Turkish EFL Learners' Reading Strategy Use and Its Relation to Reading Self-Efficacy and Gender

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the present study is to determine the type and frequency of reading strategies (RSs) used by Turkish EFL students. Besides, this study aims to find out a) whether there is a gender difference in terms of RS use, b) whether there is a relationship between self-reported RS use and reading self-efficacy. A total of 211 university-level English preparatory class students took part in the study. The participants completed questionnaires on RS use and reading self-efficacy. The obtained data were analyzed using quantitative methods. The results indicated that students reported using RSs at a moderate level, and problem-solving strategies were the most frequently employed RS when compared to global and support strategies. Additionally, the study found that female students reported significantly higher use of RSs than male students. Finally, this study demonstrates that there is a positive relationship between students' RS use and reading self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most important language skills. It is an active and complex process that includes many components (Oxford, 2017). We spend most of our lives reading for different purposes: sometimes intensively in detail (e.g. reading textbooks, analyzing grammar structures in a text) and sometimes extensively just for pleasure, just focusing on meaning (e.g. reading interesting stories) (Nation, 2009). As Anderson (2012) puts forward, "reading, perhaps more than any other language skill, provides the foundation for success in language learning and academic learning" (p. 218). Considering this fact, it is crucial to be a successful reader in the target language and to achieve this, it seems necessary to use various strategies and skills while reading second language (L2) texts. Many researchers (e.g. Grabe & Stoller, 2014; Nation, 2009; Oxford, 2017) think that reading strategies (RSs) have a great role in helping L2 learners' reading comprehension success and so it is important to know what they mean. Before that, however, defining language learning strategies (LLSs) can be helpful to understand the scope of RSs better. LLSs in general are defined as "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students use to improve their own progress in developing skills in a second or foreign language" (Oxford, 1999, p. 518). According to Gass et al. (2013), one of the most important distinctions between successful and less successful language learners is related to the use of learning strategies. Based on this, RSs seem to

have a very crucial role for successful L2 reading, and in connection with the general definition of LLSs, they can be defined as "techniques and methods readers use to make their reading successful" (Baker & Boonkit, 2004, p. 302). As for Barnett (1988), RSs refer to the "mental operations" that readers use while trying to comprehend a text, and they can be exemplified as "guessing word meanings from context and evaluating those guesses, recognizing cognates and word families, skimming, scanning, reading for meaning, predicting, activating general knowledge, making inferences, following references, and separating main ideas from supporting details" (p.150). In addition to this, Nation (2009) exemplifies RSs as follows: "previewing, setting a purpose, predicting, posing questions, connecting to background knowledge, paying attention to text structure, guessing words from context, critiquing, and reflecting on the text" (pp.7-8). As Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) highlight, RSs can be categorized as follows: global (e.g. using context clues), support (e.g. taking notes) and problem solving strategies (e.g. rereading the text).

Many researchers emphasize that there is a positive link between RS use and reading success. For instance, Grabe and Stoller (2014) define good readers as the ones who adopt several strategies to understand a text properly, and who are highly aware of their thinking during their interaction with a difficult text. Likewise, Anderson (2014) defines one of the characteristics of engaged L2 readers as follows: "they are metacognitively aware as they use a variety of reading strategies" (p.171). Oxford (2017) highlights that reading has a considerable place in every L2 learners' lives and therefore it is necessary to teach it explicitly in a way that fosters self-efficacy and arouses interest in learners. Considering the importance of L2 reading, many researchers (see, for example, Abi & Komur, 2018; Afflerbach et al., 2017; Nation, 2009; Oxford 2017; Tercanlioglu & Demiroz, 2015; Yayli, 2010) suggest that instructors should raise learners' awareness of RSs and teach them how to employ these strategies during their reading. Additionally, Anderson (1991) puts forward that teachers should also train learners to decide whether they can effectively and fruitfully use the RSs they choose and achieve their comprehension goals with them or not. The crucial role of RS knowledge has also been proved by numerous research studies. For instance, Hosseini et al. (2012) found a positive relationship between Iranian university-level EFL students' (n=70) reading comprehension and RS use. Similarly, Par (2020) carried out a study with 56 Indonesian EFL learners at a university and found a significant correlation between the students' reading achievement and RS use. Another study conducted by Salataci and Akyel (2002) reported that RS instruction facilitated students' English reading comprehension.

