Understanding Academic Reading Experiences and Shifts in Reading Strategies within a Sociocultural Context: A Case Study of Malaysian Undergraduates in a British University

by

Esther Jawing

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EMI	English as Medium of Instruction
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
SORS	Survey of Reading Strategies
SVA	Subject-verb Agreement
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
SPM	*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (Malaysian Certificate of Education)

DECLARATION

The work in this thesis was developed and conducted by the author between January 2013 and April 2016. I declare that, apart from work whose authors are explicitly acknowledged, this thesis and the materials contained in this thesis represent original work undertaken solely by the author. I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Date:

Esther Jawing
1350006

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ABSTRACT

Research into L2 reading is well developed. Most of this research, however, views reading within a cognitive and linguistic theoretical framework. It may be argued, however, that an understanding of the reading process can no longer be achieved if restricted to linguistic and cognitive activities. This thesis attempts to draw on sociocultural perspectives to describe ESL academic reading development.

A longitudinal approach is adopted to explore the perceptions and experiences of academic reading of a group of Malaysian undergraduates studying in a British university over a period of two academic years. Using multiple case study design and phenomenography as guiding principles, data collection methods include individual interviews and reading diaries. This research has been conducted in a university in the United Kingdom with five male and six female Malaysian undergraduates. All the participants were fluent English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers. Data were analysed based on phenomenographic and thematic analysis principles, using qualitative data processing software, Nvivo10.

The findings suggest that these participants' perceptions of academic reading are influenced by their perceptions of the role of English in the UK, by the complexity of the texts they read and by their lack of academic language proficiency. Their reading strategies consist of support, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The dynamic nature of their reading strategies is characterised by their reading strategy reinvention and reading strategy adjustments, influenced by a range of text and reader factors. Text factors include the linguistic features in discipline-specific texts and the text medium. Reader factors include motivation and background knowledge. This research has made a contribution to the understanding of the sociocultural elements that influence ESL academic reading development in the UK.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

'The single purpose frequently cited for learning a second language is for reading it' (Bernhardt, 2000, p.701)

1.1 Introduction

English continues to spread, not only as a global language but also as the language of science, technology and advanced research (Grabe and Stoller, 2011). The spread of English appears to have taken on increasing importance, particularly in academic fields. In addition, '[i]n countries around the world, school systems requires students to learn English for access to information and for the eventual ability to compete economically and professionally' (Grabe, 2009, p.6).

Not only is the English language important as a language of science, technology and advanced research in the 21st century, but it has been adopted as the medium of instruction across the higher education landscape (e.g. Chang, 2010; Björkman, 2011; Beckett and Li, 2012). Today, there is a growing number of universities offering academic courses in English, such as in Malaysia, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Vietnam and South Korea (Hu, 2007; Björkman, 2011). This has thus contributed to the growing global phenomenon of English as a Medium of Instructions (EMI) in higher education contexts.

The prevalence of EMI in worldwide educational contexts contributes to the increasing number of international students studying abroad. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimated that about 4.1 million students are studying outside of their home country (OECD, 2012). The shifting learning contexts resulting from the study abroad phenomenon appear to have influenced the research landscape.

Research studies have explored the challenges in terms of academic, social, practical and personal aspects of international students studying abroad. However, research on academic reading competency in a study abroad context is relatively rare (e.g. Campbell and Li, 2007; Evans and Morrison, 2011; Nambiar and Ibrahim, 2011; Nambiar, Ibrahim and Meerah, 2012). For example, Campbell and Li's (2007) study of Asian students in New Zealand suggested that 'many of the assigned academic readings were very difficult to read' (p.8). This has made 'reviewing the concepts, ideas, and theories of these readings critically more difficult due to the students' lack of academic language convention' (ibid).

At times, only the superficial aspects of academic reading appear to have been described in past studies of higher learning in study abroad contexts. Research in ESL academic reading has thus remained of interest among L2 reading scholars, due to (1) the growing global phenomenon of EMI (e.g. Chang, 2010; Beckett and Li, 2012), and (2) the influx of international students studying abroad as evidenced in the ESL academic reading literature (e.g. Miller, 2011; Pecorari et al., 2012; Malcolm, 2012; Nergis, 2013). In addition, research on ESL academic reading has tended to adopt cognitive perspectives and positivist paradigms (e.g. Tabatabaei and Assari, 2011; Tengku Mohamad Maasum and Maarof, 2012; Nergis, 2013). These studies, however, have not produced consistent results among L2 readers.

The reasons for inconsistent results can be explained by the absence of any agreed-upon criteria to describe L2 readers. Several L2 reading scholars such as Kern (2000) and Mokhtari and Reichard (2004) affirm that L2 reading research should be considered in terms of the complex relationships between language, literacy and culture. This view re-affirms the need to explore ESL academic reading development

underpinned by sociocultural views, to address L2 learners' varied L1 backgrounds, prior L2 reading instruction, reading experiences and learning contexts.

