THE EFFECTS OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING STRATEGY ON READING COMPREHENSION, MOTIVATION AND METACOGNITION AMONG IRANIAN EFL UNIVERSITY LEARNERS

By

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Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I would like to express wholeheartedly my utmost gratitude to all the students and teachers who participated in this study. Their contributions, assistance and cooperation were essential for this research. Without them, this study would not have been accomplished. I am also thankful to all the professors and friends who have supported and helped me in completing my dissertation years at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

With deep appreciation, I wish to express my ultimate gratitude to my dear main supervisor, Professor Dr. Hairul Nizam Ismail for his valuable comments, suggestions, support and encouragement throughout the completion of my doctoral program. He always listened to me patiently and carefully, and challenged me to think critically and creatively. It is an honor to have him as my doctoral supervisor. I would always remember and cherish my learning experiences with him. Indeed, I wholeheartedly appreciate his help and I wish him more achievement in his career, health and joy in his life.

I am also deeply grateful to my co-supervisor Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan Abdullah for his valuable ideas, patience and critical suggestions during all the stages of my study. Without his assistance, my study would have been far more difficult. I benefit from all his recommendations and feedback for my research work. I truly and deeply thank him. Then, I also would like to express my appreciation to Dato' Professor Dr. Abdul Rashid Mohammed, the Dean of the School of Educational Studies and Associate Professor Dr. Abdul Rashid Mohammad, the Deputy Dean of the School of Educational Studies for all their guidance and encouragements.

I would like to express my appreciation to my beloved wife, Sareh Shaker Haghighi and my two darling children, Fezzeh and Mohammad Javad, for their support and understanding throughout these years. Their love and consideration gave me courage to face challenges and never give up. Without the support of my family, I am not sure I would have been able to come to this happy ending. Finally, my very sincere gratitude and appreciations to my father and mother as well as to my father and mother-in-law who had supported and helped me to complete my study.

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KESAN STRATEGI PENGAJARAN RESIPROKAL KE ATAS KEFAHAMAN MEMBACA, MOTIVASI DAN METAKOGNITIF DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR EFL UNIVERSITI DI IRAN.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti kesan strategi pengajaran resiprokal ke atas kefahaman membaca, motivasi membaca dan strategi meta-kognitif membaca dalam kalangan pelajar EFL universiti di Iran. Penyelidik menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif dan kualitatif untuk mengkaji kesan strategi pengajaran resiprokal tersebut. Sampel kajian seramai 60 orang daripada dua buah universiti di Iran dipilih dan diagihkan secara bertujuan bagi dua kumpulan eksperimen dan kawalan. Kumpulan eksperimen menggunakan pengajaran resiprokal manakala kumpulan kawalan pula menggunakan kaedah pengajaran konvensional. Bahagian bacaan daripada buku berjudul *Reading through Interaction Book*, ujian kefahaman membaca, soal selidik motivasi membaca, soal selidik meta-kognitif membaca dan sesi temu bual digunakan untuk mengutip data. Kaedah kuantitatif secara tinjauan ini mengandungi ujian kefahaman membaca, soalan selidik bagi motivasi membaca, soalan strategi meta-kognitif membaca. Kaedah kualitatif pula terdiri daripada soalan temu bual separuh berstruktur dengan 5 orang sampel kajian secara sukarela dalam kalangan kumpulan eksperimen di Lahijan, Iran. Keputusan menunjukkan strategi pengajaran resiprokal mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan ke atas kefahaman membaca, motivasi membaca dan strategi membaca meta-kognitif dengan min skor bagi ujian pasca bagi kumpulan eksperimen adalah tinggi secara signifikan berbanding kumpulan kawalan pada aras signifikan 0.05. Dapatan kulitatif kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa pelajar universiti Iran mempunyai tingkah laku dan kepercayaan yang positif mengenai strategi pengajaran resiprokal.

Implikasi utama kajian ini adalah pendekatan-pendekatan pengajaran dan pembelajaran berasaskan pelajar, seperti strategi pengajaran/pembelajaran resiprokal, amatlah perlu untuk meningkatkan kemahiran kefahaman, motivasi dan metakognitif membaca pelajar.

