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Department of English Language

**Enhancing Literary Text Comprehension through a Reading
Comprehension Strategies Framework**

The Case of Third-Year English Students at the University of Ghardaïa

**Dissertation Submitted to the University of Ghardaïa
for Obtaining the Master's Degree in Didactics**

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Dedication:

First of all, I dedicate this research to Almighty Allah, my ultimate source of strength, wisdom,
and inspiration throughout this journey.

Alhamdulillah, it is by Your light that I was guided, by Your grace that I advanced, and by Your
mercy that I arrived.

To my dear parents, for your endless patience, unwavering support, and the sacrifices you made
to help me reach this milestone.

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my studies.

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strive for greatness.

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continue to bless you all.

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Abstract:

This study investigates enhancing literary text comprehension through a Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) framework among third-year English students at the University of Ghardaïa. Recognizing the persistent difficulties EFL learners face when reading literary texts particularly with figurative language, vocabulary, and strategic reading this research proposes a structured three-phase framework (pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading) grounded in interactive models of reading, schema theory, and reader-response theory. A survey description design was adopted, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 29 third-year English students following the implementation of the RCS framework. The questionnaire explored students' difficulties, their use of reading strategies, their attitudes toward the framework, and self-reported improvement in comprehension, analysis, and motivation. The findings reveal that students initially faced significant difficulties, particularly with figurative language (65.5%), vocabulary (58.6%), and lack of strategy use (55.1%). Following the implementation of the RCS framework, students reported substantial improvements: 79.3% agreed that their reading comprehension had improved, 65.5% felt more confident, and 62.1% reported better analytical abilities. Students expressed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward the framework, with 79.3% wishing to continue using these strategies in future classes. The study concludes that the RCS framework is an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing literary text comprehension among EFL learners. It recommends explicit instruction of all three phases, additional emphasis on post-reading strategies, and improved institutional support for strategy-based instruction.

Keywords: Reading comprehension strategies, RCS framework, literary texts, EFL learners, strategy-based instruction, University of Ghardaïa.

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List of Abbreviations:

- + **AI:** Artificial Intelligence
- + **EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- + **RCS:** Reading Comprehension Strategies
- + **SBI:** Strategy-Based Instruction
- + **ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development
- + **SQ3R:** Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review

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General Introduction

General Introduction: Table of content

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2. Statement of the problem

3. Research Objectives

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1. Background of the Study:

Reading is a fundamental skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly at the university level, where students are required to engage with a wide range of academic and literary texts. It is not limited to decoding written symbols but involves a complex cognitive process of constructing meaning through interaction between the reader and the text (Grabe, 2009).

In higher education, reading plays a crucial role in students' academic success, as it enables them to acquire knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. This is especially evident in literature modules, where learners are expected to interpret texts, analyze characters, identify themes, and evaluate stylistic features (Nunan, 2003).

Literary texts present additional challenges due to their complex nature, including figurative language, symbolism, and implicit meanings. Understanding such texts requires not only linguistic competence but also interpretative and analytical abilities within cultural contexts (Carter & Long, 1991).

In EFL contexts, many university students face difficulties in comprehending literary texts, particularly when they lack effective reading strategies. These difficulties are often related to limited vocabulary, insufficient background knowledge, and lack of strategic reading skills (Brown, 2007).

2. Statement of the Problem:

Despite several years of studying English, many third-year EFL students at the **University of Ghardaia** continue to experience difficulties in comprehending literary texts.

These difficulties extend beyond basic linguistic issues to include interpreting themes, analyzing characters, and understanding figurative language.

According to Carter and Long (1991), the complexity of literary discourse demands specialized interpretative skills that go beyond literal decoding.

In many cases, students rely on surface-level reading and fail to engage critically with texts, which indicates a lack of effective reading strategies.

As Brown (2007) notes, the absence of strategic reading skills often hinders learners' ability to process complex academic content.

The problem, therefore, lies in the gap between students' linguistic knowledge and their ability to apply appropriate reading strategies in literary contexts.

3. Research Objectives:

This study aims to investigate the role of reading comprehension strategies in improving literary text comprehension among third-year English students at the University of Ghardaïa. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- Identify the main difficulties students encounter when reading literary texts.
- Examine the effectiveness of a structured Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) framework.
- Raise students' awareness regarding the importance of strategic reading.

4. Research Questions:

This study is guided by a set of research questions that **aim** to explore the nature of students' difficulties and the effectiveness of the proposed framework.

The main questions focus on the extent to which students face challenges in literary comprehension, the impact of the RCS framework on their performance, and their attitudes toward the use of reading strategies.

More specifically, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

- ✚ To what extent do third-year English students face difficulties in comprehending literary texts?
- ✚ How does the implementation of a Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) framework affect students' literary text comprehension?
- ✚ What are students' attitudes toward the use of reading strategies in literature courses?

5. Research Hypotheses:

Based on the research questions, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

- ❖ Third-year English students face significant difficulties in comprehending literary texts due to a lack of strategic tools.
- ❖ The implementation of a Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) framework can improve students' literary text comprehension.
- ❖ Students have positive attitudes toward the use of reading strategies in literature courses.

6. Research Methodology:

This study adopts a survey description research design to examine the effect of the RCS framework on students' reading comprehension.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this design is appropriate for testing interventions in educational settings.

The participants are **third-year English students at the University of Ghardaïa**.

Data are collected using a structured questionnaire designed to explore students' difficulties and attitudes.

7. Rationale:

This study is motivated by the need to address students' persistent difficulties in literary comprehension.

It aims to provide practical tools through the RCS framework to help learners approach texts more effectively.

It also contributes to EFL teaching by promoting learner-centered approaches and offering insights into improving reading comprehension instruction.

8. Limitations of the Study:

This study is limited to third-year English students at the University of Ghardaïa, which may affect the generalizability of the results.

The short duration of the intervention may also limit the extent of improvement observed.

Additionally, the use of specific research tools such as tests and questionnaires may not capture all aspects of students' comprehension.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the role of reading strategies in literary comprehension.

Part One :
Literature Review

Chapter One:

Theoretical Foundations of Reading and Literary Comprehension

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Introduction:

Reading comprehension is widely considered one of the most essential skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly in higher education contexts where students are required to engage with a wide range of academic and literary texts. It is no longer viewed as a mere process of decoding written symbols, but rather as a complex cognitive activity that involves understanding, interpreting, analyzing, and critically evaluating textual information (Grabe, 2009). This shift in perspective reflects the growing recognition that reading is not a passive activity, but an active and purposeful process that requires continuous interaction between the reader and the text.

At the university level, reading plays a central role in students' academic success, as most learning materials are presented in written form. Students are expected not only to comprehend texts at a surface level but also to engage deeply with their content, especially in literature modules where interpretation and critical thinking are required (Nunan, 2003). This involves the ability to analyze arguments, identify implicit meanings, and evaluate different perspectives, which are essential skills for academic achievement and intellectual development.

In recent decades, research in applied linguistics has shifted towards viewing reading as an active, interactive, and strategic process. Readers are no longer passive recipients of information; instead, they actively construct meaning by integrating textual input with their prior knowledge and experiences (Brown, 2007). This perspective emphasizes the importance of strategy use, as effective readers employ various techniques such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing to enhance comprehension and overcome difficulties.

This chapter **aims** to provide a comprehensive theoretical foundation for the study by examining the concept of reading, its multidimensional nature, and the main models that explain comprehension processes. It also explores reading comprehension, its levels and dimensions, and discusses the role of literary texts in EFL contexts, as well as the challenges learners encounter when dealing with them. Furthermore, it establishes the theoretical basis for the next chapter, which focuses on reading strategies, Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI), and the Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) Framework as practical tools for enhancing literary text comprehension among EFL learners.

1.1 Definitions of Reading:

Reading has been conceptualized in various ways across different theoretical frameworks, reflecting its complexity as both a cognitive and linguistic activity. Early definitions, influenced by structuralist approaches, viewed reading as a linear process of decoding written symbols into spoken language. In this perspective, meaning was assumed to reside entirely within the text, and the reader's role was limited to recognizing words and sentences (Nunan, 2003). Such a view led to teaching practices that focused heavily on pronunciation, vocabulary memorization, and grammatical accuracy.

However, this traditional view has been widely criticized for oversimplifying the reading process and neglecting the active role of the reader. Modern perspectives emphasize that reading is a dynamic and interactive process in which meaning is constructed through the interaction between the reader and the text (Grabe, 2009). This implies that comprehension depends not only on textual information but also on the reader's cognitive abilities and prior experiences, making reading a more complex and meaningful activity.

According to Snow (2002), reading comprehension involves "simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction with written language." This definition highlights that readers do not simply receive meaning from texts, but actively participate in its creation. It also suggests that comprehension requires the integration of multiple processes, including decoding, interpretation, and evaluation, which work together to produce understanding. In EFL contexts, reading becomes even more challenging because learners must process texts in a foreign language while constructing meaning, which increases cognitive load and requires greater reliance on strategies and background knowledge (Grabe, 2009).

1.1.1 Reading as a Cognitive Process:

The cognitive approach to reading views it as a mental process that involves higher-order thinking skills such as inference, prediction, and evaluation. Readers actively construct meaning by integrating textual information with their prior knowledge, making reading a complex cognitive activity rather than a simple decoding process (Grabe, 2009). This shift has significantly influenced modern teaching practices, which now emphasize comprehension and critical thinking over mere word recognition.

Cognitive theories highlight the importance of automaticity in lower-level processes such as word recognition. When these processes become automatic, readers can allocate more cognitive resources to higher-level processes such as interpretation and analysis. This is particularly important for EFL learners, who often struggle with balancing decoding and comprehension (Grabe, 2009). Furthermore, working memory plays a significant role in reading comprehension, as readers must retain information while processing new input. In a foreign language, this can be particularly demanding, which explains why many EFL learners find it difficult to understand complex texts, especially literary ones that require deeper analysis.

Krashen (1985) further explains that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to input that is slightly beyond their current level but still understandable. This concept of "comprehensible input" is essential in reading, as it allows learners to gradually develop their language skills without being overwhelmed. From a cognitive perspective, reading strategies function as tools that help readers manage the complexity of the reading process by activating prior knowledge, monitoring comprehension, and solving problems as they arise.

1.1.2 Reading as an Interactive Process:

Reading is now widely recognized as an interactive process in which meaning is constructed through the interaction between the reader and the text. This interaction involves the use of background knowledge, contextual clues, and cognitive strategies to interpret information (Nunan, 2003). Readers actively engage with the text by making predictions, asking questions, and evaluating information as they read. This perspective is closely related to schema theory, which suggests that comprehension depends on the activation of prior knowledge.

Schema theory, developed by Bartlett (1932) and later applied to reading by Anderson and Pearson (1984), proposes that readers use their existing knowledge structures to interpret new information. When relevant schemas are activated, comprehension becomes more efficient and meaningful (Brown, 2007). For example, when reading a literary text about a historical event, learners who possess background knowledge about that event will understand the text more easily than those who do not. This theory has profound implications for EFL instruction, as it suggests that activating learners' prior knowledge before reading can significantly enhance comprehension.

Additionally, interactive reading involves continuous monitoring of comprehension. Readers evaluate their understanding and adjust their strategies when difficulties arise. This self-regulation is a key characteristic of skilled readers and plays an important role in successful comprehension. Thus, reading can be seen as a process of negotiation between the reader and the text, where meaning is constructed through active engagement and strategic processing. This interactive view provides a foundation for understanding why reading strategies are essential, particularly in literary contexts where texts often contain implicit meanings and cultural references.

1.2 Reading Comprehension: Theoretical Perspectives:

Reading comprehension represents the ultimate goal of the reading process and refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate written texts. It involves both lower-level processes, such as decoding and word recognition, and higher-level processes, such as inference, interpretation, and critical analysis (Snow, 2002). This combination of processes highlights the complexity of comprehension as a cognitive activity and explains why many EFL learners struggle to achieve deep understanding, particularly when reading literary texts.

1.2.1 Definition of Reading Comprehension:

Reading comprehension is commonly defined as the process of extracting and constructing meaning from written texts. This definition emphasizes that comprehension is not limited to understanding explicit information, but also involves interpreting implicit meanings and making connections between ideas (Snow, 2002). In academic contexts, reading comprehension is essential for accessing knowledge and engaging with learning materials. Students must be able to extract relevant information, synthesize ideas, and apply their understanding to different contexts. Without effective comprehension skills, learners may struggle to succeed academically (Grabe, 2009).

Moreover, reading comprehension is an active and strategic process in which readers continuously monitor their understanding and adjust their reading strategies accordingly. This dynamic interaction between the reader and the text is what enables meaningful learning and deep engagement. For EFL learners, comprehension can be particularly challenging due to linguistic limitations and lack of familiarity with textual structures. This highlights the importance of developing both language proficiency and strategic reading skills to enhance comprehension (Nunan, 2003).

1.2.2 Bottom-Up and Top-Down Models of Reading:

The **bottom-up model** conceptualizes reading as a linear and hierarchical process that begins with the recognition of the smallest linguistic units, such as letters and phonemes, and gradually progresses to words, sentences, and entire texts. In this model, comprehension is achieved through accurate decoding of these linguistic elements (Nunan, 2003). This approach places strong emphasis on linguistic competence, including vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, and phonological awareness. It assumes that if learners can successfully decode the text, they will be able to understand its meaning. Traditional teaching methods often focused heavily on drills, pronunciation, and grammar exercises based on this model.

However, the bottom-up model has been criticized for its limitations, particularly its neglect of the reader's cognitive processes and prior knowledge. It does not adequately explain how readers interpret meaning in complex texts, especially literary texts that require inference and critical thinking (Brown, 2007). Despite these limitations, the bottom-up model remains relevant in EFL contexts, especially for beginner learners who need to develop basic decoding skills. It provides a necessary foundation upon which higher-level comprehension processes can be built.

The **top-down model** offers an alternative perspective by emphasizing the role of the reader's background knowledge, expectations, and cognitive processes in comprehension. According to this model, reading is a process of hypothesis testing, where readers make predictions about the text and confirm or revise them as they read (Brown, 2007). This model highlights the importance of schema theory, which suggests that readers use their existing knowledge structures to interpret new information. By activating relevant schemas, readers can understand texts even when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary or complex structures. The top-down model promotes active

engagement with the text, encouraging readers to think critically and interact with the content. This makes it particularly useful in literature classes, where interpretation and analysis are essential. However, this model has also been criticized for underestimating the importance of accurate decoding, as without sufficient linguistic knowledge, learners may struggle to construct meaning effectively (Grabe, 2009).

1.2.3 The Interactive Model of Reading:

The **interactive model** integrates both bottom-up and top-down processes, suggesting that reading comprehension results from the interaction between linguistic decoding and cognitive processing. Readers simultaneously process textual information while activating their prior knowledge to construct meaning (Stanovich, 1980). This model recognizes that reading is neither purely text-driven nor purely reader-driven, but rather a dynamic process that involves multiple interacting components. It allows for flexibility, as readers can rely more on one process than another depending on the situation.

One of the key contributions of this model is the concept of "**compensatory processing**," which suggests that readers can compensate for weaknesses in one area by relying on strengths in another. For example, a reader with limited vocabulary may use contextual clues to infer meaning. Similarly, a reader with weak decoding skills may rely more heavily on background knowledge to understand the text. This model is widely accepted in modern reading research because it provides a comprehensive explanation of the reading process. It is particularly relevant in EFL contexts, where learners must balance decoding skills with higher-level comprehension strategies (Grabe, 2009).

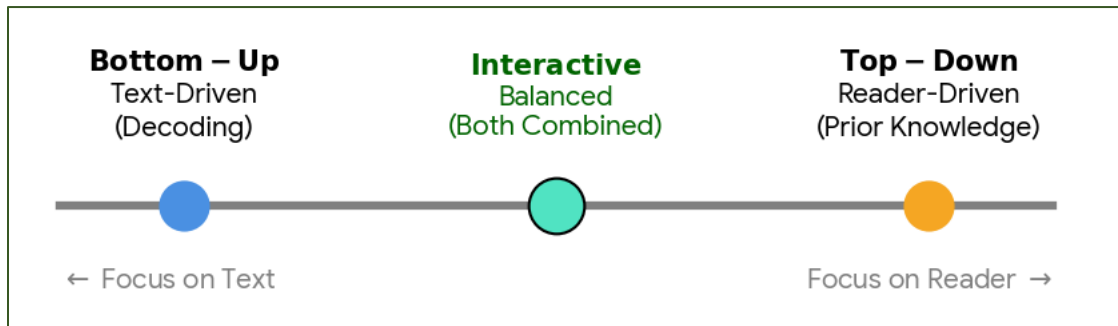


Figure 1.1: The Spectrum of Reading Models.

1.2.4 Schema Theory and Background Knowledge:

Schema theory, as developed by Bartlett (1932) and elaborated by Anderson and Pearson (1984), provides a powerful framework for understanding how prior knowledge influences reading comprehension. According to this theory, knowledge is organized into mental structures called "schemata," which represent generic concepts and their interrelations. When readers encounter a text, they activate relevant schemata to interpret new information, make predictions, and fill in gaps that are not explicitly stated.

In the context of literary reading, schema theory explains why readers from different cultural backgrounds may interpret the same text differently. For instance, an EFL learner who lacks schemata related to British Victorian society may struggle to understand a novel by Charles Dickens, even if they possess sufficient linguistic knowledge. This highlights the importance of activating and building relevant schemata before reading, through activities such as pre-reading discussions, visual aids, and cultural background information.

the RCS Framework incorporates schema activation as a key strategy within its pre-reading phase.

