Explicit reading strategy instruction in an online reading classroom

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Article Info	Abstract
	Difficulties in comprehending English academic texts encountered by many students lead to the need for improvement in teaching reading. Moreover, in online reading instructions, explicit reading strategies are required so that students can develop their comprehension more independently and become strategic readers. This study aims to find out how explicit reading strategy instructions in online reading classes are implemented and what advantages and challenges are faced during its implementation. This is a case study program evaluation that uses observation, field notes, and interviews. It involves second-year students in an English literature study program taking a reading comprehension course. Despite several limitations, the results reveal that employing explicit reading strategy instructions in the online context can help students enhance their reading skills through structured and systematic phases. This is very much related to the advantage which shows an increase in student motivation in reading that further can improve students' reading ability in general and in comprehending English academic texts. However, these advantages are restricted by technological limits in the online learning process and student motivation variables. To maximize the effectiveness of explicit instruction in the online reading classroom, it is critical to invest in improved technological resources, integrate engaging and interactive content to increase student motivation and provide ongoing professional development for educators. These steps will help to ensure that explicit reading strategy instruction results in the best results possible.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most essential skills in learning a foreign language (Yu, 2015). Apart from that, in the digital era, reading skills are required to filter the flow of information that cannot be stopped (Israel, 2017). Reading abilities are beneficial to university students in developing both personal and intellectual qualities (Mullis, et al., 2009). However, the reading ability of Indonesian students is still unsatisfactory. Data from the Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) revealed that the capability of Indonesian students to comprehend texts, especially in English was still low. In Asia context in 2018, Indonesia was ranked 13th out of 21 countries with a score of 51.58 which was below the EPI average (53.49). In line with this data, Poole's research (2019) also showed that many university students have difficulty understanding a text, especially academic text.

Reading comprehension essentially involves multidimensional interactions between readers, texts, and context (Brevik, 2019). In general, there are several factors influencing students' reading ability such as students' perception of reading (Ratri, 2015), students' motivation and reading interest (Yu, 2015), reading strategies (Onovughe and Hannah, 2011), students' confidence to practice and poor motivation from the teachers (Mohammed and Amponsah, 2018). In English as a foreign language (EFL) setting, among some common factors are a lack of vocabulary (Nurjanah, 2018; Qarqez and Rashid, 2017), a lack of understanding of sentence patterns, difficulty in recognizing the words meaning and inappropriate classroom activities (Alderson, 1984; Rodli, 2018).

These factors lead to the requirement to make improvements in reading comprehension instruction. This improvement can be achieved by guiding students to become strategic readers (Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris, 2017; Brown, 2017). As the students become strategic readers, they will be able to advance their reading comprehension ability. Furthermore, improved reading comprehension allows students to read more difficult texts more easily. Specifically, making students strategic readers involves showing them how to use reading techniques to facilitate active reading, foster monitoring, and improve comprehension (Scammacca, Roberts, Vaughn, and Stuebing, 2015). Strategic readers have the ability to recognize their difficulties in comprehending a text and find the best way to solve them. Solving their reading problems could allow them to develop their reading skills (Brevik, 2019). Encouraging students to become strategic readers can be done effectively through explicit reading strategies instruction. By providing appropriate and effective instruction, even struggling readers can learn how to be skilled readers (Zare and Otman, 2013) since they usually cannot identify the right reading strategies themselves (Pilonieta, 2010).

In an explicit strategy lesson, the reading instructor starts by explaining the learning aims, then providing exercises and feedback until the students achieve the targeted reading skills and can apply them independently (Archer and Hughes, 2011) to comprehend a wide range of new texts outside the classroom (Atkins, 2013; Ballou, 2012). The application of explicit reading strategies instruction has been highlighted because it is considered systematic and effective in developing students' reading skills (Archer and Hughes, 2011; Boardman, Boelé, and Klingner, 2017; Ferlazzo and Sypnieski, 2018). The explicit instruction leads students to cognitively be aware of the thinking process of a skilled reader as the process of understanding the text occurs. Other than that, students are taught certain reading strategies to support and improve their understanding as they read various texts.

