



**READING STRATEGIES IN READING COMPREHENSION IN FRENCH
AMONG DUAL-LANGUAGE PROGRAM (DLP) AND NON-DLP LEARNERS**

By

NURUL AMALINA BINTI MAHMAD KAMEL

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Master of Arts

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Recently, one programme has been introduced by Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia called the Dual-Language Programme. This Dwi-Language Programme, or DLP, is introduced into selected schools. Only two subjects are taught in English, namely Science and Mathematics. The use of DLP has improved the results of the French students on French subjects, specifically their reading comprehension. Accordingly, the current research investigated the most and least reading strategies employed by DLP and non-DLP learners by considering the metacognitive awareness employed: global strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support strategies. Also, the study examined the impact of the use of English as a medium of instruction on students' reading comprehension. A total of 355 learners participated in this study. They were learners taking French as their third language and were in level A1 for DELF. They aged between 14 and 17 years old. This study utilised the Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS) questionnaire by Rafi (2002). This questionnaire, developed for English as a Second Language students and students of other languages, was distributed to 12 schools that offered French subjects in Kelantan. The purpose of using the OSORS was to determine the strategy learners depended on the most and the least when reading French materials. OSORS questionnaire consisted of 30 items, which were divided into three reading strategies: (i) problem-solving strategies (PROB) (8 items), (ii) support strategies (SUP) (9 items), and (iii) Global strategies (GLOB) (13 items). The findings showed that the reading strategies used by both DLP and non-DLP learners were almost similar despite differences in demographics, formal spoken home language, background language, and the use of English as a medium of instruction in French class.

Keywords: Dual-Language Program (DLP), English as medium of instruction, Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS)

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Baru-baru ini, satu program telah diumumkan daripada Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia iaitu Program Dwi-Bahasa. Program Dwi-Bahasa ini, atau dikenali sebagai DLP, diperkenalkan ke sekolah terpilih. Hanya 2 mata pelajaran yang diajar dalam Bahasa Inggeris iaitu Sains dan Matematik. Melalui DLP, guru Perancis mendapati bahawa keputusan pelajar Perancis telah meningkat, terutama sekali untuk pemahaman teks. Oleh itu, penyelidikan ini adalah untuk mengkaji penggunaan bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa pengantar dan untuk menyiasat strategi membaca yang paling banyak dan paling kurang digunakan seterusnya menganalisis perbezaan yang signifikan antara pelajar DLP dan Bukan DLP mengenai penggunaan strategi Global, strategi Penyelesaian Masalah dan strategi Sokongan. dengan mengambil kira kesedaran metakognitif. Responden yang terlibat adalah pelajar yang mengambil bahasa Perancis sebagai bahasa ketiga. Responden berumur antara 14 hingga 17 tahun dan berada di tahap A1 untuk DELF. Kajian ini menggunakan satu set soal selidik yang dipanggil Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS) oleh Rafi (2002). Soal selidik ini telah dibahsuai kepada pelajar yang menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua serta pelajar bahasa lain dan ia akan diedarkan di 12 sekolah yang menawarkan bahasa Perancis di Kelantan. Tujuan pengguna soal selidik ini adalah untuk mengetahui strategi yang paling banyak serta yang paling sedikit digunakan oleh pelajar. Satu sampel seramai 355 orang pelajar Level A1 terlibat di dalam kajian ini. Soal selidik ini mengandungi 30 item yang dibahagikan kepada tiga strategi membaca: Strategi Penyelesaian Masalah (PROB) (8 item), Strategi sokongan (SUP) (9 item) dan Strategi Global (GLOB) (13 item). Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa strategi membaca yang digunakan oleh kedua-dua kelas iaitu pelajar dari kelas DLP dan bukan DLP adalah hampir sama walaupun mempunyai perbezaan dari segi demografik, bahasa percakapan di rumah, latar belakang bahasa dan penggunaan bahasa Inggeris sebagai medium pengajaran untuk kelas bahasa Perancis.

