

Exploring Reading Strategies and Challenges of Bangla-Medium Tertiary Level Learners: A Phenomenological Study

By

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**A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in English**

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that,

- (1.)The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing my degree at Brac University.
- (2.)The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
- (3.)The thesis does not contain material that has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
- (4.)I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Learners: A Phenomenological Study”***

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Ethical Statement

The research study was conducted with all the ethical considerations that I could consider. I have described all the ethical considerations in Chapter 03, which is named after the research methodology section, in greater detail.

Abstract

Reading skills play a crucial role in language acquisition, and their development is approached differently across various educational levels in Bangladesh. Understanding how reading skills evolve can enhance the overall effectiveness of language acquisition. This study employed a phenomenological qualitative research design to explore reading skills among university-going Bangla medium tertiary-level learners. This study specifically focused on understanding how Bangla-medium background university learners utilize various reading strategies. In Bangladesh, the English language is treated as a foreign language at the primary and secondary levels of education. Most learners in Bangladesh primarily follow Bangla not only as their first language but also as the medium of study at the secondary and higher secondary level, given that it is their native language. After completing higher secondary education in Bangladesh, the learners usually pursue the tertiary level of education at various tertiary level of institutions. This study explored how Bangla medium tertiary-level learners in Bangladesh engage with assessment procedures in reading pedagogy and the challenges they encounter while implementing these techniques in their academic studies. A total of nine tertiary-level learners were selected as participants based on their lived experiences and educational backgrounds. Information was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation, and analyzing artifacts. Interviews were recorded with permission from the participants, transcribed, and then analyzed to answer the research questions. The results revealed that tertiary-level learners employ several reading strategies but encounter difficulties while implementing them in their academic lives. These strategies include skimming, scanning, summarizing, using the interactive model, decoding unfamiliar vocabulary, understanding complex grammar, and intensive reading. This study will be significant for various stakeholders including teachers, students, curriculum developers, policymakers, and future researchers. The findings will also be significant for curriculum development, teacher training programs, and textbook writing at various levels.

Keywords: reading skills; tertiary-level learners; reading pedagogy; reading implications; reading challenges; reading comprehension; Bangla medium background

Dedication

The dedication is the expression of a friendly connection or thanks by the author towards another person. It can occupy one or multiple lines depending on its importance. I dedicate this research study to my supervisor and my parents. Without them, I could not have completed the paper. Thank you for all your support and consistent encouragement throughout my thesis journey.

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my creator, whose uncountable blessing and benevolence have been instrumental throughout my academic journey.

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List of Acronyms

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
SSR	Sustained Silent Reading
DEAR	Drop Everything and Read
SQUIRT	Super Quiet Reading Time
WEB	Wonderful Exciting Books
DIRT	Daily Independent Reading Time
SIM	Strategy Invention Model
CIM	Cooperative Learning Model
TA	Thematic Analysis

Glossary

- Active Reading: A reading approach where learners engage with the text by questioning, summarizing, and making predictions to improve comprehension.
- Phenomenological Study: A qualitative research method that explores individual's lived experiences to understand their perspectives on a phenomenon.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

In this chapter, the overview of this study is introduced by first outlining the background of the research study, which sets the path of the importance of this research study to the readers, especially for both educators and every stage of learners. I also represent the purposes of this research study, the context of the tertiary level of education in Bangladesh, the methodological relationship between science and reading skills, and, lastly, the conclusion of this chapter.

1.2 Background of This Research

Over the last 125 years, much research has focused on understanding the process of reading. Understanding what happens from the moment our eyes meet the page to the “*click of comprehension*” has only been studied in the last 50 years (Nunan, 2003, p. 70). In terms of language teaching, skills are often discussed in four different modes: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. As a language skill, reading is clearly one of the most important; in fact, in many instances around the world, we may argue that reading is one of the most important language skills, particularly in terms of cases where the learners have to read in English materials for their own specialist subject but may never have to speak the language (McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara, 2013). From a language acquisition point of view, reading skills can be a major source of comprehensible input, especially in countries where English is rarely used outside the classroom (Krashen, 2004). In almost all societies in this world, one of the first things a learner is asked to do is to read (McDonough et al., 2013). Reading skills are essential for language learners to master the language skills after learning the native language. For learners to ensure success in any content class of a specialized subject, reading in English is necessary (Nunan, 2003). Reading is one of the language skills that stimulate the acquisition

of knowledge and the exchange of information in the language learning context (Liu, Chen & Chang, 2010).

1.3 The Purpose of This Research

People read for different reasons according to the purposes of their lives. Reading skills primarily depend on fulfilling our purpose in life. According to our purposes, reading processes will vary. Reading skills have been usefully categorized into three different purposes by Williams (1984). These three purposes include: (1.) getting general information from a text, (2.) getting specific information from a text, and lastly, (3.) for pleasure or interest.

In educational societies, the ability to read is one of the main drivers of language development. Although the importance of reading skills among learners has declined tremendously in the Bangladeshi primary-level and secondary-level educational system, it has actually increased for tertiary-level university learners. Hermida (2009) has stated that, in the academic context, the interaction between the university learners as readers and the ideas in the texts may not be effective. This is probably due to the fact that some university-going learners may lack the academic reading skills required for university-level reading, which is different from high-school reading. Previous research on learner's reading skills focused on many evolving concepts. Numerous studies have found that the traditional ELT materials placed more of an emphasis on vocabulary and grammar rather than they focused on reading comprehension as a whole. This confines the development of reading skills. Also, for learners to learn new vocabulary and grammatical structures, they are instructed to read only a few chosen written texts, which limits them to surface-level reading. The learning goals of these selected texts are for the structural usages that treat reading as a tool that limits the text authenticity, the development of critical thinking skills, the interaction between the reader and the text, the real-world experiences, active learning, and the development of reading comprehension.

Morgan, Farkas, and Wu (2012) investigated the connection between social-emotional adjustment and reading difficulties. They have discovered that children who struggled with reading were more likely to report feelings of anger, distraction, depression, loneliness, and unpopularity. Some studies have also focused on the evolving idea of one-way communication that happens when readers read texts in which they are unable to engage with the text. This traditional model fails to the fact that reading is an active process. By means of interaction between a reader and a text is that while reading the texts, the readers use their background knowledge, experiences, expectations, and connections, which influence their interpretation. Other studies have pointed out that reading is one of the complex developmental skills that engage with other developmental accomplishments. They are attention, memory, language acquisition, motivation, etc. (Bissex, 1989; Jackson, 1991). Lone (2011) described that reading is one of the most important components of language acquisition learning and an essential tool for lifelong learning for all tertiary-level learners.

1.4 The Context of Tertiary Education in Bangladesh

My personal experiences in this field as a Bangladeshi tertiary-level learner helped me to develop my research area. I have been studying both Bangla and English mediums of instruction. Therefore, I am familiar with the educational settings where this research study has taken place. In the school and college where I completed my primary and secondary education, I had to learn to treat English as a part of the process of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). However, in my tertiary education, which is my university years, I happened to learn English as a part of the process of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It made me wonder why the language learning skills are similar despite the fact that the processes differ significantly. Through the Bangla medium instruction, English has been treated as the foundational subject, not as a language learning acquisition point of view. In my university years, I have experienced how English language acquisition skills have been taught through

the Communicative Language Teaching approach. Furthermore, as a tertiary-level learner, I have discovered that it is extremely difficult for Bangla medium-background learners to adapt to university-level educational settings the moment when they are admitted to their university lives.

Erickson, Peters, and Strommer (2006) have supported the statement that professors generally take foundational academic skills for granted, as they tend to presuppose that all learners have already acquired these language skills either as a part of their secondary education or elsewhere during college. Nezami (2012) conducted a research study to investigate the university-level EFL learners of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). He found major problems regarding reading skills and comprehension of English while investigating, and the identified major problems were semantic problems, lacking motivation, limited self-study activities, hindrances in the skimming and scanning techniques, problems in the prediction and usages of prior knowledge, lack of interest in collaboration and group work, problems in pronunciation and spellings, limited vocabulary, problems in understanding meaning, lack of ability to summarize the text, and lastly, the dearth of extensive and intensive reading. Hermida (2009) on the importance of teaching reading skills in first-year university courses, has mentioned that in the academic context, the interaction between the university learners as readers and the ideas in the texts may not be effective. This is probably due to the fact that some university learners may lack the academic reading skills required for university-level reading, which is different from high-school reading.