THE EFFECTS OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING STRATEGY ON READING COMPREHENSION, MOTIVATION AND METACOGNITION AMONG IRANIAN EFL UNIVERSITY LEARNERS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of reciprocal teaching strategy on reading comprehension, reading motivation and reading meta-cognition in reading comprehension among Iranian EFL learners at universities. The researcher used a mixed method to examine the effects of using reciprocal teaching strategy instruction. The participants were purposively selected and assigned into experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught through reciprocal teaching while the control group was taught through conventional method of instruction. The reading sections of *Reading through Interaction Book*, reading comprehension test, reading motivation questionnaire, reading meta-cognition questionnaire and interviews were used to collect the data. The quantitative survey consisted of reading comprehension test, reading motivation questionnaire and reading meta-cognition questionnaire with a sample of 60 participants from two universities in Iran. The results of this study indicated that reciprocal teaching strategies had significant positive effects on reading comprehension, reading motivation and reading meta-cognition of Iranian EFL university learners. The posttest mean score of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the control group at 0.05 confident levels. The qualitative findings of this study provide evidence on the fact that Iranian EFL university learners expressed positive attitudes and beliefs about using reciprocal teaching strategy instruction and this strategy met their teaching needs and goals. The main implication of this study is that student centered approaches to teaching and learning processes, such as the

reciprocal teaching strategy, is very much needed to improve students' reading comprehension, reading motivation and reading meta-cognition skills.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

English language has an important role in international communication among countries/nations and its importance is ever increasing in the world in terms of knowledge economy and industrial science. In Iran, like in most countries, English is an international language and is the language of IT (computer, internet, websites, etc.), tourism, diplomacy, and prestige. In addition, international book fairs, business, and industry conferences and summits which are also being held every year in Iran. Knowing English language also helps the Iranian students to secure good jobs especially in international and multinational companies. Thus, in order for Iranian to keep up with the world and be successful, they must learn and master the international language. Due to this necessity, English language learning has been of paramount significance in Iranian universities and colleges.

So, Iranian students, like other students in the world, need to learn English language, to read and understand them as many of international reading materials (books, articles, etc.), movies, and music are published or produced in English. These needs motivate Iranian students to learn English. Consequently, this situation motivates Iranian students to learn English and get access to a great wealth of world entertainments.

Reading comprehension is one of the most important skills English language learning as it is the prerequisite as well as facilitates other kinds of English language skills such as speaking and listening. Since Iranian EFL students have to read a lot of English books and other reading materials as part of their learning and assignments in

their university and courses' requirements, acquiring reading comprehension skill has become so vital for Iranian students. These circumstances have motivated language learners in Iranian EFL contexts to learn English as the global language at any cost (Maleki & Zangani, 2007; Mehrpour & Vojdani, 2012).

English language teaching is very important and requires special attention. It is important for the students to learn all communication skills in English such as listening, speaking, reading and writing to improve their English knowledge and communication skills (Chang, 2006). Nevertheless, Grabe and Stoller (2002) maintain that one of the most important elements in foreign language learning is the teaching method and strategies. The method of teaching can facilitate the learning process and motivate learners to actively participate and improve in their English language learning. Thus, this study focused on the reciprocal teaching strategy because of its potential to improve reading comprehension and facilitates other kinds of reading competencies such as reading motivation and reading meta-cognition.

According to Pressley (2002), one of the methods of teaching and learning a foreign language is reciprocal teaching strategy which was advocated by Palincsar and Brown in 1984. This explicit teaching and learning strategy facilitates foreign language learning in various learning areas and situations (Oczkus, 2004). Ahmadi and Pourhossein (2012) and Oczkus (2004) also expressed that this strategy has a significantly positive effect on the students' reading comprehension and their learning process. It is one of the most effective reading comprehension models that not only facilitates reading comprehension skill but also assists the improvements of other kinds of English language skills such as listening, speaking and writing. They added, reciprocal teaching strategy improves students' reading comprehension ability and

motivates them to enhance co-operative working between themselves and with their instructor.

Reciprocal teaching strategy facilitates both reading comprehension process in EFL content and also gives students the opportunities to utilize English language functions and concepts that are effective in a communicative approach (Hasan, 1994). Reciprocal teaching involves learners who have obtained fundamental skills but experience difficulties in meaning construction (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Pressley (2002) mentions that reciprocal teaching is the first empirical observation to the teaching of reading comprehension strategy; it involves teachers and students in working collaboratively to construct the textual meaning. In practice, teacher's model of four cognitive reading strategies helps students improve their motivation in reading and understanding. Students who use reciprocal teaching in the classroom will play the teacher's role while becoming more familiar with this reading strategy. Furthermore, reciprocal teaching strategy helps students be independent in their reading (Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

Hodge, Palmer and Scott (1992) agree that ineffective readers at undergraduate levels normally do not evaluate their reading comprehension and do not employ any strategies to facilitate their reading comprehension. Furthermore, Meyer, Young and Bartlett (1989) explained that there is an increasing interest in the role of reading meta-cognition instruction and reading meta-cognition strategies are sufficient means for enhancing reading motivation and reading comprehension for English language learners. If students adopt reading strategies in their reading, they will improve their reading comprehension and motivation (Paris et al., 1983; Koda, 2004; Ahmadi & Hairul, 2012).

