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**Exploring metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and reading
comprehension performance of intermediate and advanced learners of English as
a second language**

Seminario de grado para optar al grado de Licenciatura en Lengua y Literatura Inglesas

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Santiago, 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Se agradece muy profundamente el apoyo de la profesora guía Alfonsina Doddis, la asesoría estadística de Aníbal Barriga y se agradece a la profesora Ximena Tabilo por su ayuda en la recolección de los datos de la investigación.

Hubo muchas personas que me prestaron su apoyo durante el proceso formativo tanto profesores como familiares cuando dudé de mí misma y quise abandonar durante el proceso, por esto y mucho más, gracias.

ABSTRACT

The present research report provides information about a quantitative study that intended to explore possible relationships between the students' perception of their metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and their performance in a reading comprehension test. The variables were the scores that intermediate and advanced university students of English as a second/foreign language got in a metacognitive awareness of reading questionnaire and in an English reading comprehension test. The participants were 10 intermediate and 10 advanced students taking a four-year academic programme in English language and literature. The intermediate students were in the second year of the programme whereas advanced students were in their fourth -and final- year of studies. The instruments applied to collect the data were taken online by the participants, who volunteered to take the tests. The data collected were processed in terms of descriptive statistics, such as means, and standard deviation. Then, correlation coefficients were calculated to identify relationships between the variables. The results of the study were unexpected since the intermediate group of students got better results than the advanced student group in the questionnaire and in the reading test. Besides, no relationship between the perceived metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and the reading comprehension performance was identified in any of the two groups of participants. Thus, possible explanations are offered for the fact that the better results of the questionnaire and the reading test were obtained by the intermediate group and for the fact that no relationships were identified between the students' perceived metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and their performance in the reading comprehension test. Nevertheless, both groups of students perceived the use of different subscales or factors of metacognitive strategies, which is important for the development of their reading comprehension skill and for becoming more autonomous language learners.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Metacognition has been a topic of interest to applied linguists engaged in research on second language acquisition for about three decades. Flavell's (1976, 1979) contributions to the study of metacognition, i.e., his model of metacognition, is the foundation for research in the field of metacognition. He defines metacognition as "one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them" (1976, p. 232). Indeed, Flavell was interested in identifying components of metacognition and in getting to know how metacognition optimizes acquisition. Flavell (1979) proposes three categories of metacognition: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, and actions (or strategies). Metacognitive knowledge involves person knowledge which refers to the beliefs or knowledge that a person has about his/her own cognitive processes. In addition, within metacognitive knowledge, we find task knowledge, which has to do with the knowledge a person has about how a certain task should be carried out and "how successful you are likely to be in achieving its goal" (Flavell, 1979, p. 907, in Haukås, 2018). Strategy knowledge refers to a person's beliefs about the strategies that could be used to successfully complete a learning task. Concerning the category of metacognitive experiences, Flavell states that they are "any conscious cognitive or affective experience that accompany and pertain to any intellectual enterprise" (1979, p. 906, in Haukås, 2018). Finally, the category of metacognitive actions or strategies is described as a person's use of strategies to manage his/her cognition.

The study of metacognition has developed to become applicable to different areas such as self-instruction, personal development, education, attention, social interaction, memory, science, mathematics, language acquisition, metacognitive strategies, reading and writing. In the field of second language acquisition, metacognition has been related to language learning strategies. As stated by Goh (2008), language learning strategies research has been developing within the field of applied linguistics and second language acquisition about 30 years. Several applied linguists have contributed to academic and pedagogical research on these strategies and have discussed

controversial issues in research such as definition of the concept of strategy and methodological aspects as the use of taxonomies and questionnaires (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Goh & Hu, 2013). Language learning strategy research has an important component, metacognition, which is considered to be essential to understanding second/foreign language students' learning processes and their use of strategies.

In relation to the language learning strategy taxonomies proposed in the field, the one proposed by O' Malley and Chamot (1990) has been chosen to give theoretical support to the notion of metacognitive strategy in the study reported here. They state that "metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self-evaluation after the learning activity has been completed." (p. 8). As regards metacognition, research has shown the importance of the role of metacognitive awareness of listening, reading, and writing strategies, and the use of metacognitive strategies in the completion of language tasks in the second language acquisition process. For instance, Zhang and Wu (2009) point out that studies on learners' metacognitive aspects of reading-strategy use have revealed that "successful readers generally display a higher degree of metacognitive awareness, which enables them to use reading strategies more effectively and efficiently than their unsuccessful peers (Carrell, 1989; Carrell, Gajdusek, and Wise, 1998; Hudson, 1998; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001; Zhang, 2001; Zhang, Gu, & Hu, 2008)".

Considering the important role that metacognition plays in the acquisition of a second or foreign language, one of the variables of the present study is metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. In addition, the second research variable is reading comprehension. The reading comprehension skill is of significant importance to university students in Chile, who may be studying different disciplines at tertiary level. These students need to develop their reading skill in the English language since a great number of specialized journals and books are written in English. In the case of the participants in the present study, they are 20 university students; 10 of intermediate

proficiency level, and 10 of advanced proficiency, who are taking an English Language and Literature BA program. These students need to read academic texts in disciplines such as theoretical and applied linguistics, English Grammar, Phonology, Phonetics, Semantics, Discourse Analysis and British and American Literature. Besides, in this programme, students take English language courses from the first to the fourth year of their studies. During the programme, these students have to develop their English language acquisition process in order to achieve a high level of proficiency, including productive and receptive language skills. When they graduate, these students may enrol in postgraduate studies such as MA programmes in English Linguistics, English and/or American Literature; and they may also take Pedagogical Studies. Therefore, these students need to be fluent readers of English in order to pursue postgraduate studies. As pointed out by Grabe and Stoller (2020, p. xvii), “L2 reading ability, particularly with English as the L2, and as English continues to spread, not only as a global language but also as the language of science, technology and advanced research”.

In this study, the theoretical-descriptive framework chosen for the reading comprehension skill is the theory proposed by Grabe and Stoller (2020), which is based on recent research on second language reading. They stress the fact that reading is a very complex activity that requires the combination of various processing skills. As they point out that people read for different purposes, they say that this complicates the possibility of providing a definition of reading. Instead, they describe the different processes that readers go through when engaged in reading. Finally, Grabe and Stoller (2020, p. 27) state that “Reading comprehension is an extraordinary feat of balancing and coordinating many abilities within a very complex and rapid set of processes, allowing us to think that comprehension is an effortless and enjoyable activity for fluent readers”.

The present study intends to explore the relationship between the perceived metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and the reading comprehension performance of a group of intermediate students and a group of advanced students

from a BA program of English Language and Literature offered by the Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, Universidad de Chile.

The research report is organized into chapters: This chapter (1) is the Introduction to the study. In Chapter 2, the general and specific objectives of the study, and the research questions have been included. Chapter 3 contains the theoretical-descriptive framework concerning language learning strategies, metacognition, and the reading comprehension skill. Chapter 4 describes the methodology used for conducting the research and for the analysis of the data collected by means of the instruments applied. In Chapter 5, the results of the study are presented and analyzed. Finally, Chapter 6 gives a summary of the results, and provides possible explanations for the unexpected results. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are also included.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present research work is a quantitative study that has two variables: the scores of a reading comprehension test, and the scores of The Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Questionnaire.

2.1. General objective

The general objective of the present study is to explore possible relationships between metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and the reading comprehension performance of Chilean students of English as a second language at two levels of interlanguage, intermediate and advanced.

2.2. Specific objectives

1. To identify and compare intermediate and advanced students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies.
2. To identify and compare intermediate and advanced students' reading comprehension performance.
3. To identify and compare possible relations among different subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies -directed attention, planning and evaluation, problem solving, person knowledge and mental translation- and the reading comprehension performance of intermediate and advanced students.

2.3. Research questions

1. What is the intermediate and advanced students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies like and how does it compare between the two levels of interlanguage?

2. What is the intermediate and advanced students' reading comprehension performance like and how does it compare between the two levels of interlanguage?

3. Are there any relationships among different subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies -directed attention, planning and evaluation, problem solving, person knowledge and mental translation- and the reading comprehension performance of intermediate and advanced students?

3. THEORETICAL-DESCRIPTIVE FRAMEWORK

3.1. Language learning strategies

Many researchers and applied linguists have proposed definitions of learner strategies. Among these experts, Weinstein and Mayer (1986) proposed a broad definition that includes the motivational state of the learner at the moment of learning new information about a second language such as the manner in which he selects, organizes and acquires knowledge. Therefore, learning strategies may have either a conceptual or an affective basis.

The distinctions among learning, communication, and production strategies are important in second language acquisition studies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Faerch & Kasper, 1984; Tarone, 1981). It has been pointed out that language learning strategies aim at language acquisition, whereas communication and production strategies are linked to language use. O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 43) stated that the main distinctions between language learning or acquisition strategies, production, and communication strategies are basically their purposes, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Language learning strategies focus on learners acquiring a target language rather than on using a language.
2. Production strategies, in contrast to language learning strategies, are more focused on communication goals. In this sense, when using them, the learner aims at using the language appropriately and with minimal effort.
3. Communication strategies are used as a backup plan when the speaker fails in his/her language production purposes. Therefore, it is said that they are important in the negotiation of meaning.

In turn, O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and O'Malley et al. (1995) chose Anderson, J. R.'s cognitive theory (1985, 1983, 1980) as a theoretical basis for the framework they developed to characterize and classify language learning strategies.

3.1.1. Anderson's Cognitive Theory

Anderson's cognitive theory (1985, 1983, 1980) can be described as a comprehensive model of cognitive skill learning. Thus, second language acquisition is viewed as a cognitive skill. Within this theory, it is possible to account for the use of learning strategies at different stages of the acquisition process. Anderson proposed "a unitary theory of the mind or a common cognitive system for all higher-level mental processes" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 24). The view of second language acquisition taken by Anderson stands in opposition to Chomsky's theory, which proposes that the mind has specific faculties related to language. Anderson described cognitive skill acquisition as a "'three-stage' process, using a 'production system' notation to specify the dynamics of the system during the skill acquisition process". (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 20)

3.1.1.1. Declarative and Procedural Knowledge

Anderson's theory makes a distinction between two types of knowledge: declarative knowledge, which is what we know *about*, and *procedural* knowledge, which is what we know *how to do*. Procedural knowledge constitutes static information in memory, whereas procedural knowledge is dynamic information in memory.

Declarative knowledge is stored in long-term memory. Examples of declarative knowledge are word definitions, rules, and facts, such as 'the moon orbits around the Earth'. Declarative knowledge can also be found as temporal strings such as the chronological order in which we remember some events; also, as visual images we may have about an animal or the order of some place as a living room. Finally, it has to be highlighted that the most important way to store information in memory is through propositional representations, which retain the meaning of information and disregard details which are not important (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 20). O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 23) pointed out that, "Larger units of meaning that can be represented by propositional networks require a *schema*, or a configuration of interrelated features that define a concept". They also stated that the main importance of schemata is that they enable us to organize and understand new information.

