Iranian EFL Learners' Performance and Strategies across Different Reading Comprehension Question Types

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Abstract

The study aimed to focus on 'higher-order' discourse-level processes which are operationalized into ten different question items and the variance in EFL learners' performance across these question items in order to diagnose the problematic items and the readers' degree of awareness of strategies related to each question item. To this end, a TOEFL reading comprehension test with a suitable measure of readability index for intermediate level was administered to six groups of Iranian EFL learners and teachers, comprising 219 subjects of mixed gender and proficiency level. The participants were asked to mark the correct options and write about the relevant reasons and strategies in Persian or English while answering the 16 multiple choice (MC) questions. The results of Chi-square, coefficient of variability, and frequencies showed the item types that contribute to the significance of variance and low degree of awareness among EFL Iranian learners and teachers in terms of cognitive and metacognitive test-taking strategies.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, test-taking strategy, reading comprehension question type, test performance

Introduction

Reading, as the most emphatic language skill in EFL settings like Iran, has been taught, learned, and tested differently in educational centers in spite of the fact that the purposes for reading, according to Birch (2011:488), are generally similar among readers: to get information, to study and learn, to access sacred, classical, and popular literature, and to escape everyday realities by entering a fictional world. Reviewing the history of teaching and testing reading, one can find four approaches regarding reading: bottom-up processes, top-down processes, interactive processes, and reading strategies (Smith, 1973; Goodman, 1975; Rumelhart, 1980; Nuttal, 1996).

Theoretically, language learning strategies (LLSs) movement was due to reconceptualization of language competence in the form of communicative competence, one of the components of which was strategic competence. Pedagogically, it was a reaction to the imbalanced attention paid to the role of teacher and textbook in comparison to the learner's role in the teaching and learning processes and in response to the growing need to pay attention to individual differences (e.g. styles and strategies) among learners as one of the variables in the process (Macaro, 2009).

The intersection of research on reading processes and language learning strategies results in reading strategies, which is one of the concerns of the present research. Test-taking strategies as one of the manifestations of language learner strategies consist of either test-management or test-wiseness strategies (Cohen, 2006). Responding to a language measure such as a reading test, a test-taker draws upon a number of test-taking strategies, which is another concern of this research.

Another focus of this research is EFL readers' varying performance across different reading comprehension questions which operationalize one's conception of reading construct. This is in line with

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Nation's statement (2009) that due to the complex nature of reading comprehension, readers experience difficulties that can be traced back to different origins, including decoding difficulties, linguistic comprehension, lexical process, working memory, and 'higher-order' discourse-level processes (e.g. inference, comprehension monitoring and knowledge).

Review of related literature

After having defined construct validity, one would seek to design tests which would assess language sub skills either separately or in some integrated fashion-however assessed, they would form our theoretical constructs of reading, but they would be operationalized differently.

There is no consensus on the question of divisibility of skills. In this regard, there positions are common: reading as a unitary or global skill, i.e. all the relevant skills together, multidivisibility of reading, e.g. skimming, scanning, etc., and bi-divisibility of reading into vocabulary and reading comprehension (Weir, 1994; Alderson, 1990 b,c; Lunzer, Waite & Dolan 1979).

In spite of these subjective ideas about the operationalization of skills by test items, multidivisibility of reading has always intrigued researchers and they have attempted to introduce some lists which are seductive due to the fact that they offer an apparently theoretically justified means of devising test tasks or items, isolating reading skills to be tested, and diagnosing reader's problems with a view to identifying remediation. A brief history of these efforts was cited in the introduction. Some of the most influential ones are presented in a chronological order: Davies' classification of reading skills (1944, 1968), Lenon's components of reading skills (1962),Munby's taxonomy of microskills of reading (1978), Carver's five processes of reading (1982), Grabe's component elements of fluent reading process (1991), Rost's one general reading competence (1993), Carroll's four common factors (1993), Weir's three operations in reading (1994), Abdullah's sub-skills of critical reading (1994) and Johnstone et al's three major categories skills (2007).

As it was mentioned before, there are difficulty and skepticism about the above-mentioned efforts to isolate individual reading skills due to the likelihood that these skills interact massively in any reading or response to a question or task (e.g. Li,

1992). In spite of the criticisms regarding multi-divisibility of reading, most models, according to Alderson (2000), make reference to numerous skills or sub processes that occur in reading. At the very least, therefore, students should be tested on a range of relevant skills and strategies, with the results possibly being provided in diagnostic, profile- based format. However, as we have seen, research is unclear as to the exact nature of many of these reading skills, and to what extent they are to be considered as part of reading or as part of general understanding processes.