Kata kunci: Program Dwi-Bahasa, Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa pengantar,
Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
DALF	<i>Diplôme D'Approfondir de la Langue Française</i>
DELFL	<i>Diplôme D'Etude de la Langue Française</i>
DLP	Dual Language Program
EFL	English Foreign Language
ESL	English Second Language
FEI	France Education International
FFL	France Foreign Language
FLL	French language learning
GLOB	Global Strategies
IPGKBA	<i>Institut Perguruan Kampus Bahasa Antarabangsa</i>
KSSM	<i>Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah</i>
L1	Mother tongue / First language
L2	Second language
L3	Third language
LPM	<i>Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia</i>
MARSI	Metacognition Assessment of Reading Strategies Inventory
MBMMBI	<i>Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia Memperkukuhkan Bahasa Ingeris</i>

MCO	Movement Control Order
MoE	Ministry of Education
Non DLP	Non-Dual Language Program
OSORS	Online Survey of Reading Strategies
PROB	Problem-Solving Strategies
SK	<i>Sekolah Kebangsaan</i>
SMK	<i>Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan</i>
SMS	<i>Sekolah Menengah Sains</i>
SPM	<i>Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia</i>
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SUP	Support Strategies
UK	United Kingdom
UM	<i>Universiti Malaya</i>
UMK	<i>Universiti Malaysia Kelantan</i>
UPM	<i>Universiti Putra Malaysia</i>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Reading comprehension, also known as reading comprehension, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), is one of the most important language skills among the four skills of learning a language. It is a process of developing the capacity to use various texts for professional and personal purposes (González, 2017). It serves as a mechanism that allows learners to gauge when or how to engage in a clear or explicit approach. This approach could be a metacognitive or cognitive strategy, depending on how students react to the text given to them.

Metacognitive strategy refers to the mental activities guiding a learning process, while cognitive strategy refers to the mental processes manipulating the target language to complete a task. As access to French language texts could facilitate students' overall reading speed and efficacy, the impact of using either metacognitive or cognitive strategy can extend beyond French language learning (FLL).

Learning and understanding French texts would be challenging to most of the population in a country where French is considered a foreign or third language. This is because French is not widely used in daily life, including among the people in Malaysia. Malaysia is made up of various races and ethnicities. Its population is 31 million, consisting of 50 per cent Malays, 25 per cent Chinese, 10 per cent Indians, and 15 per cent mostly indigenous people from Sabah and Sarawak (David et al., 2018). As a multi-racial country, Malaysia uses Bahasa Malaysia as its main language, followed by English, Chinese, and Tamil.

Overview of Languages in Malaysia

Language	Status
Bahasa Malaysia	Official Language
English	Popular Second Language
Manglish	Popular Language Consisting of Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil Influences
Chinese	Popular Especially in Southern Malaysia
Tamil	Popularly Spoken Especially Among Indian Population
Shinhalese	Primarily Used By Sri Lankan Population
Iban	Indigenous Language Used in Sarawak
Dusunnic	Indigenous Language Used in Sabah
Thai	Minority Language

Figure 1.1: Overview of Languages in Malaysia

Figure 1.1 lists the languages spoken by people in Malaysia (Chepkemoi, 2020). In general, Malay is the official language, followed by English, Manglish, Chinese, and Tamil. English functions as the second language in Malaysia (Pakulak & Neville, 2010; Semtin & Maniam, 2015) and has been widely used, especially in education, as a medium of instruction. David et al. (2018) highlight that English is also commonly used in daily communication and has become crucial in higher learning in Malaysia. Manglish is derived from a mixture of Malay, English, Chinese, and Indian.

Considering that some Malaysians are fluent in a second language and their mother tongue, most Malaysian citizens are bilingual rather than monolingual (Bice & Kroll, 2019). Nonetheless, Malaysia encourages its people to learn a third language. The learning of a new language will give new experiences to them (Bice & Kroll, 2019). Being able to speak numerous languages simultaneously is an added advantage to a person. As a result, most Malaysians are at least bilingual or trilingual.

The Malay language is the official language of Malaysians. English, a well-known language worldwide, is the second language, while the Chinese, Indians, and other races use their vernacular language in Malaysia. These Malaysians, hence, have a better chance of getting work. This is because those who can communicate in Malay, English, Mandarin, or Tamil have better career options in the private sector. For example, some employees are paid more because they can converse in two or more languages. Some businesses hire niche staff to target different portions of the Malaysian population, resulting in bilingual and trilingualism and significant differences in socio-economic fields, especially those

proficient in Malay, English, and other vernacular languages.