An explicit reading strategy lesson involves four fundamental stages (Archer and Hughes, 2011). The first phase is to introduce reading strategies in which the reading instructor explains the reading strategy and the purpose of using it. In this stage, the students are given a range of examples. The second phase is the modeling stage in which students learn the steps of reading strategy application. Here, the instructor also demonstrates the use of the reading strategy. The third stage involves directed practice, in which the teacher and students attempt to implement the strategy together. This stage is intended to prepare the students to practice the strategy independently. The last main phase is the autonomous practice phase in which the students practice autonomously to do akin exercises to different texts. In this context, the nature of explicit reading strategies instruction which provides systematic reading stages can lead students to learn reading in a more structured way (Khaiyali, 2017).

Furthermore, as we know, the COVID-19 pandemic has extensively changed the method by which students learn, shifting them from offline to online learning (Subekti, 2020). Online learning is now widely used across many institutions even though the pandemic has ended since it offers flexibility for learners. Online learning can be defined as a learning process conducted using the

Internet either synchronously or asynchronously (Dhawan, 2020; Dudeney and Hockly, 2007). Basically, the online learning process is similar to face-to-face learning when viewed from the side of learning intensity (Boettcher and Conrad, 2010). However, in online learning, the teacher cannot control students directly, and this might greatly affect the effectiveness of learning. In such a setting, direct feedback and immediate response are not possible (Littlefield, 2018). Therefore, students in a virtual classroom ought to study with greater autonomy and from any location (Singh and Thurman, 2019).

According to Archer and Hughes (2011), explicit strategy lessons seem suitable for distance learning classrooms because students are facilitated to eventually comprehend the techniques for reading with its main phases by providing them with sequential lectures, a variety of demonstrations, and non-examples, as well as chances to apply the techniques independently. In this context, students are offered varied learning experiences that can enhance their understanding of reading strategies in the distance learning situation. They get different ways of learning and are scaffolded through its stages that can further enhance their learning. Nevertheless, the implementation of explicit reading strategy instruction is not without challenges. There are two main challenges in applying this instruction. First, even when exposed to reading strategies repeatedly, students frequently find it difficult to remember and apply them in new contexts (Ballou, 2012). Transferring strategies to different texts and situations can be challenging, which is the root of this difficulty. In addition to that challenge, the kind of text and the students' past reading experiences can affect how successful reading strategies are (see Ballou, 2012).

The use of explicit strategies lessons has been widely researched in several research contexts and many ranges of students' levels. At the primary level, Pilonieta, Hathaway, Medina, and Casto (2019) investigated the use of explicit strategy instruction in conjunction with guided reading and tandem reading with first and second-grade students. The result showed that explicit strategy instruction enhanced students' vocabulary and reading comprehension. Moreover, in the secondary level, Brevik (2019) has compared the use of explicit strategy lessons or daily use of strategies in lower secondary level students. The study found that the use of explicit strategies lessons was more effective than the daily use of strategies lessons. Differently, Iwai (2016) researched the effect of explicit strategies lessons on K-8 teacher candidates in a literacy methods course. It is shown in this study that explicit strategies instruction could increase the teacher's knowledge in using reading strategies. In a different context, research has been conducted to see the impact of explicit strategy lessons for students with special needs (Salehomoum, 2018). This study result indicated that the use of explicit strategies instruction is effective for some students with special needs. At the university level, research of Ajideh, Zohrabi, and Pouralvar (2017) and Zafarghandi, Hasaskhah, and Montaghami (2016) revealed the significance of explicit strategies instruction on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) reading comprehension among university students in Iran. In the Indonesian university context, the use of explicit instruction has been investigated from the perspective of students (Devi and Suroto, 2021). This study affirmed that the students perceive the use of explicit strategy instruction positively concerning their reading comprehension.