1.3 Literary Texts: Nature and Characteristics:

Literary texts occupy a central position in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, particularly at the university level where students are expected to engage with authentic and intellectually stimulating materials. Unlike simplified pedagogical texts, literary works present language in its natural and creative form, offering learners exposure to rich vocabulary, varied syntactic structures, and stylistic diversity (Carter & Long, 1991). This makes literature a valuable resource for developing both linguistic competence and interpretative abilities.

1.3.1 What is a Literary Text?

A literary text is a work of art that uses language creatively to express ideas, emotions, and experiences. Unlike non-literary texts, which primarily convey information, literary texts invite readers to interpret meaning, appreciate aesthetic qualities, and engage with multiple layers of significance (Lazar, 1993). Literary texts are characterized by their use of figurative language, symbolism, ambiguity, and stylistic devices that distinguish them from everyday communication. They include poetry, prose fiction, and drama, each with its own conventions and reader expectations.

1.3.2 Genres of Literary Texts (Poetry, Prose, Drama):

Poetry: is a genre that emphasizes rhythm, imagery, and condensed language. Poems often use figurative devices such as metaphor, simile, and personification to evoke emotions and create meaning. The compact nature of poetry requires readers to pay close attention to word choice, sound patterns, and structural elements such as stanzas and line breaks. For EFL learners, poetry can be particularly challenging due to its unconventional syntax and reliance on cultural associations (Lazar, 1993).

Prose fiction: includes novels and short stories, which typically feature narrative structures, character development, setting, and plot. Prose allows for extended exploration of themes and ideas. Readers of prose fiction must track multiple narrative elements, infer character motivations, and recognize literary devices such as symbolism and irony. This genre is commonly used in EFL literature classes because it provides rich linguistic input and engaging content.

Drama: consists of plays written for performance, featuring dialogue, stage directions, and acts. Reading drama requires readers to visualize action, interpret dialogue for subtext, and understand character relationships. Unlike prose, drama relies heavily on spoken language and non-verbal cues, which can be difficult to infer from the written text alone. Each of these genres' places different demands on the reader and may require different strategic approaches.

1.3.3 Features of Literary Language (Figurative Language, Symbolism, Ambiguity):

Literary language is characterized by several distinctive features that set it apart from ordinary language:

- ❖ **Figurative language:** includes metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperbole, which create meaning by comparing or associating different concepts. For example, when a poet writes "my love is a rose," the reader must infer that the beloved is beautiful, delicate, and perhaps thorny, rather than literally being a flower. This requires interpretive skills that go beyond literal comprehension.
- ❖ **Symbolism:** involves the use of objects, characters, or events to represent abstract ideas or concepts. A storm in a novel might symbolize emotional turmoil, while a journey might represent personal growth. Recognizing symbolism requires readers to think beyond the surface level and consider deeper meanings.

- ❖ **Ambiguity:** refers to the presence of multiple possible meanings in a text. Unlike informational texts, where clarity is valued, literary texts often deliberately use ambiguity to invite interpretation and discussion. While these features enrich literary reading, they also pose significant challenges for EFL learners.

1.3.4 Differences Between Literary and Non-Literary Texts:

Literary texts differ from non-literary texts in several fundamental ways:

- **Non-literary texts:** (such as news articles, textbooks, reports, and instruction manuals) are primarily **referential**, meaning they aim to convey information clearly and directly.
 - They prioritize clarity, precision, and objectivity.
- **Literary texts:** in contrast, are **connotative**, meaning they evoke associations, emotions, and multiple interpretations.
 - They prioritize aesthetic experience, creativity, and subjective response.
- Additionally, non-literary texts are typically organized according to conventional structures (e.g., introduction-body-conclusion in essays, inverted pyramid in news articles), whereas literary texts may play with or subvert conventional structures.
- The language of non-literary texts tends to be literal and formulaic, while literary language is figurative and inventive.

These differences have important implications for reading instruction, as strategies effective for non-literary reading may not be sufficient for literary reading.

The RCS Framework addresses these differences by including strategies specifically designed for interpreting figurative language, symbolism, and ambiguity.

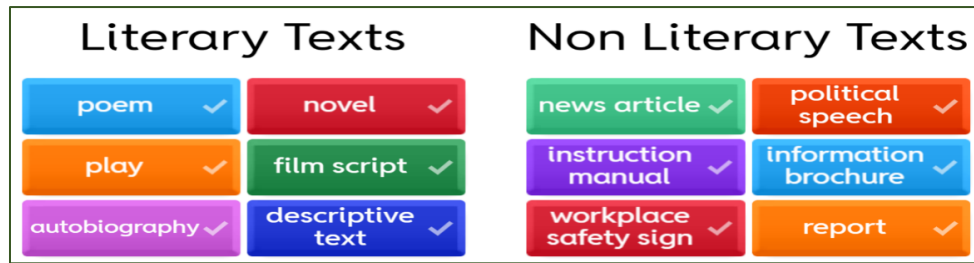


Figure 1.2: **Literary and Non-Literary Texts**

1.4 Literary Text Comprehension:

Literary text comprehension refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and respond to literary works. Unlike the comprehension of informational texts, which primarily involves extracting factual information, literary comprehension requires readers to engage with aesthetic, emotional, and interpretive dimensions of language. This section examines the levels of comprehension, the role of interpretation, reader-response theory, and the challenges that EFL learners face when reading literary texts.

1.4.1 Levels of Comprehension (Literal, Inferential, Critical):

Reading comprehension operates at different levels, each reflecting a specific depth of understanding and requiring distinct cognitive skills.

The **literal level**: involves understanding information that is explicitly stated in the text. At this stage, readers focus on identifying facts, recognizing main ideas, and recalling details without interpretation. This level depends heavily on linguistic competence, including vocabulary and grammar. Although basic, literal comprehension is essential as it provides the foundation for higher levels of understanding (Snow, 2002).

The **inferential level**: requires readers to go beyond explicit information and interpret implied meanings. This involves using contextual clues and prior knowledge to make logical inferences,

identify relationships between ideas, and understand underlying themes. This level is crucial for literary texts, where meaning is often implicit and requires interpretation (Grabe, 2009). For example, when a character in a novel refuses to speak, the reader may infer that they are angry or ashamed, even if the text does not state this directly.

The **critical level** involves evaluating the text and forming judgments based on evidence. Readers analyze arguments, assess credibility, and reflect on the text's significance. This level requires advanced cognitive skills such as evaluation and reflection. In literary reading, critical comprehension might involve assessing the plausibility of character motivations, evaluating the effectiveness of literary devices, or critiquing the author's ideological assumptions. This level is essential in academic contexts, where critical thinking is a key requirement (Snow, 2002).

Level	Type of Understanding	Cognitive Skill Required	Example in Literary Reading
Literal Level	Information explicitly stated in the text.	Recall, word recognition, basic grammar/vocabulary.	"What did the character say?" (identifying facts)
Inferential Level	Implied meanings, relationships between ideas.	Using context clues, prior knowledge, inference.	"Why did the character refuse to speak?" (interpreting motives)
Critical Level	Evaluation, judgment, reflection on text significance.	Analysis, assessment, critique.	"Is the author's argument convincing?" / "Does the character's motivation make sense?"

Table 1.1: Levels of Reading Comprehension

1.4.2 The Role of Interpretation in Literature:

Interpretation is central to literary reading because literary texts do not present meaning directly; rather, they invite readers to construct meaning through active engagement. Unlike a scientific report that states its conclusions explicitly, a poem or novel may suggest, imply, or evoke meaning indirectly. Interpretation involves identifying patterns, making connections, and formulating hypotheses about what the text means (Lazar, 1993).

Interpretation is also subjective to some extent, as different readers may legitimately derive different meanings from the same text based on their backgrounds, experiences, and purposes for reading. However, interpretation is not arbitrary; it must be supported by evidence from the text. This balance between subjectivity and textual evidence is what makes literary reading both challenging and rewarding. In EFL contexts, learners may need explicit instruction in how to develop and support interpretations, as this skill may not transfer automatically from their first language (Grabe, 2009).

1.4.3 Reader-Response Theory:

Reader-response theory, particularly associated with the work of Rosenblatt (1994), emphasizes that meaning emerges from the transaction between reader and text. According to this theory, there is no single, correct meaning residing in the text; rather, each reader brings unique experiences, emotions, and perspectives to the reading event, and meaning is constructed through their interaction with the text.

Rosenblatt (1994) distinguishes between **efferent reading** (reading to acquire information) and **aesthetic reading** (reading to experience the text). Literary reading ideally involves an aesthetic stance, where readers attend to feelings, associations, and lived-through experiences.

This theory has important pedagogical implications, as it validates learners' personal responses as legitimate components of literary interpretation rather than deviations from "correct" understanding. The RCS Framework incorporates reader-response principles by including strategies such as visualizing, connecting personally, and responding emotionally to literary texts.

1.4.4 Challenges in Understanding Literary Texts:

Despite their pedagogical benefits, literary texts present several challenges for EFL learners. One of the main difficulties is the presence of **complex vocabulary and unfamiliar expressions**, which can hinder comprehension and make reading a demanding task (Grabe, 2009). Learners may struggle to understand key words and concepts, which affects their overall interpretation of the text.

Another major challenge is the use of **figurative language and stylistic devices**, which often require interpretation beyond the literal level. Elements such as symbolism, irony, and metaphor can be difficult to understand, particularly for learners who lack experience with literary analysis. This can lead to confusion and misinterpretation of the text's meaning (Lazar, 1993).

In addition, **cultural differences** can create barriers to comprehension. Literary texts often include references to social norms, historical events, and cultural values that may be unfamiliar to EFL learners. Without sufficient background knowledge, students may find it difficult to interpret these elements accurately (Kramsch, 1993).

Furthermore, many learners lack **effective reading strategies**, which limits their ability to engage with texts critically and independently. They may rely on surface-level reading and fail to analyze deeper aspects of the text, such as themes and character development. This highlights the importance of strategy-based instruction.

1.5 Factors Affecting Literary Reading Comprehension:

Successful literary reading comprehension is influenced by a range of interrelated factors, including linguistic competence, cultural knowledge, motivation, and text complexity. Understanding these factors helps educators design more effective instruction and anticipate the difficulties that learners may encounter.

1.5.1 Linguistic Competence (Vocabulary and Grammar):

Linguistic competence is a prerequisite for reading comprehension, as readers must be able to recognize words, understand sentence structures, and follow discourse organization. Vocabulary knowledge is one of the most important factors influencing reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009). Learners who lack sufficient vocabulary may struggle to understand even simple texts, as they are unable to recognize key words and concepts. Grammatical knowledge also plays a crucial role, as it helps readers understand relationships between ideas and follow complex sentence structures.

Zid (2025) found that digital tools can support learners in improving their linguistic competence by providing immediate feedback and facilitating text processing. This suggests that strengthening linguistic knowledge can significantly enhance reading comprehension, particularly in EFL contexts. However, even learners with good linguistic knowledge may struggle with literary texts if they lack other competencies, such as cultural awareness or strategic reading skills.

1.5.2 Cultural and Background Knowledge:

As discussed in relation to schema theory, cultural and background knowledge significantly influence reading comprehension. Readers interpret texts based on their cultural frameworks, which can either facilitate or hinder understanding. Literary texts are deeply embedded in cultural contexts, often including references to social norms, historical events, and cultural values that may be unfamiliar to EFL learners (Kramsch, 1993).

Chenini and Sebrou (2025) highlight that Algerian students often face difficulties in understanding literary texts due to a lack of cultural knowledge and exposure to authentic materials. This limitation affects their ability to interpret meaning and engage with texts effectively.

Therefore, activating and building cultural schemata before reading is an essential instructional strategy.

1.5.3 Motivation and Attitude:

Motivation and attitude play a significant role in reading comprehension, particularly for literary texts that require sustained engagement and effort. Learners who are intrinsically motivated to read are more likely to persevere through difficult passages, use strategies effectively, and derive enjoyment from the reading experience (Grabe, 2009).

Conversely, learners who view reading as a chore or who lack confidence in their abilities may avoid reading or give up when they encounter difficulty.

Teachers can enhance motivation by selecting texts that are relevant to learners' interests, providing choices, and creating a supportive classroom environment where learners feel safe to express interpretations and ask questions.

socio-affective strategies, including self-encouragement and anxiety reduction, can help learners manage the emotional dimensions of literary reading.

1.5.4 Text Complexity and Difficulty:

The complexity of the text itself is another important factor affecting comprehension. Text complexity includes considerations of vocabulary difficulty, sentence length, syntactic complexity, discourse organization, and conceptual demands. Literary texts often exhibit high levels of complexity across multiple dimensions, which can overwhelm EFL learners. Additionally, the specific features of literary language discussed in section 3.3 (figurative language, symbolism, ambiguity) add further layers of complexity.

Factor	Description	Implications for EFL Learners
Linguistic Competence	Vocabulary knowledge + grammatical understanding.	Weak vocabulary → difficulty recognizing key words; poor grammar → trouble following complex sentences.
Cultural & Background Knowledge	Familiarity with social norms, historical events, and cultural references.	Lack of cultural schemata → misinterpretation of symbols, themes, or character behaviors.
Motivation & Attitude	Intrinsic interest and confidence in reading.	Low motivation → avoidance of difficult texts; lack of persistence → surface-level reading only.
Text Complexity	Vocabulary difficulty, sentence length, syntactic complexity, conceptual demands (e.g., figurative language, symbolism, ambiguity).	High complexity → cognitive overload, especially when combined with linguistic gaps.

Table 1.2: Summary of Factors Affecting Literary Reading Comprehension

Teachers must carefully select literary texts that are appropriate for their learners' proficiency levels while still offering sufficient challenge to promote growth.

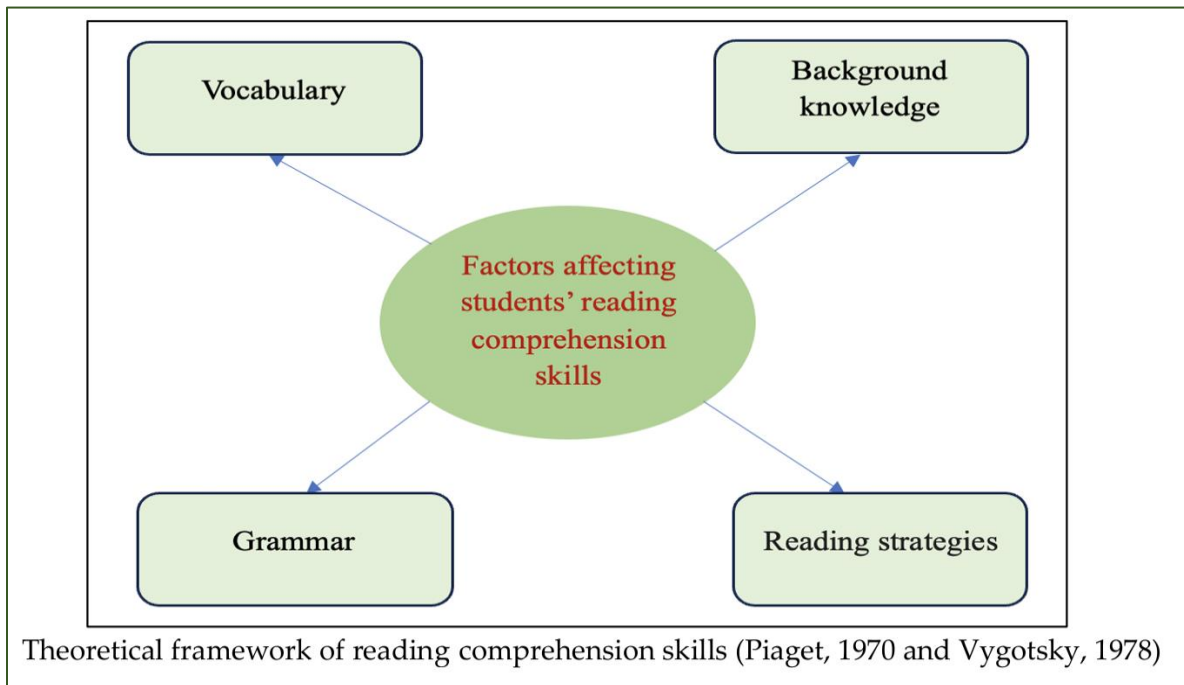


Figure 1.3: Theoretical framework of reading comprehension skills.

1.6 Strategies for Teaching Literary Text Comprehension:

Given the challenges associated with literary reading in EFL contexts, explicit instruction in reading strategies is essential. This section presents an overview of strategies organized according to the stages of the reading process:

- ✓ **before reading.**
- ✓ **during reading.**
- ✓ **and after reading.**

1.6.1 Pre-Reading Activities:

Pre-reading activities are designed to activate learners' prior knowledge, build necessary background information, and set purposes for reading. Effective pre-reading strategies include **predicting** content based on titles, headings, or illustrations; **activating schemata** through discussion or brainstorming; **pre-teaching vocabulary** that is essential for comprehension; and **setting reading goals** (Brown, 2007).

For literary texts, pre-reading activities might also include providing cultural context, introducing the author and historical period, or asking learners to share personal experiences related to the text's themes. These activities reduce cognitive load during reading by preparing learners for what they will encounter.

The RCS Framework places strong emphasis on the pre-reading phase as a foundation for successful comprehension.

