

# Exploring the Relationship Between Reading Difficulties and Reading Strategies: The Case for Online Learning (Arabic)

Ainaa Mardhiah Zaharuddin<sup>1</sup>, Fikhriah Khamarudin<sup>2\*</sup>, Ainul Rasyiqah Sazali<sup>3</sup>, Ahmad Luqman Ahmad Kamal Ariffin<sup>4</sup>, Noor Hanim Rahmat<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,5</sup>Academy of Language Studies, University Technology MARA, Cawangan Selangor, Kampus Shah Alam, Malaysia

<sup>4</sup>Faculty of Information Science and Engineering, Management and Science University, Selangor, Malaysia

\*Corresponding author

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.909000490>

Received: 10 September 2025; Accepted: 15 September 2025; Published: 15 October 2025

## ABSTRACT

Reading is a crucial aspect of language acquisition and academic success, but it can be challenging for learners, especially when reading online. This study aims to identify online reading difficulties among Arabic as a third language learners and understand their perception of reading strategies in online reading. A set of quantitative questionnaires was used to gather data from 156 learners from different faculties at UiTM, Malaysia. The online 5-point Likert scale survey was used for data collection. The findings revealed that most learners face difficulties in translating, guessing, and understanding new Arabic words in reading texts. To overcome these difficulties, learners used global strategies, such as paying closer attention to online reading through tables, figures, pictures, and context clues. Additionally, they applied problem-solving strategies by repeating their reading when the text became difficult.

**Keywords:** online reading difficulties, reading strategies, Arabic as a third language, support strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of Study

Arabic has had a significant impact on Malay culture and has become an integral part of the Islamic Malay identity. Many Malaysians want to study Arabic because it is significant in religion, trade, and diplomacy. (Ibrahim and Rahman, 2018). As a result, several Malaysian universities offer language classes in Arabic, Korean, French, Spanish, and Japanese, either as graduation requirements or electives. Apart from learning Arabic vocabulary, grammar, and style, learners face hurdles, particularly in developing effective Arabic reading skills. This is because reading Arabic is fundamentally different from reading in most other languages. The reason for this difference is that Arabic is a Semitic language characterized by distinct calligraphic traits. (Shaban, 2023). According to Çakıcı (2017), reading is the most difficult skill to develop because it is multidimensional in nature and a complex mental process. In spite of this, learners are unable to surmount these obstacles, as reading is the primary method of acquiring information. The most important goal of teaching languages is to develop the ability to extract information from a graphically recorded text during the process of reading, which allows them to actively use the language being studied in various activities. (Sardor et al., 2020). This ability not only enhances comprehension but also empowers learners to engage with the language in practical contexts. Consequently, it fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of the language itself.

The difficulties in reading become more challenging when learners read online. Thus, it is important to apply reading strategies so that the learners can become skilled readers. According to Cheng (2016), skilled readers

exercise strategies to monitor and modify their reading experience and thereby increase their level of comprehension when involved in a reading activity. According to Brown (as cited in Cheng, 2016), the strategies that skilled readers are able to perform include (1) clarifying the purposes of reading, (2) identifying the important aspects of the message, (3) allocating attention to relevant information, (4) monitoring activities to determine if comprehension is occurring, (5) engaging in review and self-testing, (6) taking corrective measures if necessary, and (7) recovering from disruptions and distractions. Therefore, this study tries to investigate how learners perceive reading difficulties and reading strategies during online reading, as well as to determine the relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies.

### **Statement of Problem**

Online reading is essential nowadays for everyone, especially learners, as much of the information is available online. Classes have also evolved from traditional settings to online learning since the pandemic of COVID-19, which has increased the need for readiness among learners to engage in online reading. Bui (2021) found that online reading improves learners' independent learning skills because it is easy for them to retrieve any information from the Internet. Besides, they can find online materials about different subjects. This is supported by Munir and Muassomah (2021), who highlighted that the implementation of online learning can provide easy access to learning resources, besides providing flexible time for the teachers and learners. Reading online text also enables learners to apply animation in learning and increase control and interaction with the learning materials which will lead to the improvement in the learning quality (Abubaker, 2013).

However, despite these advantages of online reading, many students struggle with it. Ritonga et al. (2021) discovered that learners from Arabic courses encountered challenges when perusing Arabic text online, as it necessitated the application of linguistic skills, including *sorf* (morphology) and *nahwu* (grammar). Similarly, Abdullahi et al. (2018) reported that Malay undergraduate Arabic learners had poor performance in reading skills based on their participation in an online quiz that was designed and assessed based on TOAFL (AL-ARABIA). They added that reading Arabic skills should be monitored strictly at the university level because they reflect the capability of the learners.