People in all aspects of their lives require reading habits as one of the most important skills for professional success and non-professional success, particularly in this era of internet and technological competition, which is all the more reason to complete and implement the goal of this research study.

The aim of this research study is to investigate the reading pedagogy and the reading challenges that are faced by first-year university students in a developing country like Bangladesh being engaging with texts in their second language. This study further seeks to identify the strategies they have employed to adapt and improve their reading comprehension, with the goal of informing educators on how to better support and encourage especially tertiary learners in their academic transition.

1.5 The Methodology of Scientific Reading Skills

The “*Science of Reading*” is a phrase representing the accumulated knowledge about reading, reading development, and the best practices for reading instructions obtained by the use of the scientific method (Petscher et al., 2020). Recent psychological developments, such as functional MRI, or fMRI, identified that the left hemisphere frontal, temporal, and parietal regions are activated in reading tasks (Schlaggar & McCandliss, 2007). Because the human brain is not genetically “hardwired” for literacy development, learning to read and write requires the brain to co-opt other pre-literacy skills such as vision and language. When we learn new skills like speaking or reading, the primitive brain is recycled, and the allowed range of change is extremely limited. Such cognition provides insights into how learners, particularly those who are slow to learn, should be taught (Jung, 2019).

The Research of Cognitive Science indicates that 95% of children can learn to read, but rates of reading failure are typically around 30% (Snow, 2021). Wellington and Osborne (2001) have stated that reading is a scientific activity. They have pointed out that the ability to read in a careful, critical, and healthy doubtful manner is the basic feature of being a scientist, and the skill to read critically, carefully, and with a healthy skepticism is the main component of the literacy of science. Learners continue to view the reading skills as only part of finding the specific information from the texts to this day. Learners take less time in reading comprehension because it does not take that much mental skill (Wheeler, 2007). A learner has

to be a critical reader, and to do that; one has to inspect any argument of the text with valuable aspects. They are theoretical, practical, social, cultural, historical, logical, and personal aspects. For learners to prepare themselves in today's digital world of science and technology, a learner has to need a world-class education. Starting from preschool, children must learn to be able to think critically, integrate information correctly, and solve problems in upcoming new situations (Center for Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Education, 1998). Yu (2013) has proved that science literacy skills are built on new vocabularies, concepts, information, and phenomena. According to him, there are some existing factors that help the learners understand the complexity of scientific reading texts. These factors include (a.) the scientific language, (b.) the vocabulary, (c.) the organizational pattern of the text, (d.) the intrinsic motivation, (e.) reading without purpose, and lastly, (f.) the background knowledge.

1.6 Conclusion

English is widely recognized as the lingua franca globally in a variety of fields, including business management, information technology, computer science, nursing, education, software development, and so on (Byun et al., 2011). The English language as a global lingua franca represents a global exchange of information, development of knowledge, and prospects of career advancements and mobility (Montgomery, 2004). Kruseman (2003) has suggested that in today's world of the internet and technology, English should be the medium of instruction in each and every institution in this globalizing world because every learner has the right to pursue an international career in English as a language in the world of science and business. In 2024, many countries where English is not the first language already had a growing number of following English as a medium of instruction at the tertiary level. Coleman (2006) has referred to this phenomenon as the "Englishization of European Higher Education". He identified numerous significant characteristics that force the institutions to provide English-taught programs. The characteristics include Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL),

internationalization, exchange of students, research areas, teaching materials, staff mobility, graduate employability, and market research profit among international students (p.4). Due to the same purposes, the growing number of Bangladeshi learners have the desire to study using the English medium of instruction at the tertiary level of education. Despite the tremendous popularity of EMI, there has been little research on EMI among Bangladesh tertiary-level learners and their language efficacy.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review of this research study represents the summary of the reviews of the existing literature that focuses solely on the Bangladeshi tertiary-level learner's perspectives as well as the challenges they faced in developing their reading techniques. The reviews of the existing literature also convey the key themes of students' perspectives and the difficulties they encounter in their way of learning and applying reading comprehension. This literature review provides the need to understand the effective strategies for addressing these challenges for the sake of further improvements in their learning outcomes. In addition, the challenge of the curriculum of a foreign language in a country where another language is the national language makes it extremely difficult to fully understand the teaching method. Because teaching foreign language learning with the traditional teaching method is very challenging, which is also reviewed in this chapter. In conclusion, this chapter calls out that the overly traditional way of learning is innately difficult, especially for tertiary-level learners, to ensure their success in their professional lives.

2.2 Silent Reading

Modern reading is a silent, rapid, and solitary activity (Seanger, 1997). Multiple researchers have already proved that reading silently is strongly correlated with a learner's reading achievement (Jones et al., 2010). Jones also stated that the instructors set aside time for the learners so that they can be able to read in a silent manner. This approach of reading activity can be recognized as the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). This sustained silent reading has a few similar synonyms. They include: Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), Super Quiet

Reading Time (SQUIRT), Wonderful Exciting Books (WEB), and lastly, Daily Independent Reading Time (DIRT) (Jones et al., 2010).

During the activity of the silent reading, the learners can choose their desired books to be able to read in a silent manner. Along with the learners, the instructors can do the same as independently reading. When learners first learn to read, silent reading is the only option for them to practice daily so that they can enhance their reading skills as soon as possible. The silent reading activity creates the opportunity for the learners to read in the most comfortable, pleasurable, and desirable way (Gambrell, 1978). The ratio of reading practice to reading instruction should be as high as 80% of practice and 20% of instruction (Berglund and John, 1983). The silent reading activity depends on various elements such as inspiration and motivation, self-interest and self-choice, modeling and supporting the environment. For learners to continue to improve their reading skills, these elements are necessary (Nagi, Campenni, and Shaw, 2000).

Read, Relax, Respond, Reflect, and Rap - this is defined as the structured format of the sustained silent reading as (R^5). This R^5 resulted in the most important terms of reading comprehension, including the formal and informal assessments of wide reading and the metacognitive strategies. Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006) suggested three important facts regarding reading comprehension that both the learners and instructors should be focused on. Firstly, the learners should be monitored and guided about their reading habits in an intensive process by skilled teachers. Secondly, the instructors should also create new opportunities for the learners to share their ideas and discuss the text. And lastly, the instructors should be capable of promoting the application of metacognitive strategies in terms of reading comprehension.

Subedi (2022) has mentioned in his journal regarding reading skills that whether reading can be silent or oral, it all depends on the use of verbalization. He further explained that the act of receiving the messages which are written in the script is known as the silent reading. The purpose of silent reading is to enhance one's own reading habit, not to impress other readers. Silent reading does help to acquire the reading speed and also to improve the process of overall reading comprehension. In order to develop one's own reading skills for pleasure and interest, silent reading is no doubt a necessary reading activity.

In their journal article, Jones, Reutzel, and Newman, (2010) stated that independent silent reading has many key terms to reflect the learner's reading comprehension, specifically the silent reading activity. The key terms are: (a.) the learners should read independently in a silent manner, (b.) the learners should read any reading materials of their own choice, (c.) in the period of learners' independent reading, teachers should also read with the act of modeling, (d.) during school hours, a fixed time to read on a daily basis should be approximately 15 to 30 minutes, (e.) reading enjoyment should be the main point of independent silent reading, and lastly, (f.) the learners should be the ones deciding how much and what they read.

2.3 Skimming and Scanning

For tertiary-level learners, the skimming and scanning strategies are the necessary strategies for reading comprehension. In order for any text to look for any important and specific details, we need to quickly have our eyes move and find key points from the text to understand the main ideas. The skimming strategy refers to the main ideas of what the text offers, whereas the scanning strategy refers to the important points of what the text proposes. In a text for the tertiary level of learners, both strategies are equally important. For the skimming strategy, learners can understand what the text is about, and for scanning, learners can find the important information they want from the texts.

The skimming and scanning strategies are more effective strategies in terms of reading comprehension tasks. These two strategies have a positive impact on learners in the case of reading comprehension, especially in reading speed and getting the gist of reading. Also, these strategies are so helpful for reducing the time during the reading tasks (Fatmawan, Dewi, and Hita, 2023).

The skimming strategy is really faster than the normal reading. Liao (2011) has stated that the skimming strategy is important, and its speed is similar to three to four times faster than the normal reading. Learners do use the skimming strategy when they have a very limited amount of time, and in that little amount of time, they have to complete to read a lot of materials. Sutz and Weverka (2009) have stated that the skimming strategy is the only strategy that learners would like to use in order not to read the whole book but to understand and know the main points and major information.