1.6.2 While-Reading Strategies:

While-reading strategies are applied during the reading process to facilitate comprehension and monitor understanding. These include:

- + **inferencing** (using context clues to understand unfamiliar words or implied meanings),
- + **visualizing** (creating mental images of described scenes or events).
- + **questioning** (generating questions about the text).
- + **summarizing** (restating main ideas in one's own words).
- + and **monitoring** (checking one's understanding and taking corrective action when needed).

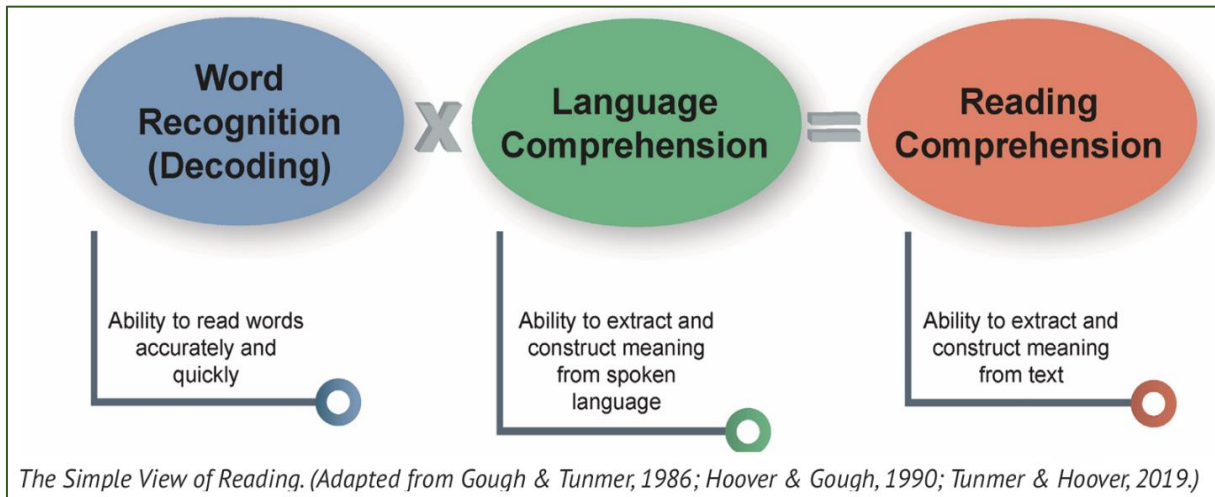


Figure 1.4: The simple view of reading.

For literary texts, while-reading strategies also include:

- ❖ **analyzing characters.**
- ❖ **identifying literary devices.**
- ❖ and **tracking themes.**

These strategies enable learners to engage actively with the text and construct deeper meaning.

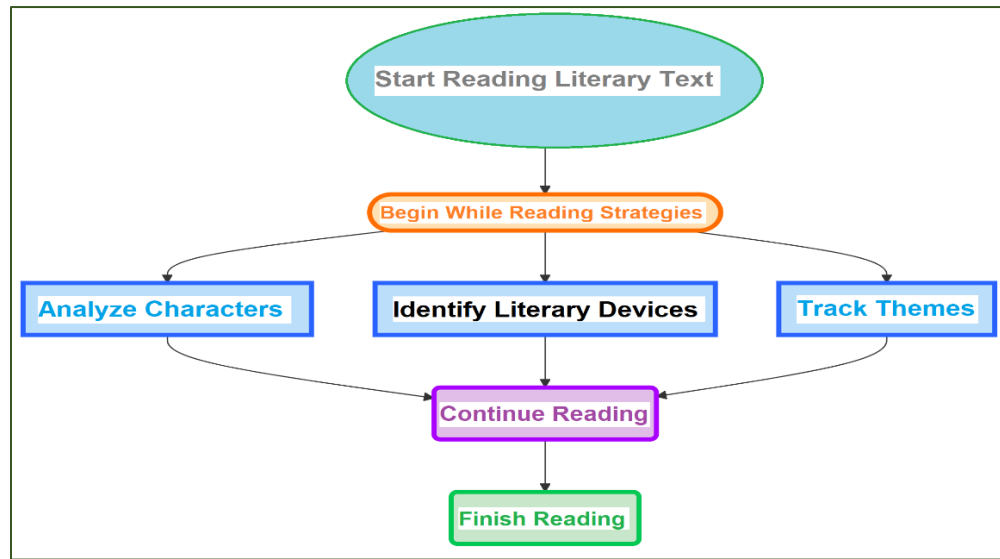


Figure 1.5 reading strategies.

1.6.3 Post-Reading Activities:

Post-reading activities consolidate learning, extend comprehension, and promote reflection. Effective post-reading strategies include **summarizing** the entire text, **evaluating** the text and one's reading process, **discussing** interpretations with peers, **responding** personally to the text, and **applying** insights to new contexts (Brown, 2007).

For literary texts, post-reading activities might include writing a response journal, participating in a literature circle, comparing the text to other works, or analyzing how the text relates to contemporary issues. These activities promote critical thinking and help learners internalize strategies for future reading.

1.6.4 Questioning Techniques and Critical Thinking:

Questioning is a powerful tool for promoting comprehension and critical thinking. Teachers can use different types of questions to target different levels of comprehension:

- **literal questions** (what did the character say?).
- **inferential questions** (why did the character act that way?).
- and **critical questions** (do you agree with the author's message?).

Encouraging learners to generate their own questions is equally important, as it promotes active engagement and metacognitive awareness. Questioning techniques are integrated throughout the RCS Framework, particularly in the during-reading and post-reading phases.

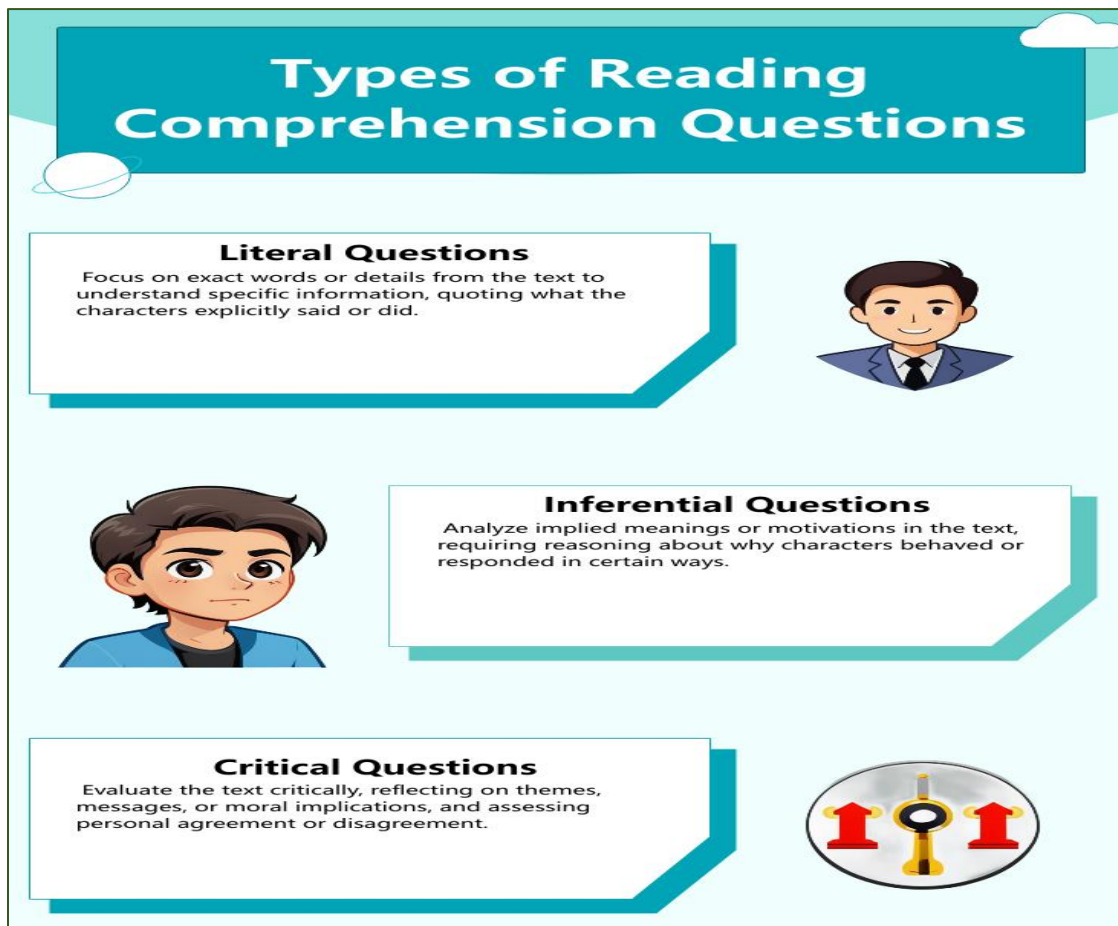


Figure 1.6: Types of reading comprehension questions.

1.6.5 Use of Discussion and Group Work:

Discussion and group work provide opportunities for learners to share interpretations, clarify misunderstandings, and learn from peers. Collaborative reading activities, such as **literature circles** and **paired reading**, reduce individual anxiety and create multiple entry points into the text (Daniels, 2002). These activities also promote the use of socio-affective strategies.

1.7 The Role of the Teacher in Developing Literary Comprehension:

The teacher plays a crucial role in developing learners' literary comprehension skills. Rather than simply transmitting information about texts, effective teachers create conditions in which learners can develop their own interpretations and strategic competencies.

1.7.1 Teacher as Facilitator:

In a learner-centered approach, the teacher acts as a facilitator who guides learners in constructing their own meanings rather than providing correct answers. This involves asking open-ended questions, encouraging multiple interpretations, and creating a supportive environment where learners feel comfortable taking risks (Brown, 2007).

As a facilitator, the teacher also models strategy use, provides feedback, and gradually withdraws support as learners become more independent. This facilitative role is essential for Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI).

1.7.2 Scaffolding and Guidance:

Scaffolding refers to the temporary support provided to learners as they develop new competencies. In literary reading, scaffolding might take the form of pre-reading vocabulary instruction, guided questions during reading, or structured discussion protocols after reading. The teacher gradually fades this support as learners become more proficient, ensuring that they do not become dependent on external assistance (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

Teachers using the RCS Framework provide explicit modeling and guided practice before expecting learners to apply strategies independently.

1.7.3 Encouraging Interpretation and Personal Response:

Finally, teachers should encourage learners to develop their own interpretations and personal responses to literary texts. This aligns with reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1994) and validates learners' unique perspectives.

Rather than searching for a single correct interpretation, teachers can ask questions such as "What does this mean to you?" or "How does this connect to your experience?"

Encouraging personal response enhances motivation, promotes engagement, and helps learners develop confidence in their ability to interpret literary texts. This approach is fully compatible with the RCS Framework, which includes strategies for personal connection and emotional response.

Conclusion:

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations of reading and literary text comprehension. It has demonstrated that reading is a complex and multidimensional process that involves the interaction of cognitive, linguistic, and socio-cultural factors (Grabe, 2009). Understanding these dimensions is essential for explaining how learners process texts and why they may encounter difficulties.

The chapter has also examined the main models of reading, highlighting the importance of both decoding and cognitive processing in comprehension. The interactive model, which integrates bottom-up and top-down processes, provides the most comprehensive explanation of reading and serves as the theoretical basis for strategy instruction. Schema theory and reader-response theory further enrich our understanding of how prior knowledge and personal response contribute to literary comprehension.

Particular attention has been given to literary texts in EFL contexts, which offer valuable opportunities for language development and critical thinking but also present significant challenges for learners. These challenges include complex vocabulary, figurative language, cultural references, and the need for interpretive skills. Factors such as linguistic competence, cultural knowledge, motivation, and text complexity all influence learners' ability to comprehend literary texts.

Finally, this chapter has introduced strategies for teaching literary text comprehension and discussed the role of the teacher in facilitating strategic reading. These insights provide the necessary foundation for Chapter 2, which will focus on reading comprehension strategies in greater depth, including the classification of strategies (cognitive, metacognitive, socio-affective), Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI), and the Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) Framework as a practical model for enhancing literary text comprehension among EFL learners.

Chapter Two:

Reading Comprehension Strategies and the RCS Framework

Chapter Two: Table of content

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Introduction:

Reading comprehension is widely acknowledged as a complex and multifaceted process that goes beyond the mere recognition of written symbols. It involves the interaction of various cognitive, linguistic, and socio-cultural factors that work together to enable readers to construct meaning from texts. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, this process becomes even more demanding, as learners are required to process a foreign language while simultaneously engaging in higher-order thinking processes such as interpretation and evaluation. Consequently, many learners experience difficulties in achieving effective comprehension, particularly when dealing with complex or literary texts (Grabe, 2009).

In response to these challenges, researchers have increasingly emphasized the role of reading strategies as essential tools that facilitate comprehension and support learners in overcoming obstacles. Reading strategies enable learners to actively engage with texts, monitor their understanding, and apply appropriate techniques to solve comprehension problems.

They transform reading from a passive activity into an active and strategic process, where learners play a central role in constructing meaning (Oxford, 2011).

The importance of reading strategies is particularly evident in literary reading, which requires deeper levels of comprehension. Unlike informational texts, literary texts often contain figurative language, symbolic meanings, and complex narrative structures. As a result, learners need to use a variety of strategies to interpret and analyze these texts effectively (Lazar, 1993).

Furthermore, literary reading demands not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural awareness and emotional engagement, which further complicates the comprehension process for EFL learners.

This chapter argues that explicit instruction in reading strategies can bridge the gap between learners' current abilities and the demands of literary text comprehension.

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of reading comprehension strategies and their role in enhancing literary text comprehension. It explores the definition and importance of reading strategies, examines their classifications, and discusses Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI) as an effective pedagogical approach.

Furthermore, it introduces the Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) Framework as a structured model for developing strategic reading skills. Finally, the chapter highlights the application of this framework to literary texts and examines the role of technology and artificial intelligence in supporting strategic reading.

2.1 Definition of Reading Strategies:

Reading strategies are commonly defined as deliberate, conscious, and goal-oriented actions that readers employ to facilitate comprehension and enhance their interaction with written texts.

These strategies involve a range of cognitive and metacognitive processes that enable learners to construct meaning, monitor their understanding, and overcome comprehension difficulties effectively (Oxford, 2011).

From a cognitive perspective, reading strategies function as tools that help readers manage the complexity of the reading process. According to Grabe (2009), reading comprehension requires the coordination of multiple processes, including word recognition, syntactic parsing, semantic interpretation, and discourse-level understanding. Strategies allow learners to control these processes and use them efficiently, particularly when encountering unfamiliar or challenging texts.

Moreover, reading strategies are closely related to the concept of active learning. Rather than passively receiving information, readers actively engage with texts by making predictions, asking questions, and summarizing information. Nunan (2003) emphasizes that effective readers are those who use strategies flexibly and appropriately, adjusting their reading behavior according to the demands of the text.

In the context of literary reading, strategies play a crucial role in enabling learners to interpret implicit meanings and analyze complex textual features. Literary texts often require readers to go beyond literal comprehension and engage in deeper levels of analysis, such as identifying themes, understanding symbolism, and evaluating the author's intentions.

Therefore, reading strategies are essential for achieving successful comprehension in EFL contexts.

2.1.1 Distinguishing Strategies from Skills:

It is important to clarify the distinction between reading strategies and reading skills, as these terms are often used interchangeably in the literature. According to Brown (2007), mental refer to automatic, unconscious processes that readers develop through repeated practice, whereas strategies are deliberate, conscious actions employed to solve specific problems. In other words, a strategy becomes a skill when it is internalized and used automatically.

This distinction has significant pedagogical implications, as it suggests that strategy instruction should aim to help learners move from conscious, controlled use to automatic, skillful application. Understanding this continuum allows teachers to design progressive instructional activities that gradually reduce learners' reliance on conscious effort.

Feature	Reading Strategies	Reading Skills
Awareness	Deliberate and conscious actions.	Automatic and unconscious processes.
Purpose	Employed to solve specific comprehension problems.	Developed through repeated practice.
Nature	Controlled and goal-oriented.	Internalized and used automatically.
Instructional Goal	To move from conscious use to automatic application.	Achieving fluency and reducing cognitive effort.

Table 2.1: Comparison Between Reading Strategies and Reading Skills.

2.1.2 Characteristics of Effective Reading Strategies:

Effective reading strategies share several common characteristics that distinguish them from random or ineffective reading behaviors.

- ❖ **First**, they are intentional, meaning that readers use them with a specific purpose in mind, such as clarifying meaning or identifying main ideas.
- ❖ **Second**, they are flexible, allowing readers to adapt their approach based on text type, reading purpose, and comprehension difficulties (Oxford, 2011).
- ❖ **Third**, effective strategies are self-regulated, meaning that readers can monitor their own comprehension and decide when to apply a particular strategy.
- ❖ **Fourth**, they are teachable, which implies that even struggling readers can learn to use strategies through explicit instruction and guided practice.

These characteristics highlight the potential of strategy instruction to transform reading outcomes for EFL learners, particularly those who face persistent comprehension challenges.

2.2 Importance of Reading Strategies for EFL Learners:

Reading strategies are particularly important for EFL learners, who often face a range of linguistic and cognitive challenges.

These challenges include limited vocabulary knowledge, insufficient grammatical competence, and unfamiliarity with cultural references, all of which can hinder comprehension (Grabe, 2009).