These findings highlight the need for targeted strategies to address the difficulties faced by learners in online reading. Hence, this study aims to explore the specific reading strategies employed by learners in online learning environments and their relationship with reading difficulties, with an emphasis on supporting learners, especially those studying Arabic. This is to find the answer for this study's hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between online reading difficulties and the use of reading strategies among learners of Arabic as a third language.

### **Objective of the Study and Research Questions**

This study is done to explore perception of learners on reading difficulties and reading strategies. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

1. How do Malay learners perceive reading difficulties in online Arabic language learning?
2. How do Malay learners perceive reading strategies in online Arabic language learning?
3. Is there a relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Causes of Reading Difficulties**

The challenge of understanding English reading materials adversely affects pupils' reading performance, as comprehension is an essential ability. According to Matondang (2020), difficulties in comprehending reading

texts can significantly affect students' learning. Teachers and students have to know the difficulties they are facing. Idayanti (2021) in her research revealed that the students struggled with four main difficulties: identifying the main idea in a reading text, comprehending vocabulary, understanding the content and meaning of the text, and recognizing important details.

In addition, Prihatini (2020) found that students commonly face difficulties such as incorrect reading and limited understanding, which inhibit their ability to improve reading comprehension. While Erlidawati (2018) recognized several challenges faced by students, such as limited vocabulary, difficulty in understanding the main idea of reading texts, and poor pronunciation, which result from insufficient independent reading.

## **Reading Strategies**

In the process of reading, readers must employ various strategies to extract meaning from the text. These reading strategies are essential to reinforce students' reading comprehension. Numerous studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between learners' reading strategies and their reading comprehension skills (Banditvilai, 2020). Su (2001) highlighted in her study that reading strategies are among the most influential factors in enhancing reading comprehension skills, as they significantly impact students' ability to understand texts.

Brookbank (1999) suggested that the use of various reading strategies enhances learners' reading comprehension proficiency. Learners who adopt reading strategies focus on identifying the main points of paragraphs, clarifying unclear words, phrases, or sentences, and summarizing their readings. These strategies assist readers in overcoming challenges they encounter while reading and evaluate their planning and outcomes. Both proficient and less proficient readers experience improvements in their reading skills through the application of these strategies.

Paris et al. (1991) and Williams (1994) categorized reading strategies into three categories; pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading strategies. Pre-reading strategies are aimed at assisting learners in getting the most out of what they are going to read, integrating it with the previous information they have. While-reading strategies are designed to help learners understand the text structure, locate the main idea and also assist them in developing the skill of extracting information from what they read. The purpose of post-reading strategies is to consolidate and conclude what has been read.

While Carrel (1998) highlighted that reading strategies encompass skimming, scanning, predicting, guessing, making inferences, confirming or disconfirming inferences, identifying the main idea, and rereading. However, other researchers have organized reading strategies in a different way. Oxford (1990) divided language learning strategies into two main groups, direct and indirect. Stern (1992) introduced five main language learning strategies: management and planning strategies, cognitive strategies, communicative experiential strategies, interpersonal strategies and affective strategies as effective strategies in reading. Brantmeier (2002) and Brown (1990) identified three main reading strategies; skimming, scanning and guessing, while Adam (2008) in his study added up questioning as one of the types of reading strategies.

## **Past Studies**

### **Past Studies on Reading Difficulties**

Several studies have been done to investigate the reading difficulties among learners within online learning environments. Research conducted by Rachmanita et al. (2022) explored students' difficulties in reading comprehension through online learning and employed a qualitative approach in which the data were gathered using a reading comprehension test and questionnaires. The respondents for this study were 75 eighth-grade students at SMP Persatuan Pedamaran. This study revealed several difficulties experienced by the students which included understanding the text and the main ideas, understanding the moral value of the text, and finding the reference and the meaning of the vocabulary. These difficulties were associated with the students' background, their social situation, the school environment and the teachers' teaching strategy.

Next, a study by Fadhlullah et al. (2023) investigated reading comprehension problems during online learning among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. This study used a qualitative approach and descriptive design where 18 of fifth and seventh-semester students from the English Education Department in the Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Serambi Mekah University were chosen as the respondents. A questionnaire was used as the instrument and the data was analyzed using qualitative analysis. The researchers divided the problems into two categories, which are linguistic and non-linguistic. For the first category, the biggest problems included understanding reduced relative clauses, dealing with compound sentences, and understanding word derivations. In contrast, most students stated that they did not face difficulties in understanding the meaning of new vocabulary. As for the non-linguistic problem, the biggest difficulties are the lack of supportive media and background knowledge.