According to Pressley (2006), an explicit strategy usage instruction for foreign language students is one of the most effective elements that help them to read more effectively. Wang (2008) claims that the reciprocal teaching strategy is important in helping and motivating students to improve their comprehension and understanding texts, and also in recognizing the content. Learners need to improve their reading comprehension ability in order to understand the context in a foreign language (Rosenfeld, Leung & Oltman, 2001; Seymour & Walsh, 2006). They also believe motivation for students has always been a main factor that assists learners to revamp their reading comprehension, nevertheless, it has not been fully understood that motivation has a very important role in English language reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is a complex skill because learners need to read the written texts, and then to be able to comprehend the meanings of them (Erfani et al., 2010; Farhady, 2005; Reid & Lienemann, 2006). Erfani et al., 2010 indicate that reading comprehension is the effective part of the English language education in Iran that should be taken into consideration. According to Carrell et al., (1989**),** reading meta-cognition refers to a direct teaching in reading that can consistently create positive outcome in comprehension. Palincsar and Brown (1985) describe reciprocal teaching strategy as one of the most important strategy which makes an explicit instruction and facilitates students' improvement of reading meta-cognition by providing appropriate descriptions of the importance of strategy use and information on when and how to use them.

Investigators believe that the instruction of reading Meta-cognition can help students' reading comprehension and motivate English language learners to read (Druitt, 2002; Guthrie et al., 1995, National Reading Panel, 2000). Choochom (1995)

explained that the level of students' motivation affects their desires of using strategy of reading comprehension. Researchers agree that teaching useful strategies of reading comprehension not only facilitate learners' reading comprehending but also motivate them to read more text and do more activities in reading process (Anderson, 2003; Eskey, 2002; Grabe, 2004).

Baker and Brown (1984) state that proficient readers can utilize reading meta-cognition to help their reading comprehension and also are familiar with reading process such as controlling, monitoring and evaluating in the reading process. However, students who do not have cognitive strategies knowledge do not know how to supervise their own reading procedure while reading. Investigations in EFL/ESL learning have examined to indicate the result of reading meta-cognition instruction in reading comprehension on students' reading process; consequently, the result showed that reading meta-cognition instruction should be taught to students because concentrating on reading meta-cognition helps learners to enhance their comprehending in reading process and assists readers to self-regulate or self-monitor their reading comprehension (Carrell, 1989; Carrell, Pharis, & Liberto, 1989; Cotteral, 1991).

Some researchers have showed that reading meta-cognition (meta-cognitive awareness) strongly affects Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension at universities (Fotovatian & Shokrpour, 2006). Furthermore, it was believed that conventional method does not give motivation to EFL learners in reading but reading strategies have positive effects on learning to read. According to Fotovatian and Shokrpour (2006), investigation on the EFL learners in the Iranian universities (Shiraz University, Iran) showed that learners who utilize reading strategies in their reading are proficient readers, but the readers who did not use reading strategies in their

reading and tried to utilize the conventional method and they were not familiar with reading strategies.

Zare-ee (2008) stated that different kinds of studies in Iranian university students indicated learning can improve if readers utilize reading strategies in EFL/ESL learning. And also if students are aware of, strategy in reading, monitor and control their own learning, it would influence their learning and help them to solve the problems in reading. Zare-ee (2008) in his study (Kashan University, Iran) on reading strategies, explain that between reading strategies and reading comprehension there is a strong connection among Iranian EFL learners at universities and reading strategies as new techniques motivate learners to learn these strategies and they are interested to learn new method in their reading process. In addition, there is a relationship between reading meta-cognition strategies and cognitive strategies in Iranian EFL learners. This study suggested that the use of reading meta-cognition process can facilitate EFL learners' reading achievement and should be improved by EFL teachers.

Reciprocal teaching has been chosen in this current study because it is a helpful teaching technique accepted by numerous investigators. In addition, it is a technique of efficient instruction in strategies that helps students to improve their reading comprehension (Kelly, Moore, & Tuck, 1994; Soonthornmanee, 2002).

1.2 Background of the Study

The researcher tried to explain the background of the current study in this section. It includes the place where the study takes place, the local education system in general, and more specifically, the English language learning.

1.2.1 Islamic Republic of Iran

Islamic Republic of Iran is a country in the Middle East which is located in the north of the Persian Gulf and in the south of the Caspian Sea. It is a vast country with a population of more than seventy million. Iran has borders with several countries such as Azerbaijan, Iraq, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Armenia. Geographically, the temperature in Iran changes according to the seasons. It normally falls below freezing temperature in winter and is warmer and humid in summer and autumn.