Abdelrahman and Bsharah (2014) have narrated about the reading speed and that the skimming strategy is related to the reading speed. In order to improve reading speed, the skimming strategy is a necessary step, and for that, learners need to have patience, increase their concentration, and improve their memory and recall techniques. On the other hand, learners must be limited in using excess subvocalization, procrastination, stress, and interruptions. They also provide the learners with the skimming techniques that must be followed in order to improve good reading speed, and these are: (a.) in a text, first the learners should read the first sentence of the first paragraph; (b.) after that the learners should read the last sentence of the last paragraph, and lastly, (c.) in between, the learners should skim to find the main key points of the text.

Furthermore, they added the two skimming patterns. One is a formal pattern, and the other one is an informal pattern. They are: (a.) the formal pattern is the most common pattern in most

books, which is the long-involved sentences along with the long paragraphs. So, the learners should use the skimming strategy as mentioned above, and (b.) the informal pattern is only with short sentences along with the short paragraphs. So, in order to use the skimming strategy, the learners should only use the first two points that are mentioned above.

The scanning strategy is a completely different strategy from the skimming strategy itself. The learner's demand is to find only the specific meaning of the necessary information of a text, not knowing the meaning of the whole full text. The necessary information can be any important names, dates, places, objects, etc., depending on the genre of the text (Sutz and Weverka, 2009). The scanning strategy is the strategy meant for any important or specific details a learner wants to find in their desired texts. A learner does not need to read a whole text. If their only purpose is to find any important points of a text, they can apply the scanning strategy for it (Brown, 2003). Olson and Ames (1972) and Thamrin (2014) both have mentioned the scanning strategy procedure in their research journals, and the techniques are: (a) the learners should have to make sure to use the scanning strategy only to find out the particular information in a text they need, (b.) the learners should have to decide which clues would support the findings of the required information, and lastly, (c.) the learners should take a quick scan and sweep down the pages quickly to find out the clues. If the clues are found, learners should read that section to get the desired information needed.

2.4 Summary

For a learner to have both effective studies and effective reading comprehension, the summary strategy is probably the most significant and encompassing strategy among all the existing reading strategies (Corder-Ponce, 2000). It only focuses on the major points of the text, and with the summary technique, the learners can focus on the conceptual framework that stimulates memory and reading comprehension (Khoshsima and Rezaeian Tiyar, 2014).

The summary strategy is based on the Strategy Invention Model (SIM). It is the model that provides the learners with instructions on how to use the strategies in terms of their difficulty phase. The learners can learn the summary strategy using the SIM (Palinscar, 1987).

The summary strategy itself refers to identifying only the main and important ideas in a text, cutting non-important information, and simplifying the original concept in the learner's easily understandable way. It is the only metacognitive strategy that initiates a more comprehensive memory representation of the knowledge base. Many researchers have proved that since the nineties, the first language educational research provided that the summary strategy is a very effective strategy for broadly understanding the reading materials. It also influenced the second language learners. They gave a positive response to the summary technique. The most important feature of it is to paraphrase. The paraphrasing technique is the only technique for especially tertiary-level learners to understand the lengthy existing articles. The learners can always use the paraphrasing technique to write the author's point of view in their own words (Chiu, 2016).

There are a total of four types of paraphrasing ways in summary writing. These are: (a.) near copy, (b.) minimal revision, (c.) moderate revision, and (d.) substantial revision. The second language learners used the near copy paraphrasing type more than the first language learners. In contrast, the first language learners preferred the moderate and substantial revision of the paraphrasing type (Keck, 2006).

This is the only strategy that has a better positive impact than any other reading-related learning activity to improve reading comprehension (Chiu, 2016).

2.5 Reading for Discussion

The tertiary level learners are very grateful for group discussion, which greatly helps during class hours (Giri, 2003). During the group discussion, the learners could share their knowledge

with other peers and, at the same time, hear the opinions of other peers so that every perspective was transferred to each other. Hasnawati found in his journal article about the result mentioning that the small group discussion was so effective for the learners that they even witnessed their own improvement after having the discussion in the classroom (2004).

According to Brookfield (1990), in his book, *“The Skillful Teacher”*, he has mentioned that there are some advantages as well as a few disadvantages to the small group discussion strategy. The advantages of small group discussions are: (a.) to engage learners in exploring a range of perspectives and discovering new perspectives, (b.) to increase intellectual ability and to encourage active listening, (c.) to increase the learner’s interest and involvement with a topic, (d.) to show learners that their opinions and experiences are valued, (e.) to help develop a sense of group identity, (f.) to encourage democratic habits such as valuing participation, respect for others’ opinions, and tolerance of diversity, (g.) to create the opportunity to take the responsibilities that are appropriate for their intellectual abilities, (h.) to improve their ability to lead and be led by others, and lastly the group discussion is an excellent way to discuss and work together.

The disadvantages of small group discussions are: (a.) the group work often involves and prioritizes smart learners only, (b.) the small group discussion strategy needs some different arrangements of seats and teaching strategies, (c.) the successful strategy of the small group discussion is put on hold in order to allow learners to lead the group or work independently.

2.6 Multimedia Resources

Gunawan et al. (2023) have explained that Google has a website information feature named the Google Site, and both for instructors and learners, it is very helpful for teaching and learning purposes. For tertiary education, learning from Google is a secondary beneficial factor for individuals. With it, both the instructors and learners can simplify their understanding, find

research, edit their complexity, and interact by fulfilling their needs using multimedia resources as per their needs (Salsabila and Aslam, 2022). Farida and Indah have mentioned that an instructor can use Google Sites to help with the teaching process. They also mentioned that Google Sites is a great tool for educators and learners to use frequently with Web-based Digital Technology (2021).

Hyper-learning is a very good facility for learners to learn interactively and dynamically (Hedd and Ludwig 2020). It is far better than the traditional learning process for the tertiary-level learners. Hyper-learning is a teaching technique, and it reinforces the use of technology and multimedia resources so that learners would be able to prolong their experiences (Wilhelm et al., 1998). Various skills have already been applied in the hyper-learning technique. Some of the skills are spaced repetition, which is to recall information from memory to help intensify its' retention, active recall, chunking to break down a large amount of information into smaller chunks, visualization refers to creating images in the mind that help with visualizing, remembering, and understanding concepts well (Apriliyanti and Munir, 2024).

2.7 Scaffolding Strategy

Nguyen and Williams (2016) have stated that while completing a task given by an instructor, the instructor supports the learner with the scaffolding strategy, and the learner will not be able to complete the task without it. The instructors must be the ones to create the instructional methods so that they can introduce reading comprehension and reading strategies to the learners based on their learning preferences for English as a foreign language (Akramy et al., 2022). Peer scaffolding and instructor scaffolding are so helpful for learners to create a supportive environment and promote the learner's independence. The scaffolding strategy brings instructors and learners together so that tasks can be completed with their own efforts and guidance (Homayouni, 2022).

Fauziyah (2024), in her doctoral dissertation, has described the six importance of scaffolding. They are: (a.) the scaffolding strategy provides clear directions and reduces the learner's confusion, (b.) the scaffolding strategy clarifies the learner's understanding of the purpose and the importance of their tasks, (c.) the scaffolding strategy provides the learners the freedom to make decisions on prescribed tasks by the instructors, (d.) the scaffolding strategy clarifies expectations and delivers the assessments and feedback, (e.) the scaffolding strategy provides the learners with worthy and original resources, and lastly, (f.) the scaffolding strategy reduces uncertainty, surprises, and disappointments to make sure the learning is maximized.

Fauziyah (2024) has further mentioned in her doctoral dissertation the three stages of implementing the scaffolding strategy in teaching reading skills. The three stages are:

(a.) The Pre-Reading Stage:

In this pre-reading stage, the instructor's task is to select some suitable reading materials for the learners so that they can learn the suitable skills to become proficient readers. The instructors also briefly review the selected reading materials for the learners so that they can understand the overall view of the texts and study on their own later without any disruption.

(b.) The Reading Stage:

In this stage, the learners will start reading texts at their own speeds to improve their reading comprehension. In this stage, the learners will start summarizing their own words, finding important information from texts, understanding the author's point of view, reading aloud, re-reading difficult sections from texts, etc.

(c.) The Post-Reading Stage:

In this post-reading stage, the instructor will test the learners' reading comprehension by evaluating their capacity and how they interpret the reading materials in their own words.