Another study by Dillah et al. (2023) focused on identifying online reading difficulties among pre-university ESL learners and the strategies they use to cope with challenging online reading tasks. Data was gathered from 207 participants through a quantitative method and a 5 Likert-scale survey to identify factors contributing to online reading difficulties. Results indicate feelings of inferiority, low self-confidence, and inadequate language proficiency. The findings emphasize the importance of designing interventions to enhance learners' reading skills and aligning language instruction to better meet students' needs for understanding academic materials.

In summary, past studies consistently identify that reading difficulties in online learning are influenced by both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Rachmanita et al. (2022) highlighted that reading difficulties rooted in understanding the text, moral values, and vocabulary were associated with social, environmental and instructional influences. Similarly, Fadhlullah et al. (2023) identified linguistic problems such as difficulties with reduced relative clauses and word derivations alongside non-linguistic problems, which included inadequate access to supportive media and limited background knowledge.

### **Past Studies on Reading Strategies**

In the Malaysian context, researchers have explored the relationship between online reading strategies and reading difficulties to understand how students navigate digital texts. Hamzah et al. (2020) examined the metacognitive awareness of online reading strategies among Malaysian university students. The study aimed to investigate how students with different English proficiency levels used global, problem-solving, and support strategies to comprehend online texts. A quantitative research design was employed, using the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) as the main instrument. The population consisted of undergraduate students from public universities, with a sample size of 250 participants selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected via an online survey and analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA. The findings revealed that proficient readers employed global strategies like summarizing, while less proficient readers relied on support strategies such as dictionary use. The study emphasized the importance of teaching metacognitive strategies to improve online reading comprehension.

Similarly, Ismail and Hassan (2021) explored the relationship between reading difficulties and digital reading strategies among secondary school students in rural Malaysia. The study aimed to identify the strategies used by struggling readers in online learning environments. Using a mixed-methods research design, the researchers combined quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. A self-developed questionnaire measured cognitive and metacognitive strategy use, while interviews provided qualitative insights into students' reading behaviors. The population included 400 rural secondary school students, with a purposive sample of 80 students identified as struggling readers. Quantitative data were analyzed using factor analysis and correlation tests, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings indicated that students with reading difficulties relied heavily on surface-level strategies, such as rereading and keyword scanning, and struggled with higher-order strategies like synthesizing information. The study highlighted the need for targeted interventions to develop advanced reading strategies for rural students.

Ahmad et al. (2022) focused on the perceived use of online reading strategies among Malaysian ESL learners in higher education. The study aimed to explore how language proficiency influenced the choice of reading strategies in online contexts. A longitudinal research design was used, with data collected through online reading tasks and a strategy-use questionnaire. The population included 300 ESL learners from private

universities, with a sample of 200 participants selected through convenience sampling. Structural equation modeling was employed to analyze the data. The findings showed that proficient ESL learners utilized a combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, while less proficient learners depended on repetitive reading and translation tools. The study emphasized the importance of integrating strategy instruction into ESL curricula.

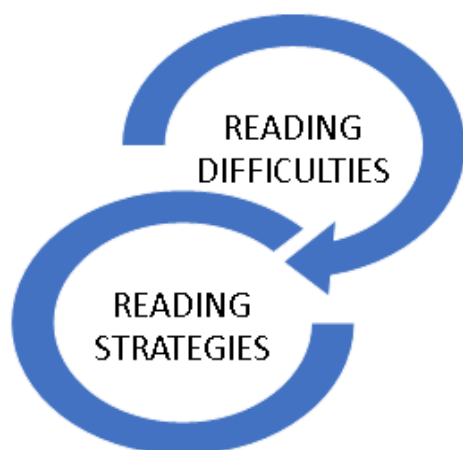
In addition, Rahman et al. (2021) investigated the use of online reading strategies among secondary school students in urban Malaysia. The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of teaching metacognitive strategies in improving digital reading comprehension. A quasi-experimental research design was adopted, with pre-tests and post-tests administered to measure the impact of strategy instruction. The population consisted of 300 urban secondary school students, with a sample of 150 students divided into control and experimental groups. Data were analyzed using paired t-tests and thematic analysis. The results indicated significant improvements in the experimental group's comprehension after receiving strategy training. This study highlighted the potential of explicit strategy instruction in enhancing online reading performance.