Historically, Iran was ruled by different dynasties. Between 1501 and 1722, Iran was controlled by the Safavid Dynasty; the official religion in Iran has converted into Shiite Islam by Qajar Dynasty (1794–1925). Those days, the Great Britain and Russia were fighting each other to control the area's economy. Thereby, during World War I, it became a battle field for those countries. Afterwards, Reza Kahn had taken over Iran by a coup in 1921and he changed his name into Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925 (WEP-Iran, 2012; Iran's Encyclopedia, 2012).The Islamic revolution in Iran took place in January 1978. It was started with demonstrations against the Shah. After the Shah fled in January 1979, Iranian supreme leader (Ayatollah Khomeini) has come back to his country from his exile. Ten days after the Shah left the country, Pahlavi Dynasty collapsed on 11 February and Iran officially became an Islamic Republic on 1st of April 1979 (WEP-Iran, 2012; Iran's Encyclopedia, 2012). From 1979, following the fall of the Pahlavi monarchy regime, Iran became an Islamic theocracy.

There are no native speakers of English in Iran. So, Iranian EFL students do not have any chance to practice their English language with native speakers and to improve in English language learning. Therefore, reading comprehension is a vital

factor for Iranian EFL students to connect with the native speakers through media, internet, and so on.

1.2.2 Education in Iran

There are two levels of education in Iran. The first one is administered by the Education Ministry and the second one by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. Most of the citizens of Iran (around 97%) can read and write in the native language. There are several types of schools in the country. The first one is the elementary school which is provided for the students from the age of six to eleven. The second one is the secondary school which serves the students from the 7 to 9 grades. The last one is called high school which consists of three years of schooling (grade 10 to 12). After high school, students can participate in an entrance examination which is provided by state universities and by different open or private universities (Encarta Encyclopedia, 2009).

Figure 1.1

Map of Iran

1.2.3 English Language Education in Iran

The most widespread native language in Iran is called Persian so; English language in Iran is used as a foreign language. Lots of Iranian learners are interested in learning at least one language other than their own language (Tehran Times, Retrieved, 2012). Usually, Iranian students are interested in learning English, German, Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, and French languages. However, the most preferable foreign language for the young generation to learn is English. It is taught in Iran as a foreign language starting from secondary school/middle school. Its teaching method focuses on reading, translation, and writing, speaking, and listening.

The Iranian government is now considering English language teaching from elementary school level. One of the most popular English learning centers for the children and young generations is called Kanoun-e-Zabaan-e-Iran. In this center, languages like English, Persian, French, German, Spanish, and Arabic are taught to the learners (Tehran Times, Retrieved, 2012; Iran's Encyclopedia, 2012).According to Erfani et al., (2011), most of the Iranian English language classroom activities in the universities do not emphasize on strategies and proficiency. According to Soleimani (2005), the uniformity of English language teaching in Iran means imposing an inflexible structure for students to follow. Similarly, concerning the inadequate usage of reading strategy among EFL learners, Farhady (2005) claimed that the method of teaching in Iranian universities for EFL students must be changed. Consequently, Iranmehr et al., (2010) had invited all Iranian researchers and experts for re-addressing the strategies of teaching EFL learners in the country.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension is one of the main problems among Iranian EFL learners at universities. However, few studies in Iran have shown that the most

important learning skills the learners need to be successful in their studies are reading and recognizing the written language (Riazi, 2005). Nevertheless, there are some significant problems among the learners concerning reading comprehension strategy usage. Erfani et al., (2009) elaborated the problems by suggesting that reading comprehension teaching method in Iran does not include any useful strategies as the teachers do not teach any new reading comprehension strategies to the learners; consequently, the classes had become quite boring and inflexible. Learners need to be motivated and also need to develop interest in reading comprehension process. Without such learning strategies, developing English language reading comprehension competency would be a serious challenge and problem for the Iranians. Expert readers use a specific strategy while reading to facilitate their reading comprehension and motivation (Baker & Wigfield 1999).

Thus, it is hoped that specific reading comprehension strategies like reciprocal teaching strategy might help Iranian EFL learners because comprehensive reading skill is required in the examinations in university levels (Birjandi, Mosallanejad & Bagheridoust, 2006; Lee & Oxford, 2008). Furthermore, few studies have been conducted in Iran investigating the main determinants of foreign language learning achievement. In some studies, reading motivation has attracted the attention of investigators most (Rastegar, 2003; Shaikholeslami & Khayyer, 2006; Tohidi, 1984) whereby have done some investigations on the Iranian students' reading motivation in English language learning. According to Sadighi and Maghsudi (2000), there is a significant difference in reading motivation among the Iranian EFL students. It was also found that the personal, social, and educational factors had significant relationships with the EFL learners' motivation. Moreover, students were often attributed as having motivation in their studying. Therefore, reading motivation needs

to be considered which has a significant effect on students' English language learning. Thus, Motivation in reading is an important step to be taken by all educational stakeholders in order to improve the learners' performance.