After having defined our construct and adopted our position regarding divisibility of skills, we move to operational definition. Test specifications provide the link between theoretical and operational definition and act as guidance to the test writers as well as test users. In this stage many facets of test characteristics (input, expected response) are taken into consideration as part of the construct that affect the performance and its conditions in terms of time and place. The process of specifying test, according to John Stone et al (2007), may be organized into one of the three categories of statistical specifications, content specifications and item specification. The focus of this paper is on the third one which refers readers to the constructs measured and the content standards for which items are to be aligned. For examples of test specifications such as DIALANG, FCE and IELTS, one can refer to Alderson (2000).

In reading assessment, there are two general approaches: process-oriented, i.e. the way one reaches a given understanding and product-oriented, i.e. the fact of reaching that understanding. One of the areas of product approach is the researcher's interest in understanding reading ability by devising text comprehension question at various levels of understanding and seeing how readers fared on these different questions. These lists of question types, according to Alderson 2000, are of interest to test developers because they should show that every attempt has been made to include items that cover a range of skills and levels of understanding in order to be as comprehensive in their coverage of the construct as possible. It would be hard to contradict or even verify such claims in spite of the difficulty to agree on what skills are being tested by individual items.

Reading comprehension question types have been investigated by many authors (Pearson and

Johnson, 1978; Kitsch and Yarbrough, 1982; Ben Saussan, Sim and Weiss, 1984; Eskey and Grabe, 1988; Tollefson, 1989; Pearson, 1991; Shing and Dunkel, 1992; Agrusi, 1997; Alderson, 2000; SAT, 2007; GRE, 2009)

In a review of reading strategies, it is important to consider the processes involved in reading comprehension because these can be initiated, accompanied, or followed by strategies. In other words, these strategies are chosen and activated to facilitate and evaluate comprehension. There have been three accounts of reading comprehension processes, which are named top-down, bottom- up and interactive models. The last model offered an opportunity to combine lower-level and higher- level processes.

More specifically, Van Dijk and kintch (1983) conceptualized reading comprehension as happening concurrently several levels: the word level, the level of propositions, the level of local coherence, the level of macrostructure of the text, and the level of superstructure including the context of the reading event.

The consequence of this conceptualization was an attempt to differently combine strategies involved in top-down and bottom-up processing in the form of a continuum rather than a dichotomy, depending on the different learner and context variables (Cohen and Macaro, 2007).

Therefore, reading strategies are one of the factors (i.e. text, setting, reader, reader background, the L1 and the L2 and reader decision making), the complex interactions of which result in reading comprehension.

Reviewing the research on reading strategies, Cohen and Macaro (2007) found a vast range of foci, including strategy types and their relationship with reading Proficiency, L1 and L2 reading strategies involving both linguistic and non-linguistic factors, and reading strategy instruction (Hosenfeld, 1976, 1977; Block, 1986; Carrell, 1985; Sarig, 1987; knight, pardon & Waxman, 1985; Parry, 1983; Abraham and Vann, 1987; Anderson 1991; O'malley and Chamot 1991; Paran, 1997; Mokhtari, 2001; Finkbeiner, 2005; Lee,2007; Swan, 2008).

In an L2 reading test domain, substantial studies have shown that there are certain kinds of strategies existing, applied by test takers during a test taking course (Cohen, 1984; 1998a; 1998b; Cohen & Upton, 2006; 2007; Nevo, 1989; Rupp, Ferne & Choi, 2006).

Among a diversity of reading test formats a MC format has drawn a great deal of language testing re-searchers' attention by virtue of its unique nature-test questions, or stems and alternatives are provided. Aslanian (1985:21) remarks that L2 test takers are capable of arriving at correct answers by the strength of clues available in test question without an appropriate understanding "The meaning relationships, organization of the text, the reasoning pattern of the exposition, or what the text generally means, for that matter". However, this could be attributed to test construction, not to the test format itself. With cautions construction, multiple choice reading tests still function to measure test-takers' reading ability to some extent, since test takes need to make sense of reading passages or test questions to a certain degree in order to arrive at answers (Dollerup, Glahn and Hansen 1982; Cohen 1984; Nevo 1989; Anderson et al. 1991; Anderson 1991; Rupp, Ferne and Choi 2006; Cohen and Upton 2006; Nikolov 2006; Purpura 1997; 1999; Phakiti 2003).