Amer et al. (2010) reported on a study of the Online Reading Strategies used by Omani EFL university first-year students and senior student teachers. The Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) was employed to categorize reading strategies into three types: global, problem solving, and support strategies, revealing a significant difference in the usage of global strategies between first-year and fourth-year students. Proficient readers tend to utilize more global strategies, while first-year students show a tendency toward employing more support strategies compared to senior students. Despite these variations in strategy usage based on proficiency levels, there are no notable gender differences within the student groups.

The reviewed studies collectively emphasize the importance of online reading strategies in addressing reading difficulties among Malaysian students. Hamzah et al. (2020) and Ismail and Hassan (2021) highlighted the challenges faced by less proficient and rural students, while Ahmad et al. (2022) and Rahman et al. (2021) underscored the role of strategy instruction in improving comprehension. Despite differences in research designs and populations, these studies converge on the need for explicit teaching of metacognitive and cognitive strategies tailored to students' diverse needs. Future research should focus on developing long-term intervention programs and exploring their effectiveness in various educational settings.

## Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. This study looks at the relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies. This study is rooted in reading difficulties by Abeeleh and Al-Sobh (2021). Readers who have online reading difficulties may find reading less positive and avoid reading at times (Rahmat,et.al, 2021). However, Amer, AL Barwani, & Ibrahim (2010) suggested online reading strategies such as global, problem-solving and support strategies.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework of the Study- Reading Difficulties and Reading Strategies: Online Reading Mode

## METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is conducted to explore motivational factors for learning among undergraduates. A purposive sample of 156 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from Abeeleh and Al-Sobh (2021) on reading comprehension problems and also Amer, AL Barwani, & Ibrahim (2010) on readers' perceived use of online reading strategies to reveal the variables in table 1 below. The survey has 4 sections. Section A contains items on demographic profile. Section B has 14 items on reading difficulties. Section C has 17 items on global strategies. Section D has 8 items on problem-solving strategies and section E has 9 items on support strategies.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Items in the Survey

SECTION	CATEGORY	STRATEGY			
B	Reading Difficulties (Abeeleh & Al-Sobh, 2021)			14	.917
C	READING STRATEGIES (Amer,et.al.,2010)	Global	15	31	.962
		Problem-Solving	7		
		Support	9		
				45	.951

Table 1 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of 917 for reading difficulties and 962 for reading strategies. The overall external reliability for all 45 items is .951; thus, revealing good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is conducted to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

## FINDINGS

### Findings for Demographic Profile

**Table 2.** Percentage for Q1- Gender

NO	ITEM	PERCENTAGE
1	Male	38%
2	Female	62%

Table 2 displays the distribution of respondents according to gender. It shows that thirty eight (38%) of the respondents were male and sixty-two (62%) were female in the survey.

**Table 3.** Percentage for Q2- Arabic Course

NO	ITEM	PERCENTAGE
1	Arabic Level 1	20%
2	Arabic Level 2	51%
3	Arabic Level 3	29%

Table 3 shows the percentage of respondents according to their current level in Arabic Course. Twenty (20%) are students from Arabic Level 1. Fifty-one (51%) from Arabic Level 2. The other twenty-nine (29 %) from Arabic Level 3.

**Table 4.** Percentage for Q3- Self-Rating in Arabic Proficiency

NO	ITEM	PERCENTAGE
1	Poor	9%
2	Average	67%
3	Good	24%

Table 4 displays the distribution of respondents according to their Proficiency in basic Arabic. A smallest segment of respondents (9%) showed poor self-rating in proficiency in basic Arabic, while the majority (67%) had rated themselves as average in Arabic proficiency language. For good Arabic proficiency, the percentage is (24%).

**Table 5.** Percentage for Q4- When I read, I prefer,

NO	ITEM	PERCENTAGE
1	Physical Books/Magazines,etc	74%
2	Online Materials	26%

Table 5 presents the percentages of respondents preference for their reading. Majority of the respondents, (74%) prefer to read physical books or magazines, while a few of them (26%) prefer online material for reading.

### Findings for Reading Difficulties

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive reading difficulties in online learning?