2.8 Guessing the Overall Meaning of Words from Context

Guessing the overall meaning of words from the context is another way of reading skills that a learner applies in the classroom (Tahir, 2024). Shokouhi and Askari (2010) have stated that in order to teach and learn reading comprehension, the strategy of guessing the overall meanings of unknown words from the context is very useful. The learners mostly use this strategy when they do not understand a word or meaning. Then, the learners try to read sentences around the non-understandable word or sentence.

Patel and Jain (2008) have mentioned that the contextual guessing of the overall meanings of unknown words strategy is the strategy of guessing the unknown meaning of the unknown words or sentences. They also mentioned that the ability to guess the overall meanings from the context refers to the ability to think and connect the words with the context of the discourse. English as a foreign language learners can apply the strategy in and outside of the classroom. This strategy trains the learners to be able to recognize and understand the depth of a topic the Bangladeshi educational curriculum needs. The instructors choose descriptive texts as the reading materials for the learners because descriptive texts are a kind of fictional and non-fictional stories that will help the learners understand their rational depth. The descriptive texts tell stories about a series of chronological events that are interconnected with each other (Tahir, 2024).

2.9 Intensive Reading

Taembo has mentioned an important point of view of intensive reading, and that is, the aim of intensive reading is not only to help the learners obtain the detailed meaning of the text but also to enhance the vocabulary and grammar knowledge of the existing text (2024). He has also mentioned that intensive reading is the only approach for the learners to read the text very carefully to get their desired information. It allows learners to enhance their understanding of

the descriptive texts. In the intensive reading process, the learners choose to study shorter texts along with some close guidance from the instructors (Taembo, 2024).

The reading rate is dependent on intensive reading. Learners read slowly and accurately, observe, and understand every word and sentence to get the deeper meaning, and note down unfamiliar vocabulary and grammar to understand better comprehension in an intensive reading process. Taembo (2024) has further mentioned that intensive reading refers to silent reading that mostly comprehends the content of a text. The characteristics of the intensive reading process are: to begin with, the learners have a goal of gaining necessary information, and for that, they have to understand the general context of the text, such as the author's point of view, the grammar, the vocabulary, the sentence structures, the key points, and the discourse of the text. Secondly, the learners have to read the reading materials very carefully in slow motion so that they understand the depth and the credibility of the text, and lastly, the quality of reading comprehension, which the learners understand by simplifying the concept of the text and being able to answer the questions related to the reading comprehension (Taembo 2024).

2.10 Jigsaw Reading

Adams has proven the positive effects of the jigsaw method of reading in his research journal that he conducted, that is, the learners have improved their reading comprehension using the jigsaw method of reading (2013). The learners use the jigsaw method of reading to handle the descriptive texts effectively so that during their mastering of dealing with descriptive texts, they can make the learning more impactful and engaging (Karel et al., 2024).

Suryanti et al. (2024) have stated that the jigsaw method is a very effective strategy for building quality reading comprehension. He also mentioned that the jigsaw method of reading comes from the Cooperative Learning Model (CLM). In order to achieve the optimal learning outcome, this model encourages all learners to collaborate. They further explained that the

jigsaw method of reading not only improves the learner's reading ability but also enriches their overall learning experiences (2024). Cita (2009) has stated that the jigsaw method of reading is a very useful strategy for learners, and it can create active, creative, and enjoyable learning across many subjects. Suryanti et al. (2024) have provided many research journals that support the jigsaw method of reading and its enhancement to the learner's abilities in reading comprehension among various contexts in the world in his research journal article. They further explained that the jigsaw method of reading is the only strategy for the university-going tertiary-level learners to transform their curriculum into dynamic hubs so that the new innovative ideas and the research methodologies prosper among learners with the advanced technologies and they can cope with the digital world (Suryanti et al., 2024).

The jigsaw method of reading further offers the learners a structured format so that they can collaboratively engage with each other and present the reading materials to each other by sharing their different perspectives (Nuraeni, 2019). In the jigsaw method of reading, the learners will form a small group, and each member will be assigned a work to complete and share perspectives with the other group members. In conclusion, each and every person in the small group will exchange information with each other and their mutual understanding of a particular topic (Supeno & Suseno, 2020).

2.11 Decoding Unfamiliar Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a very important part not only in reading comprehension but also in the English language. In order to understand the text, the learners have to know the meaning of the majority of words. Without it, they cannot comprehend the text (Achamd and Sujarwo, 2022). The majority of the learners still face difficulty with reading comprehension, especially for the tertiary-level learners whose medium of instruction is primarily English as a foreign language. The vocabulary supports the language learning activities, and if the mastery of the vocabulary learning is poor, then that learner's reading comprehension will be poor too (Karel et al., 2024).

2.12 Conclusion

All the reviews of the literature reveal that Bangladeshi learners face significant challenges in vocabulary acquisition, decoding grammatical structures, pronunciation, understanding semantic mapping, schemata and background knowledge, and intensive reading process, primarily because of the limited exposure to the instructor's guidance, the lack of the technological accesses and the authentic texts, and the lack of understanding of using the right effective reading strategies at the right time. I also point out the limited resources on the Bangladeshi tertiary-level learners' perspectives and discovering their challenges in dealing with reading skills development. This review of literature discloses the in-depth exploration of the reading strategies that Bangladeshi tertiary-level learners engage with to develop their reading comprehension skills. The result will enlighten the intention of the chosen interviewees and the research questions that will evaluate the tertiary-level learner's reading practices and challenges.

Chapter 3

The Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The objectives of this research methodology section are to highlight the kind of research approach that has been conducted through the interviews I have taken personally. In this chapter, I have included the design of this research study, which is the phenomenological research design of the qualitative research approach, mentioned the central research questions, the semi-structured interview, narrated the selected participants' background information, talked about the way for conducting the data collection process and the data analysis, and lastly, the ethical considerations of this research study.

3.2 The Research Design

3.2.1 The Qualitative Research Approach

The research design refers to the plan that is conducted by the researcher. I have chosen the qualitative research approach to carry out this research study. Mantula et al. (2024) have revealed that the qualitative research approach is a very valuable approach for the higher degree of education because this approach allows the learners to experience a deeper understanding of the complex phenomena as well as provides learners with a detailed description of the experiences and valuable perspectives. The qualitative research approach also talks about the challenges faced by the learners because of the poor understanding of its potential and the lack of time and sufficient funding as well as proper guidance. Over the years, the qualitative research approach has become very significant among instructors and learners for its dynamic perspectives of the educational environment (Mantula et al., 2024). Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, and material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world into a series

of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3; Creswell, 2013).

3.2.2 The Phenomenological Research Design

I have chosen the phenomenological research design of the qualitative research approach. The phenomenological research design refers to the understanding of the lived experiences of the selected participants by the researcher, and in this research study, I have selected the participants according to their lived experiences and perspectives on reading comprehension skills and challenges faced by them while utilizing the comprehension techniques. The phenomenological data are the apprehensions of time, the lived experiences in which the temporal in the objective sense appears. One of the more distinctive characteristics of the phenomenological movement is its cultural pervasiveness. Its impact has been noticeable in studies on perception, psychology, psychiatry, ethics, religion, art, and education (Husserl, 2019). Hossain et al. (2024) have revealed that the phenomenological research design is a well-established research design that is oriented to get an in-depth understanding of the nature and meaning of the everyday lived experiences of the participants. Phenomenology itself is a broad term that focuses on people's subjective experiences. This approach sheds light on the selected participants by identifying the phenomena based on their lived experiences throughout their particular scenarios. In this research study, I have focused on the everyday lived experiences of the tertiary-level learner's reading comprehension strategies and their challenges during their application to their academic life. Due to the high similarity of the phenomenological qualitative approach with the selected participants' lived experiences, I have chosen to use this phenomenological approach.

3.2.3 The Semi-Structured Interview

I have followed the semi-structured interview process with the interviewees whom I have selected, and also, as part of the agreement the participants agreed to this research study. I have chosen this method because this data collection method focuses on some predefined questions, and following it comes with some follow-up questions depending on each participant's educational journey. The semi-structured interview helps the interviewees to go beyond the “what” questions and find a way of answering “how” and “why” questions in this qualitative research. A thorough understanding of the answers to “how” and “why” questions help the researcher to get a clear direction of the issued research (Hossain et al., 2024). Creswell et al. (2009) stated that through the semi-structured interviews, the researchers explored the participant's subjective experiences.