Research questions

Due to lack of research in the above-mentioned areas, there should be some research to diagnose reader's problems across different question types (e.g. main idea, restatement) and to list the strategies employed to answer the questions. To address these issues, the present study aims to focus on the variance of Iranian reader's comprehension across ten different question items (i.e. main idea, restatement, inference, vocabulary, negative questions, author's attitude, following possible topic, referent, organization and support) and to check the test-taking strategies across the mentioned question types of different nature.

Accordingly, the questions related to EFL reader's reading comprehension in the present study are as follows:

1. Do the groups perform differently across different question items?

2. Do some question items account for the significance of difference in the groups' performance across different question items?

3. Are the readers in the groups aware of the strategies they employ across different question items?

Methodology

Subjects
To answer the questions, a sample of EFL Iranian learners with different English backgrounds and language proficiency were selected from intact classes.

In addition, a group of English teachers with different degrees and work experience was also chosen. Accordingly, there were six groups comprising two hundred and nine teen subjects of mixed gender and proficiency level. Table 1 shows a schematic description of the sample groups is presented below

Table 1. Demographic information about the sample

Group	Name	Number	Sex Male	Sex Female	Age Range
A	Advanced Headway and CAE Learners	19	12	7	20-25
B	IELTS Preparatory Course Participants	24	14	10	25-30
C	University English Students	40	15	25	20-25
D	Pre-University Students	60	-	60	19
E	Pre-University Students	32	32	-	19
F	English Teachers	44	24	20	22-50

It is worthy of note that group A consisted of subjects at advanced level who studied 'Advanced Headway' and 'CAE Masterclass' in two language institutes, group B involved university graduates with BA/BS or MA/MS, who attended special coaching courses with a primary focus on reading component of IELTS and were supposed to take a proficiency exam like IELTS in near future, Group C comprised sophomores and freshmen studying English Translation in Allameh Tabataba'i University (one of the best universities in Iran which offered the course), Groups C and E included pre-university students who were recommended by their teachers as the best ones at their schools, and, finally, group F was composed of novice and experienced English teachers teaching English in secondary and high schools.

Instrument
The reading comprehension test used as the elicitation task in the present study was taken from a TOEFL book written by Zhong and Sullivan (1990. The text consisted of three paragraphs, a detailed description of which is given below (table 2):

Table 2. Description of reading comprehension test items

Paragraph	No of Sentences	Words per sentence	Characters per words	Flesch	Fog	Flesch- kincaid
1	4	18.75	4.53	68.23	12.3	8.39
2	5	21.4	4.69	69.67	11.17	8.85
3	4	22	4.87	61.54	13.35	10.15

It is worthy of note that the three measures of readability were obtained by using an online program (www. readability Formulas.com) which analyzed the text and gave the results of three popular formulas (i.e. The Flesch Reading Ease Formula, The fog scale, and the Flesch Kincaid Grade level). These measures indicate increasing difficulty of paragraphs and its suitability for learners around intermediate level.

The multiple-choice questions that follow the text consist of ten different types, each of which represents a set of underlying processes, skills, abilities and strategies. This divisibility assumption, a correspondence between question types and skills, is adopted here, though it has received both approval and criticism (for a review, see Alderson, 2000;

Pearson, 2005; Paris, 2007).

For the importance of issue, a description of each question type is presented below, the features of which are listed by referring to the sources mentioned in the review and two TOEFL books written by Zhong and Sullivan (1990) and Gallagher (2005):

1. Organization (Org.): This type of question tests whether the reader can recognize how the author presents ideas and information to meet a specific purpose.

2. Previous or Following Possible topic (P/FPT): For this question a reader must use his / her understanding of the passage to infer what might have been written before or what might come next.

3. Restatement (Res.): This type of question involves literal comprehension of the text, elementary paraphrasing, specific information and skimming or scanning for a detail or fact.
4. Negative Question (Ng.): The question asks one to identify the choice not mentioned in the passage.

5. Referent (Ref.): Referents, words (or sentences, paragraphs) in a passage that other words refer to, are mentioned before the pronoun (or other words) in the passage, often immediately before it, but sometimes after it.

6.Vocabulary (Voc.):This question type requires understanding vocabulary in context by going through context clues, structural clues, punctuation clues, key words and word parts.