**Table 6.** Mean for READING DIFFICULTIES

Item	Mean
RDQ1I faced a problem in figuring out the meanings of some new words in the reading text	3.5
RDQ2I faced a problem in identifying the aim behind reading comprehension	3.2
RDQ3I faced difficulty in guessing the meanings of some new words	3.5
RDQ4I faced a problem in distinguishing main ideas from supporting ideas in the reading text	3.3
RDQ5I faced difficulty in extracting main and detailed ideas in the text	3.3
RDQ6I faced difficulty in recognizing the total meaning of the text	3.3
RDQ7I usually translate word by word when I am reading	3.7
RDQ8I feel stressed when reading a text in Arabic in the classroom.	2.4
RDQ9I never feel quite sure of myself when I am reading in the classroom.	2.9
RDQ10I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.	3.6

RDQ11 Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.2
RDQ12 I feel upset when I don't understand what I read in Arabic	3.3
RDQ13 I faced difficulty in summarizing the main ideas of the text	3.3
RDQ14 I don't face difficulty with reference questions I find text mapping an easy task for me	3

Table 6 presents the mean scores for reading difficulties in online learning experienced by the learners. Each item represents the specific reading difficulty faced by the learners during online learning. The mean scores range from 2.4 to 3.7 indicating the extent to which learners encounter these difficulties. The highest mean score is 3.7 which corresponds to item RDQ7, translating word by word when reading, showing that learners rely the most on word-by-word translation as the reading strategy. Item RDQ10 (thinking other students are better at language) which has the second highest mean score, 3.6 indicates that learners frequently feel inferior thinking that others are better at language than they are. It is followed by item RDQ3 and RDQ11 which have mean score of 3.5 showing that learners often faced difficulties in figuring out and guessing the meaning of some new words they encountered in the reading text. Learners reported facing moderate difficulties with a mean of 3.2 to 3.3 in several areas which are RDQ2 (identifying the aim behind reading comprehension), RDQ4 (distinguishing main ideas from supporting ideas), RDQ5 (extracting main and detailed ideas), RDQ6 (recognizing the total meaning of the text), RDQ11 (feeling anxious about language class even if the learner is well prepared), RDQ12 (feeling upset when Arabic text cannot be understood) and RDQ12 (summarizing main ideas of the text). The lowest mean score is RDQ8 (learners feel stressed when reading in the classroom) and RDQ9 (learners do not confident when reading in the classroom) with the mean of 2.4 and 2.9 respectively. These difficulties are less frequent compared to other challenges. Meanwhile, item RDQ14 (learners do not face difficulty with reference questions, where they find text mapping is an easy task) has a mean score of 3.0 which is moderately high, suggesting that they generally find this task manageable.

### Findings for Reading strategies

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive reading strategies in online learning?

In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) global strategies, (ii) problem-solving strategies and (ii) support strategies.

**Table 7.** Mean for (i) GLOBAL STRATEGIES

Item	Mean
GSQ1 I have a purpose in mind when I read online	3.3
GSQ 2 I think about what I know to help me understand what I read on-line	3.5
GSQ 3 I take an overall view of the on-line text to see what it is about before reading it	3.5
GSQ 4 I think about whether the content of the on-line text fits my reading purpose	3.5
GSQ 5 When reading on-line, I decide what to read thoroughly and what to ignore	3.3
GSQ 6 When on-line text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading	3.7
GSQ 7 I use tables, figures, and pictures in the on-line text to increase my understanding	3.7
GSQ8 I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading online	3.7
GSQ9 I use typographical features like boldface and italics to identify key information.	3.5
GSQ10 I critically analyse and evaluate the information presented in the on-line text	3.4
GSQ11 When reading on-line, I check my understanding when I come across new information	3.4



GSQ12I try to guess what the content of the on-line text is about when I read.	3.6
GSQ13I check to see if my guesses about the on-line text are right or wrong	3.6
GSQ14I scan the on-line text to get a basic idea of whether it will serve my purposes before deciding to read it.	3.5
GSQ15I critically evaluate the on-line text before choosing to use its information	3.4

Table 7 presents the frequency of global strategies utilized by learners in terms of the mean score. The highest score was 3.7, representing items 6,7 and 8 whereas the learners pay closer attention to what they are reading when on-line text becomes difficult, as they also use tables, figures, and pictures in the on-line text to increase their understanding, as well as they use context clues to help them better understand what they are reading online. Meanwhile, with a score of 3.5, learners think about what they know to help them understand what they are reading on-line, take an overall view of the on-line text to see what it is about before reading it, think about whether the content of the on-line text fits their reading purpose, use typographical features like boldface and italics to identify key information, and scan the on-line text to get a basic idea. However, the least strategy that was used is to have a purpose in mind when reading online and to decide what to read thoroughly and what to ignore with a score of 3.3.

