



Online reading strategies of Thai EFL Students

Urarat Parnrod

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Songkhla Rajabhat University, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Reading is mainly known as an important skill. It is widely acceptable that “the more we read, the more we know. We can also gain several benefits of reading, such as developing our imagination and creativity, improving vocabulary and communication, and helping with building a good self-image and playing well with others. To be survived in the fast-changing world, having skills in online reading could be an alternative for the students to be more successful in reading. However, it was found that most studies have focused on reading strategies. Then having more studies about online reading strategies could contribute to language learning and teaching in terms of training the students to employ reading strategies in an online environment effectively and maintaining the students’ confidence in language learning. Therefore, this study aims at investigating online reading strategies employed by 43 undergraduate students majoring in English. The questionnaire, Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS), was adapted to elicit the students’ online reading strategies. The quantitative results showed that *problem-solving reading strategies* were often used when doing online reading activities (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.94), followed by *global reading strategies* (Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.93), and *support reading strategies* (Mean = 3.45, SD = 1.08). Pedagogical implications are also presented in this study.

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Corresponding Author:

Urarat Parnrod

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science,

Songkhla Rajabhat University, Thailand.

Samrong Rd, Khao Rup Chang, Mueang Songkhla District, Songkhla 90000, Thailand

Email: urarat.pa@skru.ac.th

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is mainly known as an important skill. It is widely acceptable that “the more we read, the more we know (Wineburg & McGrew, 2019) (Okkinga et al., 2018). We can also gain several benefits of reading, such as developing our imagination and creativity, improving vocabulary and communication, and helping with building a good self-image and playing well with others (Pulimeno et al., 2020). To be survived in the fast-changing world, having skills in online reading could be an alternative for the students to be more successful in reading (Skees & Yusuf, 2021) (Skees & Yusuf, 2021). Although many schools require the students to move back to onsite learning instead of studying online at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students still need to develop their online learning skills for their study (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Thus, training the students to use online reading strategies appropriately would be a way to help them find more success in their study (Poole, 2011) (Seli, 2019) (Palloff & Pratt, 2007).

Based on several definitions (Linse, 2005; Patel & Jain, 2008; Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Devito, 2014), it can be concluded that reading is a process of receiving and interpreting information involving the previous knowledge to reach the meaning and understanding of the text and to get the ideas or

information intended by the author. With the rise of the World Wide Web, online reading has become a key source of input for L2 readers. According to Ashfaq and Ansari (2020), the understanding of scientific publications is encouraged by online reading since the internet provides access to hyperlinks, language translation services, and online dictionaries. It seems that online reading is the process of extracting meaning from a text which is available on the internet. The readers need to connect to the internet and have more focus on their required information (Coiro & Dobler, 2007) (Cho & Afflerbach, 2015) (Ryder & Graves, 1996).

According to Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), online reading strategies are classified into three types covering global reading strategies (GLOB), problem-solving reading strategies (PROB), and support reading strategies (SUP). As for global reading strategies (GLOB), they involve planning how to read and managing comprehension, whereas problem-solving reading strategies (PROB) tend to be dealt with reading difficult parts of a text. Regarding support reading strategies (SUP), they are related to using devices and techniques to understand a text. However, it was found that most studies (Suebpong, 2017; Raqqad, Ismail & Raqqad, 2019; Oranpattanachai, 2023) have focused on reading strategies. Then having more studies about online reading strategies is needed. Therefore, this study aims at investigating online reading strategies employed by undergraduate students majoring in English.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The quantitative research design was used in this study. This study aimed at examining online reading strategies employed by undergraduate students majoring in English (Marboot et al., 2020) (Rianto, 2022) (Do & Le Thu Phan, 2021) (Su et al., 2018) (Din, 2020).

Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 43 English major students. All of them were the first-year university students at a university in southern Thailand.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire, Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS), a widely used one in language teaching which was developed by Anderson (2003), was adapted to elicit the students' response regarding their perceived use of online reading strategies while reading text in English (et al., 2016).

This questionnaire involved close-ended questions containing 38 items, containing 18 items as *global reading strategies (GLOB)*, 11 items as *problem-solving reading strategies (PROB)* and 9 items as *support reading strategies (SUP)*.

The students were asked to rate the degree of frequency of the online reading strategies they tend to use while reading English on a five-point Likert scale (see Table 1).