7. Main idea (Main): It is an idea that is common to every sentence or each paragraph, i.e. not too broad, too narrow or irrelevant.

8. Inference (Inf.): This involves the deductive process through which a conclusion is derived by integrating the information contained in a text (cotextual information), or by using prior knowledge relating to the text as a whole or accompanying nonlinguistic elements (contextual information).

9. Support (Sup.): This question is similar to a main idea question except that this kind asks about a detail rather than about the whole passage.

10. Author's Purpose, Attitude, Opinion or Tone (Aut Pur.): This type of question tests whether one understands the reason why the author writers something or how the author views the subject about which he or she writes.

Data collection procedure

Before administering the reading comprehension test, the researcher explained what was expected to be done by test takers. The participants, managers of the institutes, schools and university were assured that the information would be used and interpreted anonymously. With regard to instructions, the subjects were informed that they should mark the correct answer and write about the reason why they chose the relevant option or the strategy they employed to answer each question. They could do the writing in English or Persian.

The sessions for the administration of the test lasted about 40 minutes, involving both the marking of correct choice and writing about the reasons or the strategies. The total mark was 16, which means that each correct answer was given one point.

Data analysis

Results were tabulated by marking each item correct for each participant in the groups and entered on a spread sheet for carrying out statistical analysis (i.e. SPSS). Reliability of the reading comprehension questions calculated using Cronback's Alpha. Based on the 16 items and participants, Alpha was reflecting a sufficient level of internal reliability.

The first research question focused on the significance of difference for the groups' performance across different question types. Accordingly, item data of answer patterns and item facility across different question types in the groups were calculated. In order to determine whether the performances across different question types were significantly different, Pearson Chi-square was run for each group.

The second question asked whether some question items account for the significance of difference in the groups' performance across different question types. To answer this question, coefficient of variability for all question items in each group was calculated and the items whose behaviors were different were identified.

As for the third question, the degree of the groups awareness regarding strategies employed was measured by finding the mentioned implicit or explicit strategies and calculating the relevant frequencies.

Results and Discussion

The first research question asked whether the groups perform differently across different question types. The results of data tables and answer patterns for the questions were used to employ the statistical procedure of Chi-square to judge whether the observed frequencies have significant differences or

not. As it can be seen in the following table, the obtained values for all groups, with the exception of group B, are more than the critical value for x2 at .05 level of significance (x2 (9)>16.919). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the groups' performance across different question types is rejected.

Table 3. Chi-square Tests of the six Groups' Performance

Group	Chi-Square	df	Asymp.Sig
A	29.78	9	.000
B	10.74	9	.294
C	27.24	9	.001
D	56.82	9	.000
E	26.80	9	.002
F	58.11	9	.000

The second research question asked whether some question items account for the significance of difference in the groups' performance across different question items. The measures of item facility show that there are apparent differences between groups' performance across different question types. With regard to Group A (Advanced Headway and CAE), questions 'Following Possible Topic' and 'Support' were particularly difficult. The hierarchy of difficulty for the question types is 10/6>9>8>3>5/2>1>7>4. It is also worthy of note that 'Vocabulary was the easiest question type for this group.

However, the second group (IELTES Preparatory Course) showed a different hierarchy 6/3>10>4>2/5>7>2>8>9. As it can be seen for group B, 'Authors' Attitude' and 'Inference' were, the most difficult, and 'Organization' was the easiest one.

With reference to Group C's (English Translation) hierarchy 7>8>10>3>5>4>6>1>2>9, 'Following Possible Topic and 'Referent' were especially difficult, while 'Organization' was a very easy question.

Pre-University Book, group D, Showed a different hierarchy 8>10>4>6>7>9>3>2>5>1. It is clear that 'Referent' was a challenging question for this group, but the students found 'Main Idea' a rather easy question.

Another group of pre-university students, group E, showed the following hierarchy 9>10>4>6>8>7>3/2>5>1. It can be seen that 'Organization' was a very difficult question, but 'Main Idea' was an easy one.

Finally, group F, English Teachers showed the pattern 9>6>3>8>4/10>5>2>1>7. 'Organization' was the most difficult, and 'Following Possible Topic' was the easiest.