Concerning procedural knowledge, Anderson (1985, 1983, 1980) stated that the ability to understand and produce language by applying language rules can be considered instances of this type of knowledge. He also proposed the idea that because we repeatedly use the same knowledge, we may not easily remember the rules we had previously learnt; and, therefore, we may find it difficult to state these rules. In addition, Anderson pointed out that “declarative knowledge or factual information may be acquired quickly” (in O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 24). On the contrary, procedural knowledge, such as language acquisition, is acquired slowly and gradually because it needs many hours of practice to be internalised. Anderson (1985, 1983) placed the representation of procedural knowledge in memory in what he called ‘production systems’.

It has been stated by experts that when trying to develop a theory about cognitive skill acquisition, it is difficult to understand and explain the way complex cognitive skills are represented in human memory. Anderson (1983) “argued for a unitary theory of the mind or a common cognitive system for all higher-level mental processes” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 24). This claim contrasts with what other theorists have proposed, including Chomsky (1980). They have claimed that “the mind has specific faculties associated with language and perhaps with other special symbolic systems, such as numbers.” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 24).

Experts have contributed to the development of cognitive psychology by elaborating sets of proposals that have facilitated the design of models of how complex cognitive skills are represented in memory using principles of representation. One of these representation systems is a production system. Anderson (1980) claimed that all complex cognitive skills can be represented as production systems. He stated that, “Computer simulations using production systems have been developed for a number of cognitive skills, including such seemingly diverse skills” such as reading (Thibadeau, Just, & Carpenter, 1982) and playing chess (Newell & Simon, 1972). (In O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, pp. 24, 25). A production has a condition and an action. The condition has a clause, or several clauses introduced by IF; and the action has a clause, or

several clauses introduced by THEN. O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 25) gave the following example of production for pluralization originally provided by Anderson (1980):

“IF the goal is to generate a plural of a noun, and the noun ends in a hard consonant, THEN generate the noun +/s/.” Here, one of the conditions is an internal or personal goal or states the learners have in mind that might be satisfied or changed for the learners. “The IF clause will match different sets of stored conditions and the learner will execute different sets of actions”. (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 25). In addition, they stated that, at the beginning, productions can be represented in declarative form; and through practice they can be automatically executed.

3.1.1.2. Stages of Skill Acquisition

Anderson (1985, 1983) viewed cognitive skill acquisition “as a three-stage process, using a ‘production system’ notation to specify the dynamics of the system during the skill acquisition process.” (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 20) With relation to this proposal and to Anderson’s distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge, an important question is relevant: “How does one proceed from the rule-bound declarative knowledge used in performance of a complex skill to the more automatic proceduralized stage?” (In O' Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 20) Anderson (1985, 1983) proposed the cognitive, associative, and autonomous stages of skill acquisition, which will be described below.

The cognitive stage is the first one in skill learning. At this stage, new information is introduced to learners; they are taught how to perform a task; they may observe how some experts do the task or they may try to understand how something works and they could study it. This stage requires the student to be fully conscious of the activity being performed. In addition, the knowledge acquired is declarative and can be verbalized. For example, a learner can learn rules of grammar, or memorize vocabulary when learning a second language. This knowledge enables a learner to describe what he has

learnt but it is not adequate for skilled performance. (O' Malley & Chamot, 1990, pp. 25, 26)

In turn, the associative stage is an intermediate stage between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge because it is the phase in which the knowledge starts becoming procedural. Nevertheless, the declarative representation may remain, and the learner can still state it. At this stage, the learner is aware of his/her errors and can gradually correct them. The learner's performance starts becoming adequate, but he or she may continue being slow and may still commit errors.

Finally, at the autonomous stage, the errors that occurred in the previous phases are no longer committed. The skill that is being learned becomes almost automatic; it is also performed without much demand on working memory. It should be highlighted that skilled performance improves gradually, and it is achieved after a prolonged period of time and constant practice. "While a fact can often be learned in one trial, a complex skill such as second language acquisition can only be mastered after a relatively long period of practice." (O' Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 26)

In Figure 1 below, the stages of skill acquisition can be observed.

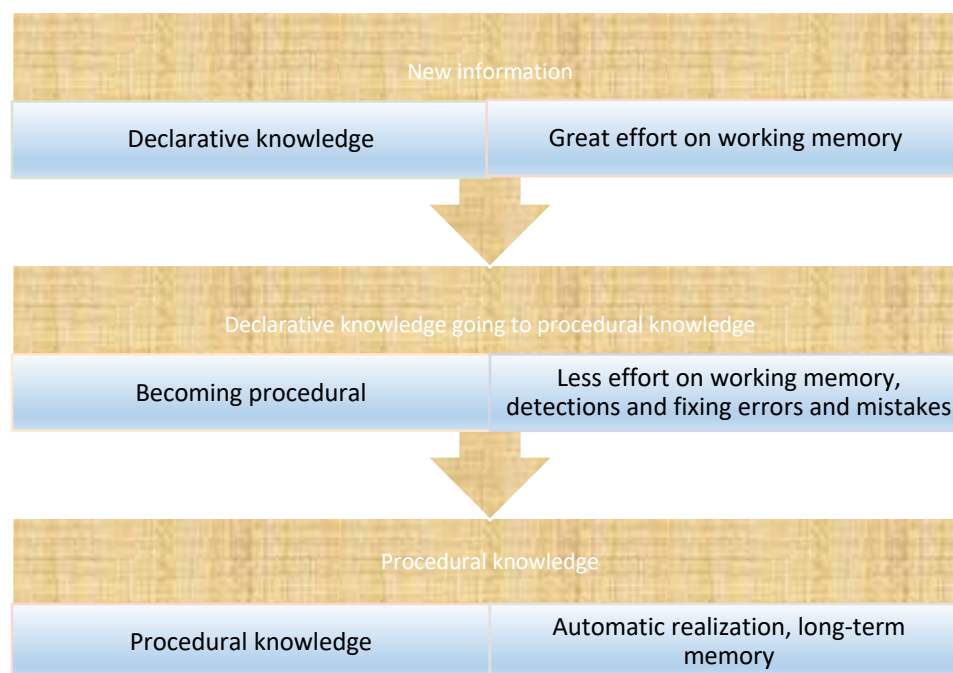


Figure 1. Stages of skill acquisition according to Anderson's theory (1985,1983)

3.1.2. *O' Malley and Chamot's Definition of Learning Strategies*

As mentioned above, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) based their conception of learning strategies and their classification on Anderson's (1985, 1983) information processing and cognitive theory concerning skill acquisition, described in the previous section of this report. It should be remembered that other experts had also advanced toward a more cognitive view of second language acquisition. For instance, McLaughlin, Rossman, and McLeod (1983) developed an information processing approach to deal with second language acquisition. They claimed that the cognitive system plays a central role in acquiring a new language since the learner is considered as "an active organizer of incoming information, with processing limitations and capabilities". (O' Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 11) In addition, McLaughlin et al. (1983) emphasized the idea that even though motivation can be considered to play an important role in language acquisition, the learner's cognitive system is central to processing.

O' Malley and Chamot (1990) decided to apply Anderson's theory, in a foundational way, to connect language learning strategies and cognitive processes. Thus, O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 52) defined learner strategies as

"complex procedures that individuals apply to tasks; consequently, they may be represented as procedural knowledge which may be acquired through cognitive, associative, and autonomous stages of learning. As with other procedural skills at the different stages of learning. As with other procedural skills at the different stages of learning, the strategies may be conscious in early stages of learning and later be performed without the person's awareness."

3.1.3. *O' Malley and Chamot's Taxonomy of Learning Strategies*

O' Malley and Chamot (1990) classified leaning strategies into three types:

(1) Metacognitive strategies

O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 8) stated that "metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self-evaluation after the learning activity has been completed".

(2) Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies involve processes that are used by the learner to interact with the learning material by its manipulation or transformation. For instance, the learner can make mental images, can organize part of the material or he can take notes on main ideas.

(3) Social/affective strategies

Social/affective strategies refer to the influence of social and affective processes on learning. The learner may interact with his classmates, or the teacher in order to get help from them to clarify doubts, or to find out whether he has understood the task properly. Affective strategies refer to the learner using forms of affective control to help him in his learning tasks.

Since the present research work deals with metacognitive strategies, O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of these strategies into subcategories is described in detail in this section of the report. In general terms, they classified these strategies into three categories: planning, monitoring and evaluation.

(1) Planning: Previewing the organizing concept or principle of an anticipated learning task (advance organization); proposing strategies for handling an upcoming task; generating a plan for the parts, sequence, main ideas, or language functions to be used in handling a task (organizational planning).

(2) Directed attention: Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors; maintaining attention during task execution.

(3) Selective attention: Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that assist in performance of a task; attending to specific aspects of language input during task execution.

(4). Self-management: Understanding the conditions that help one successfully accomplish language tasks and arranging for the presence of those conditions; controlling one's language performance to maximize use of what is already known.

(5). Self-monitoring: Checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension or performance in the course of a language task. This has been coded in the think-alouds in the following ways:

- a. Comprehension monitoring: checking, verifying, or correcting one's understanding.
- b. Production monitoring: checking, verifying, or correcting one's language production.
- c. Auditory monitoring: using one's "ear" for the language (how something sounds) to make decisions.
- d. Visual monitoring: using one's "eye" for the language (how something looks) to make decisions.
- e. Style monitoring: checking, verifying, or correcting based upon an internal stylistic register.
- f. Strategy monitoring: tracking use of how well a strategy is working.
- g. Plan monitoring: tracking how well a plan is working.
- h. Double-check monitoring: tracking, across the task, previously undertaken acts or possibilities considered.

(6). Problem identification: Explicitly identifying the central point needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion.

(7). Self-evaluation: Checking the outcomes of one's own language performance against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy; checking one's language repertoire, strategy use, or ability to perform the task at hand. This has been coded in the think-alouds as:

- a. Production evaluation: checking one's work when the task is finished.
- b. Performance evaluation: judging one's overall execution of the task.
- c. Ability evaluation: judging one's ability to perform the task.
- d. Strategy evaluation: judging one's strategy use when the task is completed.
- e. Language repertoire evaluation: judging how much one knows of the L2, at the word, phrase, sentence, or concept level.

(O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, pp. 137, 138).

3.1.4. State of the Art in Language Learning Strategy Research

Griffiths (2020) pondered on the continuity of studies regarding language learning strategies since, at the beginning of the year 2000, it had been suggested that the concept of self-regulation should replace the language learning strategy concept. However, Griffiths stated that research on language learning strategies still prevails among applied linguistics researchers as a focus of interest, although there are some proposals in this field that have not yet reached a consensus. Griffiths (2020) gave an account of language learning strategy research in order to support her view that the field is still dynamic and 'vibrant' (p. 607). This account is described below.

Since the beginning of language learning strategy research in the 70's, the concept of language learning strategy has been controversial; for instance, Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978. In the 80s, O'Malley et al. (1985) pointed out that there was definitional 'confusion' (In Griffiths, 2020, p. 607). By the 1990s, Wenden (1991, in Griffiths, 2020, p. 607) thought that the definition of language learning strategy was 'elusive'. At the beginning of the 2020s, Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) suggested

replacing the term 'strategy' with 'self-regulation'. Later, Tseng et al. (2006) proposed that a different approach to studying strategies should be applied.

In turn, Gao (2007) wondered whether language strategy research had any future. In 2012, Rose pleaded against the notion of “[t]hrowing language learning strategies out with the bathwater” (p. 92) as a reaction against Tseng et al. (2006) and Gao (2007).

