CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Reading strategies indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand (Block, 1986). As was mentioned in Chapter One, Anderson (as cited in McPherson, 2003) believes that reading is an essential skill for English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) students to master. Reading skills and strategies can help readers make greater progress and attain greater development in all academic areas. This shows that the context for most of the discussion for reading is reading for academic purposes programs in university and secondary school education settings.

Reading is also the basis for self-development. Through reading, students begin to extend their learning outside the classroom and so gradually develop the capacity to learn without a teacher. This is the beginning of independent learning. Reading efficiently will enable students to learn efficiently.

Teacher-directed comprehension strategies have three major elements: metacognitive, cognitive and affective.

<u>Metacognitive Strategies</u>

Flavell (as cited in Nist & Holschuh, 2000) defines metacognition as "knowledge that takes as its subject or regulates any aspect of any cognitive endeavor" (p.76). One aspect of metacognition is knowledge about cognition, concerning what readers know about their cognitive resources and the regulation of those resources. Regulation includes the ability to detect errors or contradictions in the text, knowledge of different strategies to use with different kinds of texts, and the ability to separate important from unimportant information. Another aspect of metacognition is readers' ability to control or self-regulate their actions during reading. Self-regulation includes planning and monitoring, testing, revising and evaluation of the strategies employed when reading and learning from the text (Nist & Holschuh, 2000).

Metacognitive strategies refer to how students think about learning tasks, how students plan and monitor their learning and how they use self-evaluation to continue learning. Metacognition is the level of learning where the students monitor how they are learning. It is the stage at which intuition or unconscious strategies become conscious so that the students can reflect on how they are performing the task. Metacognition allows the efficient student to improve on the strategies used for a particular exercise but, more than that, it enables them to learn about their own learning, in other words, to learn how to learn (Maguire, 1997-1998).

Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies engage students in activities that lead to understanding, knowing or making cognitive progress (Garner, 1988 as cited in Nist & Holschuh, 2000). Concerning cognition in strategic learning, there are two categories of knowledge research: schema theory and domain knowledge. Schema theory relates to the effect of prior knowledge on a new learning situation. It is a framework that organizes knowledge in memory by putting information into the correct "slots", each of which contains related parts. Schema theory is very important to reading comprehension because a schema provides ideational scaffolding, permits selective attention and inference making, allows orderly memory searches, facilitates editing and summarizing (Nist & Holschuh 2000). According to schema theory, reading comprehension is the interactive process between the reader and the text. The reading process can be divided into two parts: bottom-up and top-down. Efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate text to one's own knowledge. Background knowledge is also very important to comprehension (Carrell 1983). Williams and Moran (1989) point out that schema theory influences pre-reading activities in EFL reading materials. In these materials, some activities ask students to relate their personal experience to the topic of the lesson through discussion. In the present study, the strategies in pre-reading stage will be adopted in the checklist to analyze the EFL cousebooks.

Affective Strategies

Affective strategies include co-operative learning and self-talk. Helping students through self-esteem and encouragement and getting and giving help through mutual stimulation is the basis of this third set of strategies (Maguire, 1997-1998). There are many dimensions of the affective component; Nist and Holschuh (2000) regard motivation as one major influence on comprehension. One of the characteristics which influence motivation is control; students who have control over their learning situation tend to be more motivated. Using effective strategies can create a sense of control over achievement and this will be helpful to motivation.

Categorizations of Reading Skills and Strategies

The reading process involves many different reading skills and strategies, and each skill and strategy may also have subskill and substrategies. There are various taxonomies to categorize reading skills.

Nist and Holschuh (2000) discuss teacher-directed comprehension strategies. The strategies they focus on have two criteria. First, the strategies have to possess metacognitive, cognitive, and affective components. Second, they must be the strategies that the students can generate by themselves. The strategies are categorized into three groups:

1. Organizing Strategies: graphic organizers, concept mapping, previews

2. Isolating Key Information: underlining and highlighting, annotation

3. Elaborating: elaborative interrogation, elaborative verbal rehearsals,

   self-testing.

Ahmad and Asraf (2004) suggest that there are five reading comprehension strategies that can be effectively taught in producing skilled readers: determining importance, summarizing information, drawing inferences, generating questions and monitoring comprehension.