Sociocultural views have been used to study and describe L1 reading development and processes. This aspect is a well-researched area in L1 reading (e.g. Forman and Cazden, 1985; Halliday, 1994; Gee, 2001; Lee, 2001; Reyes and Azuara, 2008; Dyson and Genishi, 2013; Heath, 2013). However, it has yet to be developed fully in L2 reading research (Grabe and Stoller, 2011).

To the best of my knowledge, only Kern's (2000) framework in his work *Literacy and Language Teaching*, as well as Grabe and Stoller's *Teaching and Researching Reading* published in 2011, acknowledge the influence of social and cultural factors on the L2 reading development process. Thus, the point of contention in the existing literature is how a socially oriented framework can conceptualise L2 reading development, particularly in terms of the ESL academic reading development process.

This chapter provides the overall background to the study. It starts with a description of academic reading in a second language. Then, it offers a brief overview of my own educational experiences as an ESL teacher and learner. My experiences are twofold. Firstly, reading is one the skills that I find very challenging to teach. Secondly, as an ESL Malaysian postgraduate myself I also struggled with the academic reading demands in the first few months in the UK. The significance of conducting this research will be discussed and finally, I will outline the structure and purpose of each chapter in this thesis.

1.2 Academic Reading in a Second Language

Reading in academic fields through the medium of English has undeniably provided one of the 'many avenues for students to develop their abilities to the point at which advanced academic curricular goals can be achieved' (Grabe, 2009, p.6). In higher education contexts, one of the most serious problems, but often neglected by both students and lecturers, is that of reading skills. In Hedgcock and Ferris's (2009) analysis of teachers in disciplines such as science and mathematics, social studies and arts, the results suggest that teachers seem to assume that their pupils or students already know 'how to read' (p. 2). The reason for this might be that the reading process as experienced by these students is yet to be understood. Therefore, it is difficult for educators to identify students' ability to read, because the reading process is complex and inaccessible through outside observation.

Another reason could be that the teaching of reading skills is often seen as one of the responsibilities of language teachers (Hedgcock and Ferris, 2009). One of the major concerns is that of other educators' inability to develop their students' reading skills when they need instructional intervention (ibid). The issue here concerns not only the learners' ability to read, but also how well they can read content-specific texts.

Levine, Ferenz and Reves (2000, p.1) suggested that 'the ability to read academic texts was considered one of the most important skills that university students of ESL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) need to acquire'. The issue remains, however, whether these ESL and EFL learners are prepared for the reading demands in higher education. For example, the instructional practice for ESL reading activities in Malaysian public secondary schools, as pointed out by Mohd Sidek (2011b) focuses on the Initiation-Response-Evaluation format (i.e. students read silently, teacher asks questions, students respond and teacher evaluates said response).

Nambiar (2005) also suggested that L2 reading instruction is usually conducted in a mechanistic manner, with learners required to read a text first, underline difficult words, and then use a dictionary to source the meaning of each word. Comprehension questions are used to identify the important ideas in the text; a very popular method in school is to get learners to identify the main ideas' (Nambiar, 2005, pp.2–3). When these students enter higher learning institutions, it is often assumed they possess the skills and strategies needed to successfully comprehend academic text.

The teaching and learning of English in Malaysia is, therefore, seen as learning a subject and focusing on 'the mechanics of the language, without making connections with how it is used in real communicative events' (Musa, Lie and Azman, 2012, p.39). These common classroom practices suggest that the teaching of English literacy neglects the sociocultural elements of language learning (ibid). In addition, during the transition from school to higher education contexts, the academic or language skills needed might go beyond rote learning and the mechanics of language.

Academic reading at the tertiary level, for example, requires more than comprehension skills, because students have to critically react to the content over the duration of their studies. They would also be expected to participate in class discussions, recall main points and details when tested, and synthesise information from reading with other related information. The academic reading and critical thinking skills that are needed for both academic and critical literacies are likely to be challenging for native English-speaking students (Wingate, 2007; Wingate and Tribble, 2012). They are doubly likely to be discouraging for students who are (1) being educated through the medium of an L2, and (2) in an unfamiliar educational system (Grabe, 2009; Hedgcock and Ferris, 2009; Grabe and Stoller, 2011).

1.3 My Personal Experiences

Looking back at how I taught the reading skill to my students, I often took my students for granted by assuming they knew how to read. Most often, I did not teach them how to (1) understand the passage structures, and (2) offer their stances and views when reading a text. In my ESL reading classrooms, I ideally had students who seemed to understand the text. In reality, however, they were unable to comprehend the texts they were reading. Throughout my career as an ESL teacher, the greatest challenge was to teach reading skills.