**Table 8.** Mean for (ii) PROBLEM--SOLVING STRATEGIES

Item	Mean
PSSQ1I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I am reading on-line.	3.8
PSSQ2 I try to get back on track when I lose concentration	3.9
PSSQ3 I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading on-line	3.8
PSSQ4 I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading on-line	3.6
PSSQ5I try to picture or visualise information to help remember what I read on-line	3.8
PSSQ6 When on-line text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding	4
PSSQ7 When I read on-line, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases	3.7

Table 8 illustrates the mean for problem-solving strategies used by the learners in online reading. The mean scores range from 3.6 to 4.0 showing that the learners frequently use these strategies to overcome reading difficulties. Item PSSQ6 (re-reading the online text to increase understanding) has the highest mean score of 4.0, indicating that re-reading is the most frequently used strategy among learners when they face difficulties in reading online texts. Then, item PSSQ2 (getting back on track when losing concentration) has the second-highest mean score of 3.9, showing that learners commonly use this strategy to refocus their attention. Next, item PSSQ1 (reading slowly and carefully to ensure understanding of the online text), PSSQ3 (adjusting reading speed according to the online text) and PSSQ5 (picturing or visualizing information to help remember the online text) have mean scores of 3.8. These suggest that learners frequently used these strategies to ensure comprehension and retention of the information that they had acquired. Item PSSQ7 (guessing the meaning of unknown words or phrases) has a slightly lower mean score of 3.7, showing that it is a moderately frequent strategy. The least used strategy is PSSQ6 (stopping from time to time and thinking about the online text) with the lowest mean score of 3.6. Although it has the lowest score, it still indicates that students have put their effort into improving their understanding when reading online.

**Table 9.** Mean for (ii) SUPPORT STRATEGIES

Item	Mean
SSQ1 I take notes while reading on-line to help me understand what I read	3.7

SSQ2 When on-line text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read	3.6
SSQ3 I print out a hard copy of the on-line text then underline or circle information to help me remember it.	3.1
SSQ4 I use reference materials (e.g. an on-line dictionary) to help me understand what read on-line.	3.7
SSQ5 I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read on-line.	3.5
SSQ6 I go back and forth in the on-line text to find relationships among ideas in It	3.4
SSQ7I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the on-line text	3.4
SSQ8 When reading on-line, I translate from Arabic into my native language	3.9
SSQ9 When reading on-line, I think about information in both Arabic and my mother tongue	3.8

Table 9 illustrated the mean score of support strategies utilized by learners in online reading. When reading online, most learners translate from Arabic into their native language with a score of 3.9, and with the mean score of 3.8, learners think about information in both Arabic and their mother tongue. A score of 3.6 indicates that learners read aloud to help them understand what they are reading when on-line text becomes difficult. However, the lowest score was 3.1 shows that printing out a hard copy of the on-line text then underline or circle information to help learners remembering it have slightly influenced their reading process.

### Findings for Relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies .

This section presents data to answer research question 3- Is there a relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies?

To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between reading difficulties and reading strategies, data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 below.

**Table 10.** Correlation between Reading Difficulties and Reading Strategies

Correlations			
		READING_DIF FICULTIES	READING_ST RATEGIES
READING_DIFFICULTIES	Pearson Correlation	1	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	156	156
READING_STRATEGIES	Pearson Correlation	.620**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	156	156

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

Table 10 shows that there is an association between reading difficulties and reading strategies. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between reading difficulties and reading strategies ( $r=.620^{**}$ ) and ( $p=.000$ ). According to Jackson (2015), the coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies.

## CONCLUSION

### Summary Of Findings And Discussions

For RQ1 (How do learners perceive online reading difficulties?), the findings of this survey revealed that students face various kinds of difficulties when reading online, such as translating word by word. Students mostly have difficulty translating word by word because they have problems guessing and figuring out the meanings of some new words in the reading text. In line with the findings of Rachmanita et al. (2022), among the difficulties experienced by the students in reading is finding the meaning of vocabulary. Some students also have difficulty in online reading because they think that their friends are better at languages than they are. According to the findings of Dillah et al. (2023), students struggle with difficulties when reading online material in English in the sense of inferiority and low self-confidence that these students face when comparing their level of proficiency with others.

RQ2: How do online readers perceive their use of reading strategies? The study reveals that despite the reading difficulties faced, students attempted to apply effective reading strategies when dealing with reading tasks, namely global, problem-solving, and support strategies. In terms of the global reading strategies employed by Arabic as third language learners, the results indicate that they pay closer attention to what they are reading when online text becomes difficult. The students seek to use tables, figures, and pictures in the online text to increase their understanding, as well as use context clues to help them better understand what they are reading online. This is in accordance with the study by Dillah et al. (2023), which found that ESL learners tend to be more attentive and reflective about what they read to comprehend the online texts better. They proactively engage in the reading process by applying their schemata and contextual clues to make reading comprehension easier.