Landry (2002) states that schema theory supports strategy training, and developing fluent reading skills and strategies which will promote fluency in reading. Teaching reading strategies prepares readers for reading efficiently. Bottom-up strategies have the reader work from letters and minimum units upward to decipher text. Top-down strategies take into consideration the rhetoric of a passage activating knowledge of the subject as well as expectations and intuition. Rapid reading, repeated reading, and extensive reading and teaching structural aspects, all contribute to fluency in reading. Reading for a purpose, especially reading interesting material, gives additional motivation to learners.

Nuttall (1996) divides reading skills into four groups and gives a detailed and clear explanation on word attack skills and text attack skills. She also offers activities for training each skill and strategies. Her four groups of reading skills are as follows: a) strategies involving flexibility of technique: variations in reading rate, skimming, scanning b) strategies of utilizing information that is not part of the linear

text: reference apparatus, graphic conventions, and figures (diagrams, etc) c) word

attack skills: tackling unfamiliar lexical items by using morphology, inference from

context, a dictionary, etc. and d) text attack skills: interpreting the text as a whole,

using all the clues available from both top-down and bottom-up strategies, including

cohesion and rhetorical structure.

Saricoban (2002) researched the strategies that effective readers employ in the

Three-Phase Approach (pre-reading, reading and post-reading stages of instruction) in

classroom language learning. Barnett (1988) uses the Three-Phase approach to

incorporate effective reading strategies into second language classroom.

Pre-reading stage

a) Predicting/guessing (talking about the title and/or commenting on the

illustrations if provided), b) Teaching new vocabulary, c) Setting the scene. The

pre-reading stage attempts to improve students' interest in the topic, and motivate

them, provide some predicting/guessing activities for the reading passage, make use

of students' background knowledge about the topic, prepare the students for the

context of the reading passage, and build a bridge between the reading passage and

the learners' background knowledge and interests. In pre-reading activities, students

are asked to find answers to given questions based on the text, give their personal

opinion about the topic, or predict the continuing text.

While-reading stage

a) Annotating: focusing on content and language of the text. To do this,

students are asked if they use the strategy of underlining, questioning and organizing

information to understand the text. b) Analyzing: analyzing arguments in the text,

analyzing characters, the setting, focusing on the use of words (kinds of verbs: action

or mental) and other aspects of language use (e.g. connectors, etc.).

Post-reading stage

a) Summarizing, b) Evaluating, c) Synthesizing, d) Commenting, e) Reflecting.

The aims of post-reading work are to help students use their acquired knowledge in

similar readings, integrate with the foreign culture, make use of key words and

structures to summarize the reading passage, and extract the main idea of a paragraph

or a reading text.

Thus, in the literature reviewed, there were different ways to categorize

reading skills and strategies according to different concepts and teaching approaches.

Different authors also have their own emphases on each skill and strategy. However,

there are some overlaps between these categorizations, for example, annotation

belongs to 'while-reading stage' in the Three-Phase Approach, also belongs to

'Isolating Key Information' in Nist and Holschuh's (2000) teacher-directed

comprehension strategies. The analytical framework in the present study adapted and

combined insights from different writers in the field.

Review of Related Studies

The review of related studies includes the studies about reading skills and

strategies, the significance and approaches of teaching reading skills and strategies.

<u>Reading Skills and Strategies</u>

Cabral (2002) performed research aiming to identify the main reading strategies applied by first-year college students during their daily academic learning tasks and their major difficulties. The research process consisted of a measuring frequency using Lickert scale questionnaire completed by 1,000 students from four of the main Portuguese state universities from science and engineering courses. Results indicated that among the strategies presented to the students the least used had to do with interaction with teachers and with quotations from books. The intermediate levels of usage were characterized by the presence of specific strategies of comprehension, which were directly related to the academic tasks and study habits (keyword detection, memorization of contents and new vocabulary through reading). The strategies with higher levels of usage were rereading, main ideas detection, and meaning analysis through context.

