the Center's curriculum simply because if they focus on reading or all four skills (An, Interview Extract 3).*

*It depends on whether the teachers emphasize reading or not (Tai, Interview Extract 4).*

*Students like reading similar topics and interesting pictures (My, Interview Extract 6).*

However, in general, participating teachers believed that students did not like English reading. For example, An and Tai, in particular, remarked their views during the interview:

*I think the number of students interested in reading English was not many (An, Interview Extract 3).*

*Some of them like reading, but others do not...even some students bring the books with them and ask me for advice or comments on what they are reading (Tai, Interview Extract 4)*

#### 4.2.2 Games

Games were reported the most commonly used strategy in English reading class. The participating teachers said that when playing games, students were working in a competitive environment and were motivated to read.

*At word and phrase level, children are likely more interested in. However, at sentence level, students prefer playing games and answering questions to compete with others to reading and answering the questions themselves (Binh, Interview Extract 1).*

In this excerpt, one can realize that Binh perceived that students were interested in reading at the word and phrase level, but they were motivated in reading at the sentence level when participating in class activities with their friends.

Additionally, Chau designed games as a lead-in activity for the listening section to enhance students' reading motivation.

*I divide students into two teams, A and B. A will read the first paragraph; B will listen to see whether A is reading correctly. If wrong, B will clap the table as a signal. If B can correct team A's mistakes they will get one mark. Besides, I also have students play other games (Chau, Interview Extract 2).*

Similarly, An shared that students liked playing games that led to the listening exercise, whereas Tai valued the importance of pair work as a type of student participation.

*I have students play games in which they listen, find and circle the correct words among a list of words. Students also like this game (An, Interview Extract 3).*

*I think students like working in pairs and compete with others (Tai, Interview Extract 4).*

#### 4.2.3 Pair work

Tai and An reported that students in their class were interested in working in pairs.

*From my observation, children who are under 10 years old will learn more effectively if working in pairs (Tai, Interview Extract 4).*

*My students prefer working in pairs to working in groups. I think it is difficult to divide students into groups. They do not like the way the teacher assigns them to be in such arrangement, but if I let them choose their own group, their level may be mixed randomly (An, Interview Extract 3).*

Evidence can be seen in the excerpt that Tai thought working in pairs could enhance student learning. Likewise, An indicated that students were accustomed to working with someone frequently sitting next to them. In addition, Tai believed that pair work could prevent students from dealing with some learning differences or problems caused by group division.

#### 4.2.4 Group-work

Participating teachers from high and low frequency shared that they had students work in groups. However, Chau confirmed that students liked working in group while the other had just mentioned group-work without any indication of students' interests.

*I think students prefer group work to pair work. (Chau, Interview Extract 2)*

*I divide the class into four groups and draw four columns on the board. They will read and take turns to fill in the table with the content (Binh, Interview Extract 1).*

Except for the remainder from low frequency, My said that students liked working both in groups and pairs.

*I think students like working in groups or pairs to discuss the final answers and write on the table or the board. Or they discuss the answers and present in front of the class (My, Interview Extract 5).*

#### 4.2.5 Role play

Two participating teachers (An and Tai) assumed that students' like of role-play depended on different factors.

*Yes but if the story is funny and interesting (An, Interview Extract 3).*

*...some of them like but the others do not. It depends on the requirement of the activity whether or not they have to remember all the content and practice in front of the class...some students are not good at memorizing, they are not confident enough to talk in front of the class (Tai, Interview Extract 4).*

The comments by these two teachers reveal that students were likely to be interested in doing role-play activities. Moreover, An felt that stories could be the factor influencing the way students learn in class, whereas Tai indicated that the focus of the activity in the lesson might be the case.

However, Chau felt that students were interested in role-play while My revealed the opposite view.

*Yes, my students like role play very much (Chau, Interview Extract 2).*

*At the student level I teach, students are about 10 to 12 years of age. Therefore, there are not many games or role plays (My, Interview Extract 5).*

The findings from the qualitative data indicate that students did not like learning English reading. However, games, group work, pairs and role play were considered as common reading strategies mostly used. In particular, most participating teachers felt that students were very interested in playing games when learning English reading.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The conceptual framework used in this study has been strongly grounded on positive results. Analyses of quantitative data show 11 reading strategies were reported frequently used by teachers, including using context clues; connecting; questioning; prediction; skimming; distinguishing; direct instruction; visualizing; confirming; discussion, and small-group work. However, using context clues and connecting were proved to be the most fre-

quently used strategies. The findings concur with studies conducted by Song (1998), van den Broek and his colleagues (2001), Duke and Pearson (2002), Piller and Skillings (2005), Duke *et al.* (2011), Bolos (2012), and Shin and Crandall (2014). These authors claim that prediction, using prior knowledge, questioning, making connection, asking questions, visualizing were effective strategies that could enhance students' reading comprehension. The present study indicates that among those reading strategies, distinguishing, direct instruction, confirming, discussion and small-group work were also added into this reading strategy group.

Unlike the frequently used reading strategies mentioned above, role-play, writing and monitoring were ranked the moderate rate of frequently used strategies, and scanning was the least frequently used reading strategy. It was contrast to the preliminary assumption that role-play and writing were mostly used in young learners' classes. The findings from this present study are in line with Block's (1986) study which suggests that monitoring was one of his research' theoretical frameworks.

In order to glean deep insights into the EFL teachers' self-reported use of teaching strategies that aroused students' interests, the answer to the second research question is that direct instruction, discussion and small-group work were students' favorite reading strategies. Analysis of the qualitative data collected through interviews suggests that students were interested in games, group work, pairs and role play when learning English reading. Most of the participating teachers concluded that children did not like learning English reading although they pointed out frequently used reading strategies perceived to be preferred by students. Moreover, the results added games and pair work as reading strategies which were not mentioned in the literature. Games were used more frequently in teaching as they could promote student learning. It can be inferred that young learners were interested in games and could become active to some extent. The data also supplemented the findings from the questionnaires in the ways that group work, one of the frequently used reading strategies, could enhance students' interests. However, the reading strategy reached the moderate level of frequency in quantitative data analysis, role-play, mentioned as one of students' favorite strategies. Besides, this reading strategy was said to be influenced by other factors in relation to the question whether students liked it or not. It could be explained that the students' characteristics influenced their interests.

The findings of this present study have some pedagogical implications for teachers, particularly for those who are teaching EFL young learners within the Vietnamese context. First, this paper supports the idea that consideration into reading strategies should be taken in order to improve young learners' reading ability and attitudes toward reading at a higher cognitive level. The findings also provide teachers with insights into how they can think of potential use of more games and similar activities to involve active participation of young learners in their reading learning process. If this can be done, both teachers and learners will feel more motivated to enhance their interests in making reading instruction and learning meaningful and pertinent in a broader context.

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