As a result, learners may struggle to understand texts, especially those that require higher-level thinking skills.

By using reading strategies, learners can compensate for these difficulties and improve their ability to process textual information. For instance, predicting enables learners to anticipate the content of a text and activate their prior knowledge, while inferencing allows them to deduce meaning from

context when encountering unfamiliar words or expressions. These strategies reduce cognitive load and make the reading process more manageable.

In addition, reading strategies contribute to the development of learner autonomy. When students are trained to use strategies effectively, they become more independent and capable of regulating their own learning process. They learn how to monitor their comprehension, identify problems, and apply appropriate solutions. This aligns with learner-centered approaches, which emphasize the importance of active participation and self-directed learning (Oxford, 2011).

Furthermore, reading strategies enhance learners' motivation and confidence. When students are able to understand texts more effectively, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward reading and become more engaged in the learning process. This is particularly important in literary contexts, where texts may initially appear difficult or intimidating.

Therefore, integrating reading strategies into EFL instruction is essential for improving comprehension and supporting learners' overall academic success.

2.2.1 Addressing Common Comprehension Difficulties in Literary Reading:

Literary texts present unique challenges for EFL learners that go beyond those encountered in informational reading. These challenges include unfamiliar cultural references, figurative language, ambiguous meanings, and non-linear narrative structures (Lazar, 1993).

Reading strategies provide learners with concrete tools to navigate these difficulties. For example, when encountering a culturally specific reference, learners can use activating prior knowledge or seeking clarification strategies.

When faced with figurative language such as metaphors or similes, inferencing strategies enable learners to derive meaning from contextual clues. By equipping learners with a repertoire of strategies, teachers can help demystify literary texts and make them more accessible. This, in turn, reduces reading anxiety and fosters a more positive attitude toward literary study.

2.2.2 The Role of Strategies in Promoting Critical Thinking:

Beyond basic comprehension, reading strategies also play a crucial role in developing critical thinking skills. Literary texts often present multiple interpretations and require readers to evaluate characters' motivations, question narrative perspectives, and analyze thematic complexity.

Strategies such as evaluating, questioning the author, and comparing perspectives encourage learners to move beyond passive acceptance of textual information. According to Facione (2011), critical thinking involves self-regulation, analysis, and evaluation, all of which are supported by metacognitive strategies.

When EFL learners apply these strategies to literary texts, they learn to justify their interpretations with textual evidence, consider alternative viewpoints, and construct reasoned arguments.

Thus, strategy instruction contributes not only to comprehension but also to the development of higher-order thinking essential for academic success.

2.3 Classifications of Reading Strategies:

Reading strategies can be classified into different categories based on their functions and purposes. One of the most widely accepted classifications distinguishes between **cognitive**, **metacognitive**, and **socio-affective** strategies (Oxford, 2011).

Strategy Category	Definition	Key Examples
Cognitive	Mental processes used to process and understand textual information directly.	Summarizing, Inferencing, Analyzing, Translating, Note-taking.
Metacognitive	Processes involving the regulation and control of the reading activity.	Planning before reading, Monitoring comprehension, Evaluating understanding.
Socio-Affective	Strategies involving interaction with others and management of emotions.	Asking questions, Collaborating with peers, Seeking clarification, Reducing anxiety.

Table 2.2: Oxford's Classification of Reading Strategies.

This classification provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how different strategies contribute to the reading process. Each category addresses a distinct aspect of the reading experience:

- cognitive strategies focus on information processing.
- metacognitive strategies regulate thinking.
- socio-affective strategies manage social interaction and emotional states.

Understanding these categories helps teachers design balanced instruction that addresses all dimensions of reading comprehension.

2.3.1 Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies:

Cognitive strategies refer to the mental processes that readers use to process and understand textual information. These strategies include summarizing, inferencing, analyzing, translating, and note-taking. They directly contribute to comprehension by helping learners organize and interpret information (Grabe, 2009).

For example, summarizing allows learners to identify the main ideas of a text and express them in their own words, while inferencing enables them to understand implicit meanings that are not explicitly stated.

These strategies are particularly important in literary reading, where much of the meaning is implied rather than directly stated.

Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, involve the regulation and control of the reading process. These include planning before reading, monitoring comprehension during reading, and evaluating understanding after reading. Metacognitive strategies enable learners to become aware of their thinking processes and take corrective actions when necessary (Oxford, 2011).

For instance, a learner may realize that they do not understand a particular section of a text and decide to reread it or use context clues to infer meaning. This ability to monitor and regulate comprehension is essential for effective reading, particularly in EFL contexts.

The integration of cognitive and metacognitive strategies is crucial for successful reading, as it allows learners to process information while simultaneously controlling their comprehension. Research has consistently shown that successful readers use both types of strategies in an integrated manner, whereas struggling readers tend to rely on fewer strategies and apply them less effectively (Anderson, 2005).

Therefore, instruction should explicitly address both cognitive and metacognitive dimensions of strategic reading.

2.3.1.1 Examples of Cognitive Strategies for Literary Reading:

Within the context of literary texts, several cognitive strategies prove particularly valuable.

- ✚ **Visualization**, for example, involves creating mental images of scenes, characters, or events described in the text, which enhances engagement and memory retention.

- ✚ **Elaboration** involves connecting textual information to personal experiences or prior knowledge, thereby deepening understanding.

- ✚ **Summarization** at the chapter or stanza level helps learners track narrative development or poetic argument.

- ✚ **Translation**, while often debated, can serve as a temporary scaffold for beginning EFL learners when dealing with particularly dense passages.

These strategies, when explicitly taught and practiced, provide learners with concrete actions they can take to enhance their engagement with literary texts.

2.3.1.2 Metacognitive Regulation in Literary Reading:

Metacognitive regulation in literary reading involves three distinct phases: **planning**, **monitoring**, and **evaluating** (Brown, 2007).

- ✓ During the planning phase, readers set purposes for reading, preview the text, and allocate time and attention. For a literary text, this might involve identifying the genre, considering what they already know about the author, or establishing a goal such as identifying the protagonist's central conflict.
- ✓ During monitoring, readers check their understanding continuously, noting confusing passages, recognizing when inferences are needed, and adjusting reading speed.
- ✓ Evaluation occurs after reading and involves assessing whether comprehension goals were met, identifying strategies that worked well, and reflecting on the overall reading experience.

Teaching EFL learners to engage in these metacognitive processes transforms them from passive recipients of textual information into active managers of their own learning.

2.3.2 Socio-Affective Strategies:

Socio-affective strategies involve interaction with others and the management of emotions during the learning process.

These strategies include asking questions, collaborating with peers, seeking clarification, and reducing anxiety (Oxford, 2011).

In EFL contexts, socio-affective strategies play a significant role in creating a supportive learning environment. When learners feel comfortable and confident, they are more likely to participate actively and engage with texts. Conversely, anxiety and lack of confidence can hinder comprehension and reduce motivation. Collaborative learning activities, such as group discussions

and peer feedback, can enhance comprehension by allowing learners to share ideas and perspectives. This is particularly important in literary studies, where interpretation often involves multiple viewpoints.

Through discussion, learners can develop a deeper understanding of texts and refine their analytical skills.

Therefore, socio-affective strategies are essential for supporting both the cognitive and emotional aspects of reading.

2.3.2.1 Managing Reading Anxiety in Literary Contexts:

Reading anxiety is a significant affective factor that can undermine comprehension, particularly when learners encounter complex literary texts. Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) found that foreign language reading anxiety is distinct from general language anxiety and is often triggered by unfamiliar cultural content, complex syntax, and the perceived risk of misinterpretation.

Socio-affective strategies provide learners with tools to manage this anxiety.

Self-encouragement strategies, such as positive self-talk ("I can understand this if I take my time"), help learners maintain confidence.

Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing before reading, reduce physiological tension.

Seeking clarification from teachers or peers normalizes the experience of difficulty and provides a supportive safety net.

By explicitly teaching these socio-affective strategies, educators can address the emotional barriers that often prevent EFL learners from fully engaging with literary texts.

2.3.2.2 Collaborative Reading and Peer Support:

Collaborative reading activities, such as literature circles, paired reading, and group discussions, provide natural contexts for the application of socio-affective strategies. In literature circles, for

example, each learner takes on a specific role (e.g., discussion director, summarizer, cultural connector) and shares their insights with the group.

This structure reduces individual anxiety by distributing responsibility and creating multiple entry points into the text (Daniels, 2002). Peer support also enables learners to observe how others use strategies, providing implicit modeling and expanding their strategic repertoires. Furthermore, collaborative reading fosters a sense of community and shared purpose, which enhances motivation and persistence when texts become challenging.

Therefore, socio-affective strategies are not merely supplementary but are integral to creating the conditions under which cognitive and metacognitive strategies can flourish.

2.4 Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI):

Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI) is an instructional approach that focuses on explicitly teaching learners how to use reading strategies effectively. It involves a systematic process that includes explanation, modeling, guided practice, and independent application (Oxford, 2011). According to Brown (2007), SBI enhances learners' comprehension by increasing their awareness of strategy use and encouraging them to apply strategies consciously. This leads to improved reading performance and greater learner autonomy.

In practice, SBI requires teachers to demonstrate how strategies are used and provide opportunities for students to practice them in meaningful contexts. For example, a teacher may model how to predict the content of a text based on its title and then guide students in applying this strategy.

In literary reading, SBI is particularly valuable because it equips learners with the tools needed to analyze and interpret complex texts. By learning how to apply strategies such as inferencing and analysis, students can develop a deeper understanding of literary works.

Therefore, SBI represents an effective approach for integrating reading strategies into EFL instruction and improving learners' comprehension skills.

Research has consistently demonstrated that students who receive systematic strategy instruction outperform those who do not, particularly on tasks requiring deep comprehension and transfer to new texts (Chamot, 2005).

Moreover, the benefits of SBI extend beyond the classroom, as learners carry strategic approaches with them into future academic and professional reading contexts.

2.4.1 Phases of Strategy-Based Instruction:

SBI typically unfolds in four distinct but interconnected phases.

- ✓ The first phase, **awareness raising**, involves helping learners recognize the value of strategies and identify which strategies they already use. This phase often includes discussions about successful reading experiences and inventories of current strategy use.
- ✓ The second phase, **explicit modeling**, requires teachers to demonstrate strategies while verbalizing their thought processes, making invisible cognitive actions visible to learners.
- ✓ The third phase, **guided practice**, provides structured opportunities for learners to apply strategies with teacher support and peer collaboration.
- ✓ Finally, the **independent application** phase challenges learners to use strategies autonomously with new texts, gradually withdrawing scaffolding (Oxford, 2011).

Phase	Core Activity	Role of the Teacher
Awareness Raising	Identifying current strategies and their value.	Facilitator of discussion on reading experiences.
Explicit Modeling	Verbalizing thought processes (Think-alouds).	Model who makes invisible cognitive actions visible.
Guided Practice	Applying strategies with support and collaboration.	Guide providing structured opportunities.
Independent Application	Using strategies autonomously with new texts.	Coach who gradually withdraws scaffolding (fading).

Table 2.3: The Four Phases of the SBI Model.

These phases are not strictly linear; learners may cycle back to earlier phases as they encounter new text types or more complex reading demands.

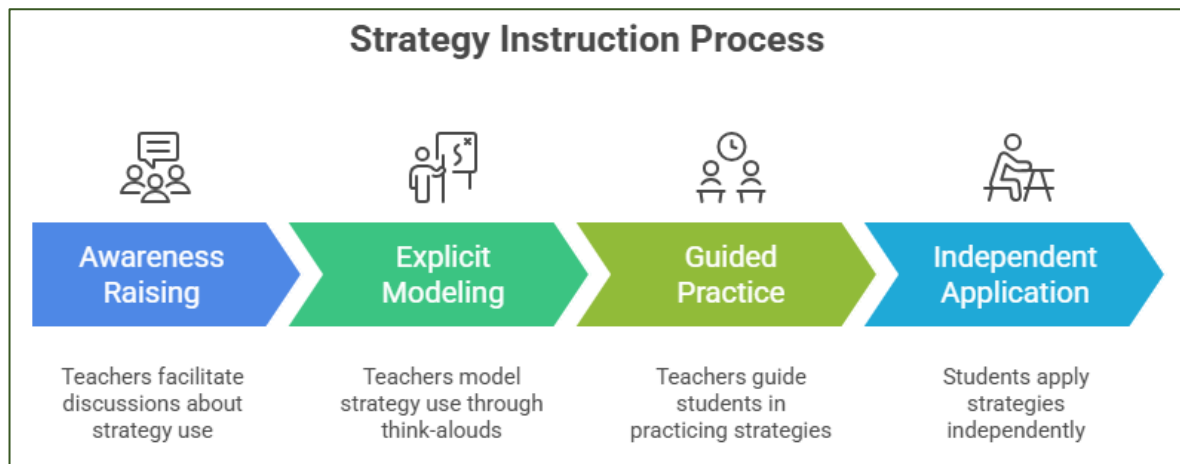


Figure 2.1: Visual Representation of the SBI Phases Showing the Gradual Release of Responsibility from Teacher to Learner

2.4.2 Teacher Roles and Challenges in Implementing SBI:

Successful implementation of SBI depends significantly on teacher knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Teachers must possess not only a solid understanding of reading strategies themselves but also the pedagogical skills to make strategy use visible and accessible to learners. This requires moving from a transmission model of teaching, where the teacher explains textual meanings, to a facilitative model, where the teacher guides learners in constructing their own meanings (Chamot, 2005). Challenges to implementing SBI include time constraints, large class sizes, and curricular pressures that prioritize content coverage over process-oriented instruction.

Additionally, teachers may face resistance from students who are accustomed to passive learning models or who believe that using strategies indicates weakness.

Addressing these challenges requires [sustained professional development](#), [collaborative planning time](#), and [institutional support for pedagogical innovation](#).

2.5 The Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) Framework:

The Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) Framework is a structured and systematic pedagogical model designed to enhance learners' reading comprehension by integrating a set of carefully selected strategies into the reading process.

This framework is grounded in the idea that comprehension can be significantly improved when learners are explicitly trained to use strategies in an organized and purposeful manner.

Unlike traditional approaches that focus mainly on linguistic knowledge, the RCS framework emphasizes the active role of the learner in constructing meaning. It provides learners with practical tools that guide them through different stages of reading, enabling them to engage more effectively with texts.

This is particularly important in EFL contexts, where learners often struggle to bridge the gap between language knowledge and comprehension skills (Grabe, 2009).

Furthermore, the RCS framework promotes a learner-centered approach by encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. It fosters **critical thinking**, **problem-solving**, and **independent learning**, all of which are essential for academic success at the university level.

In the context of literary reading, the framework becomes even more relevant, as it provides learners with strategies that help them interpret complex texts, analyze literary elements, and understand deeper meanings.

Therefore, the RCS framework can be considered an effective tool for enhancing both comprehension and analytical skills.

The framework is adaptable to various text types and proficiency levels, making it a versatile tool for EFL reading instruction across different educational contexts.

2.5.1 Theoretical Background of the Framework:

The RCS framework is supported by several theoretical perspectives that explain how reading comprehension occurs.

One of the most important is **cognitive theory**, which focuses on the mental processes involved in learning and comprehension.

According to this theory, reading involves processes such as attention, memory, and inference, all of which can be enhanced through the use of strategies (Grabe, 2009).

Another important theoretical foundation is **schema theory**, which emphasizes the role of prior knowledge in comprehension. According to this theory, readers interpret texts by connecting new information with their existing knowledge. Strategies such as predicting and activating prior knowledge are therefore essential for effective comprehension (Nunan, 2003).

The **interactive model of reading** also plays a key role in the framework. This model suggests that reading involves the interaction between bottom-up processes (decoding linguistic elements) and top-down processes (using prior knowledge and expectations).

The RCS framework integrates both processes by encouraging learners to use strategies that support decoding and meaning construction simultaneously (Stanovich, 1980).

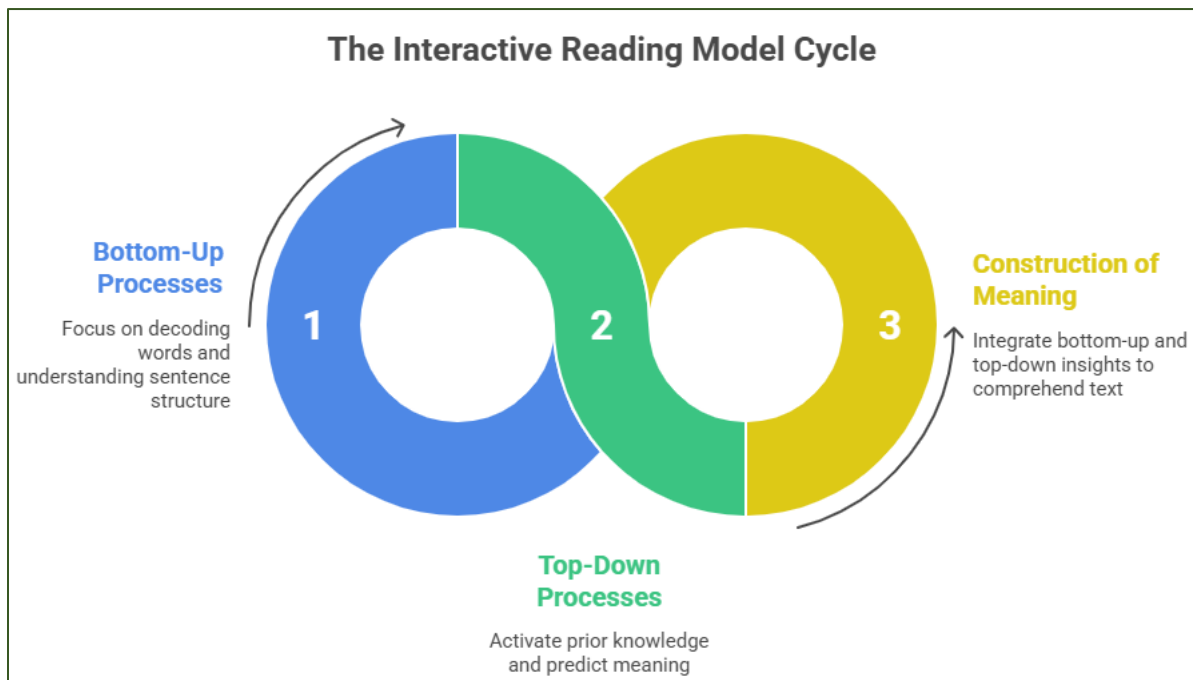


Figure 2.2: The Interactive Reading Model Integrating Bottom-Up and Top-Down Processes.