Block (1986) used think-alouds to examine the comprehension strategies used by college-level students-both English native speakers and nonnative speakers. Some of the strategies used by ESL and native-speaking readers in the study were described. Block classified reading comprehension strategies into two groups: *general strategies* and *local strategies. General strategies* included: anticipating content, recognizing text structure, integrating information, questioning information, interpreting the text, using general knowledge and associates, commenting on behavior or process, monitoring comprehension, correcting behavior and reacting to

the text. *Local strategies* include: paraphrasing, rereading, questioning meaning of a clause or sentence, questioning meaning of a word, and solving vocabulary problems. Block (1986) urges L2 reading researchers to investigate comprehension strategies in terms of "how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand" (p. 465)

Upton's study (1997) used tape-recorded think-aloud protocols to do a study on comprehension strategies use. An analysis of the strategies used by the L2 readers showed that the ESL group relied more on local, text-based strategies to attempt to gain understanding of the text.

Many research studies suggest that good readers possess a number of strategies to help their comprehension. Jiménez, García, and Pearson (1996) did research to examine the strategic reading processes of eight bilingual Latina/o children who were identified as successful English readers. Data were gathered using both unprompted and prompted think-alouds, interviews, a measure of prior knowledge, and passage re-calls. The data suggested that Latina/o students who were successful English readers possessed a qualitatively unique fund of strategic reading knowledge. means. The successful Latina/o readers used a variety of strategies, such as using context, invoking relevant prior knowledge, questioning, rereading, evaluating, inferencing, searching for cognates, and translating. The less successful Latina/o readers used fewer strategies and were often less effective in resolving comprehension difficulties.

The Significance of Teaching Reading Skills and Strategies

Improved reading comprehension skills can positively influence student's academic performance. Students who have effectively read and understood reading assignments are better prepared for class, leading to improved class participation and more accurate and complete notes. Performance on exams and quizzes may be greatly improved, as students become more proficient and effective readers. Student interest and motivation in a subject is often fostered when one understands the reading assignments. In addition, as students gain proficiency in reading, self-esteem improves (Muskingum College, n.d.). Reading strategy instruction improves reader's comprehension of texts; especially challenging texts, and strategy instruction has been reported to be beneficial for readers (Singhal, 2000). Teaching students to become active strategic readers can also help remediate the learning difficulties experienced by struggling readers (Schmidt, Rozendal, & Greenman, 2002). Therefore it is important to teach reading skills and strategies.

Song Mi-jeong (1998) did a study of strategy training for reading in an ongoing university foreign language reading classroom. The training method was modified from the procedure developed by Brown and Palincsar (1984), which involved four concrete reading strategies: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. The following research questions were addressed: "Does strategy training enhance the reading ability of EFL college students?" If so, "How is the effectiveness

of reading strategy training related to the reading proficiency of the students?"

"Which types of reading comprehension questions are affected by strategy training?"

Results showed that strategy training was effective in enhancing EFL reading, and

that the effectiveness of the training varies with L2 reading proficiency. The results

also indicated that students' performance on certain types of reading comprehension

questions was improved by the training method. These findings suggest that foreign

language reading pedagogy, especially for adult students in academic settings, should

include explicit and direct strategy teaching.

Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto's study (1989) specifically examined if strategy

training enhanced L2 reading. That study showed that two kinds of strategy tranining,

semantic mapping and the ETR (experience, text, relationship) method, both

improved reading comprehension scores. The results indicated that the control group,

which had no strategy training, did not have significant gains in their scores between

their pretests and posttests. The experimental groups showed significant gains in

scores.

Kern (1989) conducted a study to determine the effect of strategy training on

reading. One experimental group received explicit instruction in reading strategy use

in addition to the normal course content. The control group received no instruction in

reading strategy use. Data analysis revealed that reading strategy training had a strong

positive effect on L2 readers' comprehension. Those who had the most difficulties in

reading appeared to benefit the most from reading strategy instruction.

Studies based on reading habits have particularly focused on the importance of

the promotion of specific strategies: capitalize on the learners' interests, make reading

materials accessible, build a conducive environment, allow time to read in school,

provide significant adult models and use motivational techniques (Cabral, 2002).

Cabral (2002) states that the most successful readers understand and use a variety of

active study strategies to control and monitor their learning, apply particular strategies

only when appropriate, and explain the strategies they use, and describe whether or

not particular strategies prove to be useful in particular situations.