According to the Global Competitive Report, Malaysia is one of the rapidly growing countries with the most competitive economy among developing countries in Asia. Astro Awani (2016) stated that Malaysia is ranked 25 out of 138 most competitive economies among Asian developing countries. As a result of this rapid economic development, various government initiatives have been taken to support this expansion. One of the initiatives is introducing foreign language learning in secondary schools and universities.

The statistics published by Statista.com on 27 November 2020 revealed that English was the most spoken language in the world in 2019, followed by Chinese, Hindi, Spanish, and French (Duffin, 2020). Figure 1.2 shows the statistics for the most spoken language worldwide in 2019.

The most spoken languages worldwide in 2019
(by speakers in millions)

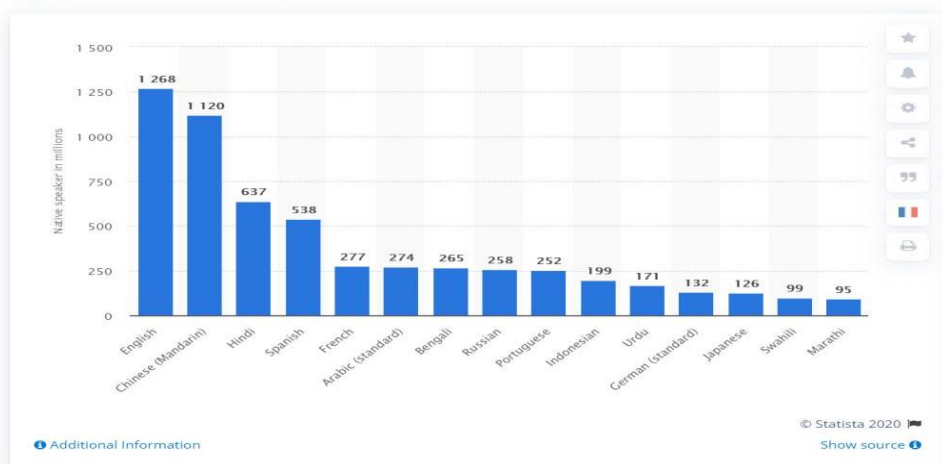


Figure 1.2: Statistics for The Most Spoken Languages Worldwide 2019

Education in Malaysia offers two main types of schools: primary and secondary. Each type is divided into national and national-type schools. Students attending national schools are primarily taught in Malay, while students enrolled in national-type schools use vernacular languages (Chinese or Tamil) to learn all subjects (David et al., 2018). They also stated that this kind of school only exists in Malaysia. Nonetheless, English is taught as a subject in national and national-type schools and a medium of instruction only in private international schools. This linguistic divide also exists in higher education institutions. Despite its lack of official status, English has traditionally been regarded as an important second language in the country (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014). It is the international language of commerce, trade, and diplomacy.

Malaysia is a plurilingual country. As a result, significant modifications have been made to the education system in terms of the medium of instruction since the formulation of the national language policy in 1956. For example, there have been continuous arguments concerning the usage of English, including for teaching disciplines such as mathematics and science.

Beginning in 2003, Mathematics and Science were taught in English in schools. Accordingly, after receiving feedback from parents and schools in 2012, the policy of teaching Mathematics and Science in English was abandoned, and the government chose to revert to Malay as the language for all subjects. Naturally, it caused discontent among parents and confusion among students and teachers.

The Malaysian government introduced the Dual Language Programme (DLP) in 2016 on 300 pilot schools (Appendix 3). The schools were allowed to teach Mathematics and Science in English or Malay to their Year 1 and Year 4 students. It promotes the initial implementation of *Dasar Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris* (MBMMBI) and highlights a component in the PPPM 2013–2025 (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2014), namely displaying a strong mastery of Malay and English as well as proficiency in various languages given the rapid global competition. Specifically, the implementation of the DLP is to support learners' mastery of English language skills through increased exposure time to English (Appendix 2). By strengthening a learner's bilingualism, DLP can provide opportunities for learners to increase access to and exploration of various knowledge to compete globally and increase the marketability of students in the job market (Hidayati, 2020).