Even though the suggestion that the notion of 'language leaning strategy' should be replaced with the term 'self-regulation' seemed interesting to some experts, Griffiths (2020) stated that some researchers argued that self-regulation is embedded in language learning strategies. As a matter of fact, Winne (1995) had pointed out that language learning strategies were characteristic of the self-regulating learner. Other researchers that agreed with this suggestion were Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) and Boekaerts et al. (2000).

As a matter of fact, language learning strategy research has neither been dismissed nor has it decreased. On the contrary, it has continually attracted researchers who have published a “stream of books” (Griffiths, 2020, p. 607). Among these applied linguists, Griffiths mentioned Gao (2010), Cohen (2011), Oxford (2017) and Griffiths (2018). Besides, as a way of exemplifying that research has been thriving through the years, Griffiths mentioned that articles have been published by various researchers; among them, she mentioned Macaro (2006); Plonsky (2011); Gu (2012); Cohen and Griffiths (2015); Griffiths (2015); and Teng and Zhang (2016). In addition, the author said that journals have published special issues on the topic such as, *System*, 2014; *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 2018.

Although Griffiths (2020) stated that research, debates, and publications on language learning strategies show the experts' interest in the field, she claims that there are still some issues that should be discussed:

(1) Definition of language learning strategies

Griffiths (2020) commented that some agreement has been reached concerning a definition. First, it was suggested that language learning strategies are students' actions (Rubin, 1975). Second, language learning strategies are selected by learners (Cohen, 2011; Oxford, 2017). Third, language learning strategies have a purpose and a goal (Macaro, 2006; Oxford, 1990, 2017). Fourth, language learning strategies are used by learners to learn a language, as their name suggests. Thus, Griffiths (2020, p. 608) suggested that a possible definition could be given by joining the features just mentioned. Thus, she stated that language learning strategies are "actions chosen by learners for the purpose of learning language". This definition might be considered to include elements which can characterize the "prototypical core", as proposed by Gu (2012; in Griffiths, 2020). Nevertheless, Griffiths (2020) recognized that there are still variation dimensions which would have to be further discussed. For instance, the differences between strategies, styles, and skills; the problem of awareness in the use of strategies; the nature of strategies, i.e., whether they are only mental or whether they are also physical; and finally, the relationship of language learning strategies to other kinds of strategies, e.g., language use strategies, communication strategies.

(2) Theoretical bases

The field has been accused by Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) and Macaro (2006), of not being theoretical. Because of this criticism, Griffiths (2020) reviewed the main theoretical models that have supported strategy theory.

When Rubin (1975), Stern (1975), and Naiman et al. (1978) published their important strategy work, the prevailing theoretical paradigm was cognitivism. Other cognitive proposals developed later such as the role of error, interlanguage, schema theory, information processing. All cognition-based theories have a potential impact on

strategy theory, for instance, on learning from errors, on the development of schemata, on the processing of incoming information.

Later, an important theory in language learning started to develop, socioculturalism (Lantolf, 2000). Sociocultural theoretical proposals have been of key importance in the development of language learning strategy theory by adding the dimension of socio-cultural strategies such as asking for help or learning about the cultural background of the language that is being learnt.

Apart from the two disciplinary areas mentioned above, Griffiths (2020) referred to another discipline that has been influential in the development of strategy theory, humanism (Pawlak, 2012; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014). Humanist ideas highlight the importance of learners as individuals, and as “different from each other even within the same sociocultural context, driven by individual factors such as gender, age, motivation, beliefs, (...) personality” (Griffiths, 2020, p. 690). The influence of humanist ideas in strategy theory can be observed in the category of affective strategies, e.g., developing self-confidence, keeping motivation high, and maintaining positive self-talk.

Finally, Griffiths (2020) commented that language learning strategy theory is the conjunction of cognitive, sociocultural, and humanist theoretical proposals. Thus, strategy theory regards learners as individuals with cognitive abilities, who have emotions and who are in a specific socio-cultural context. Apart from the theories mentioned, Griffiths (2020, p. 609) states that within strategy theory, traces from other theories can be found such as “behaviourism (e.g. repetition), structuralism (e.g. finding grammar rules), post-structuralism (e.g. emphasizing meaning), and self-regulation (the need for learners to manage their own strategy choices).”

(3) Classification

Several experts have proposed classifications of language learning strategies; however, there is no consensus on this matter. Griffiths (2020) mentioned different classifications but points out that all of them have been criticized for lacking reliability and validity (e.g., Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Woodrow, 2005). Griffiths (2020) mentions the following taxonomies:

- a. Rubin (1981) proposed the first classification: direct and indirect.
- b. O'Malley et al. (1985) proposed 26 types of strategies divided into three groups: metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective.
- c. Oxford (1990) proposed six groups of strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social.

Although the taxonomies mentioned above have provided theoretical-descriptive frameworks for language learning strategy research, Griffiths (2020) commented that strategy classification is still a matter of discussion.

(4) Research methodology

Griffiths (2020) stated that one common way of eliciting information about language learning strategies has been through the Likert-type questionnaire, which has been criticized by some researchers. Among them, Griffiths mentions Reid (1990); Gu, Wen, and Wu (1995); and Woodrow (2005).

Finally, concerning the question of whether language learning strategy research is alive in the field of applied linguistics, Griffiths (2020) concludes that, even though some aspects of it have faced criticism, the field of strategy research is still very much an area of interest to the academic community.

3.2. Metacognition, metacognitive knowledge, and metacognitive awareness

Metacognition has been defined in different ways; however, all conceptualizations share the idea that metacognition refers to “our ability to think about our own thinking or ‘cognition’, and, by extension, to think about how we process information for a range of purposes and manage the way we do it.” (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, pp. 83, 84) The concept of metacognition that experts have at present can be traced back to the time when Flavell (1976, p. 232) proposed a definition of metacognition. He stated that,

“metacognition refers to one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and . . . active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the cognitive objects or data on which they bear, usually in the service of some concrete goal or objective.”

However, it was not until 1987 when Wenden applied metacognition to language learning by considering the role it played in the development of learner autonomy, and by trying to identify learners’ different cognitive processes. Wenden contributed with a new characteristic to the discussion of the good language learner by claiming that “learners who are metacognitively aware are self-directed and can take charge of their own learning processes”. (In Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, p. 84). Since that time, applied linguistics researchers have been interested in understanding the role of metacognition in the development of language skills such as reading and listening.

It has been pointed out by researchers that through metacognition, learners are able to develop an understanding of themselves and of the world. They are also able to be in control of their thoughts and behaviours and monitor their consequences (Kluwe, 1982, in Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, p. 84). Furthermore, according to Hacker et al. (2009, in Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, p. 84), when learners use metacognition, they can become aware of their learning process and be able to control it through problem solving. By means of self-awareness of their weak and strong points, learners can improve their performance.

Furthermore, Flavell (1976) identified that children go through the following processes when they store and retrieve information: (a) the child learns to identify situations in which it may be useful to intentionally and consciously store information that may be useful in the future; (b) the child learns to keep information which may be linked to active problem-solving; thus, he may be able to retrieve it when it is necessary; and (c) the child learns how to systematically search for information which may be useful in the solution of a problem.

Thus, metacognition can contribute to the learners' development of knowledge about themselves, to learners being able to direct themselves, and to manage their process of learning as illustrated in Figure 2 below provided by Vandergrift and Goh (2012, p. 85).

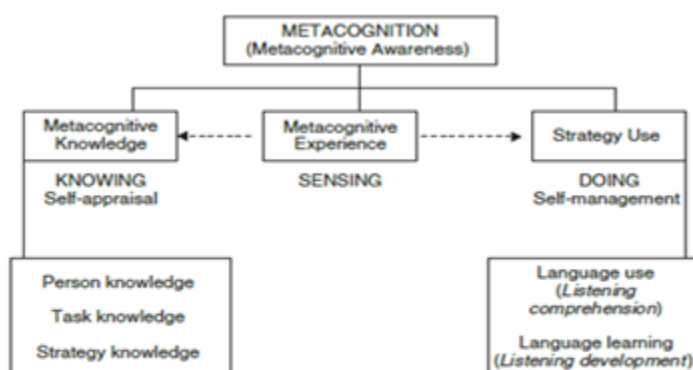


Figure 2: A metacognitive framework for listening instruction

(Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, p. 85)

Flavell (1979, pp. 906-907. In Goh & Hu, 2013, p. 2) states that metacognitive knowledge is “that segment of your ... stored world knowledge that has to do with people as cognitive creatures and with their diverse cognitive tasks, goals, actions, and

experiences”. In addition, Flavell (1979) identified three types of metacognitive knowledge: person, task, and strategy knowledge, which will be described below.

(1) Person knowledge

Person knowledge is knowledge about oneself as a learner. “It includes knowledge about how one reacts to a learning situation, the challenges that one faces, and one’s feelings of anxiety or confidence.” (Goh & Hu 2013, pp. 2, 3) Moreover, it has been highlighted that person knowledge could give insights into confidence and beliefs concerning learning.

(2) Task knowledge

Task knowledge is knowledge about the aim, demands, and nature of the learning task, and its difficulty. Thus, it includes knowledge about how to approach, perform, and complete the learning task.

(3). Strategy knowledge

Strategy knowledge refers to the learner’s knowledge of strategies which will enable him/her to use and, thus, achieve a certain purpose and complete a learning task.

Metacognition awareness can be understood as a state of consciousness of our thoughts as we focus on a cognitive or learning situation. According to Flavell (1979, p. 906), metacognitive awareness “takes the form of experience and knowledge. Metacognitive experience is a feeling we have about our cognition, such as the feeling we have when we do not understand something, while metacognitive knowledge, as mentioned above, consists of our beliefs and knowledge about learning”.

Flavell (1979) claims that metacognitive awareness can be proved to be present in the following cases: when the learner has a different train of thought or feeling; when he

retrieves information that is related to what he is thinking; and when strategies are used to solve comprehension and learning problems.

3.3. Reading comprehension

Grabe and Stoller (2020) have proposed a theoretical-descriptive framework of reading abilities which constitutes an up-to-date model of the reading comprehension skill based on recent research concerning both the mother tongue and the second or foreign language. They have also tried to provide a conceptual map of the reading research done in the last thirty-five years.

3.3.1. An Initial Definition of Reading

Several applied linguistics researchers have attempted to suggest a definition of reading. However, as second language reading comprehension is so complex, it is difficult to find a satisfactory explanation of this skill. At this point, Grabe and Stoller (2020, p. 3) suggest it would be interesting to read Perfetti and Adlof's (2012, p. 3) quotation:

“Reading comprehension is widely agreed to be not one, but many things. At the least, it is agreed to entail cognitive processes that operate on many different kinds of knowledge to achieve many different kinds of reading tasks. Emerging from the apparent complexity, however, is a central idea: Comprehension occurs as the reader builds one or more mental representations of a text message (e.g., Kintsch & Rawson, 2005). Among these representations, an accurate model of the situation described by the text (Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983) is the product of successful deep comprehension”.