Hansen (1981) carried out a study to investigate the effects of two

experimental methods intended to improve inferential reading comprehension. One

experimental group received practice in pre-reading strategies and focused on

integrating text information and prior knowledge before reading. Another

experimental group received practice in answering questions which required

inferencing practice between the text and prior knowledge. Results of comprehension

questions revealed that the performance of the participants in both experimental

groups surpassed that of the control group.

Ahmad and Asraf (2004) studied the reading strategies used by good readers

and poor readers. The analysis of the verbal protocol data collected through a series of

face-to-face open-ended interviews suggested the importance of teaching

comprehension monitoring strategies in the teaching of reading comprehension skills.

The results indicated that reading teachers should improve the average and poor

readers' awareness and knowledge of comprehension strategies because an increase in

awareness of strategic knowledge would improve pupils' performances in reading

comprehension tasks. This study also suggested that reading comprehension instruction should be viewed as reflective reading that encourage process-oriented instruction which can foster the students' abilities to react critically to text.These studies show that it is important to have reading strategies training. Students are likely to benefit from reading strategies training.

Approaches to Teach Reading Strategies

After exploring what reading skills and strategies can be taught and the importance of teaching reading skills and strategies, it is necessary to examine how reading skills and strategies can be taught effectively.

Masuhara (2003, p.349) says "Skill/strategies training seems to be based on an assumption that conscious, explicit and direct teaching of strategies will eventually nurture automatic execution of reading strategies through practice." One of the most important goals of teaching reading is to help our students become strategic and independent readers. Nist and Holschuh (2000) summarized three components of strategy training: First, students should become familiar with a definition or description of the strategy. Students will use the strategies more effectively if they understand what the strategies are and why they work. Second, there must be an explanation of why the strategies should be learned because this is important for helping the students' self-control of the strategies. Third, the instruction of how to use the strategy should include both teacher modeling and direct instruction.

Direct instruction includes several steps: 1. Modeling the process. 2. Providing examples. 3. Practicing strategy use. 4. Evaluating strategy use. According to the cognitive apprenticeship method, the teacher in direct instruction should do the following steps: (a) model the strategy in an authentic activity, (b) support the students doing the task through scaffolding, (c) allow the students to articulate their knowledge and monitor the effectiveness of the strategy on their learning, and (d) gradually withdraw support so the students become proficient (Nist & Holschuh, 2002).

Pressley (2001) suggests that teachers should model and explain comprehension strategies, have their students practice using such strategies with teacher support, and let students know they are expected to continue using the strategies when reading on their own. He also suggests that such teaching should occur across every school day, for as long as required to get all readers using the strategies independently, which means including it in reading instruction for years.

Brown and Palincsar (cited in Singhal, 2000) report the results of research using a successful technique of instruction, reciprocal teaching, which is an example of explicit comprehension instruction. Subjects in this study were taught to use four key strategies: summarizing the main content, formulating potential test questions, clarifying difficult parts of the text, and predicting future content. An expert worked with the students to model how the strategies were to be used until gradually students assumed responsibility for using them on their own. Using such a technique, the test scores of poor readers improved dramatically. This study provided further evidence

that comprehension can in fact be taught. This study also suggested that current

instructional paradigms should include teacher modeling of specific reading strategies

for learning how to improve reading comprehension.

Research shows that an important aspect of reading development involves

understanding how and when to use strategies to facilitate comprehension and

learning (Schmidt, Rozendal & Greenman, 2002). Swanson (cited in Schmidt,

Rozendal & Greenman, 2002) concluded that the best strategy instruction should offer

a great deal of supervised student feedback and practice, show students when and

where to use the strategy, and teach students to monitor their own performance.

Song Mi-jeong's study (1998) has some suggestions for reading strategy

teaching: First, strategies should be taught through direct explanation, explicit teacher

modeling, and extensive feedback. In addition, students should be told what the

strategies are, where and when they can be used, and how they are used. More

importantly, they should be informed of the value and usefulness of strategies in L2

reading. Second, EFL readers, particularly less capable EFL readers, should be given

intensive and direct strategy training for a long period. As Gaskins (cited in Song,

1998) claims, teaching of strategies without direct explanation and explicit teacher

modeling for a short period would not have a long-term effect on students and

effectively help them develop as strategic readers.