Another major problem among Iranian EFL learners is the lack of reading strategy. According to Hokmi (2005), although reading strategy is essential for those students who are going to study in foreign language, EFL students in Iran do not have sufficient strategies in their reading process and have problem in comprehending texts. Oxford (1997) and Laufer (2003) stated that strategy in reading comprehension facilitates learners learning and also has considerable effect on learners' motivation in reading. Usually, the students do not have ability to utilize reading meta-cognition in foreign language learning process and their success in reading comprehension and motivation has been affected.

The reading method which is used in Iranian universities is typically based on conventional methods (Hokmi, 2005). Research findings showed that the traditional/ conventional method has been one of the main obstacles of the English language learning in Iran since learners need to be motivated in reading but the conventional method is utilized for a long time so, students are not interested in reading classes. Shokouhi (2006) maintained that conventional methods such as the grammar translation have been used in Iran for many years. This method is utilized by the teachers in Iran in order to enhance learners' reading comprehension; however, they have not emphasized students' motivation. Farhady (2006) illustrated that conventional methods which have been used in the Iranian universities do not have any significant effects on learners' learning and motivation to read. To date, EFL learners in Iranian universities have been taught using conventional methods

emphasizing tasks such as reading particular English passages, translating them into their own language, and answering some comprehension questions (Hokmi, 2005).

While it is acknowledged that reading comprehension and reading motivation can be improved by utilizing certain reading strategies, teachers and learners in Iran do not seem to focus on them. Some possible reasons are that learners are not aware of the significant correlation between the strategy usage and the success in reading comprehension (Butler & Winne, 1995); learners have little background information related to the strategies (Carpenter & Just, 1986); students may be focused on the degree of activities than on getting data (Mayer, 1996); students found that the strategies are too complex to use (Palmer & Goetz, 1988); and their instructors had given easy reading assignments which do not require them to use any strategies (Van Meter, Yokoi, & Pressley, 1994). According to Lervåg and Aukrust (2010), it has been recognized that reading meta-cognition has an important function in English language learners' reading comprehension and motivation, investigators explored that strategies in reading are the main important techniques fostering reading comprehension and reading motivation in foreign language learning settings.

Accordingly, this study investigated the effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading meta-cognition between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL universities learners. As a result, it is important to emphasize the mentioned problems (reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading meta-cognition) and to merit a comprehensive study in order to find a possible solution for the ongoing problems.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was designed to investigate the difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading meta-

cognition between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL universities learners. This study attempted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on the reading comprehension between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL universities learners?

2. To investigate the difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on reading motivation between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL universities learners.

3. To investigate the difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on reading meta-cognition between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL universities learners.

4. To examine the Iranian EFL university learners' beliefs towards the use of reciprocal teaching strategy.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to set a research structure based on its specific objectives, several research questions were elaborated. These research questions are going to be analyzed and answered chronologically in order to develop a solid platform to continue on each consecutive step of the research, followed by the descriptions of null hypotheses assumed for each research question. The research questions are as follows:

1. Is there any significant difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on the reading comprehension between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL universities learners?

2. Is there any significant difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on the reading motivation between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL universities learners?

3. Is there any significant difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on the reading meta-cognition between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL universities learners?

4. What are the Iranian EFL university students' beliefs towards the use of reciprocal teaching strategy?

The fourth research question consists of a qualitative procedure; hence, any null hypothesis would neither be developed nor quantitatively tested. Sequentially, qualitative data would be collected and the qualitative findings of this research might provide support to have the deeper understandings of the quantitative findings of this research.

1.6 Research Null Hypotheses

The null hypothesis usually offer a general or default situation, such as that there is no connection between the two considered phenomena (Ader, Mellenbergh & Hand, 2008). Null hypotheses need to be checked by numerical analyses in order to be rejected or confirmed. Null-hypotheses in the rejection one shows that the measured phenomena are related to one another. The opposite of the null hypothesis is alternative hypothesis which proposes that two measured phenomena are related to one another. In quantitative research, according to Adèr et al., (2008), null hypotheses rejection evaluate a wider range of potential compared to an acceptance of alternative hypotheses. Several null hypotheses which based on the research questions are developed over the quantitative questions about this study:

1. There is no significant difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on the reading comprehension between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL university learners.

2. There is no significant difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on the reading motivation between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL university learners.

3. There is no significant difference effect of reciprocal teaching strategy on the reading meta-cognition between experimental and control group among Iranian EFL university learners.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study aimed to help Iranian EFL learners at universities improve their reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading meta-cognition through reciprocal teaching strategies. In other words, this study is going to suggest a new strategy to assist teachers' model of teaching in reading comprehension among Iranian EFL learners at universities. This model of teaching would increase the levels of reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading meta-cognition usage. Reciprocal teaching strategy might also help the students be independent readers. Therefore, the findings of this study might help EFL learners to find effective solutions to develop better skills of becoming independent readers.