As it can be concluded, the results of IF show different patterns of difficulty hierarchy. Therefore, in order to locate the items that cause the significant difference, coefficient of variability (CV) was calculated for each group. The items which approach 2 SD are the ones which contribute to the significance of difference. The following table represents the items that should be considered:

Table 4. Items of Unusual Variance

Group	A	B	C	D	E	F
Items	14	18	18	13	8	14
	17	19	19	15	17	17
	19			19	19	20

Table 5. Items of Unusual Variance (with names)

Group	A	B	C	D	E	F
Items	P/FPT Org. Sup.	Org. Sup.	Org. Sup.	P/FPT Ref. Sup.	Voc. Org. Sup.	P/FPT Org. Sup.

A close look at the data shows the items that can be corresponded with the above numbers. Accordingly, we have the following unusual items for each group.

As for the last question, the participant's degree of awareness in terms of test-taking strategies, the enumeration of the implicitly or explicitly mentioned strategies with the relevant frequencies can be observed in tables 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

Conclusion and Implications

With reference to the results, it can be noticed that EFL learner' performances vary across different

question types. That is to say, EFL learners may find some questions easy or difficult. Therefore, there should be some activities to diagnose the possible problems encountered while answering some specific question items, and, accordingly, follow-up activities to treat these potential problems. As it is often mentioned the textbooks at schools, universities and language institutes should be supplemented by teachers' extra activities.

On the whole, questions assessing student's recognition of organization of ideas in the passage, their detection of ideas supported, and their ability to predict the following topic to be discussed are particularly challenging for students. One possible explanation for this observation can be the nature of

underlying processes which are elicited by the questions; they are concerned with global comprehension. This kind of comprehension, contrasted with local comprehension, has drawn a number of researcher's attention (e.g. Alderson, 2000). It follows that there should be more instances of these questions in the textbooks and teacher's reading comprehension activities.

The low frequency in the list of strategies also indicate that raising students awareness regarding cognitive and metacognitive strategies are quite vital if teachers want to improve their student's performance in reading comprehension tasks. This is the point which is often emphasized in the strategies-based programmes (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

Table 6. Frequency of General Strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
General Strategies (Questions 1-16)							
1. Locating information in different parts of the text	2		2			3	7
2. Comparing and contrasting information presented in the passage and the options	1		2			4	7
3. Skimming the whole passage		3	1	3			7
4. Reading the questions to develop a general idea about the passage and then reading the whole passage to identify and underline the relevant parts	4		3		1		8
5. Answering the last questions on the basis of skimming for the first 13 questions	2	1	1	2			6
6. Reading the whole passage and then the parts of the text			1	2			3
7. Translating the options	1		1				2
8. Using background knowledge			1		3		4
9. Paying attention to key words in the text and the questions	2	1	1			4	8
10. Employing different strategies for different questions (answering some questions after reading for the first time and, some other questions after the second one and the rest after thinking about them more and using background knowledge)		3	2		1		6
Total	12	8	15	7	5	11	58

The teachers in the study did not show a high degree of awareness in terms of strategies. This implies that there should be special in-service programmes to familiarize them with strategies in general, strategies employed in reading comprehension and test-taking strategies specified for each question type.

If we look at the findings from assessment point of view, we can see the necessity of having a variety of question types in both high-stake and low-stake exams in order to tap all the underlying processes, skills, abilities and strategies that they represent (Paris, 2007).

The present research focused on multiple-choice questions assessing reading comprehension. However, future research can focus on other question items (e.g. Completion, matching, summary) and observe the variance in terms of subjects' performance across different tasks and the strategies employed. The line of research can concentrate on the study of effects of proficiency level, sex and age as moderator variables. The sample used in this research was limited to some groups of EFL learners in Iran, so some more groups can be added to make the sample more representative of the EFL population in Iran.

Table 7. Frequency of main idea Strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Groups						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Main Idea (Questions 1-2)							
1. Paying attention to more than one paragraph		1	1			1	3
2. Paying attention to the generality of the option		3	3		3	4	13
3. Paying attention to (skimming) the whole passage		1	10		8	3	22
4. Paying attention to the repetition of key words			2				2
5. Identifying the problem with other three wrong choices			5		1		6
6. Comparing and contrasting the relevance, scope and correctness of choices			9		3		12
7. Paying attention to the idea supported by most of the sentences			1		3	1	5
8. Identifying the nature of question			3				3
9. Reading between lines			1				1
10. Reading one specific paragraph for the main idea			1				1
11. Using background knowledge					2		2
12. Paying attention to the last part of the passage					1	5	6
Total		5	36		21	14	76