From the previous research mentioned above, there has been no research to explore how explicit strategy lesson is implemented at the university level in Indonesia. Thus, this research is essential to correspond to the gap. The main objectives of this research are to examine how an explicit reading strategy instruction is implemented in the classroom and explore the advantages and challenges during its implementation in virtual academic reading classes at an Indonesian private university. By investigating these research objectives, this research is expected to provide valuable insights into improving reading comprehension among university students in Indonesia. This study can also offer English educators an alternative to effective pedagogical approaches, particularly in online learning environments.

METHODS
The goals of this study are to look into how explicit reading strategies instruction is implemented in an online reading class, as well as the benefits and challenges that come with it. In accordance with the objectives and context, this study employed a qualitative method of inquiry with a case study component. First, as a case study, this study was conducted to investigate a specific educational phenomenon (Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun, 2011; Nunan, 1992). Second, it investigated a program, method, or people (Creswell, 2010) with an in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, this study was done in a natural setting, using data gathered from actual occurrences (see Creswell,

2010). Therefore, in terms of research design, this work can be considered a case study as it examined explicit strategies lessons in a virtual academic reading classroom.

The participants were thirty-two second-year university students taking reading for academic purposes courses at a private university in Sumedang, Indonesia. Convenient sampling was used, and participants were mostly recruited according to the easiest accessibility (Gray, 2014). This study employed several research instruments to increase the validity of the data (Yin, 2003). The research instruments used were observations, field notes, and interviews. Data on the application of explicit strategies lessons in a virtual academic reading class was gathered using observations and field notes. Observations and field notes were employed in every meeting during the semester with a total of twelve meetings. Meanwhile, the interview took place after completing the online reading class through a learning management system (LMS) during the semester. A total of six learners were selected based on their proficiency level in academic reading abilities. Two respondents are low-achievers, two others are mid-achievers, and the last two are high-achievers. The criterion for determining the respondents' proficiency levels was based on their classroom performances in comprehending reading texts. This is aimed at providing more comprehensive and rich data covering all proficiency levels. After that, each student was interviewed in-depth for information concerning the benefits and challenges they encountered while implementing online explicit reading strategy instructions. The interview was a semi-structured interview with a total of fourteen questions regarding the students' perspectives on the implementation, perceived benefits, and challenges of the explicit reading strategy instruction in the classroom. By combining the research instruments (triangulation), the risk of limited data will decrease and the validity of the research results may increase (Alwasilah, 2000; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007). The data collected from each instrument were analyzed to answer the research questions.

The analysis was carried out through several steps. The first step involved transcribing the data. The field notes and observations taken during the twelve meetings of the semester were transcribed and organized chronologically. Furthermore, the results of the interviews were also transcribed precisely. The next step in data analysis is coding. In this step, the data were labeled with codes representing meaningful pieces of information. The first research question, which aimed to understand how explicit reading strategy instruction is implemented in an online reading class, yielded several categories. These included implementation, instructional strategies, student engagement, technology use, challenges, and instructional outcomes. For example, observations indicating the instructor's use of modeling and guided practice were coded as "instructional strategies" while field notes describing technical difficulties encountered during the online sessions were coded as "challenges". In addition, different categories were determined for the second research question, which looked at the benefits and challenges of explicit reading strategy instruction. These included perceived benefits and challenges, student feedback, the impact on reading skills, motivation and engagement, and suggestions for improvement. For example, interview excerpts in which students mentioned improvements in their reading comprehension were coded as "perceived benefits", while students' comments about difficulties in using the learning management system were coded as "perceived challenges". Moreover, a thematic analysis was conducted to identify general patterns that provided further understanding of the research questions. The data revealed themes such as "enhanced reading comprehension", "technical barriers", and "active engagement". Each theme was interpreted following existing literature and the theoretical framework of explicit strategies instruction developed by Archer and Hughes (2011) and Tierney and Readence (1995).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
The explicit strategies lesson application
This section elaborates on the study's findings, with a focus on the steps for implementing explicit reading strategy instruction. The primary research question concerns how these steps are implemented and how they affect students' academic reading abilities in an online course setting. The data gathered, particularly from observations and field notes, show that students benefit significantly from explicit strategy lessons. These benefits are evident throughout all major stages of the instructional process, as defined by Archer and Hughes (2011). The four stages are reading strategy introduction, modeling, guided practice, and independent practice. Each stage's implementation and benefits are described below, demonstrating the explicit reading strategy instruction's effectiveness in improving students' reading skills.