3.3 The Research Questions

The objective of this research study is to investigate the Bangladeshi tertiary-level learners' perspectives as well as to analyze the challenges that are faced in reading comprehension skills. To fulfill the objective of this research study, the researcher developed the two research questions that are followed by the research issues mentioned above.

(RQ.1.) In what ways do Bangladeshi university learners effectively practice reading comprehension strategies to enhance their academic success?

(RQ.2.) What challenges do they face while utilizing the reading comprehension techniques?

3.4 The Research Participants

For this research study, there are a total of nine participants selected by me. The nine of them are university-going tertiary-level learners from Bangladesh. They were all from the Bangla medium background. To keep their identity confidential, their original names and the profiles of the selected participants were switched to pseudonyms in Table 1 below.

Table 1***Information of the Selected Participants***

Number of Participants	Pseudonym	Gender	Profession	Educational Level	Name of the Institutions
1.	RAM	Male	Student	Bachelor	A University
2.	RIN	Female	Student	Bachelor	B University
3.	KAI	Male	Student	Bachelor	C University
4.	KEN	Male	Student	Bachelor	D University
5.	BEN	Male	Student	Bachelor	E University
6.	AKI	Female	Student	Bachelor	F University
7.	TEN	Female	Student	Bachelor	G University
8.	ZEN	Male	Student	Bachelor	H University
9.	ROY	Male	Student	Bachelor	I University

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Due to the qualitative research approach, I have collected the data through the one-to-one interview process. The interview was an in-depth and engaging discussion that allowed for a rich exploration of the topics at hand. I have also recorded the whole interview with the participants' permission. I have further noted down the important notes while interviewing them. All the interviewees were given interviews in both Bangla and English languages. Some of them spoke Bangla and English language together according to their comfort zone as I prioritized my participants' perspectives and experiences. I have thoroughly transcribed all the comments that the interviewees made during the interview session. I have also taken interviews

from each of my participants according to their suitable timetable so that the interviews could be fruitful as much as possible. Each interview took approximately 45 to 50 minutes. At the beginning of the interview, I asked some demographic questions such as age, educational background, medium of instruction, level of education, occupation, geographical location, etc., to provide a better understanding of the participants' background information. Through observing every participant's external and internal behavioral nature and choice of words, I changed the direction of the follow-up questions and asked the participants the way I needed the information. I have used a simple sentence structure to ask questions so that the participants could understand easily and would be more encouraged to provide more information whenever they felt comfortable. In the result section, I have selected the most important comments from the selected participants where I could prove only the main points issued throughout the central research questions. I have coded the themes according to the participant's perspectives and experiences. These thematic analyses are the results that make the readers understand clearly by analyzing the collected data and its connections to the research questions. The only issue that I faced during the interview process was managing the time, as the participants were tertiary-level learners who were busy with their academic lives.

3.6 Data Analysis

I have conducted a comprehensive analysis of the data using multiple sources, including in-depth interviews, recorded conversations, and observations of the interviewee's behaviors and choice of words. I have conducted an in-depth interview where I encouraged the participants to share their experiences and perspectives as thoroughly as possible. Additionally, I have also analyzed the recorded conversations so that I can go through the data as much as needed. Furthermore, I have observed the participant's body language, behavioral patterns, and choice of words. This provided valuable insights into the selected participants' deeper understanding of their responses.

The findings were analyzed using the thematic analysis. The thematic analysis (TA) is one of the most popular qualitative data analytic techniques covering the contextualization of the thematic analysis and the developing themes in terms of psychology, and the social and health sciences (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

A thematic analysis is involved with the initial analysis of data, coding of data, identifying the themes from analyzing the data, and lastly, the result section by analyzing the data (Rosairo, 2023). I have analyzed the data following some steps of thematic analysis. The first step is familiarization, where I have become familiar with the collected data. I also have read, re-read, and transcribed the data. The second step is coding, where I have coded the data by identifying the important statements made by the participants. The third step is theme identification, where I have combined the coding by putting together all the identified codes and grouping them into a theme that is directly linked to the research questions. The fourth step is theme reviewing, where I reviewed the themes by checking back on how well the themes went with the extracted coded data. The fifth step is theme labeling, where I have concentrated on the reviewed themes more precisely and cautiously. The last step of the thematic analysis is to write up where I have gathered all the codes and themes and sum up the information found in the data analysis (Rosairo, 2023). This structured approach allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives and the overall findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Maintaining all the ethical factors in this research study, I have compiled this qualitative research study carefully with ethical research practices. This included trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Gunawan has mentioned the trustworthiness of the qualitative research study. The journal said that trustworthiness becomes a matter of persuasion. It additionally mentioned that trustworthiness has been further divided into credibility, which corresponds roughly with the positive concept of internal validity;

dependability, which is related more to reliability; transferability, which is a form of external validity; and confirmability, which is largely an issue of presentation. Furthermore, the journal suggested that to ensure rigor and trustworthiness, qualitative researchers consider member checking, triangulation, detailed transcription, systematic plan, and coding (2015).

Before interviewing the selected participants, I explained the purposes of the research and let them decide whether they wanted to be a part of it or not. I have also pursued them by explaining that their interviews would not be disclosed to others, their identification would not be shared with anyone, their participation would not be forced, the research would maintain the participant's anonymity and confidentiality, the research would not disclose their real name but use a pseudonym to protect their specifications, their recorded conversations will not be shared to anyone and thus I made sure that their privacy is protected and this research study did no harm to anyone by maintaining these ethical considerations.

3.8 Conclusion

The research methodology follows the qualitative research approach because the qualitative research's focal point focuses on the participant's lived experiences on a complex phenomenon where a participant speaks their own perspective to prove that complex phenomenon. The research methodology follows the phenomenological research design, and this design happens to focus solely on the lived experiences of a participant's in-depth understanding of a complex phenomenon. I have taken the semi-structured interview where, according to a participant's behavioral nature, choice of words, and individual experience, he or she had to ask some follow-up questions to be able to get the desired information. Finally, I have discussed the data collection and the data analysis procedures and how they have contributed to a better understanding of the trustworthiness and believability of this research study.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

This result part of this research study represents the research findings that investigate the Bangladeshi tertiary-level learners' perspectives as well as the significant challenges they have encountered while dealing with reading comprehension skills. This result is divided into two major sections, depending on the research questions. One section is for the application of the reading comprehension strategies that are followed by Bangladeshi tertiary-level learners. Another section is for the difficulties the Bangladeshi tertiary-level learners face while applying reading comprehension strategies in their educational lives.

4.2 Application of Reading Comprehension Strategies by Bangladeshi Tertiary Learners

4.2.1 Skimming and Scanning Strategies

Both the skimming and scanning strategies are the speed-reading strategies. At every stage of learners, these strategies help them quickly find out the main ideas in a short period of time. Both skimming and scanning strategies need to be executed not only for educational success but also for professional success. These techniques are time savors and help them to improve language learning comprehension. Among the selected participants who have been using these two strategies, they have shared their opinions as university-going tertiary-level learners.

One of the participants from B University, called Rin in Bangladesh, shared her experiences of using both skimming and scanning strategies. She said,

Using the skimming and scanning strategies in the text helps me to remember the main and important points of what I have been reading, have a clear purpose for reading, and

use colorful highlighters to highlight the unfamiliar vocabulary to write down the English meaning so that I can review whenever I want. This keeps me focused and easily understand what I am reading.

Another participant named Kai from C University was opinionated about using both the skimming and scanning strategies. He said,

Before reading, I usually skim the text to get an overview and identify the main ideas. I also scan for keywords or headings to guide my focus. This helps me to understand the structure and purpose of the text, making it easier to grasp the details as I read through it. When reading academic texts, my primary goal is to understand the overall argument first. Once I have the main idea, I focus on the specific details to support and clarify the argument, which helps me to see the bigger picture more clearly. To enhance my understanding of especially difficult readings such as complex literature or novels, I highlight key points and write brief summaries in my own words. This helps me process the information and makes it easier to review later.

Ken, another tertiary learner from D University, mentioned both using scanning and skimming strategies during the interview session. He said,

Before reading, I often skim through the text to get a general idea of the topic and structure. This helps me know what to expect and prepare for the key points. Sometimes, I scan for specific information if I am looking for something particular, which saves time and improves efficiency.