The DLP programme allows eligible schools to conduct teaching and learning sessions in English other than Bahasa Malaysia for Mathematics, Science, Information and Communication Technology, and Design and Technology (Appendix 1). Accordingly, selected schools offer French as a third language for students to learn. Since English and French languages share some similar words with sometimes different meanings (Ingo Eduard Isphording & Otten, 2013; Mady, 2017), learners could often directly translate either word for word or phrase for phrase to understand a text in French as they will find the most equivalent meaning by doing so. The concept of translation from one language (L1/L2) to another language (L3) is crucial because the process of understanding between the two cultures lies in it.

Danesi (2015) explained that the translation process involves many factors, such as the language and its specific culture. For example, students relate their culture to the target language culture to find similarities between the two languages. Besides finding similarities between the languages, learning a third language requires specific strategies. Readers usually use their skills to understand a text in a third or foreign language. McNamara (2011) highlights that these strategies are called metacognition or metacomprehension.

Reading skills and metacognition are mandatory strategies for learning a third or foreign language, implemented using a proper procedure (Fitrisia et al., 2015). Therefore, teaching a third language can be delicate as teachers are required to understand the methods used in reading comprehension.

Furthermore, teachers need to consider the background of the learners and the context in which the teaching of reading takes place. Reading comprehension is a reciprocal action between a text and its reader. Prior knowledge is also needed to aid reader comprehension. A study by Richgels (1982) reveals two theories being implemented during the process of text comprehension, namely schema theory and linguistic theory.

The vocabulary development of the reader is considered one of the areas of prior knowledge. This development gradually increases as readers participate in numerous lessons daily in class (Krashen, 1989). As readers become more confident in their reading comprehension, they require less support from their teacher (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003).

Researchers have been designing or using distinct methods, such as questionnaires, think-aloud protocols, and interviews, separately to investigate metacognitive strategy awareness and use. Despite variations in the views towards the nature of metacognitive strategy inventory instruments, the need for metacognitive strategy inventory has been acknowledged.

1.2 Strategies or skills?

This research utilised the word 'strategies' rather than skills. According to Afflerbach et al. (2008), strategies and skills are similar by definition, thus leading to confusion. Strategy is a plan to become successful, especially in politics, business, industry, and sports. On the other hand, skill is the ability to do an activity, eventually after a failure (Afflerbach et al., 2008). Considering the meaning of each term, the use of 'strategies' is more appropriate in the current research as this research examined the plan or method utilised by students to understand a French text as a result of their exposure to the English medium of instruction.

1.3 French Language Learning in Malaysia

Machart and Lim (2017) found that French has been used in Malaysia for a long time, following the initiatives of several Malaysian teachers who had mastered French knowledge before Malaysia's Independence. Accordingly, the Malaysian government has started introducing French subjects to students, specifically those in secondary school and university.

The French language began to take place in Malaysia starting in the 1970s. During this period, French was only taught at boarding schools due to the initiative of a few Malaysian teachers who had acquired some expertise during colonial times. In 1984, French, Arabic, and Japanese were introduced into the Malaysian curriculum (Machart & Lim, 2017). This was the turning point when foreign language policy appeared in Malaysia's language policy.

After being introduced in six boarding schools in 1984, French was also introduced in several local universities. In 1998, Universiti Malaya (UM) introduced the Bachelor of Arts in Languages and Linguistics programme. Later, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) offered the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Language programme in 2001 (Machart & Lim, 2017; Roshidah, 2020).

In 2005, the government seriously addressed the shortage of French teachers in Malaysia through the introduction of a pilot course for Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) graduates at Institut Perguruan Kampus Bahasa Antarabangsa (IPGKBA). Accordingly, the French language has gained momentum throughout the country from the programme at IPGKBA. The development of French language learning (FLL) in the institution was in line with the development of education at the highest level as the Malaysian government began to provide scholarships to students to further their studies abroad. This scholarship included sending future French teachers to continue their studies for 3 years at the Université de France-Comté, Besançon.

French is a foreign language in Malaysia. Previously, attention was only on the Chinese, Tamil, and indigenous languages such as Iban and Kadazandusun. When Malaysia plotted the 'Beyond the United Kingdom (UK)' strategy, the French language began. Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad expanded Malaysian cooperation with France during his services, providing Malaysians a brighter opportunity in new markets.