Grabe and Stoller (2020) remind us that human beings are not biologically endowed with the reading comprehension skill; on the contrary, fluent reading for comprehension is “an ability that is culturally transmitted from one generation to the next.” (p. 3) Reading skills are not biologically natural since they do not belong to the automatic human maturational processes. In contrast, fluent or skilled reading must be taught. Thus, reading is a “culturally learned ability.” (p. 4)

Grabe and Stoller (2020, p. 5) provide a single sentence definition of reading to introduce their proposals: ‘Reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information coherently, one of many possible variants.’ Then, they point out that this definition is not sufficient to fully understand reading abilities. In order to support their view, Grabe and Stoller deal with some reasons for the inadequacy of the definition. Thus, they say that the definition implies the idea that all readers read for the same reason. On the contrary, readers have different reading purposes; therefore, different reading skills are combined. Besides, the definition does not mention the different criteria for dealing with the theoretical bases necessary for describing the skills, processes, and knowledge necessary to account for general reading comprehension abilities. In addition, Grabe and Stoller (2020) think that the initial definition they provided does not involve cognitive processes present in reading, which would enable us to understand fluent reading. Finally, there is neither an account of the context in which reading occurs nor explanations of how texts can be read for different purposes and the reader can interpret them in different ways.

3.3.2. Purposes for Reading

Grabe and Stoller (2020) mention that a reader may have different purposes for reading. Some readers, such as university students, will read to sum up information from different texts; in other contexts, people may read for general comprehension, or for specific details; and also, to add and relate ideas to their background knowledge. Thus, the scholars classify usual reading purposes into seven headings as can be seen below.

Purposes for reading

1. Reading to search for simple information
2. Reading to skim quickly
3. Reading to learn from texts
4. Reading to integrate information
5. Reading to write (or search for information needed for writing)
6. Reading to critique texts
7. Reading for general comprehension

(p. 8)

First, reading to search for simple information is frequently used; therefore, some applied linguists believe it should be considered as a reading skill. In reading to search, the reader scans the text to find something specific, such as a word or a specific piece of information.

Second, Grabe and Stoller (2020) state that reading to skim, which refers to “sampling segments of the text for general understanding, is a common part of many reading tasks and a useful skill in its own right” (p. 8) Thus, the reader has to find where the information he needs is and he has to use reading comprehension skills and background knowledge to finally develop a general idea of the content of the text.

Third, when readers read to learn from texts, they have usually been given a task to complete. This reading purpose often occurs in academic and professional contexts. In order to complete the task, the readers need to have the ability to remember main ideas and details; they also have to construct rhetorical frames to organize the information found, such as cause-effect, and problem-solution. In addition, they need to connect the ideas found in texts with their background knowledge. Finally, they need to be critical of the text read. Therefore, reading to learn demands stronger inferencing abilities than reading to find simple information.

Fourth, reading to integrate information is complex because readers have probably to choose a different rhetorical structure to include information from various sources.

Readers have to assess the importance of information read. Thus, reading to write and reading to critique texts can be viewed as variants of reading to integrate information. In both types of purposes readers have to “select, critique and compose information from a text” (p. 9).

Fifth, reading for general comprehension is the most basic purpose for reading. However, general reading comprehension is more complex than we might think. Grabe and Stoller (2020, pp. 9, 10) add that that when fluent readers read for general comprehension, they need to process words quickly and efficiently. Moreover, they have to build a mental representation of the main ideas in the text; and, finally, they have to go through many reading processes efficiently and in a very limited period of time. The term ‘reading processes’ are defined by Grabe and Stoller (2020, p. 11) as “cognitive activity involving skills, strategies, attentional resources, knowledge resources, and their integration.”

3.3.3. Defining Fluent Reading Comprehension

Reading for general comprehension, in simple words, refers to “the ability to understand and interpret information from a text appropriately.” (Grabe & Stoller 2020, p. 11) Nevertheless, comprehension abilities are more complex; therefore, Grabe and Stoller (2020) define it based on a set of processes (Figure 3), which together give a more accurate description of fluent reading. The processes involved in fluent reading comprehension need to occur efficiently combined for comprehension to occur. These processes should take place automatically. (p. 12)

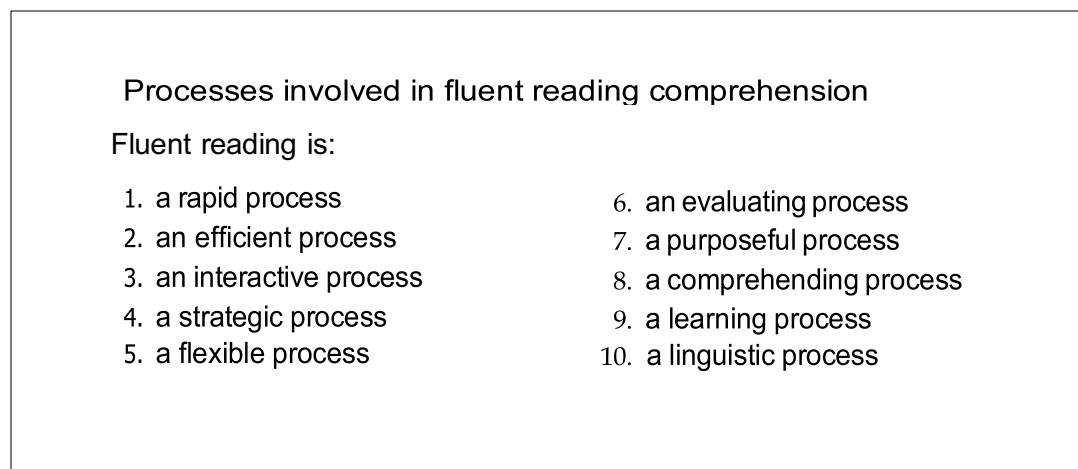


Figure 3. Processes involved in fluent reading comprehension

(Grabe & Stoller 2020, p.11).

Besides, Grabe and Stoller point out that reading is an interactive process. First, because the processes present in reading take place almost simultaneously. Thus, while “we are recognizing words... rapidly and keeping them active in our working memories... we are also analyzing the structure of sentences... building a main-idea model of text comprehension in our heads, monitoring our comprehension, and so on.” (p. 12) Second, reading is interactive because “information from the text interacts with information that the reader activates and which is in his/her long-term memory, as background knowledge.” (Grabe & Stoller, 2020, p.12) The scholars claim that linguistic and background knowledge are needed for constructing the interpretation of the text.

Concerning the notion that a reader must be strategic, Grabe and Stoller (2020, p. 13) provide a thorough description of what being strategic means. First, a strategic reader is able to read in a flexible way according to changes of reading purpose and to the monitoring of comprehension. Second, reading can be described as an evaluative process because the reader must decide if the information in the text is reliable and if it matches his/her purpose for reading. Third, reading is purposeful in that readers read in different manners depending on their different reading purposes and motivation. Fourth, the idea that reading is a comprehending process is easy to understand. Fifth, Grabe and Stoller (2020, p. 13) highlight the idea that reading is a learning process since it is also a comprehending process. Finally, reading is essentially a linguistic process.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Participants

The participants of the present study were 20 undergraduate Chilean university students. 10 of them were intermediate level students (corresponding to the second year of studies), and 10 were advanced students (taking the fourth year of their studies) of the English Linguistics and Literature programme offered by the Department of Linguistics, Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, Universidad de Chile. The learners' ages ranged from 19 to 23, and they were all native speakers of Spanish. The reason for having two groups of students with different proficiency levels, i.e., intermediate, and advanced, was to identify the influence of proficiency level on the variables of the study. On the other hand, both groups of students consisted in a convenience sample. Creswell (2009) states that a convenience sample consists in "naturally formed groups or volunteers" (p. 155).

4.2. Data collection

4.2.1. Instruments

To assess the participants' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and their reading comprehension skill, two instruments were chosen: a Metacognitive Awareness Reading Questionnaire and an adapted IELTS Academic Reading Test.

4.2.1.1. Metacognitive Awareness Reading Questionnaire

The instrument chosen to assess the students' levels of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies was an adaptation of the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire designed and developed by Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal, and Tafaghodtari (2006). Vandergrift et al. (2006, p. 431) state that it was designed for researchers and teachers since it provides information about "the extent to which language learners are aware of and can regulate the process of L2 listening

comprehension.” (Appendix A). Its design was based on Flavell’s (1979) model of metacognitive knowledge. In addition, Vandergrift et al. (2006) point out that they went through different research studies and their findings.

The original Questionnaire was modified, as stated above, to elicit data about the students’ perceived metacognitive awareness of reading comprehension strategies. Thus, the Metacognitive Awareness Reading Questionnaire was translated into Spanish to facilitate its completion. The Questionnaire has 21 statements that describe metacognitive reading strategies and how learners may feel about reading comprehension. The maximum score is 126 points. Students have to respond to the statements by choosing one of a six-point Likert scale: 1 stands for ‘strongly disagree’; 2 stands for ‘disagree’; 3 for ‘partially disagree’; 4 for ‘partially agree’; 5 for ‘agree’; and 6 stands for ‘strongly agree’. (See Appendix B). The questionnaire was completed in about 10 minutes.

The Metacognitive Awareness Reading Questionnaire includes five factors which can be claimed to be significantly related to reading comprehension success. Vandergrift et al. (2006) originally included the same factors in their listening questionnaire and made the claim mentioned above in relation to listening comprehension. The five factors or subscales include: Directed Attention, Problem-Solving, Planning and Evaluation, Mental Translation, and Person Knowledge. Thus, the questionnaire aims at finding information about the students’ perception of their use of metacognitive reading strategies (the first four factors); besides, it aims at finding out the knowledge the students have about their feelings about reading in the target language (person knowledge).

A brief description of the five factors is provided here. Directed attention refers to the strategies that are used when learners need to focus their attention to the language task. Problem-solving strategies will help learners make inferences when they are not able to understand a word, or an expression. In turn, planning and evaluation strategies will help learners plan and prepare for listening, and evaluate their performance in a task. Mental Translation refers to translation from the second language into the first.

Finally, Person Knowledge refers to what learners know about themselves as readers in the second language. (Goh & Hu, 2013, p. 5)

4.2.1.2. Reading Comprehension Test

The IELTS Academic Reading Test is a section of The International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The IELTS test aims to assess English language proficiency for study, migration, and work purposes. It is organized by Cambridge Assessment English, University of Cambridge, Britain; and it is an internationally recognized exam. It assesses the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Besides, there are two types of IELTS tests: Academic and General Training. Test takers take the same Listening and Speaking tests but different Reading and Writing tests. In order to assess the participants' reading comprehension skills in the present study, the Academic Reading Test, instead of the General Training Reading Test, was chosen since it was considered to be more suitable for university students of English as a second or foreign language. The original Academic Reading Test consists of three reading passages taken from books, journals, magazines, and newspapers, and they have been written for a non-specialist audience. The passages are followed by various comprehension questions which involve different task types such as reading for main ideas, reading for details, recognizing writers' opinions and purposes.

The Reading Comprehension Test applied in the present study includes two reading passages followed by 27 questions, 13 and 14 for each text, respectively, taken from the book IELTS Academic 14 published in 2019. The reading comprehension questions require identification of main ideas, matching information, multiple choice, and sentence completion exercises. As each question of the reading comprehension test is worth one point, the total score is 27. (See Appendix C.) Each reading passage with questions takes 20 minutes to complete; thus, the whole test took students 40 minutes. This instrument was applied to the two groups of participants in the study, intermediate and advanced learners.