Palincsar and Brown (1984), Cotterall (1990), and Allen (2003) claimed that one of the main and important factors that facilitates and improves reading comprehension is called reciprocal teaching strategy and is more effective than other reading meta-cognition strategies like visualization, ask questions, repetition, and SQR3. With this strategy, the instructor will specifically help and guide the students to use the strategies in an appropriate way. Sequentially, the learners would create their own understanding and regulation through their reading. In conclusion, the students are expected to be able to use this strategy without the help of others.

1.8 Definitions of Key Terms

In this section several key terms have been defined conceptually and operationally. Those key terms include reciprocal teaching, reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading meta-cognition, and EFL learners.

1.8.1 Reciprocal Teaching Strategy

According to Stricklin (2011), reciprocal teaching strategy is an instructional technique that instructs learners explicitly to utilize reading meta-cognition process as they understand the meaning of a context. Reciprocal teaching strategy is related to the process of reading comprehension in which students' background knowledge is activated when they interact with the text by using this strategy. Furthermore, students in their reading process understand the meaning from the context by using their background knowledge and would acquire the message/s from the text. This strategy assists an instructor to model and give the learners enough opportunities to utilize four kinds of sub-strategies of reciprocal teaching in their reading process activities. Reciprocal teaching strategy has four sub strategies which are as; making prediction, creating questioning, clarifying, and summarizing, these four elements of reciprocal teaching strategy facilitate and improve reading comprehension in a text. In this current study, reciprocal teaching strategy refers to the direct teaching technique based on the package of empirical co-operative working within learners themselves or learners with their teachers in reading comprehension in Iranian EFL learners at universities.

1.8.2 Reading Comprehension

According to Blair-Larsen and Vallance (2004), reading comprehension is defined as a combination of the learners' cognition and meta-cognition processes which a learner need to construct meaning from the text. This process of understanding the meaning of the text happens from different parts of a text such as; the topics, the titles, the explanations and even from the previous paragraphs. As a matter of fact, it means that reading comprehension occurs when a reader recognizes the written message/s in a text and then explains it correctly. Therefore, Reading comprehension process refers to the procedure of constructing meaning from the text by relying on previous information to recognize what the passage recommended in the text (Ahmadi, Hairul, & Muhammad Kamarul, 2012). In this study, reading comprehension refers to the constructing meaning from a text after reading by learners based on reciprocal teaching strategy usage.

1.8.3 Reading Motivation

According to Eccles et al., (1998), reading motivation is defined as the feelings that cause a reader to approach or avoid reading. Reading motivation is based on one's beliefs that he/she will succeed or fail as well as personal interest and activity. Ford (1992) said that reading motivation is defined as the belief that people will attempt to do something. If a student finds a book or an activity that is related to his/her interest, he/she is more likely to put effort to be engaged with it. Even though it is important to have effective comprehension skills, learners need to have the motivation in their reading while continuing to develop their comprehension skills. Accordingly, reading motivation as the main and important factor of motivation that readers should consider their negative or positive idea about reading. It means that students with positive reading motivation can be anticipated to read more in a wider

range (Hairul, Ahmadi, & Pourhossein, 2012). In this current research, reading motivation refers to the motivation which assists readers to follow their reading process through reciprocal teaching strategy and influences language learning achievement and improves their activities in reading a text.

1.8.4 Reading Meta-cognition

According to Flavell (1979), reading meta-cognition involves knowledge about cognition in general, as well as awareness of and knowledge about one's own cognition. It emphasis on helping students become more knowledgeable of and responsible for their own cognition and thinking. Although, there are many definitions and models of meta-cognition, but one of the main important definitions of meta-cognition is the knowledge of cognition and the processes involving the planning, monitoring, and evaluating of cognition.

Reading meta-cognition is a reading technique which makes reading comprehension more effective and helps learning; it is a set of reading comprehension methods which readers are familiar with them and utilize them in their reading process. Reading meta-cognition refers to the consciousness and the information of one's mental processes that one can plan, monitor and evaluate them to an interested goal" (Kerka, 2002). It consists of thinking about thinking into the students reading comprehension process, such as planning, monitoring and evaluating learning process while it is taking place. Reading meta-cognition is defined as a reader's awareness, monitoring and regulating of reading technique while reading, therefore, reading meta-cognition is defined as: "being conscious of one's own mental processes" which includes having the ability to plan, monitor and evaluate one's relating comprehension (Flavell, 1979; Anderson, 2003; Ma, JoahnaMante Estacio, 2013). In this study,

reading meta-cognition is a method that readers would utilize it in their reading comprehension process which is based on reciprocal teaching strategy.