Additionally, sociocultural theory, particularly the work of Vygotsky (1978), informs the framework's emphasis on collaborative learning and scaffolding.

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) concept suggests that learners can achieve with support what they cannot achieve alone; strategy instruction provides this support while gradually transferring responsibility to the learner.

These theoretical perspectives provide a strong foundation for the RCS framework and explain why strategy use is essential for successful reading comprehension.

2.5.1.1 The Role of Constructivism in the RCS Framework:

Constructivist epistemology, which holds that learners actively construct knowledge rather than passively receiving it, provides a philosophical foundation for the RCS framework. From a constructivist perspective, reading is not a matter of extracting pre-existing meanings from a text but rather a process of meaning-making in which the reader's prior knowledge, purposes, and context all play crucial roles (Rosenblatt, 1994).

The RCS framework operationalizes constructivist principles by providing learners with strategies that enable them to build interpretations actively.

For example, the strategy of predicting encourages learners to formulate hypotheses about textual development, while evaluating invites them to assess the validity of those hypotheses.

This iterative cycle of prediction, confirmation, and revision mirrors the constructivist view of learning as an active, generative process.

2.5.1.2 Reader-Response Theory and Strategic Reading:

Reader-response theory, particularly the work of Rosenblatt (1994), emphasizes that meaning emerges from the transaction between reader and text, with each reader bringing unique experiences, emotions, and perspectives to the reading event. This theory distinguishes between efferent reading (reading to acquire information) and aesthetic reading (reading to experience the text).

Literary reading ideally involves an aesthetic stance, where readers attend to feelings, associations, and lived-through experiences.

The RCS framework supports aesthetic reading by including strategies such as visualizing, connecting personally, and responding emotionally.

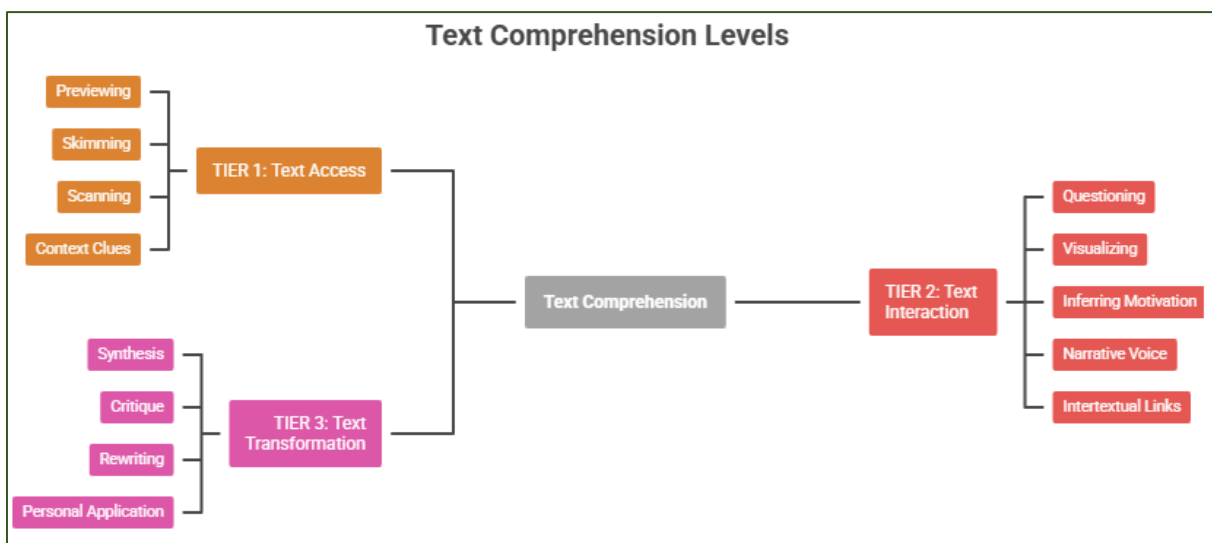


Figure 2.3: Visual Representation of the Multi-Tiered RCS Taxonomy for Literary Reading.

These strategies validate learners' subjective responses as legitimate components of literary interpretation rather than deviations from "correct" understanding. By grounding strategy instruction in reader-response theory, the RCS framework affirms that EFL learners' diverse cultural and personal backgrounds are assets to be leveraged, not obstacles to be overcome.

2.5.2 Core Components and Principles:

The RCS framework is built around a set of core strategies that are applied at different stages of the reading process.

These strategies include **predicting**, **inferencing**, **identifying themes**, **analyzing characters**, **recognizing literary devices**, and **summarizing**. Each of these strategies serves a specific function and contributes to the overall comprehension of the text.

- ✓ Predicting, for example, allows learners to anticipate the content of a text based on its title or context, which helps activate prior knowledge and prepare the reader for comprehension.
 - ✓ Inferencing enables learners to understand implicit meanings and fill in gaps in the text.
- Identifying themes and analyzing characters are essential strategies in literary reading, as they help learners interpret the deeper meaning of texts.

The framework also emphasizes important principles such as active engagement, continuous monitoring, and reflective thinking. Learners are encouraged to interact with texts, ask questions, and evaluate their understanding throughout the reading process. This transforms reading into a dynamic and meaningful activity.

Moreover, the framework promotes gradual development, where learners move from guided practice to independent use of strategies. This ensures that strategies become internalized and can be applied automatically in different reading situations.

The framework further incorporates principles of differentiation, recognizing that learners bring different strengths, needs, and preferences to the reading task. Therefore, teachers using the RCS framework are encouraged to offer choices among strategies and to respect individual differences in processing styles.

2.5.2.1 The RCS Strategy Taxonomy for Literary Texts:

Building on the core components, a specialized taxonomy of strategies for literary reading has been developed within the RCS framework. This taxonomy organizes strategies into three tiers according to their focus.

- **Tier One: Text Access Strategies** includes previewing, skimming, scanning, and using context clues. These strategies help learners enter the text and manage initial challenges.
- **Tier Two: Text Interaction Strategies** includes questioning the text, visualizing, inferring character motivation, identifying narrative voice, and recognizing intertextual references. These strategies support ongoing engagement and deeper processing.
- **Tier Three: Text Transformation Strategies** includes synthesizing, critiquing, transforming (e.g., rewriting a scene from another perspective), and applying themes to personal or contemporary contexts.

Tier	Focus	Examples of Strategies
Tier One	Text Access	Previewing, Skimming, Scanning, Using context clues.
Tier Two	Text Interaction	Visualizing, Inferring character motivation, Identifying narrative voice.
Tier Three	Text Transformation	Synthesizing, Critiquing, Rewriting scenes, Applying themes to contemporary contexts.

Table 2.4: Multi-Tiered RCS Taxonomy for Literary Reading.

These strategies encourage learners to move beyond comprehension into creative and critical appropriation of literary works.

This multi-tiered taxonomy provides teachers with a clear roadmap for sequencing strategy instruction across lessons or units.

2.5.2.2 Principles of Scaffolding and Fading in RCS:

Two complementary principles guide the instructional use of the RCS framework: **scaffolding** and **fading**.

✚ **Scaffolding** refers to the temporary support provided to learners as they develop new competencies. In the context of RCS, scaffolding might take the form of strategy checklists, think-aloud demonstrations, sentence frames for verbalizing strategy use, or structured discussion protocols.

✚ **Fading** refers to the gradual removal of these supports as learners become more proficient, ensuring that they do not become dependent on external assistance (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

Effective implementation of RCS requires teachers to calibrate the level and type of scaffolding to individual learners' needs, fading support at a pace that challenges without overwhelming.

This dynamic process of scaffolding and fading distinguishes strategy instruction from mere strategy exposure; it ensures that strategies become internalized tools that learners can deploy flexibly across diverse reading situations.

2.6 Application of the RCS Framework to Literary Texts:

The application of the RCS framework to literary texts involves a structured approach that guides learners through the different stages of reading: **before**, **during**, and **after reading**.

Each stage includes specific strategies that support comprehension and analysis.

- ✓ Before reading, learners are encouraged to use strategies such as predicting and activating prior knowledge. For example, they may analyze the title of a literary text or discuss its possible themes. This stage prepares learners for comprehension and helps them build expectations about the text.

- ✓ During reading, learners apply strategies such as inferencing, analyzing characters, and identifying literary devices. These strategies enable them to understand the text at a deeper level and engage actively with its content. For instance, learners may infer the meaning of a metaphor or analyze a character's behavior based on textual evidence.
- ✓ After reading, learners use strategies such as summarizing and evaluating the text. They may discuss the main ideas, reflect on the themes, and express their opinions about the text. This stage reinforces comprehension and promotes critical thinking.

The systematic application of these strategies helps learners develop a more structured and effective approach to reading. It also enhances their ability to interpret literary texts and engage in meaningful analysis.

Furthermore, the application of RCS to literary texts recognizes that different literary genres may require different strategic emphases.

Poetry, for example, may demand greater attention to sound patterns and imagery, while drama may require visualization of staging and attention to dialogue cues.

The framework's flexibility allows teachers to adapt strategy selection to genre-specific demands.

The structured application of reading strategies to literary texts has been supported by previous research in the Algerian context. Bousbai (2005) demonstrated that integrating strategies such as SQ3R, USSR, and CR significantly enhances EFL learners' ability to process and comprehend literary materials for both study and pleasure. His findings confirmed that systematic strategy instruction bridges the gap between students' current reading abilities and the demands of literary text comprehension.

2.6.1 Genre-Specific Strategy Application:

Different literary genres present unique affordances and challenges that influence which strategies are most relevant.

- ✓ For **poetry**, strategies such as reading aloud to appreciate rhythm, visualizing imagery, paraphrasing stanzas, and identifying figurative language are particularly valuable. The condensed nature of poetic language makes inferencing essential, while the emotional content invites personal response strategies.
- ✓ For **prose fiction**, strategies such as tracking character development, analyzing narrative perspective, identifying plot structure, and recognizing symbolism support deeper engagement.
- ✓ For **drama**, strategies such as visualizing staging, interpreting dialogue for subtext, and considering character motivations enhance comprehension of texts designed to be performed.
- ✓ For **literary nonfiction** (e.g., essays, memoirs), strategies such as identifying the author's argument, analyzing rhetorical devices, and evaluating evidence are central.

By tailoring strategy instruction to genre-specific demands, the RCS framework respects the distinctive nature of literary texts while maintaining a consistent underlying approach to strategic reading.

2.6.2 Sample Lesson Structure Using RCS for a Literary Text:

To illustrate the practical application of the RCS framework, consider a lesson built around a short story.

- ❖ In the **pre-reading phase** (approximately 10 minutes), the teacher activates prior knowledge by asking learners what they already know about the story's historical setting.

Learners predict the plot based on the title and opening lines, and they set a purpose for reading (e.g., "I will read to understand why the protagonist makes a difficult choice").

- ❖ In the **during-reading phase** (approximately 20 minutes), learners read a segment silently while using sticky notes to mark passages where they apply specific strategies: a question mark for confusing sections, a lightbulb for insights gained through inferencing, a heart for emotional responses. The teacher may pause at predetermined points to model strategy use through think-alouds.
- ❖ In the **post-reading phase** (approximately 15 minutes), learners discuss their strategy use in small groups, summarize key events, identify themes with textual evidence, and reflect on which strategies were most helpful.

This structured yet flexible lesson format can be adapted to any literary text and proficiency level.

2.7 The Role of Technology and AI in Supporting Strategic Reading:

In recent years, technology and artificial intelligence have become important tools in language learning, including reading comprehension. Digital tools provide learners with new ways to interact with texts and support the use of reading strategies.

For example, **AI-based tools** can provide instant explanations of vocabulary, summarize texts, and offer feedback on comprehension. These features help reduce cognitive load and make reading more accessible for learners, particularly in EFL contexts (Barrett & Pack, 2023).

In addition, **digital platforms** allow for interactive reading experiences, where learners can highlight text, take notes, and engage in discussions. These features support the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and enhance comprehension.

However, it is important to note that technology should be used as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for active learning.

Learners should be encouraged to use strategies independently and develop their own comprehension skills. When used effectively, technology can complement traditional teaching methods and enhance the overall reading experience.

The integration of AI into reading instruction raises important questions about the balance between support and autonomy, which educators must address thoughtfully.

Furthermore, emerging technologies such as adaptive learning systems can personalize strategy instruction by analyzing individual learners' comprehension patterns and recommending targeted strategy practice.

2.7.1 Digital Tools for Specific Reading Strategies:

Various digital tools can support the application of specific reading strategies within the RCS framework.

-  For **predicting**, digital annotation tools allow learners to type predictions before revealing subsequent text sections, with the option to revise predictions as they read.
 -  For **inferencing**, hyperlinked annotations can provide hints rather than direct answers, encouraging learners to derive meaning independently.
 -  For **summarizing**, AI-powered summarization tools can generate sample summaries that learners then critique and improve, developing their metacognitive awareness of what constitutes an effective summary.
 -  For **visualizing**, digital platforms can display images generated by learners' descriptions, providing immediate feedback on the clarity and specificity of their visualizations.
- For **questioning**, discussion forums enable learners to post questions about literary texts and respond to peers' questions, creating a collaborative inquiry environment.

These tools, when integrated thoughtfully, amplify rather than replace strategic effort.

As Chenini and Sebrou (2025) noted in their study on AI in EFL writing instruction, the effectiveness of AI tools depends largely on how they are integrated into the learning process; when used as a supplement rather than a substitute for teacher guidance, AI tools can significantly enhance learners' independent practice and self-editing capabilities.

2.7.2 Ethical Considerations and Limitations of AI in Strategic Reading:

While AI offers significant potential for supporting strategic reading, several ethical considerations and limitations must be acknowledged.

- ❖ **First**, over-reliance on AI tools may undermine the development of autonomous strategic reading. If learners habitually consult AI for summaries or interpretations, they may fail to develop their own inferencing and synthesis skills (Barrett & Pack, 2023).
- ❖ **Second**, AI tools may not accurately interpret literary language, particularly figurative expressions, cultural references, or ambiguous meanings. Errors or oversimplifications could mislead learners.
- ❖ **Third**, the use of AI raises questions about academic integrity and the authentic demonstration of comprehension. Educators must establish clear guidelines for appropriate AI use.
- ❖ **Fourth**, access to AI tools may be uneven, potentially widening digital divides.

Therefore, technology integration should be accompanied by explicit discussions about its appropriate role, ongoing teacher mediation of AI-generated content, and continued emphasis on the development of independent strategic reading abilities.

Conclusion:

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of reading comprehension strategies and their role in enhancing learners' ability to understand and interpret texts. It has highlighted the importance of strategy use in EFL contexts and discussed various classifications of strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies.

The chapter has also presented Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI) as an effective pedagogical approach and introduced the Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) framework as a structured model for developing strategic reading skills.

The application of the framework to literary texts has been examined, demonstrating how strategies can support deeper comprehension and critical analysis.

Furthermore, the role of technology and artificial intelligence in supporting strategic reading has been explored, highlighting their potential to enhance learning while emphasizing the importance of maintaining active learner engagement.

The chapter has also introduced several original contributions, including the distinction between strategies and skills, the RCS strategy taxonomy for literary texts, genre-specific strategy applications, and a sample lesson structure.

These additions provide practical guidance for implementing the theoretical principles discussed. Overall, the chapter confirms that the integration of reading strategies into EFL instruction can significantly improve learners' comprehension, autonomy, and academic performance.

This theoretical foundation will serve as a basis for the practical part of the study, which will investigate the effectiveness of the RCS framework in real classroom settings.

Future research should examine how different learner characteristics (e.g., proficiency level, motivation, learning style) interact with strategy instruction and how emerging technologies can be harnessed to personalize and enhance strategic reading development without compromising learner autonomy.

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Part Two :

Practical Part

Chapter Three:

Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Chapter Three: Table of Contents

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Introduction:

This chapter outlines the methodological framework and presents a comprehensive analysis of the data collected to investigate the effectiveness of the Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) framework in enhancing literary text comprehension among third year EFL students at the University of Ghardaïa.

As established in Chapter Two, the RCS framework integrates cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies across pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading phases.

This chapter describes the research design, sample, data collection tool, and provides a detailed analysis of the questionnaire responses.

The findings are then discussed in relation to the theoretical foundations laid in Chapters One and Two, followed by pedagogical recommendations and a general conclusion that synthesizes the entire study.