The cooperation between Malaysia and France resulted in the decision to offer French language subjects at the school level (Roshidah, 2020). The cooperation between the Malaysian government and Alliance Française Kuala Lumpur strengthened the French language subjects at school. Thereupon, the French language was officially identified as an optional subject in 1984. Today, French is taught to over 100 schools across states, including boarding, secondary, and premier schools.

For example, Frederic Laplanche (French ambassador to Malaysia), during his official visit to Sekolah Menengah Sains Tengku Muhammad Faris Petra in Kelantan in 2018, found a total of 1,300 learners were learning French in secondary schools in Kelantan (Over 1,300 Secondary Students Learn French in Kelantan, 2018; The Star, 2018). Meanwhile, at the university level, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) offered French as a foreign language to their diplomas

and degrees learners (Roshidah, 2020).

The French embassy assisted UMK by supplying native French speakers to help French learning. The number of learners learning French increased year by year and are compulsory in boarding schools in Kelantan, such as Sekolah Menengah Sains Tengku Muhammad Faris Petra, Sekolah Menengah Sains Machang, Sekolah Menengah Sains Jeli, Sekolah Menengah Sains Gua Musang, and Sekolah Menengah Sains Pasir Puteh.

Today, specifically in Kelantan, 12 schools have French as a foreign language. The learners who choose French as their third language in boarding schools are expected to acquire all four competencies. Alternatively, French is offered as an elective subject in daily school. This is because not all learners in daily school perform as well as in boarding schools. Nonetheless, learners interested in learning French are encouraged to learn the language. One of the government initiatives is by introducing DLP to selected schools. The first cohort of DLP involved a total of 296 primary schools (SK) and secondary schools (SMK) in 2016. By 2017, the Ministry of Education Malaysia approved a total of 875 schools to implement DLP (Appendix 3).

For the success of DLP, schools must have the criteria as stated in the *Pelaksanaan Rintis Programme Dwibahasa Atau Dual Language Programme (DLP) Di Sekolah Pada Tahun 2016* (KPM(BPSH-SPDK)100-1/7/3(23)) (see Appendix 4). The selected school needed sufficient resources, such as textbooks, reference materials, teaching aids, and other teaching and learning support materials. Moreover, the principal or headmasters must agree on the implementation of DLP. They should be willing to work with district and state education officers. This is to conduct long- and short-term plans in order to ensure enough teachers and students conduct DLP.

Teachers of DLP classes were supported with online English and Malay proficiency courses by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to help schools implement DLP more effectively. These courses could be accessed on eltc.edu.my website. The English course provided training for 80 hours, equivalent to 12 days of training, while the Malay language course provided training for 120 hours, equivalent to 20 days of training.

In addition, parents participated in supporting the implementation of DLP. They provided reading consent to the school to allow their child to follow DLP and took an active role in their child's education by providing. As a result, the achievement was equal to or better than the national average achievement of Malay.

The French embassy offered the French International Examinations to students due to heightened interest in the language in Malaysia. In Malaysia, the examination is handled by the Malaysian Examinations Board (LPM) in collaboration with the Alliance Française Kuala Lumpur. The examinations were

Diplôme D'Etude de la Langue Française (DELFF), set for levels A1, A2, B1, and B2, and Diplôme D'Approfondir de la Langue Française (DALF), set for C1 and C2 levels.

DELFF is a French language examination administered by France Education International (FEI) based in Sèvres, France (DELFF - DALF | France Éducation International, n.d.). DELFF consists of two types of examinations: (i) DELFF Adults and (ii) DELFF Junior/School. Students in Malaysia take DELFF Junior. Even though it is named DELFF Junior, it has the same value as DELFF Adults.

DELFF is recognised around the world and is valid for a lifetime. By scoring certain levels in this examination, learners would have access to abroad universities, especially in France, Europe, or French-speaking countries. Meanwhile, Diplôme D'Approfondir de la Langue Française (DALF) is an advanced diploma in the French language. However, DALF is unsuitable for learners in schools as the themes are difficult to anticipate. In short, these examinations are for those who wish to further studies in the French language.