Introduction stage

During the introducing reading strategies phase, the lecturer explained which reading strategies would be covered. In this research context, students were taught reading strategies such as identifying the main idea, distinguishing between facts and opinions, creating inferences, critical reading, paraphrasing, and summarizing. For example, when discussing paraphrasing, the lecturer explained that it involves restating the author's words in one's own words. This explanation was critical for introducing students to the specific reading strategy that they would learn and use. During this introduction, a surprising fact emerged: several students were unfamiliar with the term "paraphrasing". This lack of familiarity revealed a larger issue: students lacked exposure to essential academic language and reading skills. This discovery highlighted the urgent need to provide.

The introduction phase made sure that students understood the strategies and their goals, which laid the foundation for the other phases. It was clear that students needed to have this foundational knowledge in order to interact with increasingly difficult texts and assignments. Students' early unfamiliarity with crucial terms like paraphrasing revealed gaps in their prior knowledge, underscoring the need for specific instruction in academic reading strategies. The introduction phase helped students understand the reading process by providing a clear definition of each strategy and an explanation of how to apply it. During this phase, they were motivated to read the material more deeply and were also given the terminology and concepts they needed. As a result, the students were more equipped to continue the modeling, guided practice, and independent practice.

Following the explanation of the reading strategies they would learn in the lesson, in the next stage, students were given a series of examples and non-examples of the use of these reading strategies (Archer and Hughes, 2011). For instance, in the material on paraphrasing, students were provided examples of good and bad paraphrasing results. In this stage, students could recognize and understand reading strategies from the examples. In addition, the lecturer also explained the purpose of using the reading strategy. By explaining the purpose of using this reading strategy, it was hoped that students would be more motivated to implement these reading strategies in the future because they would realize that these strategies were important not only in the classroom context but also in their daily reading. This clear learning objective could help students focus more on learning content in a more structured manner (Khan, Hande, Bedi, Singh, and Kumar, 2014) and help activate their background knowledge (Cooper, Kiger, Robinson, and Slansky, 2012). The awareness of learning goals in its development could enhance student learning (Faulconer, 2017).

The students' awareness of the reading strategies was also revealed in interviews. Five interview respondents noted that the explanation of the objectives and reading strategies to be studied in the lesson helped them to think in a more focused and systematic manner during the learning process. By understanding the purpose of the strategies, the students felt motivated to apply the strategies in a more meaningful way. This could also promote students' cognitive engagement in reading instruction.

The next step involved the lecturer explaining the relevance of the targeted skills, particularly why the targeted reading strategies were important and when students would need these reading strategies. This was in line with what was conveyed by Pearson and Dole (1987) that in explicit teaching, the teacher not only mentioned what strategies would be studied explicitly but also explained what, how, why, and when the reading strategies were used (see Nash-Ditzel, 2010). One of the main approaches that equips students to be strategic readers is to provide them with knowledge about the goals and reasons for reading (Khaiyali, 2017). By knowing why and when they would need the strategies, they would be aware that the reading strategies were practical tools for them to use. This would make the lesson more meaningful.

Modeling stage

This stage is the stage where the lecturer demonstrates the targeted reading strategy. If the reading strategy to be taught consists of steps that must be followed, the best way to show it to students is by modeling what students should do (Archer and Hughes, 2011; Pearson and Dole, 1987). This stage is also referred to as the stage where the teacher has full responsibility for guiding students to acquire the reading skills taught (Maryam, 2018; Pearson and Dole, 1987).

Therefore, at this stage, the lecturer explained the steps in more detail for using the targeted reading strategy. For example, in the modeling stage of the paraphrasing topic, the lecturer

explained the steps for making paraphrases, namely: replacing synonyms for keywords in the original language, eliminating less important ideas, combining ideas if possible, maintaining the tone and level of formality of the original text, and never mixing personal ideas into the paraphrase. By explaining the steps of paraphrasing in this way, students could systematically try these steps both inside and outside the classroom.