The original Reading Comprehension Test had a pen and paper format; however, it was transformed into an online format since the Covid pandemic context required that the students should take the test online. Therefore, several rather complex modifications had to be made to facilitate the students' responses. First, the test was hyper-linked from the title of the reading passage to the corresponding questions, and vice versa from the questions to the titles of the passages; in this way, the students could easily go from one section of the test to another just by clicking on the links.

4.2.2. Data Collection Procedure

The data of the study were collected during the second semester of the academic year 2020. Due to the Covid virus restrictions, both instruments were applied online in a synchronous manner. The Reading Comprehension Test, and the Questionnaire were given to the students by an English language teacher of the academic programme. She held two sessions to separately administer the instruments to the two groups of students. Before the data was collected, students signed consent letters, which were sent to them by e-mail, and they sent the letters back to the language teacher.

4.2.2.1. Application of the Reading Comprehension Test

The Reading Comprehension Test was applied to the participants at the beginning of two 60-minute sessions. In one session, it was given to the intermediate students, and in the other, to the advanced learners. While the students took the test, the teacher was in contact with them in order to answer questions and clarify doubts. When students completed the test, they sent it to the teacher by e-mail. Students did this task in about 40 minutes.

4.2.2.2. Application of the Metacognitive Awareness Reading Questionnaire

The Questionnaire was also applied in a synchronous manner after the students had completed the Reading Comprehension instrument to facilitate the students'

identification of the metacognitive reading strategies used by them. When the students completed the questionnaire, they sent it to the English language teacher by e-mail. Students did this task in about 10 minutes.

4.3. Data processing

Since the present study was quantitative, the data processing involved descriptive statistical procedures and other statistical methods.

4.3.1. Processing the Metacognitive Awareness Reading Questionnaire Data

1. The questionnaires of both groups of learners were marked by the student and her supervisor separately; then, they had an online session to check the scores obtained by each student.

In each of the 21 items in the questionnaire, the scores may range from 1 to 6. Six (6) is the ideal score (i.e., meaning 'strongly agree' in the Likert scale used) and 1 is the lowest score (i.e., meaning 'strongly disagree' in the scale). Thus, if a student's score in an item is 6, the more metacognitively aware he/she will be considered to be. In contrast, if a student's score is 1, the less metacognitively aware he/she will be considered to be. However, there are six statements in the questionnaire that have to be reverse coded since they are negatively worded, i.e., 6 has the value of 1 and 1 the value of 6. According to Vandergrift et al. (2006), "some items ... [are] negatively worded so that respondents would not fall into a pattern of marking only one side of the rating scale." (p. 441)

The items that have to be quantified as reverse coding are the following: item 16 from the directed attention group of strategies or factors; items 4, 11, and 18 from the mental translation group of strategies or factors; and items 3 and 8 from the person knowledge group of strategies or factors.

2. As the 21 items in the questionnaire correspond to five factors or subscales, i.e., strategies, the scores of each student in the two groups were organized according to

the five subscales. This processing procedure was suggested by Goh and Hu (2013). The subscales and their corresponding items can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Metacognitive Awareness Reading Questionnaire subscales and their corresponding items

Metacognitive Awareness Reading Questionnaire subscales/ factors	Items
Planning and evaluation	1, 10, 14, 20, 21
Directed attention	2, 6, 12, 16
Person knowledge	3, 8, 15
Problem solving	5, 7, 9, 13, 17, 19
Mental translation	4, 11, 18

Thus, first, the scores were organized for each student in terms of the five subscales in the questionnaire; and then the scores were tabulated for each group of students also according to the five factors present in the questionnaire.

3.The mean and standard deviation were calculated for each group of students.

4.The results of each group were compared in terms of the total scores and of the scores of each of the five subfactors or subscales.

4.3.2. Processing the Reading Comprehension Test Data

1. The reading tests of the two groups of students, intermediate and advanced, were marked by the research student and her supervisor separately; and then, both student and supervisor together revised the marking of each test in an online session.

2. Scores of the tests were arranged first individually and then according to the group of students -intermediate and advanced- on an Excel spreadsheet.

3. The mean and the standard deviation were calculated for each of the groups of students.

4. The mean and the standard deviation of both groups of participants were compared.

Finally, the scores obtained by intermediate and advanced students in the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire and in the reading comprehension test were used to calculate correlations between the intermediate and advanced students' metacognitive awareness of reading and their reading comprehension performance.

5. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results will be provided and discussed in terms of the three research questions asked in the study.

5.1. Results of the metacognitive awareness of reading questionnaire

The results of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire will provide an answer to research question 1: What is the intermediate and advanced students' metacognitive awareness of reading like and how does it compare between the two levels of interlanguage?

The scores obtained by intermediate and advanced students in the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

Intermediate and advanced students' scores in the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire

Intermediate Students		Advanced Students	
Participants	Score	Participants	Score
Participant 1	94	Participant 1	87
Participant 2	94	Participant 2	94
Participant 3	112	Participant 3	90
Participant 4	95	Participant 4	108
Participant 5	87	Participant 5	85
Participant 6	99	Participant 6	98
Participant 7	92	Participant 7	98
Participant 8	102	Participant 8	98
Participant 9	83	Participant 9	82
Participant 10	98	Participant 10	86
Mean	95.6	Mean	92.6
Standard Deviation	8.02	Standard Deviation	8.02

It can be seen, in the table above, that the intermediate students' mean (95.6) is higher than the mean of advanced students (92.6). In fact, the intermediate students' scores in the questionnaire are 3.2% higher than the scores of the advanced students. It is worth pointing out that the mean scores obtained by the intermediate and advanced students represent 75.9% and 73.5% of the maximum score of the questionnaire, respectively, the maximum score being 126 points.

When you look at intermediate students' individual scores, it can be observed that 7 participants of this group (participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 10) got higher scores than the advanced students' average score. This fact explains why the intermediate students' mean is higher than the mean obtained by the advanced group.

Finally in Table 2, it is shown that both the intermediate and advanced groups of students have a similar dispersion around the mean; their standard deviation values are 8.2. This standard deviation shows that the students' answers in both groups are heterogeneous.

The results obtained in the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire run contrary to most findings of research on metacognitive awareness of reading strategies since studies have shown that students who have a high level of proficiency also have a high degree of metacognitive awareness. On the contrary, students with a lower level of proficiency have a lower degree of such awareness. If we bear in mind that advanced learners were in their fourth -and final- year of university studies, they could be expected to have achieved a higher level of proficiency in the English language when compared to intermediate students. Intermediate learners were taking their second year of the academic programme. Therefore, their proficiency level should be lower than that of advanced learners. Thus, the advanced students were expected to reach higher scores in the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire than intermediate learners. Nevertheless, it has to be pointed out that a possible explanation for the lower mean obtained by the advanced group -92.6- when compared to the intermediate group -95.6- is that advanced learners may be able to make a more automatic use of strategies than intermediate learners because they have a higher

proficiency level. A more automatic use of strategies may lead to students' having more difficulties to retrieve their use of language learning strategies from long term memory. As suggested by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), based on Anderson (1983, 1985), metacognitive strategies could be conscious or unconscious depending on the learners' information processing stage (going from declarative to procedural knowledge).

In the present study, as mentioned above, it was the intermediate group of students the one that reached a higher level of metacognitive awareness of reading when compared to the advanced group of students. Such results were unexpected. In Table 2 above, it can be seen that only 4 participants (participants 4, 6 7, and 8) of the advanced group had scores which are closer to the intermediate group average score, 95.6. The advanced students' low scores in the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire might be also explained by the likely lack of motivation for accomplishing the questionnaire task, which was the second one in the data collection session. The first instrument applied to gather the data was the reading comprehension test, which took students about 40 minutes to complete. The decision of asking the students to complete the reading test first was taken because of two reasons. First, the reading test was a long task; therefore, we expected learners not to feel tired when engaging in this task. Second, it was important for students to carry out the reading task first because this would make the completion of the metacognitive awareness questionnaire easier to achieve; since, in the questionnaire, they had to reflect on the reading strategies they perceived they used when reading in English. The lack of motivation of advanced university students of the academic programme has also been evident on other occasions when they have volunteered as participants in research projects. These students are usually busy with various academic tasks in the different subjects they are taking, and they are also doing research in their final seminar, which should be completed for the final exam they have to take to get the BA degree. Apart from the usual stressful circumstances of the final academic year of students who are about to graduate, on this occasion the data was gathered in an online session due to the restrictions imposed by health authorities because of the Covid virus. These restrictions have naturally increased stress and anxiety.

What seems important to highlight is the fact that, through the application of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading, it was possible to have evidence that both intermediate and advanced students perceive the use of metacognitive reading strategies when performing a reading comprehension task.

5.2. Results of the reading comprehension test

The results of the reading comprehension test will provide an answer to research question 2: What is the intermediate and advanced students' reading comprehension performance like and how does it compare between the two levels of interlanguage?

The scores obtained by intermediate and advanced students in the reading comprehension test are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Intermediate and advanced students' scores in the reading comprehension test

Intermediate Students		Advanced Students	
Participants	Score	Participants	Score
Participant 1	24	Participant 1	27
Participant 2	17	Participant 2	18
Participant 3	23	Participant 3	17
Participant 4	24	Participant 4	22
Participant 5	14	Participant 5	23
Participant 6	24	Participant 6	20
Participant 7	24	Participant 7	21
Participant 8	24	Participant 8	20
Participant 9	16	Participant 9	18
Participant 10	24	Participant 10	20
Mean	21.4	Mean	20.6
Standard Deviation	4.03	Standard Deviation	2.91

As shown in Table 3, the mean of the intermediate group of students in the reading comprehension test (21.4) is higher than the mean of the advanced group (20.6). In fact, the intermediate students' mean is 3.9% higher than the advanced

students' average. It should also be mentioned that the intermediate and advanced students' average scores represent 79.3% and 76.3% of the maximum score of the reading comprehension test, respectively, the maximum score being 27 points. According to the standard mark system for Chilean schools and universities, the intermediate and advanced groups marks would be 5.5 and 5.3, respectively, which may be considered to be 'good'.

If we look at the intermediate students' individual scores in the test, we realize that 7 participants (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10) had higher scores than the advanced students' average score. This situation explains the fact that the intermediate group's mean is higher than the one of the advanced students' group. It should be pointed out that these results were unexpected since both intermediate and advanced students took the same reading comprehension test in spite of their assumed levels of proficiency. Intermediate students were in the second year of their academic programme whereas advanced students were in the fourth and final year of the programme. Therefore, it was assumed that advanced students should get a higher average score in the reading test since their higher general proficiency level should have enabled them to have reached a high level of development of their reading comprehension skills.

As previously mentioned in the answer to research question 1, the advanced learners' low scores might be explained by the L2 readers' possible loss of motivation for accomplishing reading tasks (Grabe & Stoller, 2011, p. 24). As mentioned in the analysis of the results concerning the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies in the previous subsection, advanced university students' lack of motivation has been evident in other research studies in which they have also volunteered as participants. The usual lack of motivation shown by students who are in the final year of the academic programme may be explained by the fact that apart from the courses they are taking, they are doing research, which has to be finished in due course, in order to sit for the final exam. Therefore, these students are always extremely busy and stressed because of the heavy academic work they have to do in order to get their degree. In addition, as stated in the previous subsection of the analysis of results: "Apart from the usual stressful circumstances of the final academic year of students who are about to

graduate, on this occasion, the data was gathered in an online session due to the restrictions imposed by health authorities because of the Covid pandemic. These restrictions have naturally increased stress and anxiety.”