DELFF and DALF examinations are held in accordance with the circular issued by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). CEFR provides a framework for language practitioners in the development of syllabuses, guidelines of curriculums, examinations, textbooks, and other materials for teaching language throughout Europe (Council of Europe Language Policy Portal, n.d.). Hence, all the examinations that concern European languages must follow these guidelines, including the French language. For example, four diplomas correspond to the first four levels of CEFR: DELFF A1, DELFF A2, DELFF B1, and DELFF B2. All these four levels are categorised according to beginner level (DELFF A1 and DELFF A2) and medium level (DELFF B1 and DELFF B2) (<https://www.france-education-international.fr/diplome/delf-junior-scolaire?langue=fr>, n.d.). On the other hand, DALF is only set at advanced levels: C1 and C2 levels.

1.4 Problem Statement and Research Gap

Dual Language Programme (DLP) was approved by the National Economic Council Meeting (Bil. 21/2015) on 13 October 2015 and was included in the National Budget 2016. It was initiated to promote *Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris* (MBMMBI) programme in an effort to expose the students to English, besides strengthening Bahasa Malaysia in daily life communication (Garis Panduan Pelaksanaan Dual Language Programme (DLP), 2015).

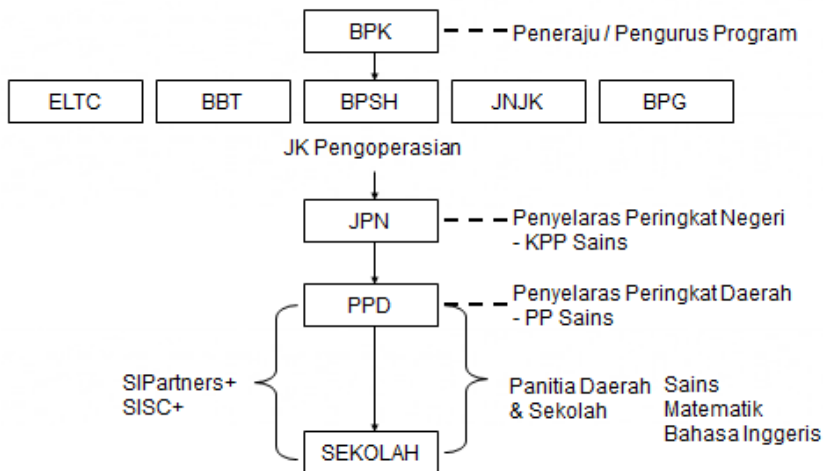


Figure 1.3: The DLP organisation

Figure 1.3 shows the flow chart for DLP organisations in schools. To make DLP a success, all education sectors play an important role, starting from the teacher development division, then the school education division, the state education department, the district education office, and finally, the schools.

Several schools in Kelantan have been chosen to implement DLP, including Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Sultan Yahya Petra 1. Schools offering DLP must teach STEM subjects in English. As for Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Sultan Yahya Petra 1, the principal has decided that French is one of the subjects taught in DLP classes. Since French and English are similar (Isphording & Otten, 2013; Mady, 2017), it is assumed that students excelling in English would also excel in French. This is because certain reading strategies are transferable from one language to another (Carrell, 1991; Al-batineh, 2020). Accordingly, the present study would like to determine the strategies used by DLP students in French reading comprehension, with English being the medium of instruction.

A problem is often with learners with less English proficiency. Even though French and English have similarities, certain words still pose different meanings (Isphording & Otten, 2013; Mady, 2017). As a result, the learners find it difficult to comprehend a text. For example, prior research (e.g., Malcolm, 2009; Al-batineh, 2020) reveals that learners with low English proficiency used translation techniques more than reading strategies when reading texts in a foreign language, which is contradictory to learners with high English proficiency. Therefore, the current study investigated, classified, and discussed the influence of English proficiency on French reading comprehension strategies of 271 learners from DLP classes and 84 learners from non-DLP classes.