3.1 Research Design:

Consistent with the general introduction, this study adopts a **survey description research design** (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Specifically, the questionnaire serves as a **post-intervention** measurement tool administered after the implementation of the RCS framework. While a full survey description research would include pre- and post-tests, the current questionnaire captures students' retrospective perceptions of change (e.g., "Before using strategies, how did you feel?" vs. "After using strategies, how do you feel now?") as well as their attitudes toward the framework. This design is appropriate for exploring causal relationships between strategy instruction and comprehension outcomes in natural classroom settings without random assignment.

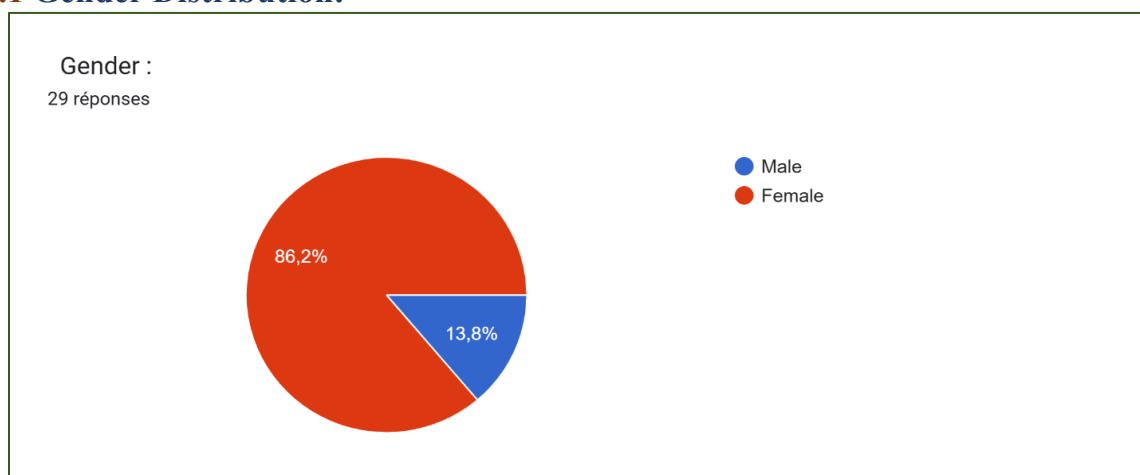
The choice of a survey description research design is justified by the practical constraints of working with intact university classes, where random assignment of individual students to experimental and control groups would disrupt normal educational practices.

3.2 Research Sample:

The sample consists of **29 third-year English students** at the University of Ghardaïa. Participants were selected from the population of EFL learners enrolled in literature modules during the academic year.

The demographic distribution is as follows:

3.2.1 Gender Distribution:



Graphic 3.1: Distribution of Participants by Gender.

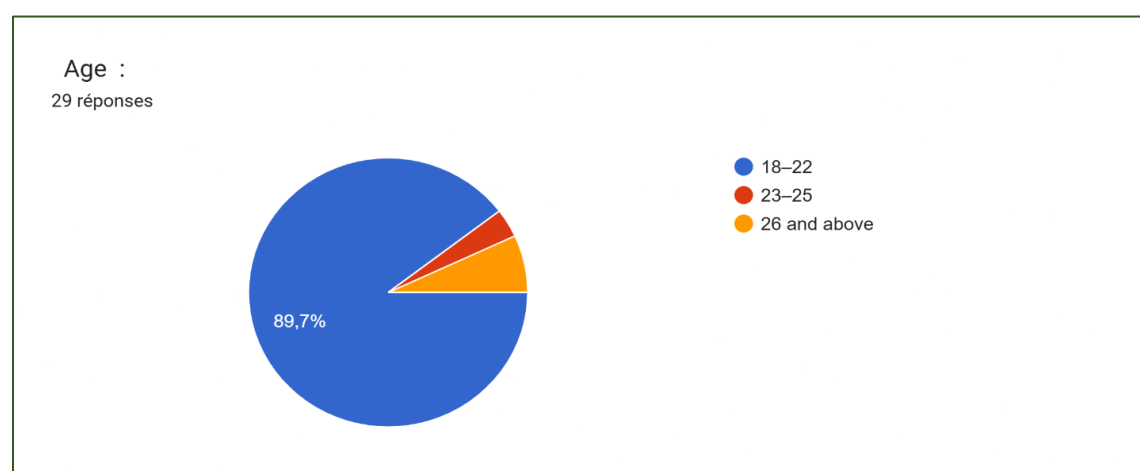
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	25	86.2%
Male	4	13.8%
Total	29	100%

Table 3.1: Gender Distribution of the Sample.

Table 5 shows that the majority of the sample consists of female students (25 out of 29, representing 86.2%), while male students constitute only 13.8% (4 students).

This gender imbalance is typical in EFL literature cohorts at Algerian universities, where female enrollment in English studies often exceeds male enrollment. The predominance of female participants is consistent with the broader trend in higher education across Algeria, where women constitute a significant majority in foreign language departments.

3.2.2 Age Distribution:



Graphic 3.2: Distribution of Participants by Age.

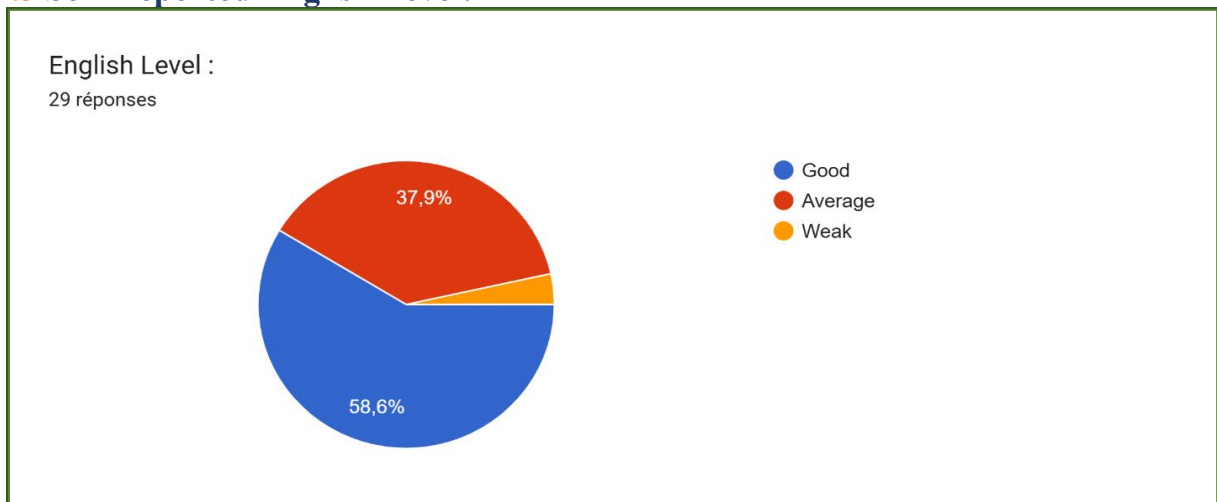
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–22	24	82.8%
23–25	1	3.4%
26 and above	4	13.8%
Total	29	100%

Table 3.2: Age Distribution of the Sample

Table 6 reveals that the vast majority of participants (24 students, 82.8%) fall within the 18–22 age range, which corresponds to the typical age of third-year university students. Only one student (3.4%) is aged 23–25, and four students (13.8%) are 26 years or older, possibly representing non-traditional or returning students who may have experienced educational interruptions.

The concentration of participants in the 18–22 age bracket indicates that the sample is representative of the typical university student population.

3.2.3 Self-Reported English Level:



Graphic 3.3: Distribution of Participants by Self-Reported English Level

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Good	16	55.2%
Average	12	41.4%
Weak	1	3.4%
Total	29	100%

Table 3.3: Self-Reported English Level

Table 7 indicates that more than half of the students (55.2%) perceive their English level as "Good," while 41.4% consider themselves "Average." Only one student (3.4%) rates their level as "Weak." This distribution suggests that the sample is relatively proficient in English, which is expected for third-year university students who have completed at least six semesters of English language instruction.

However, as will be seen in subsequent sections, self-perceived proficiency does not automatically translate into successful literary text comprehension, as linguistic competence alone is insufficient for the interpretative demands of literary reading (Grabe, 2009).

3.3 Data Collection Tool:

The data collection instrument is a **structured questionnaire** comprising 14 items divided into eight sections:

- ✚ **Section 1:** General information (gender, age, English level) – Questions 1-3
- ✚ **Section 2:** Difficulties in reading literary texts (7 Likert-scale items) – Question 4
- ✚ **Section 3:** Confidence before and after using strategies (2 items) – Questions 5-6
- ✚ **Section 4:** Use of reading strategies (7 frequency-based items) – Question 7
- ✚ **Section 5:** Opinion about the RCS framework (7 Likert-scale items) – Question 8
- ✚ **Section 6:** Improvement in reading (4 Likert-scale items) – Question 9
- ✚ **Section 7:** Most useful strategy (single-choice) – Question 10
- ✚ **Section 8:** Open-ended questions (4 items) – Questions 11-14

The questionnaire was administered digitally via Google Forms, and responses were collected anonymously over a period of two weeks following the implementation of the RCS framework.

The Likert scale options were: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) for Sections 2, 5, and 6; and Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never for Section 4.

The questionnaire was originally written in English, and no translation was provided, as the participants were third-year EFL students with sufficient proficiency to understand the items. The open-ended questions allowed students to respond in either English or French, providing flexibility for expression.

3.4 Description of Students' Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was designed to operationalize the theoretical constructs discussed in Chapters One and Two.

Section 2 directly addresses the **difficulties** identified in Chapter One (vocabulary, figurative language, main idea identification, character analysis, implied meanings). These difficulties were derived from the literature review, particularly the works of Grabe (2009), Lazar (1993), and Carter & Long (1991), which identified specific challenges EFL learners face with literary texts.

Sections 4 and 5 measure the **frequency and perceived usefulness** of the specific strategies that constitute the RCS framework as presented in Chapter Two.

The strategies included in Section 4 (predicting, guessing from context, identifying key ideas, summarizing, self-questioning, connecting to prior knowledge, analyzing themes/characters/symbols) were selected based on Oxford's (2011) classification of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and their documented effectiveness in EFL reading contexts.

Section 3 tracks **affective changes** (confidence), while **Section 6** measures **self-reported improvement** in comprehension, analysis, and motivation.

These sections operationalize the socio-affective dimension of the RCS framework discussed in Chapter Two (**section 3.2**).

Finally, the open-ended questions in **Section 8** provide **qualitative depth** by allowing students to articulate their difficulties, preferred strategies, perceived changes in reading habits, and suggestions for improvement in their own words.

3.5 Data Analysis:

Data analysis was conducted using both **quantitative** (descriptive statistics: frequencies, percentages) and **qualitative** (thematic analysis of open-ended responses) methods.

- ✓ For quantitative data, responses were entered into Microsoft Excel, and frequency distributions and percentages were calculated for each item.
- ✓ For qualitative data, responses to open-ended questions were read multiple times to identify recurring themes and patterns.

These themes were then coded and categorized. Results are organized according to the eight sections of the questionnaire as described above.

3.5.1 Section One: General Information:

This section aimed to collect demographic data about the participants, including gender, age, and self-reported English level.

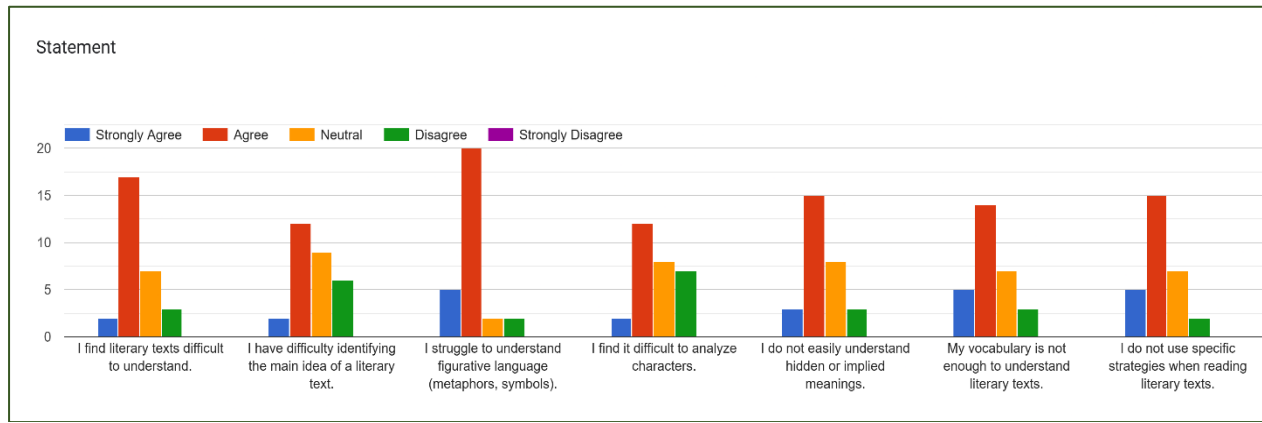
This information is essential for describing the sample and understanding the context in which the RCS framework was implemented.

As detailed in the Research Sample section (Tables 5, 6, and 7), the sample consisted of 29 third-year EFL students: 25 females (86.2%) and 4 males (13.8%); 24 students (82.8%) aged 18–22, 1 student (3.4%) aged 23–25, and 4 students (13.8%) aged 26 or above; 16 students (55.2%)

rated their English level as "Good," 12 (41.4%) as "Average," and 1 (3.4%) as "Weak." These demographic characteristics provide the context for interpreting the subsequent findings.

3.5.2 Section Two: Difficulties in Reading Literary Texts:

This section aimed to identify the specific difficulties students face when reading literary texts. Students responded to seven statements using a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).



Graphic 3.4: Students' Reported Difficulties with Literary Texts

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	% Agree (SA+A)
I find literary texts difficult to understand.	3 (10.3%)	15 (51.7%)	7 (24.1%)	3 (10.3%)	1 (3.4%)	62.0%
I have difficulty identifying the main idea.	2 (6.9%)	10 (34.5%)	8 (27.6%)	7 (24.1%)	2 (6.9%)	41.4%
I struggle with figurative language (metaphors, symbols).	5 (17.2%)	14 (48.3%)	5 (17.2%)	3 (10.3%)	2 (6.9%)	65.5%
I find it difficult to analyze characters.	2 (6.9%)	11 (37.9%)	5 (17.2%)	8 (27.6%)	3 (10.3%)	44.8%
I do not easily understand hidden/implied meanings.	3 (10.3%)	12 (41.4%)	6 (20.7%)	5 (17.2%)	3 (10.3%)	51.7%
My vocabulary is not enough.	5 (17.2%)	12 (41.4%)	4 (13.8%)	5 (17.2%)	3 (10.3%)	58.6%
I do not use specific strategies.	3 (10.3%)	13 (44.8%)	7 (24.1%)	5 (17.2%)	1 (3.4%)	55.1%

Table 3.4: Frequency of Difficulties in Reading Literary Texts (N=29)

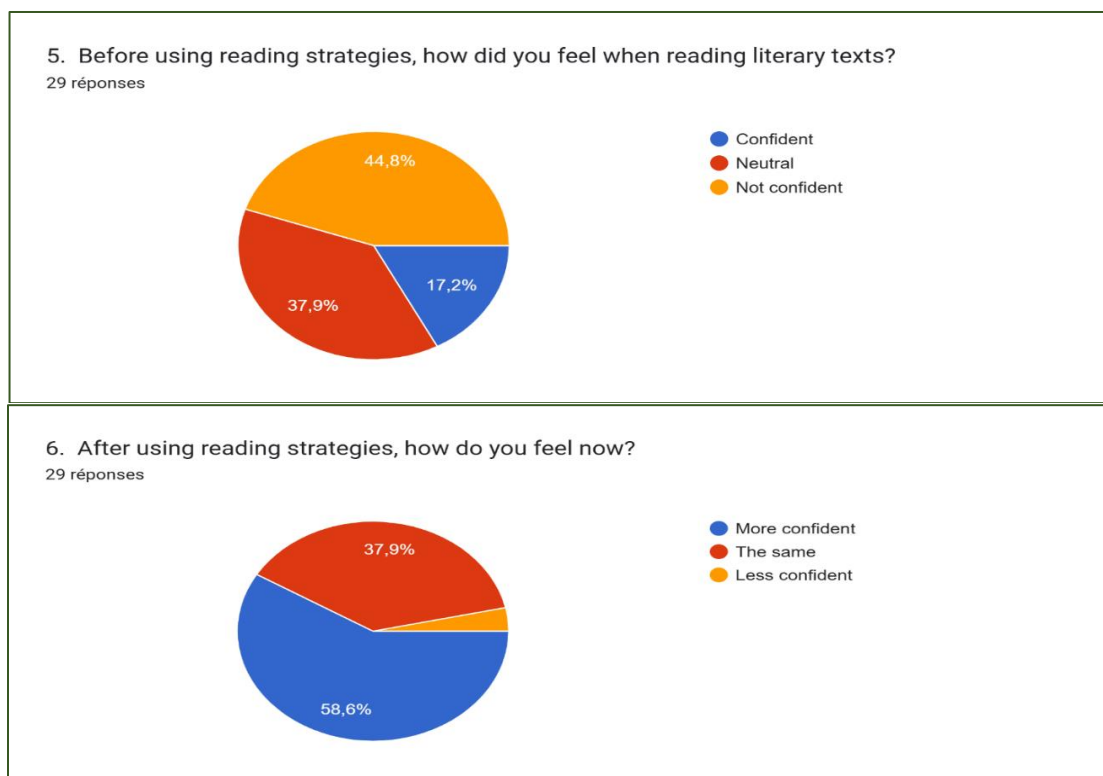
Table 8 reveals that figurative language (metaphors and symbols) represents the most significant difficulty, with 65.5% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that they struggle with this aspect.