Taking into account the suggestions of the scholars in the field and the results of the previous studies, language teachers need to find out whether their students are aware of RSs and whether they know how to use them effectively. When previous studies are analyzed, it is clearly seen that most of them only focus on whether students are aware of RSs or not, or whether there is a relationship between RS use and reading achievement. However, RS use can be influenced by different factors, and for this reason, it is also important to investigate students' RS use in relation to various variables. For instance, although we know the critical importance of RS use in comprehending a text in the target language, much uncertainty still exists about gender differences in RS use. Moreover, how RS use is related to students' beliefs in their reading capabilities in a foreign language also deserves to be investigated. Yet only a few studies have focused on the link

between RS use and reading self-efficacy. Considering the scarcity of studies with a specific focus on RS use and its relation to reading self-efficacy and gender, the present study aims to contribute to the field by focusing on these issues. So, the purposes of this research are a) to identify the type and frequency of RSs used by students, b) to examine gender differences in frequency of RS use, c) to find out the relationship between students' self-perceived RS use and reading self-efficacy. In line with these aims, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What RSs do Turkish EFL students in this study report to use?
2. Does the extent of RS use differ in terms of gender in this sample?
3. Is there any significant relationship between the students' self-perceived RS use and reading self-efficacy?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading strategy use and reading self-efficacy

Reading self-efficacy seems to have an important role in learners' foreign language reading process because as Bandura (1995) highlights, "efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act" (p.2). Schwanenflugel and Knapp (2016) define reading self-efficacy as "a person's judgment of his or her ability or competence in reading" (p. 230). Therefore, as Guthrie et al. (2004) emphasize, reading self-efficacy is essential to be a successful reader. According to these researchers, when students have a high level of self-efficacy in reading, this means that they feel self-confident and they believe that they can cope with challenging texts. They are aware that the strategies they use, the time and energy they put into the comprehension process will finally bring them success in reading. Contrary to this, when students have low-level reading self-efficacy, they think that this is not worth the effort because they believe that they are not capable enough to handle difficult texts (Guthrie et al., 2004). Similarly, Wigfield and Tonks (2004) underline that self-efficacy has positive effects on students' motivation and success, and therefore self-efficacy in reading is important to successfully engage in reading.

There are various studies that show the significance of reading self-efficacy. For instance, Mills et al. (2006) conducted a study with 95 college students learning French as a foreign language and found a positive relationship between students' reading self-efficacy and proficiency scores in reading French texts. Additionally, Shehzad et al. (2019) carried out a study with 351 Saudi students learning English as a foreign language and reported that there was a positive correlation between students' reading comprehension and self-efficacy in reading. Some researchers have put forward that there is also a positive connection between reading self-efficacy and RS use. Guthrie et al. (2004) state that learning RSs helps students improve their reading skills, and so this contributes positively to students' self-efficacy in reading. Likewise, Wigfield and Tonks (2004) believe that RS training is beneficial in helping learners become competent and self-efficacious readers. Lau and Chan (2003) state that learners need to devote a great deal of cognitive effort while using strategies, and they only attempt to put this effort into action if they believe that they

have the capability to achieve and their attempts are helpful to their success. These suggestions have been supported by the findings of some research studies. For instance, Naseri and Zaferanieh (2012) conducted a study with eighty Iranian EFL learners and found the correlation between reading self-efficacy beliefs and RS use as strong and positive. Similarly, Zare and Mobarakeh (2011) carried out a study with 45 high school Iranian EFL students and identified a strong positive correlation between students' reported reading self-efficacy and RS use. Furthermore, Shang (2010) conducted a study with 53 university-level Taiwanese EFL students and stated that the relationship between students' perceived self-efficacy and RS use was positive.