1.8.5 EFL Learners

The acronym EFL learners refer to English as foreign language learners. EFL was elaborated as where English is not spoken as a mother tongue language; instead, it is spoken as a foreign language that is not being used for communication in the society. Moreover, learners in English as foreign language learning normally would not have much chance to use the language with the native speakers because it is not their local language in the society as they are using another language (Scrivener, 2005). In this study, EFL learners refer to those research samples that would participate in this study and would divide into two groups (experimental and control): these two groups are selected from two universities in the north of Iran, Lahijan and Roudsar universities.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

In order to be focused on the studied subject matter, the following limitations are developed around this study:

1. The current study is limited to the examination of the Iranian EFL university learners' beliefs towards using reciprocal teaching strategy for reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading meta-cognition in just one of the open universities of Iran.

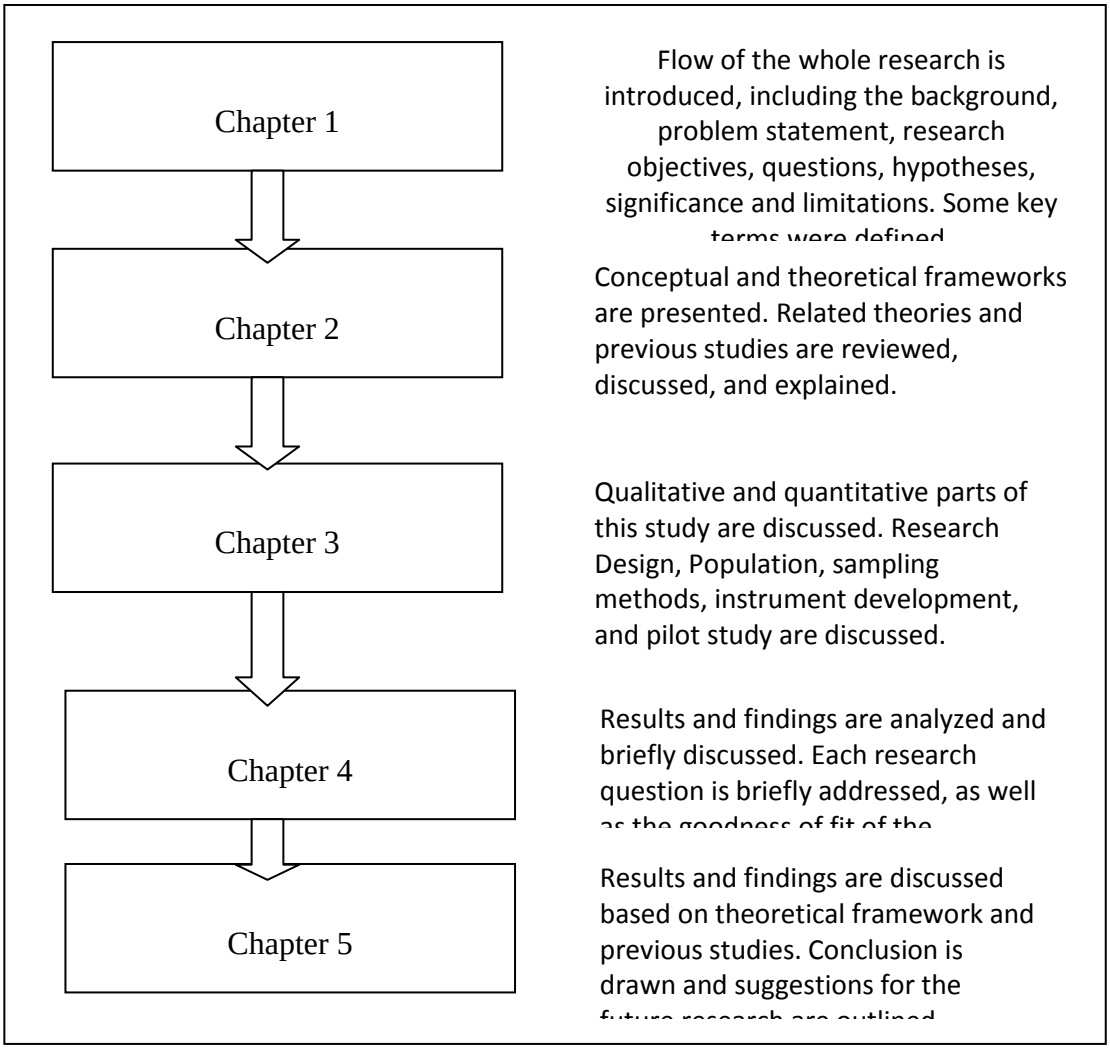
2. This study is limited to Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading meta-cognition with regard to reciprocal teaching.