At F University, a tertiary learner named Ben shared his viewpoints about using both skimming and scanning strategies. He said,

I use strategies like skimming and scanning to improve my comprehension. Skimming helps me to get an overview of the materials by quickly going through the introduction,

conclusion, headings, and subheadings. This gives me a general idea of the main arguments or themes, which prepares me to read more deeply. Scanning, on the other hand, is useful when I am looking for specific information, such as a particular term or concept. It allows me to locate key details quickly without reading the entire text. These strategies help me focus on important content, manage my time efficiently, and make the reading process more targeted and less overwhelming.

According to Liao (2011), the skimming strategy is important for every learner, and its speed is normally three to four times faster than normal reading. Learners prefer using the skimming strategy when having to deal with a lot of reading materials in a short period of time. In order to avoid reading the whole book and only understand the main points and major information, skimming and scanning are both the best strategies for tertiary-level learners (Sutz and Weverka, 2009). To save time, not to read the whole text, only have to know the necessary information, the scanning strategy is only the best strategy to apply (Brown, 2003).

4.2.2 Summary Strategy

Almost all the participant's common strategy is the summary strategy. The summary strategy is a very powerful technique for learners at every stage who have a very limited time and want to conquer a large amount of reading comprehension within a short period of time. The summary strategy also enhances retention by identifying the key information from a large text, developing critical thinking by pointing out the important details and distinguishing between the most important and the less important details.

One of the participants, Rin from B University, shared her viewpoints about using the summary strategy. She said,

Making summaries helps me to remember the main and important points of what I have been reading, and having a clear purpose for reading keeps me focused and easily

understand what I am reading. My instructor also suggested that after reading each section of a text, I pause to write a quick summary.

Another participant named Kai from C University mentioned multiple times about the summary strategy in the interview session. He said,

I focus on active note-taking and summarizing materials. I always summarize what I have read after finishing a section of an article. These methods help me understand concepts, improve my English, and gain confidence. It helps me reinforce my understanding and makes the key ideas clearer so I can easily remember and connect them to other concepts later. Furthermore, to enhance my understanding of difficult readings, I highlight key points and write brief summaries in my own words. This helps me process the information and makes it easier to review later.

One of the participants from D University, Ken, also followed the summary strategy and mentioned positive statements about using it during the interview session. He said,

Yes, I do summarize after finishing a section or an article. This helps me reinforce what I have read, ensures that I have grasped the main ideas, and makes it easier to remember and review the materials later. It solidifies my understanding and enhances retention.

Another participant from the E University named Ben shared his perspectives about the summary strategy during the interview session. He said,

Summarizing passages in their own words and translating key sections back into Bangla initially can reinforce understanding. I summarize sections in my own words after each reading, which helps me clarify and retain the main ideas. I sometimes refer to online summaries or videos for extra content when the material is particularly challenging. These strategies helped me stay focused, ensured deeper comprehension, and made it easier to review the content later. I then read more carefully, making notes and

summarizing sections as I go to ensure understanding. I summarize what I have read after finishing a section or an article. This helps me with my comprehension by allowing me to process and consolidate the key ideas in my own words. Summarizing forces me to focus on the most important points, which enhances my understanding and retention of the materials. It also helps identify any gaps in my comprehension, allowing me to go back and re-read sections that were unclear. By summarizing, I ensure that I have truly grasped the materials, and it makes reviewing easier later on.

From H University, the participant named ZEN talked about his experiences with using the summary strategy throughout the interview session. He mentioned,

I always use online summaries to help me understand the main and important ideas. Summarizing helps reinforce the ideas, and I can remember it well. I usually research these references online, and if I get any, I usually copy them, paste them into my memory, and summarize them in my own words. I really enjoy summarizing main parts, marking them with highlighters, and taking notes of important details.

A tertiary-level learner needs to summarize the text or any sections of the text or the article so that in their busiest time, they can only focus on the main points and conceptual framework that stimulates memory and reading comprehension (Khoshsima & Rezaeian Tiyyar, 2014). The paraphrasing technique is an important element for tertiary-level learners to understand long and dense articles. Learners can always use paraphrasing to write in their own words using the author's point of view. Summarization is the only strategy to focus solely on the main and important ideas in a text, cutting unnecessary information and simplifying the original text in the learner's easily adaptable way (Chiu, 2016).

4.2.3 Interactive Model Strategy

The interactive model emphasizes both top-down reading and bottom-up reading approaches. The top-down reading process refers to understanding the reading materials with background knowledge, guessing the meaning of the context of reading materials, and paraphrasing the text using their own words based on their own perspectives. The bottom-up reading process indicates decoding every unfamiliar word to understand the overall meaning. This model prioritizes the close interaction between the text and the reader. A reader's prior knowledge, perspectives, and experiences play a very important role in their understanding and interpreting the texts.

One of the participants, named Ken from D University, gave his view about the strategy of the interactive model during the interview session. He said,

My instructor recommended active reading strategies, such as highlighting key points, underlining unfamiliar words, and summarizing paragraphs in my own words. One example is that when reading case law, my instructor advised me to write a summary briefly of each case, including its key facts and ruling. When reading academic texts, I first understand the overall argument and find key ideas. I use active strategies like annotating the text, summarizing paragraphs in my own words, and discussing the materials with peers and instructors for clarification. I am also focusing on making predictions to connect with other ideas. This approach helps me focus on the essential parts and improve my overall understanding of the material.

Another participant from E University named Ben shared his perspectives on using the interactive model strategy during the interview process. He said,

Effective learning methods include pre-reading materials to build vocabulary, taking structured notes like Cornell notes for clarity, and actively engaging in class discussions

to reinforce comprehension. Forming study groups with peers helps simplify complex concepts and strengthen both content understanding and language skills. Using visual aids such as diagrams and videos makes learning more interactive while paraphrasing materials in simpler English ensures a deeper grasp of the topic. Regular visions and self-assessment solidify learning and seeking additional resources offers diverse explanations that clarify challenging ideas, making the EMI experience more accessible and enriching.

The interactive model of reading has three principal aspects, according to Birch (2007). The first aspect is that to accomplish reading-based comprehension, both the top-down and bottom-up reading approaches need to interact closely with each other. The second aspect is in order to interact with written text with the reader's prior knowledge, and the readers need to understand the messages through the interaction with the text. The last aspect is that the readers have to interact with the written text indirectly by trying to understand the message by what the writer wants the readers to understand and paraphrase the meaning on their own (Gamboa, 2017). The participant's experiences, including active engagement with reading materials, constructing meaning, social interaction, note-taking, paraphrasing, metacognitive strategies, and technological resources- all go with the characteristics of the interactive reading model.

4.3 Difficulties Bangladeshi Tertiary Learners Face While Utilizing the Comprehension Techniques

4.3.1 Difficulty in Decoding Unfamiliar Vocabulary

Among all the difficulties the researcher found throughout the interview, the difficulty in decoding the unfamiliar vocabulary is the universal difficulty most of the participants have endured while applying reading comprehension in their academic lives. Unfamiliar vocabulary can be a huge hindrance not only to reading comprehension skills but also to language

acquisition skills. Unfamiliar vocabulary refers to certain words that are not usually known to the readers. Decoding these unfamiliar words means breaking down the words into groups of words and understanding the structures used in sentences. For some learners, this technique is quite challenging because of the lack of background knowledge, the lack of pronunciation, and the lack of an extensive reading approach, which makes it harder to grasp reading comprehension skills.

One of the selected participants, Kai from C University, shared his experiences with vocabulary difficulty throughout the interview session. He said,

Unfamiliar words disrupt my reading flow because I often have to pause, look them up, and re-read the sentence. This breaks my focus and makes it even harder to keep up with the overall content. I often struggle with complex sentence structures and technical jargon in academic texts. It takes time to decode these and fully grasp the meaning, especially when the text is dense or highly technical. These can make it hard to grasp the main points, so I have to break the text down and sometimes look up terms to fully understand it.

From D University, the other participant named Ken also talked about his viewpoints on the vocabulary difficulty he faced occasionally during the interview session. He said,

I find academic texts and research articles harder to understand, especially when they use complex jargon or specialized terminology. Legal or scientific materials are particularly challenging due to the technical language and dense structures. These types of readings often require more time and additional resources to fully comprehend. I keep pausing to look up meanings. This can break my concentration, but I try to quickly look up the words and return to the text to keep the flow going. These often require me to read sections multiple times or look up definitions. The advanced vocabulary can be

hard to follow in one read. This can make the main idea unclear and disrupt my comprehension.