Prior studies have recommended investigations into the relationship between the reading strategies of language learners, texts of different difficulties and lengths, and their learning styles (Al-batineh, 2020). The findings include a conclusion that a greater linguistic distance between L1 and L2 decreases the possibility of language transfer and makes it more difficult to distinguish between different sounds and words (Isphording & Otten, 2014). A questionnaire describing how and when to apply reading strategies serves as the third method used to evaluate reading strategies. The current study was limited to the knowledge of how and when to employ reading strategies, that is, the metacognitive knowledge of reading comprehension, due to the difficulties in assessing the actual usage of reading strategies. Cross-sectional studies considered measures associated with reading comprehension, such as reading fluency, vocabulary, and working memory. Hence, this research focused on low and high-performing non-DLP students. It is because some schools introduced French to their second class in a form and some to their third class.

1.5 Research Objectives

The general aim of this study was to investigate the reading strategies employed for French reading comprehension of French secondary school learners in Kelantan. The survey of reading by Mokhtari and Sheory (2002) was used to collect the data to determine the overall and the most and least reading strategies used by the learners, as well as explore the differences between the groups. In accordance with that, the present study was developed to achieve the following objectives:

1. to identify the reading strategies employed by DLP and non-DLP learners in French reading comprehension,
2. to analyse the use of global strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support strategies in French reading comprehension and identify the similarities and differences between DLP and non-DLP learners, and
3. to discuss the most and least used reading strategies employed by high and low French achievers from non-DLP class reading comprehension strategies.

1.6 Research Questions

The present study proposed the following research questions:

1. What reading strategies are employed by DLP and non-DLP learners

in French reading comprehension?

2. Are there any similarities and differences between DLP and non-DLP learners in the use of global strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support strategies in French reading comprehension?
3. Which are the most and least used reading strategies in French reading comprehension employed by high and low achievers from non-DLP learners?

To achieve these purposes, a questionnaire was utilised. Further information about this questionnaire will be explained in the methodology section.

1.7 Research's Importance

Reading strategies, like reading skills, are not always successful, and a definition of reading strategies does not entail only positive and useful actions. Nonetheless, it is important to continue to learn how to read as it stimulates prior knowledge. This research was conducted for four audiences: the government, educational institutions, teachers, and learners.

Malaysian government wants to compete with other industrialised nations in many ways, including economic, socioeconomic, and technological factors. Among the efforts to industrialisation is by introducing French language to the country. This study could determine the extent of learners' comprehension of French reading comprehension and evaluate appropriate teaching methods for these learners in order to support the government's aim.

The completion of this study would allow teachers to identify tactics or strategies suitable for learners at different levels. Some of the tactics employed now are probably obsolete. To achieve good scores in DELF A1 reading comprehension, teachers must switch to new ways to help learners understand the French text. It is most likely that the tactics utilised for DLP and non-DLP classes are different.

In addition, this study would benefit learners. They could evaluate the depth of their learning by applying the techniques they have mastered. Sometimes, without their knowledge, they apply the same comprehension techniques for texts in English that they already know how to use. Learners must complete the OSORS questionnaire at the study's conclusion. Learners can determine their degree of proficiency from there.

1.8 Conceptual Definition

Dual Language Programme (DLP) was approved by the National Economic Council Meeting on 13 October 2015 (Bil. 21/2015) and became a part of the National Budget for 2016. *Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris* (MBMMBI) was the initial motivation for starting it in order to allow learners exposure to English while also improving their ability to communicate in Bahasa Malaysia regularly (Garis Panduan Pelaksanaan Dual Language Program (DLP), 2015).

DLP has been put into practice in selected schools. These schools implement the learning and teaching of Science and Mathematics subjects in English. For each form, only one class has been chosen for DLP implementation. The teachers teaching this class are encouraged to communicate with learners using English. To schools that offer a foreign language as a third language, the principal can execute the learning and teaching of the language either in the DLP class or other classes. In the current study, the DLP class took French as a third language and used English as its medium of instruction. Meanwhile, the non-DLP class took French as a third language but used the Malay language as its medium of instruction.

The metacognitive reading techniques used in this study were the online survey of reading strategies, or OSORS questionnaire (Al-batineh, 2020). The data from OSORS has been useful to identify learners' and teachers' reading strategies. OSORS is a tool Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) created to assess L2 learners' metacognitive reading strategies, consisting of three categories (Flavel, 1979, cited in Livingston, 2003), namely: (i) the global strategies (GLOB), (ii) the problem-solving strategies (PROB), and (iii) the support strategies (SUP). The global strategies (GLOB) are designed to be carefully thought-out methods that learners use to understand texts, such as previewing content, reading with a purpose, and exploiting context clues. On the other hand, when comprehension issues arise while reading texts, readers can immediately apply problem-solving methods (PROB), which are controlled, intentional techniques. For instance, rereading a material to determine the meaning of strange words changes the reading speed. Finally, the support strategies (SUP) are fundamental aids employed by students to aid in understanding the text, including underlining, highlighting, and making notes about the text.