Finally, in relation to the dispersion of results, it can be observed that the advanced group of students' standard deviation is lower than that of the intermediate students' group. Therefore, the advanced students' answers to the reading test are more homogeneous than those of the intermediate group of students.

5.3. Results of the subscales in the metacognitive awareness of reading questionnaire and results of the reading comprehension test

Student's results in the subscales of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire and the results of the reading comprehension test will provide an answer to research question 3: Are there any relationships among different subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies -directed attention, planning and evaluation, problem solving, person knowledge and mental translation- and the reading comprehension performance of intermediate and advanced students?

The scores obtained by intermediate and advanced students in the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.

Intermediate and advanced students' means in the subscales of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire

	Subscale	Subscale	Subscale	Subscale	Subscale
	Directed Attention	Planning and Evaluation	Problem Solving	Person Knowledge	Mental Translation
Intermediate	4.63	4.22	5.08	4.57	3.93
Advanced	4.73	3.36	4.75	4.23	5.23

In Table 4 it can be observed that, in general, the means of the subscales of the metacognitive awareness of reading in the two student groups show that there is not a major difference between intermediate and advanced students, with the exception of two of the strategy subscales, planning and evaluation and mental translation. The means of the intermediate students seem to indicate a slightly higher level of metacognitive awareness of the subscales or factors of problem solving (5.08 versus 4.75) and person knowledge (4.57 versus 4.23). In addition, the intermediate group got a mean of 4.22 in planning and evaluation, which is higher than the mean of the advanced group of learners (3.36). In comparison to the intermediate group, the advanced students' mean is slightly higher in directed attention (4.73 versus 4.63). Besides, the advanced group got a mean of 5.23 in the mental translation subscale, which is much higher than the intermediate student's mean, 3.93. This difference shows that the advanced students perceive that they do not regularly use the mental translation strategy when they are completing a reading comprehension task.

In conclusion, the results concerning the intermediate and advanced students' means in the subscales of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire shown in Table 4 and described above were not expected. In fact, it was assumed that the advanced students would get higher means in the metacognitive awareness subscales; since it was expected that advanced learners would have a better perception of their metacognitive use of reading strategies than the intermediate learners. As mentioned in the answers to research questions 1 and 2 above, a possible explanation for the fact that advanced learners got higher means in only two out of the five subscales, mental translation and directed attention, could be that advanced learners could make a more automatic use of strategies because they have a higher proficiency level since they have studied two more years at university in comparison to the intermediate students. A high proficiency student could make a more automatic use of strategies, which could result in a difficulty to perceive his/her use of language learning strategies, because the language learning strategies have become proceduralized.

On the other hand, in Figure 4 below, it can be observed that the distribution of the standard deviations is different for each student group. Thus, in the intermediate

students, when the subscales of metacognitive reading strategies are organized in terms of their standard deviations, going from high to low dispersion, the subscales occur in the following order: Person Knowledge (0.88), Directed Attention (0.82), Planning and Evaluation (0.71), Mental Translation (0.66), and finally, Problem Solving (0.54). In the advanced group, if the subscales are organized from high to low dispersion, it is the subscale of Planning and Evaluation the one that has the highest dispersion (1.13). Then, the other subscales follow: Person Knowledge (0.97), Mental Translation (0.86), Directed Attention (0.77); and, finally, Problem Solving (0.6). These dispersion results suggest that the advanced group behaved in a less homogeneous way than the intermediate group.

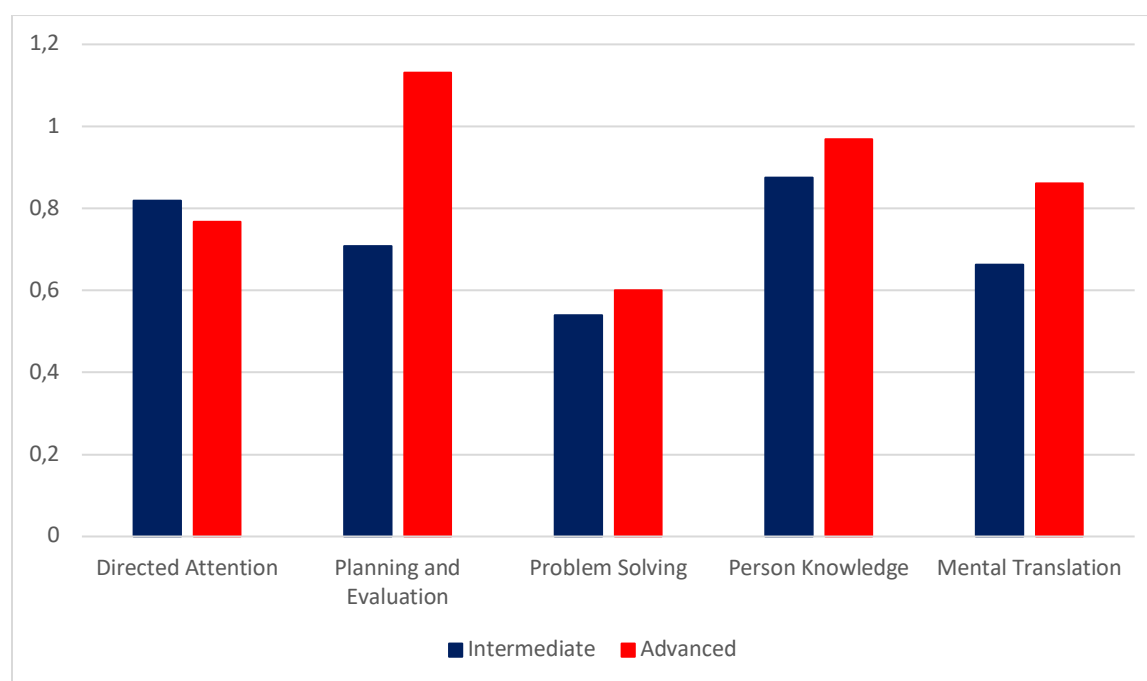


Figure 4. Intermediate and advanced students' standard deviations in the subscales of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire

What seems important to highlight is the fact that, through the application of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading, it was possible to have evidence that both intermediate and advanced students perceive the use of the five subscales of metacognitive reading strategies when performing a reading comprehension task. It should be borne in mind that according to applied linguists, metacognition enhances language learning (Anderson, N. J. 2002, 2008; Chamot 2005; Wenden 1998; Hauskås 2018, among other authors). Metacognitive strategies enable learners to plan, to monitor, to evaluate their comprehension before, during and after reading.

In order to compare the relationships between the different subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading and the reading comprehension performance obtained by the two groups of students, a correlation analysis was conducted. The Pearson and the Spearman methods were used to compare the intermediate and advanced students' scores in each of the five scales in the questionnaire and the scores obtained in the reading comprehension test. (See Tables 5 and 6 below)

Table 5.

Intermediate group's correlations between the subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading and the reading comprehension scores

Subscale	Directed Attention	Planning and Evaluation	Problem Solving	Person Knowledge	Mental Translation
Spearman	0.37	0.32	0.28	0.26	0.27
Pearson	0.52	0.38	0.19	0.34	0.23

In Table 5 above, it can be seen that the intermediate students' correlation coefficients between the five subscales of strategies and their reading comprehension scores are too low to think that there is a positive correlation between the variables. It can be observed that the only positive correlation is the one between directed attention and reading comprehension when using the Pearson methodology (0.52), although the positive correlation is weak.

Table 6.

Advanced group's correlations between the subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading and reading comprehension scores

	Subscale	Subscale	Subscale	Subscale	Subscale
	Directed Attention	Planning and Evaluation	Problem Solving	Person Knowledge	Mental Translation
Spearman	-0,03	0,31	0,49	-0,44	0,02
Pearson	-0,15	0,18	0,37	-0,66	0,01

On the other hand, in Table 6, the correlations between the five subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and the reading comprehension scores corresponding to the advanced group of students are shown. The correlations here are, in general, close to 0, especially in the subscales of Directed Attention and Mental Translation, thus, showing that no correlations were found between these strategies and reading comprehension. Besides, the correlations between the subscales of Planning and Evaluation and Problem Solving and reading comprehension are too low to make it possible to think that there are positive correlations between them. Concerning the subscale of Person Knowledge and reading comprehension, we can see that the correlation coefficient is negative, when using both the Spearman and the Pearson methods. In fact, when using the Pearson method, the correlation between Person Knowledge and reading comprehension is moderately negative, i.e., the participants of the group that obtained a higher score in this strategy subscale showed to have a worse performance in the reading comprehension test.

The results concerning the correlation coefficients between the subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and the reading comprehension test were unexpected since the findings of various studies have revealed that there is a positive strong correlation between metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and reading comprehension performance, as mentioned in the answers to the previous research questions in this section. Thus, among the applied linguists who have done research concerning the two variables, we can mention Vandergrift et al. (2006); Mokharti and Reichard (2002); Goh and Hu (2013); Cohen and Macaro

(2007); and Zhang (2001, 2013).

As mentioned above, the unexpected results concerning the lack of strong positive correlations between the perceived metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and the reading comprehension performance in the present study might have occurred due to the pandemic context in which the data was collected and to the students' levels of stress caused by the measures taken by the health and governmental authorities concerning the Covid virus.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this quantitative study was to explore relationships between the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and the reading comprehension performance of intermediate and advanced university students of English as a second/foreign language taking the BA programme of Licenciatura en Lengua y Literatura Inglesas at Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, Universidad de Chile. The participants in the study were 10 intermediate students, who were in the second year of the four-year programme, and 10 advanced learners, who were in their fourth year at university. The participants, who volunteered to take the instruments chosen to collect the data, belonged to two different levels of proficiency. The decision of having students from different proficiency levels was taken to be able to identify similarities and differences in the scores the learners obtained in the instruments applied in the research.

The research questions in the study were the following:

1. What is the intermediate and advanced students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies like and how does it compare between the two levels of interlanguage?
2. What is the intermediate and advanced students' reading comprehension performance like and how does it compare between the two levels of interlanguage?
3. Are there any relationships among different subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies -directed attention, planning and evaluation, problem solving, person knowledge and mental translation- and the reading comprehension performance of intermediate and advanced students?

In relation to the first research question, which refers to the students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, the intermediate group of students got a mean of 95.6 whereas the advanced group obtained a lower mean, 92.6. What was expected was that the advanced student group would obtain a higher mean in the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, bearing in mind the proficiency levels of

the two groups of students. Some explanations for these results were suggested, such as the complex context in which the data was collected, the levels of stress, anxiety, and demotivation that the pandemic has caused; and the heavy academic load that advanced students have in their final year at university. Besides, another possible explanation for these results could be the more automatic use of metacognitive reading strategies on the part of advanced students. This automatic use could have caused difficulties in the retrieval of the use of strategies from long-term memory.