Table 1. The criteria of interpretation

Numerical Value	Range	Interpretation
5	4.50 – 5.00	Very often
4	3.50 – 4.49	Often
3	2.50 – 3.49	Sometimes
2	1.50 – 2.49	Seldom
1	1.00 – 1.49	Never

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection in the present study was carried out in the first semester of the 2022 academic year. The three steps are presented below:

- 1) All students were informed about the data from the questionnaire and how to answer the online questionnaire.
- 2) The students answered the questionnaire distributed by the researcher. They were also allowed to ask questions in case of having unclear points.
- 3) All the questionnaires were checked whether the students completed them.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, especially mean and standard deviation (SD).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The use of online reading strategies by category

The response from the students is summarized and presented below.

Table 2. Reported strategy usage by category

Category	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Global (GLOB)	43	3.57	0.93	Often
Problem Solving (PROB)	43	3.84	0.94	Often
Support (SUP)	43	3.45	1.08	Sometimes

After analyzing the data, the survey results obtained from the students in online reading strategies showed that they used *problem-solving reading strategies* more often when doing online reading activities (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.94) than the other two online reading strategies, *global reading strategies* in the second position (Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.93), while *support reading strategies* become the least frequently used strategies by students (Mean = 3.45, SD = 1.08).

The top ten frequently used online reading strategies

After further analysis, it was also found more detailed information about the students' top ten most frequently used online reading strategies (see Table 3).

Table 3. Top ten frequently used online reading strategies.

Top ten frequently used online reading strategies	Type of online reading strategies			Mean	SD	Interpretation
	GLOB	PROB	SUP			
1 I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.		✓		4.23	0.90	Often
2 I try to guess what the content of the on-line text is about when I read.	✓			4.12	0.82	Often
3 When on-line text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading.		✓		4.05	0.92	Often
4 When on-line text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.		✓		4.02	1.06	Often
5 I think about what I know to help me understand what I read online.	✓			4.00	0.82	Often
6 I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading online.		✓		3.98	0.94	Often
7 I take an overall view of the online text to see what it is about before reading it.	✓			3.98	1.12	Often
8 When I read online, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.		✓		3.93	0.94	Often
9 When reading online, I analyze the online text in Thai and English.			✓	3.86	0.91	Often
10 I scan the online text to get a basic idea of whether it will serve my purposes before choosing to read it.	✓			3.84	0.84	Often

As shown, among the top ten most frequently used online reading strategies, it seemed that the students often used all strategies. Besides, it was found that five of them were from problem solving reading strategies, and four of them were global reading strategies. Only one of them was from support reading strategies. It should be noted that, “*I try to get back on track when I lose concentration*”, one of *problem-solving reading strategies*, showed the highest scores. It revealed that the concentration is perceived by most students to be important for their online reading. That was in line with the data obtained from several studies showing that this strategy was in the top ten online reading strategies used by the students in different contexts (Chen, 2015; Jusoh & Abdullah, 2015; Suwannaprut & Siriwan; 2020; Putri, Pammu & Nasmilah, 2023). It was also found that among those studies, this strategy was not in the first rank. That would be from the background knowledge, personality characteristics, culture, and school climate (Hedge, 2000; Reid, 2005; Lawrence. 2006).

4. CONCLUSION

This study adapted The questionnaire, Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS) developed by (Anderson, 2003), to elicit the students’ response regarding their perceived use of online reading strategies while reading text in English. The results showed that the students frequently employed *problem-solving reading strategies* the most (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.94), followed by *global reading strategies* (Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.93), and *support reading strategies* (Mean = 3.45, SD = 1.08), respectively. Additionally, “*I try to get back on track when I lose concentration*”, a *problem-solving reading strategy*, was rated in the first rank. The key results from the study could contribute to language learning and teaching. The pedagogical implications for language teachers are about raising the students’ awareness of having the concentration while reading online and training the students to have varied usage of strategies, especially using problem-solving reading strategies. Because of some limitations of this study, the following recommendation are made for further study: (1) To reveal fruitful results from the students, having a larger sample of the students from different contexts, such as levels of education, majors, and university, could shed more light on teaching English reading. (2) To achieve in reading online, adding qualitative method such as semi-structured interviews to investigate the problems and preferred solutions by the students is likely to contribute to the improvement of students’ online reading ability.

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