My own teaching experiences concur with Hedgcock and Ferris's (2009) assertions that most teachers in disciplines (including myself) often assumed that students already knew how to read. What appeared unproblematic to me could be viewed very differently from the perspectives of the students. To me, the students' reading process was a very challenging thing to understand and, often, inaccessible from my own observation.

I found that the reading process itself was, most often, complicated especially when it involved learners who were reading in another language. This complication pertained to other problems, such as language proficiency. When proficiency posed another challenge to teach the reading skills, this necessitated a more mechanistic teaching approach in my ESL classrooms.

The ideal theoretical views of reading and the pedagogy that I learned in preparing to become a qualified ESL teacher were shattered the moment I taught reading skills in my first ESL reading classroom. The reality of ESL reading classrooms appeared to transform my epistemological beliefs on L2 reading instructions. It had, thus, placed me at a crossroads in terms of whether I should maintain my idealistic approach to teach reading skills. I decided to re-assess my teaching approach and to adopt more realistic

methods in my ESL reading classrooms. In view of this, I focused on the mastering of grammar rules and rote learning, so learners could use these skills to pass their examinations. Eventually, I gave in and adopted conventional L2 reading instructions in Malaysia.

Reading practice and instruction in Malaysia have been described by Nambiar (2005, 2007) and Mohd Sidek (2011b) as a situation whereby L2 learners are mainly tested on the vital skills needed to answer comprehension questions in examinations. It may be argued that the basic skills and strategies to read for rote learning, memorisation and examination probably had not prepared them for the actual reading demands that would later be useful for higher education, careers or even later in life. Although the teaching of reading skills should focus more than just scoring good results in reading comprehension tests, the reading focus in Malaysian ESL classrooms is most often exam-oriented.

In addition to relating my own experiences as an ESL teacher, I come from an ESL background, and learned English from when I was 6 years old. Growing up in East Malaysia (i.e. Sabah), I learned to read in two languages, Malay and English. I was studying in Catholic schools. Apart from learning English as a subject in school, I was also exposed to English through my Catholic faith. Throughout my childhood and teenage years, I attended Sunday schools and Sunday services in English. I read the English bible and learned Catholic prayers through the medium of English.

At school and university in Malaysia, I was considered to be a competent L2 reader. Looking back at my prior L2 reading instructions in schools, reading activities were most often conducted in a mechanistic manner. For example, I would usually look at the grammar because I was tested on these skills. My reading activities required the skills needed to answer comprehension questions. Thus, some of the reading strategies that I could recall and use frequently consisted of (1) skimming and scanning, (2) re-

reading, (3) highlighting, underlining, circling and bracketing important points, and (4) writing a summary. On some occasions, I preferred a reading aloud strategy. I always considered myself as a competent reader for both academic and pleasure purposes.

My own experiences as an ESL postgraduate in the UK, however, proved otherwise. I was overwhelmed with the demands of academic reading when I started my PhD candidacy in October 2012. As a result, I went back to the level of a less-competent reader when reading difficult and challenging academic texts. I managed to identify my academic reading challenges. It was not the language itself that I was struggling with. The challenges were rather academic reading demands, my lack of critical reading and thinking skills.

I was able to identify my academic reading challenges, with the help of my prior training as an ESL teacher and teaching experiences in ESL classrooms. However, a different scenario might be experienced by novice academic readers or first year Malaysian undergraduates if they were to be in my shoes. This speculation boosted my enthusiasm to explore how Malaysian students read academic texts at the tertiary level, following my own prior teaching and learning of L2 reading instructions and current lived experiences as a postgraduate student in the UK. With regard to the abovementioned challenges in ESL academic reading, I am keen to explore the perceptions, experiences, reading strategy usage and dynamism of a group of Malaysian undergraduates' studying in the UK.

1.4 Backgrounds of the Participants

This study involved a group of first year Malaysian university students who came to the UK to pursue undergraduate studies on government scholarships. These Malaysian undergraduates came from a bilingual education system whereby Malay was used as the main medium of instruction. The English language, however, was taught to them as early

as pre-school age between 5 and 6 years old. In addition, 'Malaysia has accorded English as a second language status, as stated in Article 152, and is given due attention' (Jalaluddin, Mat Awal and Abu Bakar, 2008, p.106), particularly for education purposes.

The participants in this study were Malaysians from the Malay ethnic group. Malay was their native language (see Section 3.4 in Chapter 3 for more details about these participants). Malay comes under the umbrella of Austronesian languages, which comprises four groups such as Indonesian, Malanesian, Austronesian and Polynesian (Jalaluddin, Mat Awal and Abu Bakar, 2008). Meanwhile, the English language is classified as a Germanic language from the Indo-European group. Tracing back the earlier history of the Germanic language, it has been based on the reconstruction of Proto-Germanic which, later, evolved into German, English, Dutch, African, Yiddish and Scandinavian languages (ibid).