This finding aligns with the theoretical discussion in Chapter One (section 3.3) regarding the distinctive features of literary language. General difficulty understanding literary texts follows closely at 62.0%, while vocabulary insufficiency (58.6%) and lack of strategy use (55.1%) also emerge as major obstacles. Interestingly, difficulty identifying the main idea (41.4%) and analyzing characters (44.8%) are less frequently reported, suggesting that students struggle more with linguistic and inferential layers than with global structural elements.

These results confirm research hypothesis H1, which posited that third-year EFL students face significant difficulties in comprehending literary texts.

3.5.3 Section Three: Confidence Before and After Using Strategies:

This section aimed to measure the change in students' confidence levels before and after the implementation of reading strategies.



Graphic 3.5: Change in Students' Confidence After Using RCS Strategies.

Feeling	Before Using Strategies	After Using Strategies
Confident	3 (10.3%)	—
Neutral	8 (27.6%)	—
Not confident	18 (62.1%)	—
More confident	—	19 (65.5%)
The same	—	8 (27.6%)
Less confident	—	2 (6.9%)
Total	29	29

Table 3.5: Confidence Before vs. After Using Reading Strategies

Table 9 demonstrates a dramatic positive shift in students' confidence following the implementation of the RCS framework.

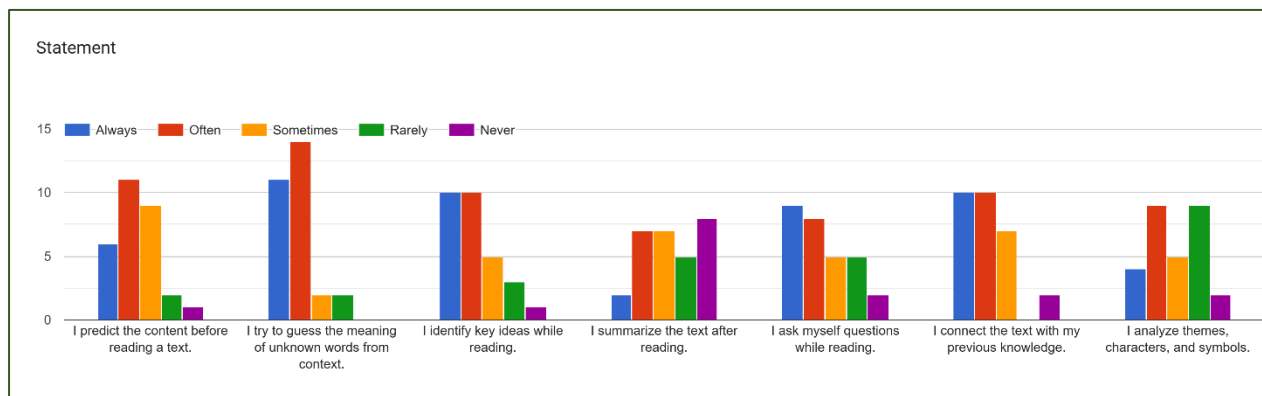
Before strategy instruction, the majority of students (62.1%) felt "not confident" when reading literary texts, with only 10.3% feeling confident. After using reading strategies, 65.5% of students reported feeling "more confident," while only 6.9% felt "less confident." This substantial

improvement supports the socio-affective dimension of the RCS framework discussed in Chapter Two (section 3.2.1), confirming that explicit strategy instruction reduces reading anxiety and enhances self-efficacy.

The fact that 27.6% reported feeling "the same" suggests that some students may have already possessed adequate confidence or that a longer intervention period might be needed for all learners to experience affective gains

3.5.4 Section Four: Use of Reading Strategies:

This section aimed to determine how frequently students use specific reading strategies. Students responded to seven statements using a five-point frequency scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never).



Graph 3.5: Frequency of Strategy Use Among Students

Strategy	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	% Often/Always
I predict the content before reading a text.	7 (24.1%)	13 (44.8%)	6 (20.7%)	2 (6.9%)	1 (3.4%)	68.9%
I try to guess the meaning of unknown words from context.	8 (27.6%)	14 (48.3%)	3 (10.3%)	3 (10.3%)	1 (3.4%)	75.9%
I identify key ideas while reading.	5 (17.2%)	10 (34.5%)	9 (31.0%)	4 (13.8%)	1 (3.4%)	51.7%
I summarize the text after reading.	2 (6.9%)	7 (24.1%)	10 (34.5%)	7 (24.1%)	3 (10.3%)	31.0%
I ask myself questions while reading.	4 (13.8%)	12 (41.4%)	7 (24.1%)	4 (13.8%)	2 (6.9%)	55.2%
I connect the text with my previous knowledge.	6 (20.7%)	9 (31.0%)	8 (27.6%)	5 (17.2%)	1 (3.4%)	51.7%
I analyze themes, characters, and symbols.	2 (6.9%)	11 (37.9%)	9 (31.0%)	5 (17.2%)	2 (6.9%)	44.8%

Table 3.6: Frequency of Using Specific Reading Strategies (N=29)

Table 10 indicates that the most frequently used strategies are guessing meaning from context (75.9% often/always) and predicting content before reading (68.9% often/always).

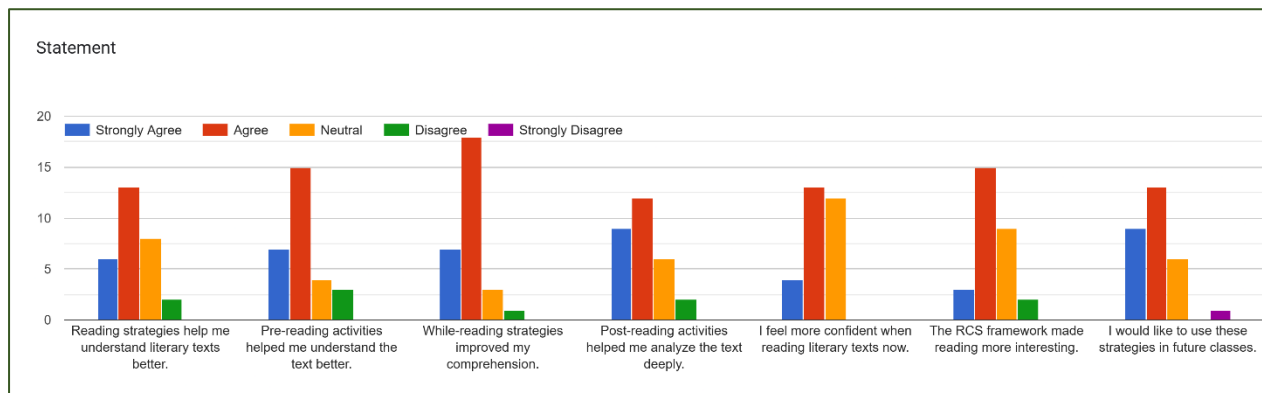
These are primarily cognitive strategies that help students access the text. In contrast, summarizing after reading (31.0% often/always) and analyzing themes, characters, and symbols (44.8% often/always) are the least frequently used strategies.

This gap is significant because summarizing and analysis are essential for deep literary comprehension, particularly for the post-reading phase of the RCS framework (Chapter Two, section 6.1).

The data suggest that while students readily adopt surface-level strategies, they require more explicit instruction and guided practice in deeper analytical strategies.

3.5.5 Section Five: Opinion about the RCS Framework:

This section aimed to measure students' attitudes toward the RCS framework, including its components and overall impact.



Graphic 3.7: Students' Agreement with Statements About the RCS Framework.

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	% Agree (SA+A)
Reading strategies help me understand literary texts better.	6 (20.7%)	15 (51.7%)	5 (17.2%)	3 (10.3%)	0 (0%)	72.4%
Pre-reading activities helped me understand the text better.	6 (20.7%)	15 (51.7%)	5 (17.2%)	2 (6.9%)	1 (3.4%)	72.4%
While-reading strategies improved my comprehension.	7 (24.1%)	18 (62.1%)	2 (6.9%)	1 (3.4%)	1 (3.4%)	86.2%
Post-reading activities helped me analyze the text deeply.	7 (24.1%)	13 (44.8%)	5 (17.2%)	3 (10.3%)	1 (3.4%)	68.9%
I feel more confident when reading literary texts now.	5 (17.2%)	12 (41.4%)	7 (24.1%)	3 (10.3%)	2 (6.9%)	58.6%
The RCS framework made reading more interesting.	7 (24.1%)	12 (41.4%)	8 (27.6%)	0 (0%)	2 (6.9%)	65.5%
I would like to use these strategies in future classes.	10 (34.5%)	13 (44.8%)	4 (13.8%)	2 (6.9%)	0 (0%)	79.3%

Table 3.7: Students' Perceptions of the RCS Framework (N=29)

Table 11 shows overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the RCS framework.

While-reading strategies received the highest approval rating (86.2% agree/strongly agree), confirming the importance of active engagement during the reading process as theorized in Chapter Two (section 3.1.1).

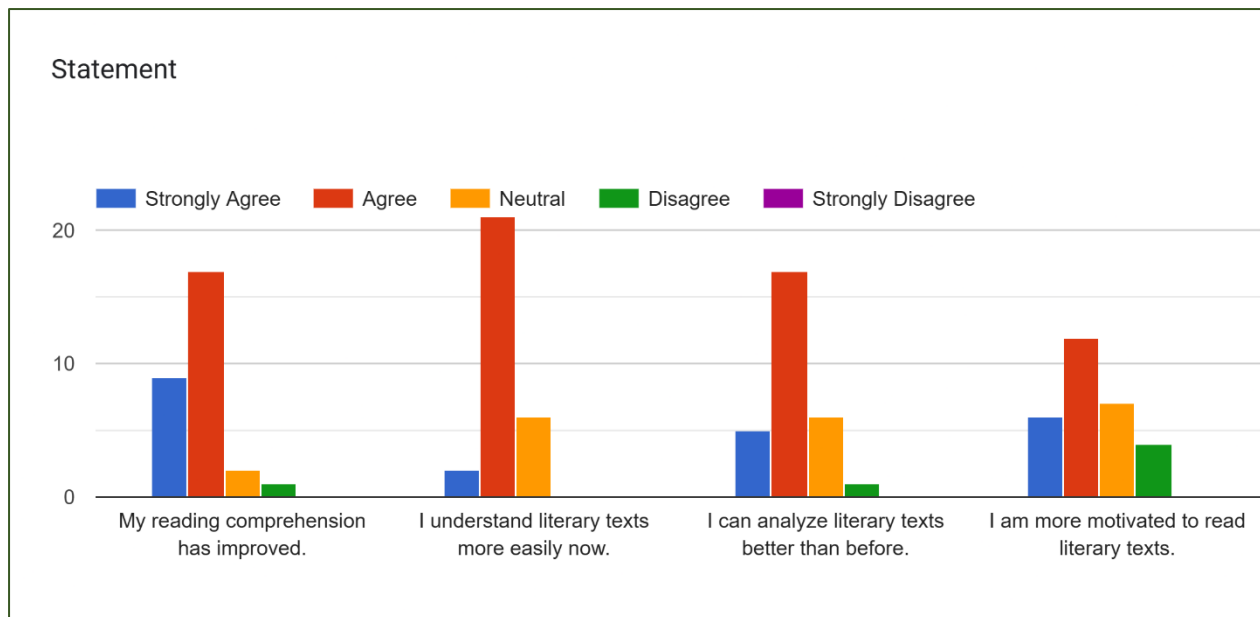
Pre-reading activities (72.4%) and post-reading activities (68.9%) also received strong support, validating the three-phase structure of the framework.

Notably, 79.3% of students expressed a desire to continue using these strategies in future classes, indicating high acceptance and perceived long-term value.

These results strongly support research hypothesis H3, which predicted positive student attitudes toward reading strategies in literature courses

3.5.6 Section Six: Improvement in Reading:

This section aimed to measure students' self-reported improvement in reading comprehension, understanding, analysis, and motivation after using the RCS framework.



Graphic 3.8: Students' Self-Reported Reading Improvement After RCS.

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	% Agree (SA+A)
My reading comprehension has improved.	7 (24.1%)	16 (55.2%)	4 (13.8%)	1 (3.4%)	1 (3.4%)	79.3%
I understand literary texts more easily now.	4 (13.8%)	15 (51.7%)	8 (27.6%)	1 (3.4%)	1 (3.4%)	65.5%
I can analyze literary texts better than before.	6 (20.7%)	12 (41.4%)	6 (20.7%)	3 (10.3%)	2 (6.9%)	62.1%
I am more motivated to read literary texts.	7 (24.1%)	11 (37.9%)	7 (24.1%)	3 (10.3%)	1 (3.4%)	62.0%

Table 3.8: Self-Reported Improvement in Reading Comprehension (N=29)

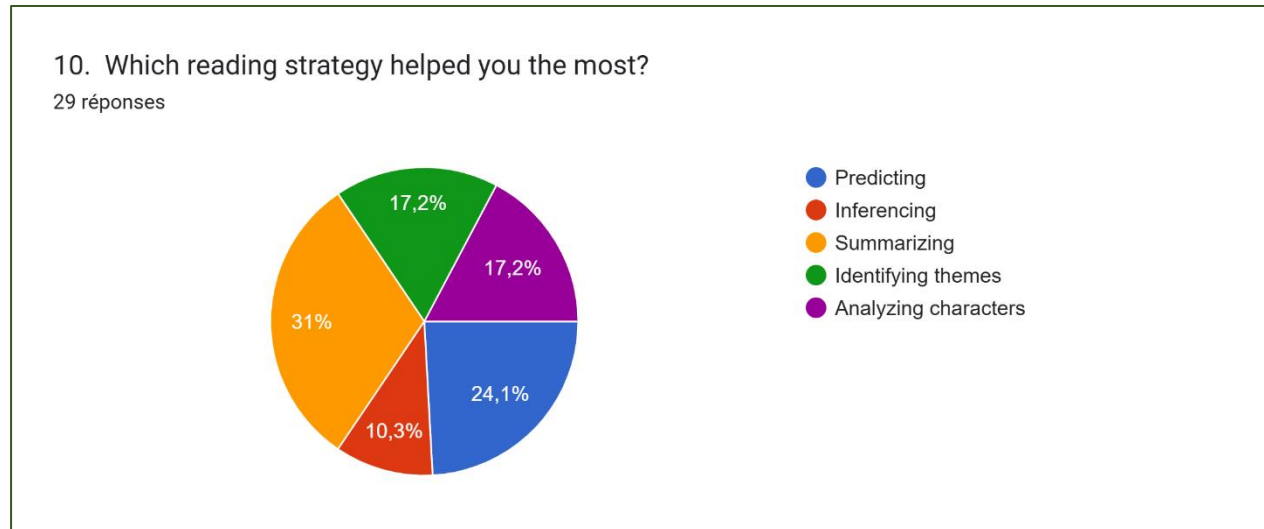
Table 12 provides direct evidence supporting research hypothesis H2, which proposed that the RCS framework significantly improves students' literary text comprehension.

A large majority (79.3%) agreed that their overall reading comprehension has improved, while 65.5% reported understanding literary texts more easily.

Improvements in analytical ability (62.1%) and motivation (62.0%) are also substantial. These self-reported gains are consistent with the confidence shift observed in Table 9 and the positive perceptions in Table 11.

3.5.7 Section Seven: Most Useful Strategy:

This section aimed to identify which specific reading strategy students perceived as the most helpful.



Graphic 3.9: Students' Choice of the Most Useful Reading Strategy.

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Predicting	8	27.6%
Inferencing	4	13.8%
Summarizing	9	31.0%
Identifying themes	5	17.2%
Analyzing characters	3	10.3%
Total	29	100%

Table 3.9: Most Useful Reading Strategy as Reported by Students

Table 13 indicates that summarizing (31.0%) and predicting (27.6%) are perceived as the most helpful strategies by students, followed by identifying themes (17.2%).

This finding is particularly interesting when compared with Table 10, where summarizing was the least frequently used strategy (only 31.0% often/always).

The discrepancy suggests that students recognize the value of summarizing for consolidating and retaining information, but they may not have fully automated its use or may find it more effortful than other strategies.

Predicting, which was already frequently used (68.9% often/always), is also highly valued for its role in activating prior knowledge and setting reading purposes.

3.5.8 Section Eight: Open-Ended Questions:

This section aimed to collect qualitative data regarding students' specific difficulties, preferred strategies, changes in reading habits, and suggestions for improvement.

Question 11: What difficulties do you face when reading literary texts?

Thematic analysis of the 29 responses revealed three dominant categories:

1. **Vocabulary-related difficulties** (18 students): "hard vocabulary," "difficult words," "lack of vocabulary," "complex vocabulary."
2. **Figurative language and symbolism** (9 students): "symbols and metaphors," "figurative language," "rhetorical devices," "hide meaning."
3. **Cultural and background knowledge** (4 students): "heavily connected to the writer's background," "different culture," "old and complex language like Shakespeare."

These qualitative findings corroborate the quantitative data in Table 8, confirming that vocabulary and figurative language are primary obstacles.