Another participant named Ben from E University went through the same difficulty. He said,

I find certain types of reading materials harder to understand, especially dense theoretical texts and highly technical papers. For example, philosophical articles with abstract concepts and complex language can be challenging, as they often require multiple readings to fully grasp the idea. Similarly, scientific research papers with technical jargon and detailed methodologies are tough to understand, particularly when they include complex data analysis and advanced statistical terms. The texts in fields outside my own area of study, such as legal or medical literature, are also difficult due to their specialized language and assumptions about prior knowledge. When I encounter a word, I do not know, I may pause to try and infer its meaning, which can break my concentration. If I need to look the word up in a dictionary or translation tools, it can take me out of the flow of the text and slow down my overall reading speed. This interruption can be especially noticeable when reading dense or technical materials, where every word feels important to the overall understanding. To minimize this disruption, I try to rely on context first and only look up words when absolutely necessary. Academic texts often use specialized terms and formal language, which can make it difficult to fully comprehend the content without frequent references to a dictionary or any other sources.

ZEN from H University faced difficulty in decoding unfamiliar vocabulary and mentioned that during the interview. He said,

I find literature terms very hard. I do not feel motivated after seeing this. For me, it is hard to keep a decent grade. I think that literature is not for me as the reading materials are really hard for me to grasp. One specific reason is that I am from a Bangla medium background. Some students from A and O levels are performing very well in the class. I feel more demotivated. English is not my first language. So, I had to use a dictionary to find out the meanings. I had to take a literature course to complete my credit. It always hinders my pronunciation and the reading flow. I usually rely on texts to understand the meaning as not all words can be understood within a short period of time of my graduation.

These findings are related to the article, which demonstrated that the vocabulary part is very important for tertiary-level learners. Without it, they cannot comprehend the text (Achamdi & Sujarwo, 2022). If a language learner does not have a mastery of vocabulary learning acquisition, then the learner's reading comprehension will be poor, too (Karel et al., 2024)

4.3.2 Difficulty in Decoding Complex Grammatical Structures

After the difficulty of the unfamiliar vocabulary, decoding the grammatical structures is the second most important difficulty, especially for tertiary-level learners, because sentence structure is the most basic and the hardest element in language learning. Like in the case of decoding unfamiliar vocabulary, most of the participants face challenges while dealing with mostly complex grammatical structures. Learners who have weaker cognitive abilities face difficulties in memorizing grammar rules, writing difficulties, and difficulty in understanding the functionalities in sentences.

The participant from C University named Kai mentioned his experiences with the difficulty of grammar during the interview session. He said,

For me, I always have confusion with complex sentence structures. Sometimes, I find highly technical and long and dense texts challenging. I often struggle with complex sentence structures and technical jargon in academic texts. It takes extra time to decode these and fully grasp the meaning, especially when the text is dense or highly technical. These can make it hard to grasp the main points, so I have to break the text down and sometimes look up terms to fully understand it. Complex sentence structures in academic texts often make it harder for me to follow the main idea. I have to pause and re-read to figure out the relationship between clauses, which slows down my comprehension and makes the materials feel more difficult.

One of the participants from D University, Ken, also mentioned his viewpoints about the difficulty of grammar during the interview session. He said,

The difficulties I face when trying to understand academic texts in English include complex vocabulary, dense sentence structures, and unfamiliar topics. Also, understanding specialized terminology and complex sentence structures can make it difficult to fully grasp the meaning. These often require me to read sections multiple times or look up definitions. Complex sentence structures in academic texts often make it harder for me to understand the materials due to the multiple clauses and advanced vocabulary, which can be hard to follow in one read. This can make the main idea unclear and disrupt my comprehension.

The participant named TEN from G University mentioned her point of view on the difficulty with grammar during the interview session. She said,

In university, there are many comfortable and distraction-free places to read, and I can take breaks and read loudly. I still feel challenged by complex grammar and unfamiliar

vocabulary. Yes, I find certain materials harder to manifest. They are vocabulary, tense, and grammar.

Another participant from H University named ZEN mentioned his standpoint on the grammatical difficulty during the interview session. He said,

Especially complex words and the way literature is written with complex sentences. Sometimes, I cannot complete my homework because of my lack of background knowledge, and sometimes, I cannot come up with good conclusions because I do not understand the meaning based on the context.

The relationships between reading skills and grammar and syntax indicate that the grammatical structure is a systematic set of regulations that dictate the customary organization and correlation of words within a sentence (Ke et al., 2024). For the assistance of language acquisition learners, a good command of complex grammar is very significant for constructing especially effective and meaningful sentences (Gao Gaimei, 2020).

4.3.3 Difficulty with Intensive Reading

Intensive reading is a very broad approach to reading comprehension. Extensive reading is the complete opposite of the intensive reading approach, as this approach solely focuses on pleasure and interest in reading skills. Every single word of a passage needs to be thoroughly understood by a reader, and this is only possible with the intensive reading approach. In order to develop critical thinking skills, language acquisition skills, and comprehension skills, the intensive reading approach is a must. The readers need to be deeply engaged with the texts to understand the texts' key messages and literary meaning. Unfortunately, many learners from the tertiary level find the intensive reading approach harder to manifest.

One of the participants from C University, and the name of the participant is Kai, shared his experiences with the difficulty of the intensive reading approach during his interview session. He said,

I find research papers with texts with heavy technical jargon harder to understand, especially in subjects like advanced literature, pure linguistics, and philosophy. The dense language and complex ideas can slow me down. So, I often have to re-read and look up terms.

Another participant named Aki from F University shared her viewpoints on the difficulty of the intensive reading approach during her interview session. She said,

I have improved my reading speed and reading comprehension during the four years of my bachelor's degree, but to this day, I face challenges in dealing with complex theories.

The other participant from H University and the name is Zen, shared his perspective on the difficulty of the intensive reading approach during his interview session. He said,

For me, having difficulties with understanding literature terms takes too much time. When I read scientific research papers, I feel it is easier for me. Reading in English takes more time when I read literature texts. As for Bangla, it does not take that much as it is my first language.

Westwood (2008) pointed out the six main strategies of how a learner can implement the intensive reading approach in the classroom. These six strategies include (a.) the learners need to self-monitor first in reading for understanding, (b.) the learners should find out the main idea within the paragraph, (c.) the learners can deliver self-question when reading, (d.) the learners should make references and connections within the texts and the background knowledge, (e.)

the learners should retell key pieces of information such as restating the gist of paragraph within the text, and lastly, (f.) the learners should learn to summarize the key points within the texts.

4.4 Conclusion

These are the findings that I have received from the majority of participants during the interview questionnaire sessions. Out of all the results, these four are the most received ones every participant as a tertiary-level learner would point out. The result shows that university-going tertiary-level learners would like to use skimming, scanning, and summarizing strategies in every aspect of their academic purposes. As a tertiary-level learner, many participants' common challenges are decoding unfamiliar vocabulary and complex grammar that are highlighted according to the data analysis procedures from the transcriptions of the selected participant's interview. This can clear the intention of the research questions that will evaluate the tertiary-level learner's reading comprehension skills. Some even stated that understanding technical jargon and literature terms slows down their comprehension to a certain degree.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

I have focused on the investigation of the tertiary-level learners' perspectives on reading comprehension skills and the challenges they have employed while analyzing throughout this research study. The above-mentioned results provided some significant perspectives of the selected tertiary-level learners as participants dealing with some reading comprehension strategies and some enticing challenges. This discussion part informs the readers about the strategies related to the research questions, the challenges related to the research questions, the limitations of the research, and lastly, the recommendations for the practical implications.

5.2 Specific Strategies Applied by Tertiary-Level Learners

The research participants in this study followed some reading strategies according to their reading comprehension level. The skimming and scanning strategies help them to find the important points and main ideas. These strategies help them to focus, keep them on track, fully grasp the idea of reading materials, know the clear purpose of reading texts, save time, and improve efficiency and reading speed. Another strategy the participants usually use is the summary strategy. They said online summarizing helps them to understand the content better, have a clear purpose for reading, understand the concepts, gain confidence, make the ideas clearer, enhance retention, and improve knowledge. The other strategy is the interactive reading model, which emphasizes close interaction by combining the top-down and bottom-up reading approaches. By combining these two reading models, learners can build vocabulary, develop critical thinking, and enhance reading comprehension at full length.

These are the most used strategies the selected tertiary-level learners have applied based on their reading comprehension in this research study.

