



## Gender Differences Views on Problem-Solving Reading Strategies in L2 A Case Study of Iranian EFL Learners

Mojgan Yarahmadi

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Ph.D in ELT, Department of English, Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch,  
Arak 38135-567, Iran

---

### ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether there are any significant differences between male and female Iranian EFL Learners 'views in using problem –solving strategies when they are reading in English. The participants were 108 senior English Translation students at Islamic Azad University Arak Branch, Iran. The t-test statistical tool was used to answer the generated research hypothesis and question. Findings revealed no significant differences.

**KEY WORDS:** EFL; Reading Strategies; Problem- solving Strategies; Gender.

---

### INTRODUCTION

The benefits of reading widely and relatively long texts are enormous for students with a relatively high level of proficiency in the language. They have different needs and different problems from those which they faced at lower educational levels. According to Anderson [1], reading is the interaction of four things: the reader, the text, the fluent reading or “the ability to read at an appropriate rate with adequate comprehension”, and strategic reading or “the ability of the reader to use a variety of reading strategies to accomplish a purpose for reading”. Reading strategies are important as they can actually assist the EFL learners’ reading process and gives them a clear sense of direction on what they are actually digesting while reading. There are different kinds of reading strategies that are employed by ESL learners namely, Global Reading Strategies (GLOB), Problem Solving Strategies (PROB) and Support Strategies (SUP). Discovering the best methods and techniques or processes the learners choose to access is the goal of research in reading strategies. Reading ability has always been viewed as critical to academic success [3]. Gender, prior knowledge, interest, and language ability have been seen as amongst the major factors that influence reading comprehension performance ( Carrell, [2];Grabe and Stoller,[3]; Koda, [4]; Pae[5]; Yongqi, [6]). Reading strategies are defined here as “deliberate, conscious procedures used by readers to enhance text comprehension” (Sheorey & Mokhtari [7], and their application is believed to contribute to efficient reading.

The objective of this study was to provide the information on the gender differences and their belief about using problem-solving strategies in L2 reading.

### METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

The participants were 108 male and female senior English Translation students at Islamic Azad University Arak Branch, Iran. They were at the age range of 23-26years old. A background questionnaire was developed by the investigator for the purpose of eliciting information about the participants including age, gender, hometown and/or address, years of studying English. A questionnaire of Problem-Solving Strategies taken from Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) was used. To see whether this questionnaire is reliable for the subjects of this study or not, it was given to 20 students of the similar group participating in the study. Based on the collected data, the reliability coefficient alpha for this questionnaire was calculated to be 0.70, which confirmed the appropriateness of this questionnaire. Scoring on the scale was done as follows; strongly agreed (4) agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) for positive statements and vice-versa for negative statements.

### RESULTS

The paired T-test was employed to analyze the data in this study. Statistical representation of the analyzed data is given in the following table:

---

\*Corresponding Author: Mojgan Yarahmadi, Assistant Professor, Ph.D in ELT, Department of English, Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch, Arak 38135-567, Iran. Email: m\_yarahmadi@ iau-arak.ac.ir Tel: +98-9189579097

Sex	N	X	S.D	Variance	d.f	tcal	teri	p	Decision
Male	54	66.60	12.03	11.92	53	0.16	2.00	0.05	Not significant
Female	54	66.11	13.20	13.08					

Table 1: Showing the t-test statistics for the male and female's views on using problem solving strategies while reading in L2

Result from table 1 (above) shows that the t-value calculated tcal (0.16) is less than the critical t-value tcri (2.00) at  $p = 0.05$ . The Null hypothesis is therefore accepted implying that there is no significance difference between Iranian male and female students view's about using problem – solving strategies while reading in L2.

## DISCUSSION

Eight problems –solving reading strategies were the basis of this study. They are as: Reading slowly and carefully ; Trying to stay focused on reading; Adjusting reading rate; Paying close attention to reading; Pausing and thinking about reading; Guessing meaning of unknown words; Visualizing information read; Re-reading for better understanding;

As far as the research question is concerned, and as tables 1-8 indicate, there is no significant difference between male and female students in their belief about using the above mentioned reading problem- solving strategies. The t-observed is less than t-critical value.

## Conclusions

Incorporating problem –solving strategies instruction into L2 reading classroom teaching promotes a way of thinking, a way of approaching a learning task or similar problematic situations for our learners.

The findings presented here serve as a reminder that both male and female students like to be involved in problem-solving strategies while reading in L2.

## REFERENCES

- [1]Anderson, N. J. 2003. Teaching Reading. In D. Nunan (Ed.), Practical English language teaching (pp. 67-86).New York: McGraw Hill Publishers.
- [2]Carrell, P. L. 1987. Content and Formal Schemata in ESL Reading. TESOL Quarterly, 21(4): 462-481.
- [3]Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. 2002. Teaching and Researching Reading. London: Longman.
- [4]Koda, K. 2005. Insights into Second Language Reading: A cross-linguistic Approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [5]Pae, T. 2004. Gender Effect on Reading Comprehension with korean EFL Learners. System, 32(3), 265-281.
- [6] Yongqi, G. 2002. Gender, Academic Major, and Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Chinese EFL Learners. RELC Journal, 33(1), 35-54
- [7]Sheorey R., & Mokhtari, K. 2001. Differences in the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies among Native and Non-native Readers. System, 29(4), 431-449