In demonstrating the use of these strategies, the lecturer used a variety of texts, not just one, to show the students how to apply reading strategies in a variety of contexts (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). This method attempted to teach students how to employ these techniques with flexibility and recognize their importance in a variety of situations. The lecturer assisted the students in understanding how these strategies can be modified for various kinds of reading materials by exposing them to a range of texts, including technical writings and stories. Through practical instruction, students gained confidence in their comprehension and interaction with a variety of texts, enabling them to face a wide range of reading challenges both within and outside of the classroom.

In learning paraphrasing strategies, students were given examples of texts and examples of good and bad paraphrasing results. This was intended to help students better understand how to apply the reading strategy effectively. In this case, student involvement was also highly emphasized (Archer and Hughes, 2011), but that did not mean students immediately practiced the strategy. Students were only involved in discussions about the content of the text being discussed. By involving them in this manner, their active participation and critical thinking increased, and the lecturer could also check the student's understanding of the text being discussed.

Guided practice stage

At this stage, students and lecturers together tried to apply the reading strategies they had learned to other texts. The purpose of this stage was to prepare them to practice independently. It was aimed at giving scaffolding to students before they could apply the strategies on their own. In addition to that, the students would also be more confident because, at this stage, the lecturer checked which students had difficulty in implementing the reading strategies discussed (Tierney and Readence, 1995). After trying together to apply these reading strategies to a text, they realized what difficulties they faced.

In the lesson about paraphrasing strategies, the lecturer invited the students to determine which paraphrase result was the most accurate. One by one, the options given were analyzed together by the lecturer and students to finally choose the most accurate one based on logical reasons. Moreover, the students were given a simple and brief sentence to paraphrase. The lecturer guided the students to apply each step of the reading strategies explained in the previous stage. In this joint discussion process, students understood the reading strategies they were learning more comprehensively. They realized the difficulties they faced when applying each step. Ninety percent of the students said that having a limited vocabulary made it difficult for them to understand sentences. This supports the conclusions of Nurjanah (2018) and Qarqez and Rashid (2017) regarding the variables affecting the reading proficiency of EFL students. Acknowledging this challenge, they were inspired to expand their vocabulary. They realized that increasing their vocabulary would improve their ability to understand texts and their general English proficiency. This drive encouraged them to actively look for methods and materials for picking up new vocabulary.

During this part of the discussion, the lecturer played an important role in giving students constructive feedback, which was especially helpful when they were having trouble applying the reading strategies they had been studying. By providing precise, useful feedback and highlighting areas that required improvement, the lecturer's involvement was crucial in helping students overcome their obstacles. Students received specific instructions on how to improve their skills in addition to understanding where they were making mistakes from this feedback. The instructor might step in to provide thorough explanations and examples, for instance, if students were having trouble with a specific reading strategy, like summarizing long texts or identifying important arguments. To correct students' understanding of the material or point out important details, the lecturer would frequently highlight particular text passages in their feedback. Furthermore, the instructor's constructive feedback promoted a positive learning atmosphere. Students were encouraged to seek out additional information and ask questions without worrying about being assessed. With practice and continuous feedback, students were able to improve their reading strategies over time, making for a more dynamic and attractive learning environment. With

everything taken into account, the lecturer's assistance in offering constructive feedback was crucial in assisting students in overcoming obstacles and gaining a deeper comprehension of the reading strategies.

Independent practice stage

This is the final stage in the explicit strategies instruction. Students were encouraged to practice on their own during this phase by participating in activities that were similar to those they had already done. Students were able to use the reading strategies they had learned in a more independent setting with this independent practice. This stage's main objective was to give students the tools they needed to apply these techniques outside of the classroom, developing a sense of confidence and autonomy in their reading abilities (Tierney and Readence, 1995). Students who work independently may run into and overcome obstacles when putting reading strategies into practice. Their comprehension and proficiency with these tactics were reinforced by this practical experience. Students had the chance to exercise critical thinking as they dealt with these difficulties.