Reading strategy use and gender

Gender is among the individual factors that can have an influence on RS use, however, there are only a few studies with a focus on this issue. Chen and Chen (2015), for example, conducted a study with 1,259 (533=male; 726=female) high school EFL students in Taiwan to investigate RS use. When female and male students were compared, the results showed that females reported using more RSs than males. Similarly, Madhumathi and Ghosh (2012) also found a significant difference between male (n=24) and female (n=28) Indian ESL students (n=52) regarding RS use. Students' self-reports indicated that females were using more RSs when compared to males. Contrary to the findings of these studies that highlight female superiority in RSs, there are also studies that show no difference between the two genders. For instance, Poole (2005) made a research with 248 advanced level ESL college students to find out the difference between male (n=138) and female (n=110) students regarding academic RS use. Results of the study revealed no significant gender-related difference in overall RS use. Depending on this, it was concluded that RS use can be influenced by other factors rather than gender. Another study carried out by Phakiti (2003) investigated whether there were any differences between male (n=173) and female (n=211) Thai university students in terms of cognitive and metacognitive strategy use while taking a reading comprehension test in English. The findings indicated that there were no significant gender differences in reported use of cognitive strategies, however, males, in comparison to females, reported using more metacognitive strategies while reading. As the findings of previous studies show disparities between male and female students' RS use, more research studies need to be conducted, and therefore gender is one of the focuses of the present study.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 211 students attending English preparatory classes of a state university in Turkey took part in the study. The participants were from different academic majors (e.g. industrial engineering, international relations), and they were required to complete English preparatory program before taking courses in their academic fields. At the time of data collection (end of the fall semester), the participants were taking pre-intermediate (B1) level English classes, with an

instruction time of 30 hours per week. Considering the time they spent on reading, they were accepted as experienced enough to report their self-perceived RS use. They were all native speakers of Turkish with an average age of 19.4. Gender distribution of the participants was almost equal as shown in table 1:

Table 1
Number of participants by gender

Gender	N	%
Female	102	48.3
Male	109	51.7
Total	211	100

Data Collection Instruments

1. The Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS): The SORS developed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) was one of the main data collection instruments of this study. The SORS aimed to find out the type and rate of the RSs used by non-native learners of English while reading school-related materials in English like textbooks, journal articles, and so on. The SORS consists of 30 items with a 5-point Likert scale and three subdimensions as follows:

a) *Global RSs (GLOB) (13 items)*: These strategies refer to the general techniques that are carefully and intentionally planned by learners to monitor their reading. They can be exemplified as: *reading with a purpose in mind, using context clues to understand better, trying to guess the content of the text*, *previewing the content of the text.*

b) *Support strategies (SUP) (9 items)*: These strategies are supportive mechanisms used to understand the text better, and they include *taking notes, underlining information, reading aloud, using a dictionary.*

c) *Problem solving strategies (PROB) (8 items)*: These strategies are the techniques used by the students when they have a problem in understanding a text. Some examples of these strategies are *re-reading the text for better comprehension, guessing what unknown words or phrases mean.*

This study used the Turkish translated version of the SORS which was borrowed from Iyitoglu (2011). In his study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis results were reported as follows: the entire scale (.88), GLOB (.72), SUP (.73), and PROB (.85). In the current study, the internal consistency reliability coefficient was .901 for the overall scale, and .816, .721, and .757, for GLOB, SUP, PROB subscales, respectively. Scores of the total scale and subscales were interpreted according to the suggestions of Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) as follows: high level (mean of 3.5 or higher), medium level (mean of 2.5–3.4), and low level (2.4 or lower).

2. Self-efficacy scale for English: This scale was developed by Hanci Yanar and Bumen (2012) to measure students' self-efficacy beliefs in English. The scale consists of four subscales to find out self-efficacy beliefs about four language skills, *reading (8 items), writing (10 items), listening (10*

items) and speaking (6 items). The Cronbach alpha results for the overall scale and its subdimensions were as follows: the overall scale (0.97), reading (0.92), writing (0.88), listening (0.93), speaking (0.92). The present study only used the reading dimension of the scale to measure students' reading self-efficacy in English. In this study, the Cronbach alpha was found to be .855 for the 8 items of the reading self-efficacy subscale.

Data Analysis

First, descriptive statistics were performed to find the means and standard deviations of the RS use and reading self-efficacy. The results from Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilks tests revealed that the assumptions of normality of sampling distributions were met. Then, an independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between male and female students in terms of self-reported RS use. Finally, Pearson correlation was performed to see the strength of the relationship between RS use and reading self-efficacy. Based on the suggestions of Cohen (1988) and Pallant (2010), values in the correlation analysis were interpreted as follows: small (r=.10 to .29), medium (r=.30 to .49) and large (r=.50 to 1.0).