Table 8. Frequency of restatement strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Restatement (Questions 3-4)							
1. Identifying specific, relevant information		7	10		11	10	38
2. Finding Paraphrases		1	2			1	4
3. Figuring out irrelevant choices				2			2
4. Comparing and contrasting choices			3				3
5. Paying attention to key words			3		1		4
6. Identifying the explicit nature of question			2		3	4	9
7. Using general information	2			1		1	4
Total	2	8	20	4	15	18	64

Table 9. Frequency of inference strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Inference (Questions 5-6)							
1. Making inferences from different ports of the text		1	1				2
2. Finding relevant parts in the text that can be used to infer		4	15		17	6	42
3. Identifying the implicit nature of the question			4	2			6
4. Reading the passage again	3		2				5
5. Paying attention to key words	3		1			1	5
6. Comparing and contrasting choices			2		1		3
Total	6	5	25	2	18	7	63

Table 10. Frequency of vocabulary strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Vocabulary (Questions 7-8)							
1. Using context clues in the sentence		4			7		11
2. Knowing the meaning of the word	1	1			2	3	7
3. Paying attention to the use of conjunctions			1		1		2
4. Replacing the word in the passage with the other words			2			1	3
5. Weighing choices against one another				4			4
6. Reading the whole sentence again			5				5
7. Deduce logically	2		1				3
8. Finding problem with the other choices			1				1
9. Using world knowledge (content schemata)					1	2	3
10. Paying attention to the general topic of the passage					1	1	2
Total	3	5	10	4	12	7	41

Table 11. Frequency of negative questions strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Negative Questions (Questions 9-10)							
1. Identifying the ideas (not) mentioned in the text			3				3
2. Identifying the different between what is mentioned in the text and the options	1				2		3
3. Looking at the different parts of the text						3	3
4. Paying attention to the key words in the passage and the options	2						2
5. Investing more time on the questions				1	1		2
6. Reading the whole passage again		2					2
7. Finding the relevant lines			1			1	2

	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
8. Finding the ideas mentioned in the passage and, consequently, choosing the option left	3	1			3		7
9. Finding the similarity of idea expressed in two choices			2			3	5
Total	6	3	6	1	6	7	29

Table 12. Frequency of author's attitude questions strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Author's Attitude (Questions 11-12)							
1. Paying attention to the relationship between sent.	2						2
2. Following the logical development of ideas in the passage			3				3
3. Guessing the writer's purpose on the basis of specific line (s)						4	4
4. Comparing and contrasting choices			3		1		4
5. Reading the whole paragraph				1			1
6. Identifying the function (e.g. exemplification) of specific parts of the passage		2	1				3
7. Guessing on the basis of personal knowledge					2		2
8. Paying attention to referents		1				3	4
Total	2	3	7	1	3	7	23

Table 13. Frequency of following possible topic strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Following Possible Topic (Questions 13)							
1. Figuring out the conclusion of the last paragraph or (the second)				2			2
2. Paying attention to the last sentences of the text		2			1		3
3. Comparing and contrasting the choices						1	1
4. Guessing due to lack of certainty	1		4				5
5. Considering the whole passage to arrive at this conclusion	3					2	5
Total	4	2	4	2	1	3	16

Table 14. Frequency of referent strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Referent (Questions 14)							
1. Identifying the antecedent which is the whole paragr.						2	2
2. Finding the main idea of the first paragraph				3		1	4
3. Comparing and contrasting the choices	1				3		4
4. Paying attention to the following and previous sent.	3		5				8
5. Reading the sentence in which the referent is used		2				2	4
Total	4	2	5	3	3	5	22

Table 15. Frequency of organization strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Organization (Question15)							
1. Finding the function of each paragraph					3		3
2. Identifying the development of ideas across the whole passage			2			1	3
3. Reading the whole passage to answer such a question	2				2		4
4. Comparing and contrasting the choices		1		2			3
5. Identifying key words	2					4	6
Total	4	1	2	2	5	5	19

Table 16. Frequency of support strategies used in answering different question types

Frequency of Strategies Used in Answering Different Question Types	Frequency Distribution of Strategies in the Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Support (Question 16)							
1. Paying particular attention to details of a paragraph	1			1	5		7
2. Identifying the clues in the sentence supported by the option		3				1	4
3. Comparing and contrasting the choices				3			3
4. Reading the whole passage	2				4		6
5. Identifying key words			2				2
Total	3	3	2	4	9	1	22

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