In addition, it seems important to highlight the fact that, through the application of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Questionnaire, it was possible to have evidence that both intermediate and advanced students perceive the use of metacognitive reading strategies when performing a reading comprehension task.

Regarding the second research question, which is related to the students' reading comprehension performance, it was the intermediate group of students the one who obtained a higher mean (21.4). The advanced group got a mean of 20.6. Therefore, the intermediate students' mean is 3.9% higher than the advanced students' average. This result was also unexpected because the advanced students' high level of proficiency would lead to a better performance in the reading comprehension test when compared to the intermediate group of students. The possible explanations for the unexpected results are the stressful context in which the data was collected, and the heavy academic load that advanced students usually have.

Finally, the third research question intended to try and identify relationships among different subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and the reading comprehension performance of intermediate and advanced students.

Before the results were obtained, it had been assumed that the advanced students would get higher means in the metacognitive awareness subscales; since it was expected that advanced learners would have a better perception of their metacognitive use of reading strategies than the intermediate learners. Nevertheless, advanced

learners got higher means in only two of the five subscales, mental translation and directed attention. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that these results could have occurred because advanced learners could make a more automatic use of reading strategies precisely because they have a high proficiency level. A more automatic use of strategies could result in a difficulty to perceive or to be aware of the use of language learning strategies.

What seems important to highlight is the fact that, through the application of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading, it was possible to have evidence that both intermediate and advanced students perceive the use of subscales of metacognitive reading strategies when performing a reading comprehension task. This finding is important in that the use of metacognitive learning strategies seems to enable students to regulate their own learning process; and thus, they may become more autonomous language learners.

Besides, regarding the third research question, a correlation analysis was conducted in order to compare the relationships between the different subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading and the reading comprehension performance of the two groups of students. Intermediate students' correlation coefficients between the five subscales of strategies and their reading comprehension scores were too low to think that there is a positive correlation between the variables. In this group, the only positive correlation is the one between directed attention and reading comprehension, although the positive correlation is weak. On the other hand, the correlations between the five subscales of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and the reading comprehension scores corresponding to the advanced group of students were, in general, close to 0, especially in Directed Attention and Mental Translation. Besides, the correlations between Planning and Evaluation and Problem Solving and reading comprehension were too low to make it possible to think that there are positive correlations between them. Concerning Person Knowledge and reading comprehension, we can see that the correlation coefficient is negative.

Concerning the limitations of the study, it should be stated that the number of participants was reduced due to the problems students faced because of the restrictions imposed by the health authorities due to the Covid pandemic. It seems that it would have been advisable to look for participants with similar levels of proficiency within each proficiency level, but this would have required the students to take another online test, which would have been very difficult to do. Regarding the instruments, what would have enriched the data collection of the students' metacognitive awareness would have been an interview. This could have provided further information about the participants' perceived awareness of their reading strategies. Because of the context in which the study was done, the interview could not take place.

Taking in consideration the limitations described above, some suggestions for further research can be made. The size of the sample should be larger, because a large sample would make possible the generalization of results. Besides, the sample should include participants of similar levels of proficiency within each group of students if we choose, for example, intermediate and advanced students. Finally, the information about the students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies could be enriched if an instrument such as an interview were used to elicit the corresponding data.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)

The statements below describe some strategies for listening comprehension and how you feel about listening in the language you are learning. Do you agree with them? This is not a test, so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. By responding to these statements, you can help yourself and your teacher understand your progress in learning to listen. Please indicate your opinion after each statement. Circle the number which best shows your level of agreement with the statement. For example:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Partly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like learning another language	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I find that listening is more difficult than reading, speaking, or writing in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I translate in my head as I listen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. When my mind wanders, I recover my concentration right away.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I feel that listening comprehension in English is a challenge for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I translate key words as I listen.	1	2	3	4	5	6

12. I try to get back on track when I lose concentration. 1 2 3 4 5 6

13. As I listen, I quickly adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct. 1 2 3 4 5 6

14. After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time. 1 2 3 4 5 6

15. I don't feel nervous when I listen to English. 1 2 3 4 5 6

16. When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I give up and stop listening. 1 2 3 4 5 6

17. I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't understand. 1 2 3 4 5 6

18. I translate word by word, as I listen. 1 2 3 4 5 6

19. When I guess the meaning of a word, I think back to everything else that I have heard, to see if my guess makes sense. 1 2 3 4 5 6

20. As I listen, I periodically ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension. 1 2 3 4 5 6

21. I have a goal in mind as I listen. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Appendix B: Metacognitive Awareness Reading Questionnaire (Spanish)

Cuestionario sobre la conciencia metacognitiva relacionada con la comprensión de lectura en inglés como segunda lengua

Los enunciados en este cuestionario describen algunas estrategias de comprensión de lectura utilizadas al enfrentar textos escritos en inglés. Este cuestionario no es una evaluación; por lo tanto, no hay respuestas "correctas" o "incorrectas". Sólo se busca conocer su percepción acerca de los procesos que usted realiza al leer en inglés y que son descritos en los enunciados. Por favor, indique su nivel de acuerdo o desacuerdo con cada enunciado subrayando el número que mejor represente su opción. Por ejemplo:

- Cuando leo, destaco las ideas principales

Muy en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Un poco en desacuerdo	Parcialmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo
1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5	6

CUESTIONARIO

1. Antes de comenzar a leer, tengo un plan en mi mente de cómo voy a leer	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Me concentro más en el texto cuando tengo problemas para comprenderlo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Considero que leer es más difícil que hablar, escuchar o escribir en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Traduzco en mi mente a medida que leo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Uso las palabras que comprendo para adivinar el significado de palabras que no comprendo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Cuando pierdo la concentración, la recupero de inmediato	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Mientras leo, comparo lo que entiendo con lo que sé sobre el tema.	1	2	3	4	5	6

8. Siento que leer en inglés es un desafío para mí.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Uso mi experiencia y conocimientos para ayudarme a entender	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Antes de leer, pienso en textos parecidos que podría haber leído antes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Traduzco palabras claves a medida que leo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Intento volver a concentrarme cuando me desconcentro.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Mientras leo, rápidamente ajusto mi interpretación si me doy cuenta de que no está correcta.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Después de leer, pienso en cómo leí y en que podría hacer diferente la próxima vez.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. No me siento nervioso(a) cuando leo en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Cuando tengo dificultades para entender lo que leo, me rindo y dejo de leer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Uso la idea general del texto para adivinar el significado de las palabras que no comprendo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Traduzco palabra por palabra mientras leo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Cuando adivino el significado de una palabra pienso en todo lo que he leído antes para ver si mi suposición es correcta.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Mientras leo, periódicamente me pregunto si estoy satisfecho(a) con mi nivel de comprensión	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Tengo un objetivo en mente mientras leo.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix C: Reading Comprehension Test

READING COMPREHENSION TEST

The format of this test is intended to facilitate both your reading and your responses to the questions. Therefore, the test contains hyperlinks that allow you to go from a question section to the text, and vice versa. To go from the text to the questions, you must click on the links that appear in the light blue box under the title "Link to the questions"; and to go from the questions to the text, you must click on the highlighted text in light blue under the title "Questions X to Y" or "Go back to Passage X".

Reading Passage 1

The growth of bike-sharing schemes around the world

How Dutch engineer Luud Schimmelpennink helped to devise urban bike-sharing schemes

Instructions: Read Passage 1 carefully, and answer questions 1 to 13. Please spend about 25 to 30 minutes on your answers to the questions.

A The original idea for an urban bike-sharing scheme dates back to a summer's day in Amsterdam in 1965. Provo, the organisation that came up with the idea, was a group of Dutch activists who wanted to change society. They believed the scheme, which was known as the Witte Fietsenplan, was an answer to the perceived threats of air pollution and consumerism. In the centre of Amsterdam, they painted a small number of used bikes white. They also distributed leaflets describing the dangers of cars and inviting people to use the white bikes. The bikes were then left unlocked at various locations around the city, to be used by anyone in need of transport.

B Luud Schimmelpennink, a Dutch industrial engineer who still lives and cycles in Amsterdam, was heavily involved in the original scheme. He recalls how the scheme succeeded in attracting a great deal of attention - particularly when it came to publicising Provo's aims - but struggled to get off the ground. The police were opposed to Provo's initiatives and almost as soon as the white bikes were distributed around the city, they removed them. However, for Schimmelpennink and for bike-sharing schemes in general, this was just the beginning. The first Witte Fietsenplan was just a symbolic thing,' he says. 'We painted a few bikes white, that was

all. Things got more serious when I became a member of the Amsterdam city council two years later.'

C Schimmelpennink seized this opportunity to present a more elaborate Witte Fietsenplan to the city council. 'My idea was that the municipality of Amsterdam would distribute 10,000 white bikes over the city, for everyone to use,' he explains. 'I made serious calculations. It turned out that a white bicycle - per person, per kilometre - would cost the municipality only 10% of what it contributed to public transport per person per kilometre.' Nevertheless, the council unanimously rejected the plan. They said that the bicycle belongs to the past. They saw a glorious future for the car,' says Schimmelpennink. But he was not in the least discouraged.

D Schimmelpennink never stopped believing in bike-sharing, and in the mid-90s, two Danes asked for his help to set up a system in Copenhagen. The result was the world's first large-scale bike-share programme. It worked on a deposit: 'You dropped a coin in the bike and when you returned it, you got your money back. After setting up the Danish system, Schimmelpennink decided to try his luck again in the Netherlands - and this time he succeeded in arousing the interest of the Dutch Ministry of Transport. Times had changed,' he recalls. 'People had become more environmentally conscious, and the Danish experiment had proved that bike-sharing was a real possibility.' A new Witte Fietsenplan was launched in 1999 in Amsterdam. However, riding a white bike was no longer free; it cost one guilder per trip and payment was made with a chip card developed by the Dutch bank Postbank. Schimmelpennink designed conspicuous, sturdy white bikes locked in special racks which could be opened with the chip card - the plan started with 250 bikes, distributed over five stations.

E Theo Molenaar, who was a system designer for the project, worked alongside Schimmelpennink. 'I remember when we were testing the bike racks, he announced that he had already designed better ones. But of course, we had to go through with the ones we had,' The system, however, was prone to vandalism and theft. 'After every weekend there would always be a couple of bikes missing,' Molenaar says. 'I really have no idea what people did with them, because they could instantly be recognised as white bikes.' But the biggest blow came when Postbank decided to abolish the chip card, because it wasn't profitable. That chip card was

pivotal to the system,' Molenaar says. To continue the project, we would have needed to set up another system, but the business partner had lost interest.'

F Schimmelpennink was disappointed, but - characteristically - not for long. In 2002 he got a call from the French advertising corporation JC Decaux, who wanted to set up his bike-sharing scheme in Vienna. That went really well. After Vienna, they set up a system in Lyon. Then in 2007, Paris followed. That was a decisive moment in the history of bike-sharing.' The huge and unexpected success of the Parisian bike-sharing programme, which now boasts more than 20,000 bicycles, inspired cities all over the world to set up their own schemes, all modelled on Schimmelpennink's. It's wonderful that this happened,' he says. 'But financially I didn't really benefit from it, because I never filed for a patent.'