FINDINGS

Reading strategy use by Turkish EFL students

The first research question (*What RSs do Turkish EFL students in this study report to use?*) explored the students' self-reported RS use, and the table below presents the descriptive statistics (i.e. means and standard deviations) on this issue. When the mean of the whole RS scale is considered, it is seen that students' self-perceived use of RSs is at a moderate (but close to high) level (*M*= 3.48, *SD*= .57). While the students reported using PROB strategies at a high-frequency level (*M*= 3.76, *SD*= .66), the other two subcategories were reported to be used at a moderate level as follows: GLOB strategies (*M*= 3.46, *SD*= .61), SUP strategies (*M*= 3.26, *SD*= .66).

Table 2
Participants' RS use based on the total scale and subcategories

SORS Subcategory	$\bar{x}$	SD
GLOB	3.46	.61
SUP	3.26	.66
PROB	3.76	.66
Total Scale	3.48	.57

*Low (2.4 or lower), moderate (2.5-3.4), high (3.5 or higher)

The subcategories of the SORS were also analyzed to see the frequency of each RS type. As presented in the tables below (tables 3, 4, and 5), among the 30 RSs, 18 strategies (items: 1, 3, 4, 12, 15, 17, 23, 24, 10, 13, 29, 7, 9, 11, 14, 19, 25, 28) were stated to be used at a high level (*M* ≥ 3.5), 11 strategies (items: 6, 8, 20, 21, 27, 2, 18, 22, 26, 30, 16) were in the range of moderate

use (2.5 ≤ M ≤ 3.4), and only 1 strategy (item 5) was found to be used at a low level (M ≤ 2.4). Within the category of GLOB strategies (see table 3), 8 out of 13 items were among the most frequently used strategies. Item 23, *checking understanding of new information in the text* was the most commonly employed GLOB strategy of all (*M*= 3.91). Some of the other most commonly reported GLOB RSs were as follows: *guessing the content of the text* (item 24, *M*= 3.90), *using visuals like pictures, tables, figures, etc. in text to understand better* (item 15, *M*=3.78), *previewing the text* (item 4, *M*= 3.72), *using contextual clues to understand the text better* (item 17, *M*= 3.70). The least preferred strategy in this category was *evaluating the information in the text critically* (item 21, *M*= 2.70).

Table 3
Students' self-perceived use of GLOB strategies (n= 211)

GLOB strategies	Item	$\bar{x}$	SD
I have a purpose in mind when I read.	1	3.70	.84
I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.	3	3.52	1.09
I take an overall view of the text to see what it is about before reading it.	4	3.72	1.17
I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.	6	2.93	1.19
I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization.	8	3.45	1.20
When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	12	3.55	1.11
I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding.	15	3.78	1.25
I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.	17	3.70	.96
I use typographical features like boldface and italics to identify key information.	20	2.82	1.28
I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.	21	2.70	1.11
I check my understanding when I come across new information.	23	3.91	.98
I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.	24	3.90	.95
I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.	27	3.27	1.13
Total		3.46	

When SUP strategies are examined (see table 4), there are 3 strategies reported to be used most frequently among 9 items. These strategies are *translating from English to native language (Turkish)* (Item 29, *M*= 4.06), *using materials like dictionaries to comprehend the text* (Item 13, *M*= 3.95), *underlining or circling information to remember it* (Item 10, *M*= 3.62). In this category, *reading aloud to understand when the text gets difficult* (Item 5, *M*= 2.23) was the least frequently used SUP strategy.