Ballash (cited in Holloway, 1999) maintains that teachers should constantly

show readers the process of using reading strategies. She also states that to help

students develop metacognition, teachers must show them how reading strategies are

effective in improving their reading comprehension. Finally, she found that teachers must direct students to reread for meaning, provide plenty of content for language learning, and allow students to use a speaking vocabulary that is greater than their reading vocabulary.

From participants' think-aloud protocols, He Tung-hsien (2001) found out that in the particular EFL context where an authentic reading task is designated, participants would choose strategies to comprehend an English expository essay. This finding is consistent with Oxford and Cohen's claim (1992, p. 23) that "learning strategies do not operate by themselves, arising de novo every time to meet the need of a new and specific learning situation." Levine and Reves (1998) did a study try to find out to what extent the reader's word-treatment strategies are task-dependent. The results of the study show that word treatment strategies are dependent on the type of the reading task. In 'close reading', the skills of locating the unknown word and decoding it within the text is indispensable, while in 'global reading' these bottom-up skills are less needed for text comprehension. Therefore, different reading tasks in the reading material will decide the learner's strategies use. These studies implied that in teaching reading strategies is that there should be various reading tasks for students to practice reading strategies they already learned.

Nassaji's (2003) study claims that semantic processing is key to reading comprehension. Moreover, the study gives several suggestions for the teaching of reading skills. One way of encouraging the development of efficient component processing skills in L2 reading involves instructional exercises that are specifically

designed to target individual skills and their subskills. A more effective approach may be one that contextualizes the teaching of these skills for the learner. An example of this approach would be extensive reading, which encourages L2 readers to read as much as possible. Extensive reading may not only offer a meaningful and motivating context for reading, but also an opportunity for improving general language proficiency and consolidating syntactic and lexical knowledge. It may also enhance the development and the coordination of various subcomponent processes involved in word recognition, by providing a context in which the reader makes simultaneous and integrative use of these subcomponents in the process of understanding connected text.

Nuttall's reading skills places emphasis on discourse. Similarly, Camiciottoli's (2003) study support the idea that understanding metadiscourse can have a positive influence on comprehension. It will facilitate reading if the reader is able to identify some metadiscourse, such as textual metadiscourse (frame markers, code glosses, logical connectives, endophoric markers, and evidentials) and interpersonal metadiscourse (booster, hedges, person markers, attitude markers and relational markers).

Recognizing rhetorical structure is one of the text-attack skills mentioned by Nuttall. Sharp's (2002) study considers the effect on comprehension of different English rhetorical patterns. Sharp conducted an experiment in which four rhetorically different texts, with identical subject matter, were read by 490 Hong Kong Chinese school children (mean age 14.1), studying in English (their L2). The results showed a

clear difference in comprehension between the text types and suggest that pedagogical

support to increase awareness of rhetorical patterns would be beneficial. Carrell (1985)

did a study of the effects of rhetorical organization of different types of expository

prose on intermediate ESL readers of different native languages. The results indicated

that certain highly structured English rhetorical patterns are more facilitative for

non-native readers in general. The implication for teaching is that devoting reading

instruction to the identification of different discourse structure may be effective in

facilitating ESL reading comprehension. In another study, Carrell (1985) examined

the question of whether explicit teaching of text structure could facilitate ESL reading.

In this study, she carried out training on the top-level rhetorical organization of

expository text. The results showed that explicit teaching about the top-level

rhetorical organization of text could facilitate ESL students' reading comprehension.

According to the review of related studies, the approaches of teaching of

reading skills and strategies were regarded as the criteria for evaluating the teaching

in the selected coursebooks. The items in the checklist in the present study were made

according to the reading skills in the Three-Phase approach and Nuttall (1996).

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has included the theoretical framework of reading skills and

strategies. There are different ways of categorizing reading skills and strategies. The

review of studies shows that it is important to train reading strategies, as the teaching

of reading skill and strategies is likely to facilitate the students' reading comprehension. Students, especially, theose who have difficulties in reading, are likely to benefit most from reading strategies training. In addition, studies related to the approach of teaching reading skills and strategies have been reviewed. The process of teaching reading skills and strategies should include: direct explanation, examples, practice, and reflection or evaluation. Reading skills and strategies instruction should be included in material design and language teaching.