The lecturer continued to play an active role in this phase by offering feedback. This assistance was crucial in fostering a supportive learning atmosphere where students felt at ease reviewing their development and identifying areas for growth. Students were able to identify their efforts and gain insight from the lecturer's feedback, which enabled them to make the required corrections. Students' development of their reading strategies and readiness for practical use were greatly helped by this constant support and opportunity for reflection.

Benefits and challenges

Benefits

The research findings show several benefits during the implementation of explicit strategies lessons which included improving academic reading skills, increasing student motivation in reading, and developing students' academic abilities in general. Each benefit is explained below. According to the feedback obtained from interviews, all participants highlighted the positive impact of explicit strategy lessons within their online reading courses, leading to notable signs of progress in their academic reading abilities. Students emphasized the need for these strategies, admitting their essential role in fostering a more strategic approach to reading, thus allowing them to comprehend academic texts more effectively.

One student observed that reading stories and working with academic texts differed significantly. This demonstrated how particular approaches are required to comprehend academic material. The absence of prior instruction in these strategies demonstrated the urgent need for precise direction, particularly for students who are not familiar with these techniques of academic reading. This highlights the significance of teaching students how to effectively read and comprehend complicated academic materials so that they can interact with academic articles with confidence and develop deeper comprehension.

The interviews also revealed that these students had not previously received explicit instruction in employing reading strategies within the context of comprehension tasks. Consequently, the significance of targeted guidance became more obvious. The consensus among the interviewed participants was that their reading skills, especially about academic texts with their complexity, significantly improved. This aligns with research conducted by Nordin, Rashid, Zubir, and Sadjirin (2013), emphasizing the correlation between heightened reading skills and students' awareness as well as the utilization of effective reading strategies.

The enhancement of students' ability to grasp academic texts is closely related to their increased motivation and engagement after being taught specific reading strategies for reading academic texts. As mentioned by Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2018), several studies highlight that explaining these strategies to students tends to make them more engaged in their reading tasks. During interviews, students emphasized that learning these strategies improved their confidence in the reading process, prompting them to dive deeper into their reading activities. This increased confidence stems from their understanding of the strategies necessary to comprehend various types of texts.

These advantages were based on several factors they outlined. For instance, they found it easier to comprehend academic texts because they were familiar with the steps and strategies involved in understanding them. One student also mentioned that after learning and applying these reading strategies, they were able to comprehend academic texts in a more effective and efficient

way. Consequently, their anxiety about reading also decreased. Five of the respondents earlier in the interview admitted to experiencing anxiety, particularly when reading texts written in English. They associated their anxiety with problems like having limited vocabulary and having trouble understanding what words meant in the text. These difficulties align with the problems that students frequently encounter when reading, as noted by Alderson (1984) and Rodli (2018). The respondents stated that they were frustrated and anxious because they could not fully understand the content due to their limited vocabulary. They frequently had to spend more time looking up words or getting assistance because of their comprehension difficulties, which added to their anxiety and stress levels.

Moreover, echoing Alderson's (1984) viewpoint, students highlighted that the learning activities in their previous reading comprehension courses were insufficient in preparing them with the essential reading skills needed for their academic pursuits. They were often presented with different text examples without being taught the strategies required for better comprehension. This lack of guidance likely contributed to their prior lack of interest in the reading comprehension course. Students reported greater motivation and interest in reading after receiving instruction in explicit reading strategies. They acknowledged their improved ability to use reading strategies to their recent learning. Their comprehension of these techniques increased their confidence and excitement for incorporating reading passages in the future. They felt more prepared to understand texts and interact with the material on a deeper level as a result. This beneficial experience improved the students' reading abilities as well as their overall pleasure in reading-related activities. It also improved the learning environment and improved the students' sense of skill and achievement.