For problem-solving strategies, when learners faced difficulty with online reading materials, they took a more active approach to solving problems by reading the texts multiple times to improve their comprehension. They managed to refocus their attention and overcome distractions. Additionally, the students successfully handled the challenges by adjusting their reading speed. This was reported by Ismail and Hassan (2021) in a previous study, who pointed out that students with reading difficulties relied heavily on surface-level strategies, such as rereading and keyword scanning. Finally, results for support strategies showed that when reading online, most learners translated from Arabic into their native language, as well as thought about information in both Arabic and their mother tongue. As reported by Amer et al. (2010), during online reading, readers depended on some reading strategies. First-year students reported using more support strategies than fourth-year students did. This finding is also consistent with the study of Ahmad et al. (2022), who found that less proficient learners depended on repetitive reading and translation tools.

Finding for RQ3 (Is there a relationship between reading difficulties and reading strategies?) show that there is a highly significant association between reading difficulties and reading strategies. Learners of Arabic as a third language were found to apply global, problem-solving, and support strategies to overcome the difficulties they face during online reading, such as paying closer attention to what they are reading when online text becomes difficult. In addition to that, they also chose to reread the text when it became difficult to increase their understanding. There is a significant positive association between the level of online reading difficulties and the frequency and types of reading strategies used. As reading difficulties increase, learners tend to use more reading strategies to compensate for their challenges. For instance, when facing vocabulary issues, they rely on support strategies like translation and repetition. When struggling with comprehension, they adopt global and problem-solving strategies, such as referring to context clues, visual aids, and rereading.

### Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

These results have important pedagogical implications. The study highlights the importance of considering various reading strategies used by learners, with a focus on improving Arabic language teaching and learning. Teachers are encouraged to be aware of the challenges faced by learners in the online learning environment, specifically regarding feelings of anxiety or low self-confidence. This is because some students are taking the Arabic language for the first time, while some of them have a basic background in this language. To support

students in the learning process, teachers can suggest reading strategies according to students' preferences and plan interactions with smaller groups to reduce anxiety, without ignoring the challenges of online group work. There is a suggestion for future research to explore more about online reading strategies, to raise awareness among learners about the importance of these strategies, despite all the reading difficulties they face. This is to help reveal significant insights into this topic, which ultimately leads the learners to fully utilize all the reading strategies to become skilled readers.

## REFERENCES

1. Abeeleh, T.W.A. and Al-Sobh, M. (2021) Reading Comprehension Problems Encountered by EFL Students at Aljoun National University. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, Vol 8(1), pp6-15.
2. Abdullahi, A., Rouyan, N.B.M., & Noor, S.S.B.M. (2018). The Use of Web 2.0 Technologies to Determine Receptive Skills among Malay Learners of Arabic Language. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 8(9), 651-659.
3. Abubaker, A.A. (2013). Factors Influence the Online Reading of Arabic Textbook for Learning by Children Aged 9 to 12 [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. School of Computing and Engineering, the University of Huddersfield.
4. Adams, W., Patterson, B. (2008). *Developing Reading Versatility*. Thomson: USA.
5. Ahmad, R., Zainuddin, N., & Khalid, S. (2022). The role of online reading strategies in enhancing comprehension among Malaysian ESL learners. *Journal of Language and Education*, 8(3), 45–62.
6. Amer, A., AL Barwani, T., Ibrahim, M. (2010) Student Teachers' Perceived Use of Online Reading Strategies. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*, Vol 6(4), pp 102-113.
7. Banditvilai, C. (2020). The Effectiveness of Reading Strategies on Reading Comprehension. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*. 10(2).
8. Brantmeier, C. (2002). Second Language Reading Strategy Research at the Secondary and University Levels: Variations, Disparities and Generalizability. *The Reading Matrix* (3), pp 1-14.
9. Brookbank, D., Grover, S., Kullberg, K., and Strawser, C. (1999). *Students Achievement of Student Chicago*. IL: Saint Xavier University,. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 435 094).
10. Brown, A. L. (1990). *Strategies for Developing Reading Skills*.
11. Bui, T.N. (2021). Students' Attitudes to Online Reading in the Era of Technology at the University of Transport and Communications. *AsiaCALL Online Journal*, 12(3), 1-8.
12. Çakıcı, D. (2017). An overview of metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension skill. *The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies*, 57, 67-82.
13. Carrell, P. L. (1998). Can Reading Strategies Be Successfully Taught?. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*. 21, 1-20.
14. Cheng, R. T. (2016). Reading Online in Foreign Languages: A Study of Strategy Use. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 17(6).
15. Dillah, D., Abd Hamid, N. B., Afrin, J. F., Subramaniam, N., & Rahmat, N. H. (2023). Exploring Reading Difficulties and Online Reading Strategies Employed by Pre-University English as A Second Language (ESL) Learners.
16. Erlidawati, E. (2018). Students' Difficulties in Learning Reading Comprehension. *ITQAN: Journal Ilmu-Ilmu Kependidikan*. 9(1), 107-119.
17. Fadlullah, Yoestara, M., & Irnanda, S. (2023). EFL Reading Comprehension Difficulties in Online Learning. *The 6th International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research 2023*, 6(1), 78-82.
18. Hamzah, M. H., Rahim, N. A., & Aziz, N. (2020). Metacognitive awareness of online reading strategies: A study among Malaysian university students. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 17(2), 123–140.
19. Ibrahim, M. H., & Rahman, A. K. A. (2018). Teaching of Arabic in Malaysia. *Intellectual Discourse*, 26(1), 189-206.
20. Idayanti. (2021). The Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Comprehension English Reading Text at SMP Muhammadiyah Al-Amin Sorong City. *Transcript: Review of English Teaching Learning*, 3(1), 1–29.