5.3 Major Challenges Faced by Tertiary-Level Learners

The results of the research study revealed that the majority of the tertiary-level learners that I have chosen for this research study are informed of the most difficult challenges they faced while utilizing reading comprehension strategies in their academic lives. Most of the opinionated difficulties are facing unfamiliar vocabulary, complex grammatical structures, and intensive reading.

All the selected participants reported that these specific obstacles had occurred severely when applying reading strategies. From their point of view, because of unknown vocabulary and complex grammar, they faced issues in understanding literature, complex terminology, and literary terms. They found reading materials harder to manifest. They expressed frustration with the statement that reading in English was often time-consuming. They further mentioned that understanding difficult meanings hindered their overall comprehension.

These difficulties demonstrate the need for targeted instructional strategies that highlight the importance of the tertiary-level learners' perspectives and experiences in this research study.

5.4 The Limitations of This Research Study

Like all the other research studies, this research study also has some literature gaps that I should think about and what will be addressed in future research.

This research study only focused on the university-going tertiary-level learners who came from the Bangla medium educational system. I have only targeted a very small tertiary-level group of learners intentionally due to the limitations of time. Future research should be focused

on the diversity and the backgrounds of other fields of learners to gain a more comprehensive understanding and enrich more potentially educational strategies and practices.

Another literature gap of this research study is the biases related to the research participants' self-made experiences where they have provided their opinions that are related to the research questions. The self-made experiences come from personal beliefs, influenced by other people, and a sense of familiarity with the research topic. Future research should be included with more technology-based experiences to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

This research study only explored reading skills, which is one of the four primary language learning acquisition skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Future research should also be well-focused on language-related issues such as language policy where languages are deeply focused, curriculum design that determines the context of the program of a language, material design that explores various teaching resources, multicultural classrooms that explore diversified linguistic and cultural norms, and so on. That would boost the learner's confidence and provide more insights into the findings.

Future researchers should work with these limitations of the current educational system so that more and more learners and instructors would benefit from this and help change the educational system for a better and technologically supportive academic environment.

5.5 The Recommendations for The Practical Implications

The Bangladeshi institutions should include in the curriculum the strategies related to the reading module, such as critical thinking, grammar acquisition, vocabulary acquisition, free writing, organizing reading activities such as book reading clubs, debate competitions, using multimedia resources such as educational apps, visiting practical workplaces such as

educational institutions to meet and explore diversified learners, and creating and collaborating language acquisition clubs to explore various teaching and learning resources.

In modern scientific education, using technology is one of the most important tools to succeed in the long run. In order to learn independently, the institutions and their instructors should provide tertiary-level learners with corporate training sessions and opportunities to build good relationships with higher associates so that they can easily implement the experiences in their academic and professional lives. The instructors should create more and more collaborative learning in the curriculum design such as small group discussion, group work, pair work, opportunities of getting desired supervisor, mentorship, and peer tutoring, and also include collaboration into the academic courses offered by the institutions before designing a course so that the tertiary-level learners would be able to recognize their potentials by getting the technological supportive classroom environment.

The tertiary-level learners would benefit from these significant recommendations as these would broaden the learners' perspectives and create a border goal of succeeding in their academic life.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter describes the detailed descriptions of the lived experiences of the selected tertiary-level learners of the reading practices they consistently engage in nearly every day and the challenges they frequently face while dealing with reading comprehension. The themes identified as very common strategies among tertiary-level learners include the skimming strategy and scanning strategy, both specialized in finding information quickly, the summarization strategy that makes complex materials easier to manifest, and the difficulties in decoding unfamiliar vocabulary and complex grammar that are the critical barrier to their educational growth. I have found that there are obvious research gaps in vocabulary acquisition

and complex grammar acquisition that often interfere with the learners' academic growth. The instructors should be more collaborative with the tertiary-level learners' academic progress. The results of this research study showed that the tertiary-level learners had recognized the difficulties they faced, mostly dealing with reading comprehension and the strategies they usually engaged in their educational lives.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This research study explored the tertiary-level learners' perspectives and discovered challenges in reading comprehension skills at their tertiary level of education. The results of this research study played a big role in creating the transcriptions of the interview, discovering the applied strategies, and also discovering the difficulties that are demonstrated by the tertiary-level learners through the transcriptions of the interviews and the observation protocols.

6.2 The Summary of the Thematic Findings

A learner's self-confidence coming from a Bangla medium background is often crushed when they are admitted to an institution where the primary medium of instruction is English. Those Bangla medium background learners struggle mostly in such an institution where they have to always compete with those learners coming from the English medium background. From this research study, the tertiary-level learners mostly struggled with unfamiliar vocabulary and complex grammatical phenomena, which slowed their reading flow and disrupted their overall comprehension. Through these complexities, the tertiary learners faced difficulties in many ways, such as understanding context, pronouncing the difficult words, and understanding the semantic mapping. Moreover, the lack of schemata and background knowledge also caused tertiary-level learners to have those issues while comprehending reading skills. The cultural knowledge also created tension between the tertiary-level learners and academic texts as some learners faced cultural barriers and unintentionally suffered because of it. Despite all the existing barriers, the selected participants adjusted their learning environments with their convenient strategic skills of reading. They are the skimming strategy for finding main ideas, the scanning strategy to find specific information, the summarizing

strategy for easier understanding, the group discussion technique for understanding other perspectives, the guessing meaning from context technique, the intensive and extensive reading approaches, the top-down, bottom-up, and interactive reading models, the jigsaw reading model, and lastly, the scaffolding technique. Despite getting the faculty's and peers' help, all of the participants used the reading comprehension strategies to some degree. It shows that tertiary-level learners have both positive and negative attitudes towards reading comprehension skills. The tertiary-level learner's aptitude is dependent on the instructor's attitude, the content of the courses offered by the instructional institutions, and the overall learning environment of the institutions.

6.3 Conclusion

Therefore, further research studies on the perspectives of developing reading skills according to the diverse learners' learning perspectives need to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the tertiary-level learners' reading pedagogy and analyzing challenges were the ultimate focus of this research study. I have successfully filled the gap in the existing knowledge through this research study to demonstrate the importance of reading comprehension skills and the challenges faced by learners at the tertiary level of education in Bangladesh.

Chapter 7

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Appendix A.

Sample Interview Questions

1. What is your full name?
2. What is your nationality?
3. Did you finish your secondary education in Bangladesh?
4. What was the teaching medium?
5. What year of study are you currently in?
6. What is your major or area of study?
7. Did you attend a Bangla medium, an English medium, or any other type of university?
8. What is your first language?
9. What did you choose to study in this EMI program?
10. In EMI classes, what are some of your learning methods?
11. How do you think your reading skills have changed since you started university?
12. Are there areas where you still feel challenged?
13. When students move from Bangla to English medium instruction, what adjustments or resources do you believe would help them become better readers?
14. Have you sought help from teachers, peers, or online resources to assist with your reading in English? If so, how did that help you?
15. What strategies have you developed or used when dealing with long and dense texts, and how did that help you to improve your reading comprehension in English?

16. Do you find any types of reading materials harder to understand? Explain with examples.
17. Do you find that reading in English takes more time than reading in Bangla? Explain with reasons.
18. Have you ever encountered cultural references in your readings that are unfamiliar to you? How does this affect your reading comprehension?
19. Do you experience mental fatigue while reading in your second language? How does this affect your reading comprehension?
20. What strategies do you use before reading a text to improve your comprehension? How does this help to improve your reading comprehension?
21. While reading, do you annotate or take notes to aid your understanding? What is the most suitable for you and why?
22. Do you summarize what you have read after finishing a section or an article? How does this help with your comprehension?
23. Do you find yourself re-reading sections to improve understanding? How does this help you?
24. Do you translate the text into your first language to help with understanding? How effective is this strategy for you?
25. Do you use external resources, like dictionaries, online translation tools, or summaries, to assist with your reading comprehension? Which ones are the most helpful and why?
26. How often do you discuss your readings with peers to help improve your understanding?
27. How do you find peer support effective?

28. What strategies or guidance did your instructor recommend for improving your reading comprehension? Give an example.
29. How often do unfamiliar words or phrases hinder your reading comprehension? How does this affect your understanding?
30. When you encounter unfamiliar words or phrases, how often do you rely on context to understand the meaning? Does it help? How?
31. Do unfamiliar words disrupt your reading flow? How?
32. What strategies do you use to learn new vocabulary?
33. What strategies do you use to break down complex arguments?
34. What are the most challenging aspects of reading academic texts in your second language?