Challenges

The interview findings confirmed that all students faced various technical challenges, including poor connectivity and issues with the devices (such as audio and video) utilized during their online classes. Naturally, such issues are unavoidable in the context of online classes. This is consistent with the findings of Windiarti, Fadilah, Dhermawati, and Pratolo (2019), and Song, Singleton, Hill, and Koh (2004), who found that technical issues are one of the most significant barriers to online learning. The students stated that this technical barrier would undoubtedly impede their understanding of the lecturer's explanation, particularly when meetings were held synchronously via video conferencing platforms. Due to technical issues like poor audio or video quality, they occasionally missed some parts of the lecturer's explanation. They found it difficult to follow along with the material being presented as a result of these disruptions, which may have affected their comprehension and learning process. Because of this, they frequently needed to look for more information or clarification in order to completely understand the topics covered.

Additionally, these technological challenges made it more difficult for students to ask their instructor for clarification or feedback when they were having problems or had questions about what they were learning. Real-time communication was difficult due to technical problems like unstable connections to the internet, broken hardware, or problems with software. As a result, some students decided to postpone their questions, bringing them up during later class periods or even outside of it. This wait for clarification frequently led to a confused understanding of the subject matter, which may hinder their thorough mastery of the targeted reading strategies.

The learning process was hampered by the inability to get feedback or ask questions immediately. In educational settings, real-time interaction is particularly important for complex subjects like reading strategies, where understanding can be greatly improved by receiving immediate clarification. Due to the delay in the inquiries, students may have continued to practice strategies incorrectly or with misunderstandings, which could have a negative impact on their learning outcomes and transform misconceptions.

This suggests that because technical difficulties can affect students' learning outcomes (Aljehani, 2024), they should not be taken for granted. There are significant cumulative effects of these barriers. For example, students who put off asking questions frequently found that their confusion grew over time, which contributed to their frustration and decreased their level of engagement. This may eventually cause their motivation and general academic performance to decrease. Moreover, students were not given the chance to quickly fix their mistakes because of a lack of prompt feedback. Rapid feedback is crucial in the context of teaching reading strategies because it allows students to improve and comprehend distinctions. It may take a long time for students to recognize their mistakes if they do not receive prompt guidance, which makes it more challenging to break bad habits or misconceptions.

Another dominant issue among students was their fluctuating motivation levels in engaging with online learning. Some students expressed experiencing recurrent declines in motivation without clear reasons. This aligns with Dhawan's (2020) claim that online learning might not consistently appeal to students due to the extensive time flexibility it offers. This flexibility often leads to challenges in managing study time or completing assignments. Respondents highlighted their reliance on consistent encouragement from instructors to push their motivation. They also emphasized the importance of interactive engagement with instructors in the online learning environment, acknowledging the challenges both students and instructors encounter in facilitating such interactions.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the results of this study have several implications for improving the efficiency of instruction in explicit reading strategies in online reading classrooms. Initially, it is essential to deal with the technological constraints that could limit the successful implementation of these strategies. Investing in strong e-learning platforms can assist in overcoming these difficulties, facilitating more effective engagement with the content for students (Wigfield, Gladstone, and Turci, 2016). The study also emphasizes how important it is to keep student motivation levels high. Students' motivation and reading comprehension skills can be greatly increased by incorporating interactive and engaging content, giving regular feedback, and creating a supportive online learning community.

CONCLUSION

This study tried to explore the effectiveness of incorporating explicit strategies lessons within an online reading comprehension course, examining both its benefits and challenges. The findings highlighted the effectiveness of employing explicit strategies lessons in the online reading classroom, specifically in fostering the development of students' reading abilities since it helped them comprehend a wide range of academic texts in a systematic manner. The students were scaffolded step-by-step to acquire reading strategies targeted in the reading course. Additionally, students' motivation in reading academic texts was also improved as their confidence in using reading strategies increased. However, these advantages were restricted by several challenges in the implementation of online learning. The key challenges that students face include technical issues as well as issues with shifting motivation when performing online learning. Therefore, it is obviously unavoidable if the use of explicit strategy lessons in the virtual reading classroom does not yield the best results. Future researchers ought to examine the use of explicit strategies lessons either in offline or online classroom contexts using quantitative measurement to see if students' reading abilities improve significantly.

FUNDING STATEMENT

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