21. Ismail, H., & Hassan, S. (2021). Exploring reading difficulties and digital reading strategies among rural secondary school students in Malaysia. *Asian Journal of Educational Research*, 9(4), 34–50.
22. Jackson, S.L. (2015) *Research methods and Statistics-A Critical Thinking Approach* (5th Edition) Boston, USA:: Cengage Learning.
23. Matondang, N. (2020). The Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension at Grade xi Mas Baharuddin [undergraduate thesis]. State Institute for Islamic Studies Padangsidempuan.
24. Munir, A.S., Muassomah, M. (2021). Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di Era Pandemi: Implementasi E-Learning di Sekolah Dasar Islamic Global School Kota Malang. *Journal of Arabic Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 93-102.
25. Muzakkir, R., Saptarina, E., & Amelia, T. (2022). An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension through Online Learning. *Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 8(2), 258-265.
26. Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies. What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House/Harper & Row.
27. Paris, S. G., Wasik, B., & Turner, J. C. (1991). The Development of Strategic Readers. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.). *Handbook of Reading Research*. Vol2, pp 609–640. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
28. Prihatini, S. O. (2020). An analysis of students' difficulties in reading comprehension at SMA Negeri 1 Sukodadi Lamongan. *E-Link Journal*, 7(1), 21–29.
29. Rahman, F., Yusof, N., & Ibrahim, M. (2021). The impact of metacognitive strategy instruction on online reading comprehension among urban secondary school students. *Journal of Educational Technology*, 20(1), 67–85.
30. Rahmat, N. H., Sukimin, I. S. ., Sim, M. S. ., Anuar, M. ., & Mohandas, E. S. (2021). Online Learning Motivation and Satisfaction: A Case Study of Undergraduates vs Postgraduates. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 11(2), 88–97.
31. Ritonga, M., Kustati, M., Budiarti, M., Lahmi, A., Asmara, M., Kurniawan, R., Putri, N., & Yenti, E. (2021). Arabic as Foreign Language Learning in Pandemic COVID-19 as Perceived by Students and Teachers. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(1), 75-92.
32. Sardor, S., Oyshajon, A., & Rushana, T. (2020). The difficulties of reading among young learners in online education. *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences*, 8(12), 76-79
33. Shaban, A. (2023). DIFFICULTIES OF READING ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 105(2), 4–10.
34. Stern, H. H. (1992). *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
35. Su, C. (2006). Evaluation of reading skills applied in the first-year college English reading course. *Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium on English Teaching*. Taipei, Crane, 579-587.
36. Tan, S. Y., & Kaur, S. (2020). Cognitive and metacognitive online reading strategies among Malaysian secondary school students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 112(2), 345–360.
37. Vasilika, R. (2013). The Effect of Reading Strategies on The Improvement of The Reading Skills of Students. *Social and Natural Sciences Journal*. 7(2).
38. Williams, E. (1994). *Reading in the Language Classroom*. London: Macmillan.