Question 12: Which reading strategies helped you the most and why?

Students provided rationales:

- **Predicting:** "increases thinking," "activates my mind," "makes me lock into the text," "keeps me focused and interested."
- **Summarizing:** "includes a summary stage," "makes texts easier to understand."
- **Inferencing:** "improved my analysis skills and increased how well I understood the text."
- **Skimming/Scanning:** "useful when I need specific information."

Question 13: How did the RCS framework change your reading habits?

Recurring themes include:

- **Structured approach:** "each stage has its role," "reading with a clear plan."
- **Active engagement:** "helped me monitor my comprehension," "made me read more carefully and think about the text."
- **Improved confidence and motivation:** "made me confident," "motivated me," "more productive and creative."

Question 14: Do you have any suggestions to improve literature classes?

Students offered several suggestions:

- **Interactive methods:** "role-play and acting," "group work and debates," "more discussions and fun activities."
- **Simplification:** "simplify content," "use materials matching student level," "focus on meaning rather than memorization."
- **Increased reading practice:** "read a hard literary text each lesson."
- **Use of multimedia:** "movies or audiobooks."

3.6 Discussion of the Findings:

The results of this questionnaire provide robust empirical support for the three research hypotheses.

3.6.1 Verification of Hypothesis One (H1):

the findings confirm **Hypothesis 1 (H1)**: third-year EFL students face significant difficulties in comprehending literary texts.

The most severe difficulties are figurative language (65.5%), vocabulary insufficiency (58.6%), and lack of strategy use (55.1%).

These findings echo the theoretical claims in Chapter One (sections 3.3 and 4.4) regarding the challenges of literary language and limited strategic competence.

The qualitative responses further emphasize vocabulary as the primary obstacle.

These findings are consistent with the literature on EFL literary reading, which has consistently identified vocabulary and figurative language as major obstacles (Grabe, 2009; Lazar, 1993).

3.6.2 Verification of Hypothesis Two (H2):

the results support **Hypothesis 2 (H2)**: the implementation of the RCS framework significantly improves students' literary text comprehension.

Self-reported improvement in comprehension (79.3%), easier understanding (65.5%), better analysis (62.1%), and increased motivation (62.0%) all indicate positive effects.

The dramatic shift in confidence—from 62.1% not confident to 65.5% more confident—demonstrates the socio-affective impact of strategy instruction.

The high approval ratings for each phase of the framework validate the three-phase structure.

3.6.3 Verification of Hypothesis Three (H3):

the findings strongly support **Hypothesis 3 (H3)**: students have positive attitudes toward reading strategies. Agreement rates range from 58.6% to 86.2%, and 79.3% wish to continue using these strategies in future classes.

These positive attitudes align with Oxford's (2011) contention that strategy instruction enhances learner autonomy and motivation.

3.6.4 Addressing the Gap Between Perceived Usefulness and Actual Use:

A notable gap emerged between perceived usefulness and actual frequency of use for summarizing and analytical strategies.

While students recognize the value of these deeper strategies, they use them less frequently than surface-level strategies.

This suggests that the RCS framework should devote additional instructional time to modeling and practicing post-reading strategies.

3.7 Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and future researchers:

Recommendations for EFL Teachers:

1. **Explicitly teach reading strategies:** Teachers should explicitly introduce and model the three phases of the RCS framework (pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading) before expecting students to apply them independently.
2. **Emphasize post-reading strategies:** Given the gap between perceived usefulness and actual use of summarizing and analytical strategies, teachers should allocate additional instructional time to modeling summarization, thematic analysis, and character analysis.
3. **Integrate socio-affective strategies:** Teachers should address reading anxiety by creating a supportive classroom environment, encouraging peer collaboration, and using positive reinforcement.
4. **Use diverse and engaging materials:** Teachers should select literary texts that match students' proficiency levels while gradually increasing complexity. Incorporating multimedia (movies, audiobooks) can enhance engagement.
5. **Provide regular practice opportunities:** Strategy use should be practiced consistently across multiple literary texts, not just in isolated lessons.

Recommendations for Curriculum Designers:

1. **Integrate the RCS framework into literature courses:** The three-phase structure should be systematically incorporated into syllabus design across all literature modules.

2. **Allocate sufficient time for strategy instruction:** Curricula should dedicate explicit instructional hours to teaching reading strategies, not assume that students will acquire them automatically.
3. **Develop assessment tools that reward strategic reading:** Assessment should evaluate not only comprehension outcomes but also the processes students use to achieve understanding.
4. **Provide professional development for teachers:** Training programs should equip EFL teachers with the knowledge and skills to implement strategy-based instruction effectively.

Recommendations for Future Researchers:

1. **Conduct longitudinal studies:** Future research should examine the long-term retention of strategy use and its impact on reading comprehension over extended periods.
2. **Include control groups:** survey description research studies with control groups would provide stronger causal evidence for the effectiveness of the RCS framework.
3. **Investigate individual differences:** Research should explore how factors such as gender, proficiency level, and motivation interact with strategy instruction.
4. **Explore technology integration:** Future studies should examine how digital tools and AI can support the implementation of the RCS framework.
5. **Expand to other contexts:** The RCS framework should be tested with different populations (different proficiency levels, age groups, and educational settings) to establish generalizability.

Conclusion:

This chapter has presented a comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire data collected from 29 third-year EFL students at the University of Ghardaïa.

The analysis followed a systematic approach, examining each section of the questionnaire separately and integrating quantitative and qualitative findings.

The findings indicate that before the implementation of the RCS framework, students struggled with vocabulary, figurative language, and lack of strategic approaches to literary reading.

More than half of the students (62.1%) reported feeling "not confident" when reading literary texts.

The most severe difficulties were figurative language (65.5%), vocabulary insufficiency (58.6%), and lack of strategy use (55.1%).

Following the implementation of the RCS framework, students reported substantial improvements across multiple dimensions: comprehension improved for 79.3% of students, confidence shifted from 62.1% "not confident" to 65.5% "more confident", analytical ability improved for 62.1%, and motivation increased for 62.0%.

The majority of students (79.3%) expressed a desire to continue using these strategies in future classes.

The high approval ratings for each phase of the framework (pre-reading: 72.4%, while-reading: 86.2%, post-reading: 68.9%) validated the three-phase structure.

However, a notable gap emerged between the perceived usefulness of summarizing (rated most useful by 31.0%) and its actual frequency of use (only 31.0% often/always).

This discrepancy suggests that students recognize the value of summarizing for consolidating and retaining information, but they may not have fully automated its use.

In conclusion, the data analysis clearly supports the effectiveness of the RCS framework in enhancing literary text comprehension among EFL learners.

Their ability to enhance comprehension, confidence, and learner motivation positions them as a valuable resource in the English literature classroom.

Nonetheless, for their benefits to be fully realized, continued instructional attention is needed for post-reading strategies.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

General Conclusion:

In the context of EFL instruction in Algerian universities, where reading literary texts often poses significant challenges for students, the integration of a structured Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) framework offers a more effective approach to enhancing literary text comprehension.

The present study, entitled "Enhancing Literary Text Comprehension through a Reading Comprehension Strategies Framework", has investigated the effectiveness of this framework among third-year EFL students at the University of Ghardaïa.

This research explored the extent to which third-year EFL students face difficulties in comprehending literary texts, how the implementation of the RCS framework affects their comprehension, and what attitudes they hold toward the use of reading strategies in literature courses.

To address the central topic, three research questions guided the investigation:

- ✚ To what extent do third-year English students face difficulties in comprehending literary texts?
- ✚ How does the implementation of a Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) framework affect students' literary text comprehension?
- ✚ What are students' attitudes toward the use of reading strategies in literature courses?

In response to these questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Third-year English students face significant difficulties in comprehending literary texts due to a lack of strategic tools.
2. The implementation of a Reading Comprehension Strategies (RCS) framework significantly improves students' literary text comprehension.
3. Students have positive attitudes toward the use of reading strategies in literature courses.

General Conclusion

The study was structured into a theoretical and a practical component:

- ❖ The first chapter presented the theoretical underpinnings of reading as a language skill, the pedagogical benefits of reading strategies, and how the RCS framework can be used to promote literary text comprehension.
- ❖ The second chapter provided a comprehensive overview of reading comprehension strategies, Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI), and the RCS framework as a structured model for developing strategic reading skills.
- ❖ The third chapter included the fieldwork and data analysis, which was based on a questionnaire administered to a sample of 29 third-year EFL students following the implementation of the RCS framework.

The findings confirm all three hypotheses:

- ✓ **First**, the data showed that students face significant difficulties in comprehending literary texts, with figurative language (65.5%), vocabulary insufficiency (58.6%), and lack of strategy use (55.1%) emerging as the most severe obstacles. Difficulty identifying the main idea (41.4%) and analyzing characters (44.8%) were less frequently reported, suggesting that students struggle more with linguistic and inferential layers than with global structural elements.
- ✓ **Second**, the implementation of the RCS framework significantly improved students' literary text comprehension. Self-reported comprehension improvement reached 79.3%, confidence shifted dramatically from 62.1% "not confident" before the intervention to 65.5% "more confident" after, analytical ability improved for 62.1%, and motivation increased for 62.0%. The high approval ratings for each phase of the framework (pre-

General Conclusion

reading: 72.4%, while-reading: 86.2%, post-reading: 68.9%) validated the three-phase structure.

- ✓ **Third**, students expressed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward the use of reading strategies in literature courses. Agreement rates ranged from 58.6% to 86.2%, and 79.3% expressed a desire to continue using these strategies in future classes. The qualitative responses revealed that students valued predicting for its engagement value ("makes me lock into the text," "keeps me focused and interested") and summarizing for its consolidating function ("makes texts easier to understand").

A notable gap emerged between perceived usefulness and actual frequency of use for summarizing and analytical strategies. While summarizing was rated as the most useful strategy by 31.0% of students, it was the least frequently used strategy, with only 31.0% of students reporting that they use it "often" or "always". This finding highlights the need for continued scaffolding and practice for post-reading strategies.

In summary, this research highlights the pedagogical value of using the RCS framework in EFL literature instruction. The framework not only contributes to language development but also promotes learner engagement and motivation.

However, for these benefits to be fully realized, institutional support such as improved access to strategy-based instruction and training for instructors on how to integrate the RCS framework effectively must be enhanced.

Ultimately, the RCS framework represents a powerful, yet often underutilized, resource in the EFL classroom, capable of transforming reading from a mechanical activity into a meaningful, learner-centered experience.

General Conclusion

Recommendations and Suggestions:

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the use of the RCS framework in EFL literature instruction:

- **Curriculum Designers** should integrate the RCS framework systematically into literature courses, with attention to the three-phase structure (pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading) that suits students' linguistic proficiency and interests.
- **Teachers** are encouraged to explicitly teach reading strategies and allocate additional instructional time to modeling summarization, thematic analysis, and character analysis, given the gap between perceived usefulness and actual use of post-reading strategies.
- **Teachers should integrate socio-affective strategies** to address reading anxiety by creating a supportive classroom environment, encouraging peer collaboration, and using positive reinforcement.
- **University Libraries** should expand their digital and physical collections of literary texts and provide access to strategy-based instructional materials.
- **Training Workshops** could be organized for EFL instructors to introduce innovative methods for teaching reading through the RCS framework, such as using predicting, inferencing, and summarizing for literary analysis.
- **Student Engagement Initiatives** such as literature circles, reading groups, or creative response assignments should be implemented to promote a culture of strategic reading beyond the classroom.
- **Further Research** is recommended to assess the long-term impact of strategy-based reading on students' language proficiency and to explore the effectiveness of the RCS framework on different populations (different proficiency levels, age groups, and educational settings).

General Conclusion

By adopting these recommendations, Algerian universities particularly English departments can create a more supportive and engaging environment for language learners.

The use of the RCS framework not only enriches linguistic competence but also fosters **motivation, critical thinking**, and **a lifelong love** for reading in a foreign language.

It is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this study will contribute to the improvement of EFL literature instruction at the University of Ghardaïa and beyond, and that the RCS framework will be adopted and adapted by teachers seeking to enhance their students' literary reading abilities.

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Appendices

Questionnaire :

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is part of a research study entitled "**Enhancing Literary Text Comprehension through a Reading Comprehension Strategies Framework**"

conducted at the University of Ghardaïa. The purpose of this study is to explore your difficulties in reading literary texts, your use of reading strategies, and your attitudes toward the application of these strategies in literature courses.

Your responses will remain completely anonymous and will be used strictly for academic research purposes only. There are no right or wrong answers; therefore, you are kindly requested to answer all questions honestly and carefully.

Thank you for your cooperation and valuable contribution.

Instructions:

Please read each question carefully and answer honestly.

• Mark only one oval per row Or write your response where necessary.

◆ **Section 1: General Information:**

1. Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female .

2. Age:

☐ 20–22 ☐ 23–25 ☐ 26 and above .

3. How would you describe your level in English?

☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Weak .

◆ Section 2: Difficulties in Reading Literary Texts

4. Mark only one oval per row:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I find literary texts difficult to understand.					
I have difficulty identifying the main idea of a literary text.					
I struggle to understand figurative language (metaphors, symbols).					
I find it difficult to analyze characters.					
I do not easily understand hidden or implied meanings.					
My vocabulary is not enough to understand literary texts.					
I do not use specific strategies when reading literary texts.					

◆ Section 3 : Confidence Before and After Using Strategies

5. Before using reading strategies, how did you feel when reading literary texts?

- ☐ Confident
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not confident

6. After using reading strategies, how do you feel now?

- ☐ More confident
- ☐ The same
- ☐ Less confident

Appendices

◆ Section 4: Use of Reading Strategies

7. Mark only one oval per row:

Statement	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I predict the content before reading a text.					
I try to guess the meaning of unknown words from context.					
I identify key ideas while reading.					
I summarize the text after reading.					
I ask myself questions while reading.					
I connect the text with my previous knowledge.					
I analyze themes, characters, and symbols.					

◆ Section 5: Opinion about the RCS Framework

8. Mark only one oval per row:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Reading strategies help me understand literary texts better.					
Pre-reading activities helped me understand the text better.					
While-reading strategies improved my comprehension.					
Post-reading activities helped me analyze the text deeply.					
I feel more confident when reading literary texts now.					
The RCS framework made reading more interesting.					
I would like to use these strategies in future classes.					

◆ Section 6: Improvement in Reading

9. Mark only one oval per row:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My reading comprehension has improved.					
I understand literary texts more easily now.					
I can analyze literary texts better than before.					
I am more motivated to read literary texts.					

◆ Section 7: Most Useful Strategy

10. Which reading strategy helped you the most?

- ☐ Predicting
- ☐ Inferencing
- ☐ Summarizing
- ☐ Identifying themes
- ☐ Analyzing characters

◆ Section 8: Open-Ended Questions

11. What difficulties do you face when reading literary texts?

.....

12. Which reading strategies helped you the most? Why?

.....

13. How did the RCS framework change your reading habits?

.....

14. Do you have any suggestions to improve literature classes?

.....

ملخص البحث:

تستقصي هذه الدراسة فعالية إطار استراتيجيات فهم القراءة (RCS) في تعزيز فهم النصوص الأدبية لدى طلبة السنة الثالثة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة غرداية، تحت عنوان: "تعزيز فهم النصوص الأدبية من خلال إطار استراتيجيات فهم القراءة: حالة طلبة السنة الثالثة بجامعة غرداية". وإدراكًا للصعوبات المستمرة التي يواجهها متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية عند قراءة النصوص الأدبية، وخاصة فيما يتعلق باللغة المجازية والمفردات والقراءة الاستراتيجية، يقترح هذا البحث إطارًا منظمًا من ثلاث مراحل (ما قبل القراءة، وأثناء القراءة، وما بعد القراءة) يقوم على نماذج القراءة التفاعلية ونظرية المخططات ونظرية استجابة القارئ. تم اعتماد تصميم وصفي مسحي، وتم جمع البيانات باستخدام استبيان منظم طبق على 29 طالبًا من طلبة السنة الثالثة بعد تطبيق إطار RCS. استكشف الاستبيان صعوبات الطلاب، واستخدامهم لاستراتيجيات القراءة، ومواقفهم تجاه الإطار، والتحسين المبلغ عنه ذاتيًا في الفهم والتحليل والدافعية. كشفت النتائج أن الطلاب واجهوا صعوبات كبيرة في البداية، خاصة مع اللغة المجازية (65.5%)، والمفردات (58.6%)، وقلة استخدام الاستراتيجيات (55.1%). بعد تطبيق إطار RCS، أبلغ الطلاب عن تحسن ملحوظ: 79.3% اتفقوا على أن فهمهم للقراءة قد تحسن، و65.5% شعروا بثقة أكبر، و62.1% أبلغوا عن قدرات تحليلية أفضل. أعرب الطلاب عن مواقف إيجابية للغاية تجاه الإطار، حيث أعرب 79.3% عن رغبتهم في الاستمرار في استخدام هذه الاستراتيجيات في الفصول المستقبلية. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن إطار RCS هو أداة تربوية فعالة لتعزيز فهم النصوص الأدبية لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وتوصي بالتعليم الصريح للمراحل الثلاث جميعها، مع تركيز إضافي على استراتيجيات ما بعد القراءة، وتحسين الدعم المؤسسي للتعليم القائم على الاستراتيجيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات فهم القراءة، إطار RCS، النصوص الأدبية، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التعليم القائم على الاستراتيجيات، جامعة غرداية.