Table 4
Students' self-perceived use of SUP strategies (n= 211)

SUP strategies	Item	$\bar{x}$	SD
I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	2	2.94	1.15
When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	5	2.23	1.20
I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	10	3.62	1.31
I use reference materials (e.g., dictionaries) to help me understand what I read.	13	3.95	1.18
I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read.	18	3.18	1.24
I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.	22	3.41	1.12
I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.	26	2.54	1.16
When reading, I translate from English into my native language.	29	4.06	1.08

	Item	$\bar{x}$	SD
When reading, I think about information in both English and my mother tongue.	30	3.40	1.24
Total		3.26	

Among PROB strategies (see table 5), 7 out of 8 strategies were reported to be used very often, indicating that students try to find a solution to the problems they face while reading. In this category, *paying more attention to the text when it gets difficult* (Item 14, *M*= 4.09) had the highest average score of all the items. Some of the other most preferred PROB strategies were as follows: *guessing meaning of the words or word groups* (item 28, *M*= 3.94)*, reading slowly and carefully to ensure understanding of the text* (item 7, *M*= 3.84), *rereading the text when it gets difficult* (item 25, *M*= 3.78)*.*

Table 5
Students' self-perceived use of PROB strategies (n= 211)

PROB strategies	Item	$\bar{x}$	SD
I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading.	7	3.84	.99
I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	9	3.89	1.05
I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading.	11	3.57	1.12
When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I'm reading.	14	4.09	1.03
I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading.	16	3.36	1.13
I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.	19	3.56	1.25
When text becomes difficult, I reread to increase my understanding.	25	3.78	1.08
When I read, I guess the meaning of the unknown words or phrases.	28	3.94	.99
Total		3.76	

Differences in reading strategy use in terms of gender

In response to the second research question (*Does the extent of RS use differ in terms of gender in this sample?*), the table below presents gender difference in terms of RS use frequency. Results showed that female students had higher RS use mean score (*M*=3.66, *SD*=.43) than their male counterparts (*M*= 3.31, *SD*=.64). Independent t-test results revealed that the difference between male and female students in the use of RSs is statistically significant, $t(190.607)$= 4.710, *p*=.000.

Table 6
T-test results for RS use by gender

	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	df	p
Female	102	3.66	.43	4.710	190.607	.000
Male	109	3.31	.64			

Relationship between reading strategy use and reading self-efficacy

The following table shows the mean and standard deviation of the participants' self-perceived reading self-efficacy level. As seen from the data in table 7, the participants have a moderate reading self-efficacy level (*M*= 3.27, *SD*= .67).

Table 7
Descriptive statistics of reading self-efficacy level

	N	$\bar{x}$	SD
Reading self-efficacy	211	3.27	.67

*Low (2.4 or lower), moderate (2.5-3.4), high (3.5 or higher)

As a response to the third research question **(**Is there any significant relationship between the students' self-perceived RS use and reading self-efficacy?**)**, a Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between RS use and reading self-efficacy. As shown in table 8, there was a moderate, positive correlation between students' RS use and reading self-efficacy, which was statistically significant (*r*= .334, *n*= 211, *p*= .000).

Table 8
Correlation between RS use and reading self-efficacy

Correlations			
		RS use	Reading self-efficacy
RS use	Pearson Correlation	1	.334**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	211	211
Reading self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.334**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	211	211

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

The first research question of the study examined the type and frequency of RSs that were reported by Turkish EFL students. The findings revealed that the students reported using RSs at a moderate level. When subcategories of RSs were examined, it was seen that PROB was the most frequently used subcategory of RSs and it was followed by GLOB and SUP strategies, respectively. This is in line with one of the findings of Poole (2005), who indicated that college-level ESL students reported using academic RSs at medium level. Furthermore, in Poole's study, similar to the present one, students reported using PROB strategies at high frequency, and GLOB and SUP strategies at medium frequency. The findings of the current study are also in agreement with Par's (2020) findings that showed that PROB strategies were reported to be used more frequently by the students, and this was followed by GLOB and SUP strategies, respectively. Different from the findings of these previous studies and the current one, another study, conducted by Chen and Chen

(2015) with 1.259 Taiwanese high school EFL students, found that the students preferred to use GLOB strategies most and then PROB, and SUP strategies, respectively. In their study, all strategies were reported to be used at a higher level. This is a good example to show that each teaching and learning context is unique, and for this reason, students' preferences regarding RS use may vary depending on different factors such as their age, proficiency level, and so on.