G In Amsterdam today, 38% of all trips are made by bike and, along with Copenhagen, it is regarded as one of the two most cycle-friendly capitals in the world - but the city never got another Witte Fietsenplan. Molenaar believes this may be because everybody in Amsterdam already has a bike. Schimmelpennink, however, cannot see that this changes Amsterdam's need for a bike-sharing scheme. 'People who travel on the underground don't carry their bikes around. But often they need additional transport to reach their final destination.' Although he thinks it is strange that a city like Amsterdam does not have a successful bike sharing scheme, he is optimistic about the future. In the '60s we didn't stand a chance because people were prepared to give their lives to keep cars in the city. But that mentality has totally changed. Today everybody longs for cities that are not dominated by cars.'

Link to the questions

Link to the questions: [Questions 1 to 5](#), [Questions 6 to 7](#), [Questions 8 to 9](#), [Questions 10 to 13](#)

Instructions: Reading Passage 1 has seven paragraphs, from A to G. You have to locate the information required in the following statements (1 to 5) and click on the paragraph letter alternative that contains the information requested.

Note: When you answer the questions, you can change the alternative chosen. If you finally decide not to provide a response, please type “no answer” in the blank rectangle, since the last dot you write cannot be deleted.

Example:

A) *“UNICEF was created in 1946 to provide relief to children in countries devastated by World War II. After 1950 the fund directed its efforts toward general programs for the improvement of children’s welfare, particularly in less-developed countries and in various emergency situations.”*

B) *“The organization’s broader mission was reflected in the name it adopted in 1953, the United Nations Children’s Fund.”*

0. UNICEF was created after the Second World War.

A B Neither

0.0. The objective of UNICEF is to give opportunities to live normal lives to children that were burned.

A B Neither

0.0.0. The name of United Nations Children’s fund reflects the mission the organization has undertaken.

A B Neither

Questions 1 to 5 about Passage 1: “The growth of bike-sharing schemes around the world”

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Note: You may use any letter more than once.

1. A description of how people misused a bike-sharing scheme.

A B C D E F G

2. An explanation of why a proposed bike-sharing scheme was turned down.

A B C D E F G

3. A reference to a person being unable to profit from their work.

A B C D E F G

4. An explanation of the potential savings a bike-sharing scheme would bring.

A B C D E F G

5. A reference to the problems a bike-sharing scheme was intended to solve.

A B C D E F

[Go back to Passage 1](#)

Questions 6 and 7.

Instructions and examples: From all the paragraphs identified with letters in the previous passage, you have to choose and write in the blanks on the left of the statements, the two letters of the statements that actually appear in the previous text. ONLY choose TWO options from 5 alternatives.

Example:

A) “UNICEF was created in 1946 to provide relief to children in countries devastated by World War II. After 1950 the fund directed its efforts toward general programs for the

improvement of children’s welfare, particularly in less-developed countries and in various emergency situations.”

B) “The organization’s broader mission was reflected in the name it adopted in 1953, the United Nations Children’s Fund.”

0.- UNICEF was created for burned children in the Second World War.

0.0. A They have been fundraising money for children in emergency situations in different countries.

0.0.0. B UNICEF adopted its present name in 1953.

Which **TWO** of the following statements are made in the text about the “Amsterdam bike-sharing scheme” of 1999? Choose only TWO from the 5 alternatives below, and write the letter of the paragraph that corresponds to your answer.

1. It was initially opposed by a government department.
2. It failed when a partner in the scheme withdrew support.
3. It aimed to be more successful than the Copenhagen scheme.
4. It was made possible by a change in people's attitudes.
5. It attracted interest from a range of bike designers.

[Go back to Passage 1](#)

Questions 8 to 9

Which **TWO** of the following statements are made in the text about Amsterdam today? Click on the check box that appears before the statement.

- A. The majority of residents would like to prevent all cars from entering the city.
- B. There is little likelihood of the city having another bike-sharing scheme.
- C. More trips in the city are made by bike than by any other form of transport.
- D. A bike-sharing scheme would benefit residents who use public transport.
- E. The city has a reputation as a place that welcomes cyclists.

[Go back to Passage 1](#)

Questions 10 to 13

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from Passage 1 and write the answer in the blank.

Example: “UNICEF was created in 1946 to 0 relief to children”.

The first urban bike sharing scheme

The first bike-sharing scheme was the idea of the Dutch group Provo. The people who belonged to this group were 10 . They were concerned about damage to the environment and about 11 , and believed that the bike-sharing scheme would draw attention to these issues. As well as painting some bikes white, they handed out 12 that condemned the use of cars.

However, the scheme was not a huge success: almost as quickly as Provo left the bikes around the city, the 13 took them away. According to Schimmelpennink, the scheme was intended to be symbolic. The idea was to get people thinking about the issues.

Reading Passage 2

Motivational factors and the hospitality industry

Instructions: Read Passage 2 carefully and answer questions 14 to 27. Please spend about 25 to 30 minutes on your answers to the questions.

A critical ingredient in the success of hotels is developing and maintaining superior performance from their employees. How is that accomplished? What Human Resource Management (HRM) practices should organizations invest in to acquire and retain great employees?

Some hotels aim to provide superior working conditions for their employees. The idea originated from workplaces - usually in the non-service sector - that emphasized fun and enjoyment as part of work-life balance. By contrast, the service sector, and more specifically hotels, has traditionally not extended these practices to address basic employee needs, such as good working conditions.

Pfeffer (1994) emphasizes that in order to succeed in a global business environment, organizations must make investment in Human Resource Management (HRM) to allow them to acquire employees who possess better skills and capabilities than their competitors. This investment will be to their competitive advantage. Despite this recognition of the importance of employee development, the hospitality industry has historically been dominated by underdeveloped HR practices (Lucas, 2002).

Lucas also points out that “the substance of HRM practices does not appear to be designed to foster constructive relations with employees or to represent a managerial approach that enables developing and drawing out the full potential of people, even though employees may be broadly satisfied with many aspects of their work” (Lucas, 2002). In addition, or maybe as a result, high

employee turnover has been a recurring problem throughout the hospitality industry. Among the many cited reasons are low compensation, inadequate benefits, poor working conditions and compromised employee morale and attitudes (Maroudas et al., 2008).

Ng and Sorensen (2008) demonstrated that when managers provide recognition to employees, motivate employees to work together, and remove obstacles preventing effective performance, employees feel more obligated to stay with the company. This was succinctly summarized by Michel et al. (2013): “Providing support to employees gives them the confidence to perform their jobs better and the motivation to stay with the organization.” Hospitality organizations can therefore enhance employee motivation and retention through the development and improvement of their working conditions. These conditions are inherently linked to the working environment.

While it seems likely that employees’ reactions to their job characteristics could be affected by a predisposition to view their work environment negatively, no evidence exists to support this hypothesis (Spector et al., 2000). However, given the opportunity, many people will find something to complain about in relation to their workplace (Poulston, 2009). There is a strong link between the perceptions of employees and particular factors of their work environment that are separate from the work itself, including company policies, salary and vacations.

Such conditions are particularly troubling for the luxury hotel market, where high-quality service, requiring a sophisticated approach to HRM, is recognized as a critical source of competitive advantage (Maroudas et al., 2008). In a real sense, the services of hotel employees represent their industry (Schneider and Bowen, 1993). This representation has commonly been limited to guest experiences. This suggests that there has been a dichotomy between the guest environment provided in luxury hotels and the working conditions of their employees.

It is therefore essential for hotel management to develop HRM practices that enable them to inspire and retain competent employees. This requires an understanding of what motivates employees at different levels of management and different stages of their careers (Enz and Siguaw, 2000). This implies that it is beneficial for hotel managers to understand what practices are most favorable to increase employee satisfaction and retention.

Herzberg (1966) proposes that people have two major types of needs, the first being extrinsic motivation factors relating to the context in which work is performed, rather than the work itself. These include working conditions and job security. When these factors are unfavorable, job dissatisfaction may result. Significantly, though, just fulfilling these needs does not result in satisfaction, but only in the reduction of dissatisfaction (Maroudas et al., 2008).

Employees also have intrinsic motivation needs or motivators, which include such factors as achievement and recognition. Unlike extrinsic factors, motivator factors may ideally result in job satisfaction (Maroudas et al., 2008). Herzberg's (1966) theory discusses the need for a 'balance' of these two types of needs.

The impact of fun as a motivating factor at work has also been explored. For example, Tews, Michel and Stafford (2013) conducted a study focusing on staff from a chain of themed restaurants in the United States. It was found that fun activities had a favorable impact on performance and manager support for fun had a favorable impact in reducing turnover. Their findings support the view that fun may indeed have a beneficial effect, but the framing of that fun must be carefully aligned with both organizational goals and employee characteristics. "Managers must learn how to achieve the delicate balance of allowing employees the freedom to enjoy themselves at work while simultaneously maintaining high levels of performance" (Tews et al., 2013).

Deery (2008) has recommended several actions that can be adopted at the organizational level to retain good staff as well as assist in balancing work and family life. Those particularly appropriate to the hospitality industry include allowing adequate breaks during the working day, staff functions that involve families, and providing health and well-being opportunities.

Link to the questions:

Reading Passage 2: [Questions 14 to 18](#), [Questions 19 to 22](#), [Questions 23 to 27](#)

[Questions 14 to 18](#)

Instructions: Look at the following statements and the list of researchers below. Match each statement with the correct researcher's letter, A to F. Write the correct letter in the blanks.

Note: You may use any letter more than once.

Example: A. Socrates. B. Plato.

0 A. I know that I know nothing.

0.0 That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.

14 Hotel managers need to know what would encourage good staff to remain.

15 The actions of managers may make staff feel they shouldn't move to a different employer.

16 Little is done in the hospitality industry to help workers improve their skills.

17 Staff are less likely to change jobs if cooperation is encouraged.

18 Dissatisfaction with pay is not the only reason why hospitality workers change jobs.

List of Researchers

- A. Pfeffer
- B. Lucas
- C. Maroudas et al.
- D. NG and Sorensen
- E. Enz and Siguaw
- F. Deery

[Go back to Passage 2](#)

Questions 19 to 22

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in Reading Passage 2?

In the blanks, click on

YES *if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer*

NO *if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer*

NOT GIVEN *if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this*

Note: When you answer the questions, you can change the alternative chosen. If you finally decide not to provide a response, please type “no answer” in the blank rectangle, since the last dot you write cannot be deleted.

19. One reason for high staff turnover in the hospitality industry is poor morale.

Yes No Not given

20. Research has shown that staff have a tendency to dislike their workplace.

Yes No Not given

21. An improvement in working conditions and job security makes staff satisfied with their jobs.

Yes No Not given

22. Staff should be allowed to choose when they take breaks during the working day.

Yes No Not given

[Go back to Passage 2](#)

Questions 23 to 27

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage “**Motivational factors and the hospitality industry**” and write your answers in the blanks.

Fun at work

Tews, Michel and Stafford carried out research on staff in an American chain of (23) . They discovered that activities designed for staff to have fun improved their (24) , and that management involvement led to lower staff (25) . They also found that the activities needed to fit with both the company’s (26) and the (27) of the staff. A balance was required between a degree of freedom and maintaining work standards.

[Go back to Passage 2](#)

FEEDBACK: If you have any comments about the test, please write them down.