Age and experience tend to strengthen one's understanding of cognition despite any individual variances that may arise from cognitive diversity or environmental factors. Accordingly, adults and older children are better equipped than younger children to accurately monitor and assess their cognitive processes (Livingston, 2003). However, contrary to cognitive strategies, which are used to tackle specific problems, metacognitive strategies are used to keep track of the use of cognitive methods.

There are three distinct parts of metacognitive knowledge: person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge (Livingston, 2003; Moritz & Lysaker, 2018). Person knowledge describes what a person knows about themselves as students. Task knowledge describes what the person knows about the requirements of the activity they are attempting. Finally, strategic knowledge describes what a person knows about potential methods for the task and when to employ them.

Metacognition by Flavel (1979), as cited in Livingston (2003), is the study of cognitive functions during learning activities. Metacognitive reading knowledge is a crucial prerequisite for employing metacognitive processes or reading strategies during text comprehension (Livingston, 2003; Muhid et al., 2020; Reshadi-Gajan et al., 2020). The current study concentrated on the connections between reading strategy knowledge or metacognitive knowledge about reading and reading comprehension.

There are many cognitive and linguistic processes necessary for reading comprehension, including translation. Translation, one of the metacognitive skills, has contributed to understanding the learners for a second or foreign language (Sapiro, 2015). Sapiro (2015) emphasised that in Europe, translation plays a major role in the function of creating national literature. Since Malaysia has inserted the importance of learning a third language in its education system, it is crucial to highlight the skills the students use to understand French text comprehension. Ulanska (2015) reveals two ways of translation: (i) translation by the notions of equivalence and correspondence and (ii) translation of lexical items. Accordingly, the current study aimed to highlight the most preferable way among learners.

Learners demonstrate high text comprehension and interest in the text given learners ask questions as they read, monitor their understanding of the text, summarise what they have read, predict the material, and connect what they are reading to prior knowledge. In addition, their level of strategy utilisation continues to be high, and they frequently employ more sophisticated strategies than beginners.

According to several cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, metacognition, especially the understanding and use of reading techniques, has been linked to reading comprehension in primary school learners and adults. The ability to regulate and monitor one's reading comprehension process improves as a child gets older, as seen by the higher degrees of metacognitive knowledge through reading that older children possess. Accordingly, younger children, novices, have poorer self-regulation skills than older children who have greater experience and proficiency in most tasks (Khodjakulova, 2021).

Intervention research has examined the relationship between reading strategies and comprehension. Prior research has repeatedly found that interventions that

attempt to improve reading comprehension through the knowledge and use of reading strategies have an impact on those measures (Habók & Magyar, 2018; Kung, 2019; Nasri & Biria, 2016; Vettori et al., 2018). On standardised reading comprehension tests, impacts are, however, generally negligible, and occasionally missing.

Metacognition by Flavel (1979) as cited in Livingston (2003) is the study of cognitive functions during learning activities. Metacognitive reading knowledge is a crucial prerequisite for the employment of these metacognitive processes, or reading strategies, during text comprehension (Livingston, 2003; Muhid et al., 2020; Reshadi-Gajan et al., 2020). The current study concentrated on the connections between reading strategy knowledge, or metacognitive knowledge about reading, and reading comprehension. There are many cognitive and linguistic processes such as translation that are necessary for reading comprehension.

1.9 Conclusion

This present study aimed to identify and determine the English proficiency of secondary school learners in terms of their ability to use French reading comprehension strategies. This chapter explained reading comprehension strategies and presented the study's problem statement, research objectives, and research question. This study would analyse and compare two groups of learners: those instructed in English and those instructed in Malay. The study would also examine the role of two variables obtained from the online survey of reading strategies (OSORS) questionnaire on French reading achievement strategies and regional variables.

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