3. This study is limited to the related variable that involved in this research and does not evaluate the unrelated variables that might be influential in the findings such as students' educational conditions, financial conditions, gender, ethnic group, parenting

styles and some other positional differences that might influence their learning in this investigation. Thus, it should not be generalized to other students or universities in other parts of Iran. Results obtained from the study should not be generalized to the EFL context in other universities or elsewhere around the world.

1.10 Thesis Structure

In this study, the researcher tried to write five chapters; introduction in chapter one, review of literature chapter two, research methodology chapter three, results and discussion chapter four and finally, conclusion, implications and suggestions for further research chapter 5. The flow of the thesis is illustrated in Figure 1. 2. Explanations of each chapter are included in the figure.



1.11 Conclusion

Chapter one introduced Iranian EFL university learners reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading meta-cognition using reciprocal teaching strategy. It has also introduced the background context of Iran, particularly brief general information about the Islamic Republic of Iran, its education system, and English language Education. This chapter has also proposed the research problems, objectives, questions, and hypotheses that would guide the researcher to progress further. The significance of the study was discussed in this chapter, followed by the operational definitions of key terms. Finally the limitations of the study were discussed. In the next chapter, discussions of the literatures, previous studies, theories, and the conceptual frameworks of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, previous related studies and different aspects of the variables are described and elaborated. First, definition and components of reciprocal teaching strategy are comprehensively discussed followed by the discussions related to the stages of its application, reading comprehension, and types of reading. Traditional/conventional teaching models of the reading as well as the concept and types of motivation are reviewed. Accordingly, researches on foreign language reading motivation are discussed in details. The chapter continues with a discussion related to the reading meta-cognition, components of reading meta-cognition, role of reading meta-cognition, theories/models of reading meta-cognition. Previous studies related to this current research are elaborated before this chapter is closed by review of related studies and conceptual and theoretical frameworks of this study.

2.2 Teaching/Instructional Strategy

According to Cooper (1993), there are many different instructional strategies that help students' English language learning. Some of the most important strategies include modeling, group effort (cooperative learning), scaffolding of instruction, having choices, using different models of reading, background knowledge activation.

2.2.1 Modeling Strategy

Modeling strategy is an essential part of helping students learn the process of constructing meaning and of helping them to learn the different strategies and technique concerned in English language learning (Bandura, 1986). Instructors provide modeling of specific strategies and skills for those students who want it

(Walmsley & Walp, 1990). The teacher models through reading aloud, discussions and demonstrating response activities then, students also provide modeling for each other through cooperative learning in this trend (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985).

2.2.2 Group effort strategy (cooperative learning)

Group effort strategy is one of the main important instructional strategies that work well in EFL learning instruction (Slavin, 1987). Learners learn to read, write, and think by having meaningful engagements with more experienced individuals (Wells, 1990).

2.2.3 Having Choices Strategy

Having choices strategy in learning a foreign language provides learners meet their own individual desires (Johnston & Allington, 1991). Students' choices from in what and how they read. In fact, the instructor allows students to actively construct meaning from the written message by their own technique (Martinez & Roser, 1991).

2.2.4 Scaffolded Instruction strategy

Scaffolded instruction **strategy** is based on the concept that students at the beginning of their learning need support and gradually become independent in their learning and it is a model of learning that helps learners to learn without any instructor (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). Pearson (1985) stated that Scaffolded instruction strategy releases instructor's accountability and the teacher helps and guides learners to achieve independence (Cooper, 1993).

2.2.5 Using Different Models of Reading Strategy

Cooper (1993) defined models of reading strategy as the different ways of reading that may be read -- aloud, helped and guided by the instructor, independently or cooperatively. By changing the models of reading utilized for different learners,

instructors are able to scaffold teaching and supply different levels of support for learners in order to make them successful in reading texts (Cooper, 1993; Cullinan, 1992).

2.2.6 Background Knowledge Activation Strategy

Background knowledge activation strategy is one of the important instructional strategies that helps students English language learning and affects their reading comprehension (Cooper, 1993). Cooper (1993) explained that background knowledge activation strategy can be activated by different strategies which help learners become autonomous in utilizing their own background knowledge. Investigations have shown that students utilized their background knowledge to construct meaning from the text (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

2.2.7 Instructional Strategies that Help Students Reading Comprehension

According to Denton and Hocker (2006), there are many instructional strategies that help students English language learning and reading comprehension. But the researcher attempted to write some of the most important reading strategies in this study as;

2.2.7.1 Skimming and scanning; utilizing a quick survey of the text, the main idea, grammar, and as a whole the main important point in the text is needed (Denton & Hocker, 2006).

2.2.7.2 Making Prediction; using background knowledge to predict the text and predicting about the next in the content is called prediction (Denton & Hocker, 2006; Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

2.2.7.3 Previewing; it refers to get a sense of the context and structure of a reading section before starting to read by reviewing titles, pictures and headings (Denton & Hocker, 2006).