The second research question addressed whether there was a significant difference between female and male students' RS use. According to the results, female students reported more use of RSs in comparison to their male counterparts, and the difference between them was statistically significant. This is consistent with Chen and Chen's (2015) findings which revealed that female students reported using more RSs than male ones. Madhumathi and Ghosh's (2012) study finding is also in line with the current study's finding. They carried out research with university-level ESL students in India and students' self-reports revealed that female students were using more RSs when compared to males. Contrary to this, the present study's gender-related finding is not in line with what Yukselir (2014) found in his study. Yukselir conducted a study with the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL students and found that there were not any significant differences between female and male students in terms of self-reported RS use. The findings of the current study also differ from those of Kargar and Zamanian (2014) and Solak and Altay (2014) in terms of gender difference. Kargar and Zamanian did not find any significant gender difference in reading comprehension strategy use level of Iranian EFL students. Similarly, in their study with student teachers of English at a state university in Turkey, Solak and Altay found no significant difference regarding RS use between male and female students. These different findings indicate that male and female students' RS use also changes from context to context.

The third research question explored the association between self-perceived RS use and reading self-efficacy, and it was identified that there was a moderate positive significant correlation between these variables. Thus, this study supports the findings of Shang (2010) who also found a significant positive relationship between Taiwanese university-level EFL learners' self-perceived self-efficacy level and RS use. The findings of the current study are also consistent with those of Kargar and Zamanian (2014), who found a positive relationship between Iranian EFL students' reading comprehension strategies and self-efficacy. Similar to these studies, in their study with Chinese students, Li and Wang (2010) proved that students with high self-efficacy levels use more RSs when compared to the students with low self-efficacy levels. In conclusion, this study corroborates previous studies' findings which report a positive association between reading self-efficacy and RS use. Furthermore, it underlines one more time that frequency of RS use, students' preferences as to which strategy to use, and male and female students' preferences with regard to RS use may vary in each different teaching and learning context.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The current study set out to determine the extent of students' self-reported RS use and its relation to gender and reading self-efficacy. The study showed that the students use RSs at a moderate level while the subcategories vary as follows: PROB strategies at a high level, GLOB and SUP strategies

at a moderate level. Besides, this study indicated that female students reported using RSs more frequently than male students. Additionally, a positive relationship was reported between RS use and reading self-efficacy.

In the light of these findings, this study has some important implications for teachers and teacher educators. First, at the beginning of each school year, teachers can make use of RS questionnaires like the SORS and interviews to see to what extent their students are familiar with RSs. This can help them determine the needs of their students concerning strategy use. As for strategy instruction, direct teaching of RSs can be suggested to increase students' awareness of all the RSs and help them be more competent and autonomous readers. During this process, teachers can model the use of certain RSs with various text types, help learners practice with sample texts, and provide constructive feedback to their practices step by step. Second, while training students on RS use, it is necessary for teachers to ensure that both male and female students actively use RSs while reading texts in English. Another crucial thing to remember is that teachers also need to get pre-service and in-service training on how to teach RSs more effectively to students of different age groups, different proficiency levels, and so on. Therefore, considering the uniqueness of each teaching context, teacher educators can actively involve in the teacher training process regarding how to integrate RSs in language classes. Lastly, considering the positive link between RS use and reading self-efficacy, teachers should encourage learners to use strategies more frequently and effectively, and find ways to motivate them to be more self-efficacious readers.

Based on the findings, the present study also has considerable implications for future studies. As this study revealed learners' tendency to use PROB strategies more often than GLOB and SUP strategies, further studies could try to identify the reason behind learners' preference to use one strategy over another. Information on this can help strategy training process be more efficient. Furthermore, as this study focused only on students' self-reports and used quantitative measures, future studies can combine both quantitative and qualitative measures to get a deeper insight into the learners' RS use and its relation to reading self-efficacy. Using observation method in studies can be very effective to identify what kind of strategies students use while reading, and so this may help to expand the existing strategy categories. Future studies might also examine RS use by including different variables like reading anxiety and reading motivation level. Further studies can also explore the type and frequency of RSs used by different age groups (e.g. young learners, adult learners) so that we can see whether they adopt similar or different RSs. Moreover, the reason behind gender differences in RS use can be investigated through observation and interviews so more information can be obtained about what factors affect male and females' RS use. Furthermore, further research can be conducted to determine the efficacy of strategy training on the use of RSs by both female and male students. Finally, as the present study only shows the correlation between RS use and reading self-efficacy, future studies can be designed to examine the cause and effect relationship between these variables.

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