There are significant differences between these two languages. English and Malay are not connected, and do not come from the same cognate (Jalaluddin, Mat Awal and Abu Bakar, 2008). Therefore, there are many structural differences that have been identified by past research (e.g. Salehuddin, Tan and Maros, 2006; Maros, Tan and Salehuddin, 2007; Mat Awal, Abu Bakar, Abdul Hamid and Jalaluddin, 2007; Jalaluddin, Mat Awal and Abu Bakar, 2008). Some of the identified structural differences consist of morphological and syntactical aspects.

There are '25 letters and 34 phonemes in Malay, as compared with 26 letters and 44 phonemes in English, but it is the ratio of vowel letters to vowel phonemes that is likely to influence performance in naming tasks' (Yap, Liow, Jalil and Faizal, 2010, p.995). Malay and English both have 6 vowel letters, but Malay has only 7 vowel phonemes, as compared with 20 in English (ibid). In addition, Malay has shallow orthography–

phonology mappings, transparent morphology, and simple, short syllabic structures (ibid).

In English, every normal sentence must contain a verb. However, Malay is an agglutinative language, where prefixes and suffixes are used extensively to express grammatical relationships and to form new words (Yap et al., 2010, p.995). The above discussion indicates that the differences between these languages are confusing, and might interfere with each other. Nonetheless, Malay borrows many words from English such as *bajet* (budget), *nasional* (national), *prosedur* (procedure), *hospital*, *kaunter* (counter) and so on (see Section 2.7.1 in Chapter 2 for more discussion about Malay and English differences).

1.5 Significance of this Study

The main contributions of this thesis can be summarised as follows:

1) This study represents the first longitudinal study in the ESL reading field that seeks to explore the perceptions and academic reading experiences of a group of Malaysian undergraduates in a new learning context (i.e. British university). In addition, previous studies on ESL/EFL academic reading have been based on linguistic and cognitivist theories. In view of this, the present study adopts the sociocultural perspective that previous studies appear to have lacked.

2) Research on ESL academic reading has often been limited to ESL or EFL educational settings. These include a few studies underpinned by a sociocultural standpoint in that of Abbott (2010), Zhang (2010) and Malcolm (2012). The present study aims to conceptualise L2 readers' experiences, perceptions, the reading strategy usage and dynamism based on their interaction with various types of texts under different cognitive

and affective stances to maximise academic reading activities in an L1 English setting (i.e. British university).

3) In Grabe and Stoller's book, *Teaching and Researching Reading* published in 2011, they highlighted that one of the differences in L1 and L2 reading would refer to the sociocultural aspects, because 'reading development and reading instruction were strongly influenced by parental and community attitudes toward reading and uses of literacy' (p.52). They further emphasised the significance of sociocultural influences on L2 reading development, which necessitated further research. This study may answer Grabe and Stoller's call because it has drawn on the participants' personal accounts to depict their (1) experiences and perceptions of academic reading, (2) reading strategy usage, and (3) dynamic nature of reading strategies operating in various cognitive and affective stances. This has allowed the participants to discover their own reading process and to project their voices on their behalf to the 'ears' of the other L2 learners.

4) The findings of this study might provide further useful guidance to Malaysian university students prior coming to study abroad, particularly in predominantly English-speaking institutions. This study might also disseminate information concerning academic reading challenges that they might face, the impact of these on academic reading tasks and to explore the types of reading strategies that might be useful to meet academic reading demands.

5) This study could also provide insights to policy makers, educators, schools and universities in the UK (and possibly in Malaysia) in terms of academic reading preparation and support that they can offer to Malaysian students (or other international students).

1.7 Outline of this Thesis

This thesis consists of 6 chapters. **Chapter 1** starts with background information about the growing global phenomenon of EMI and increasing number of students studying abroad. This is followed by the motivation for conducting this research, which includes brief information about the participants' language background. The significance of the study is also explained.

Chapter 2 presents a detailed account of existing research on L2 reading by discussing the shifting theoretical views of reading, before describing L2 reading development. This chapter further outlines the domination of linguistic and cognitive views that underpins L2 reading research by reviewing previous studies on ESL/EFL and L1 English readers' reading strategy usage , L1 and L2 reading and other factors (e.g. prior reading instruction, motivation, individual differences). This thesis suggests the social turn in L2 reading research to elicit more pragmatic exploration to describe L2 reading development and processes based on a longer period of time to attain rich data inside the environment of an L1 English tertiary institution. Two components of sociocultural elements, namely text and reader factors, are found to be relevant to ESL academic reading research, and are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methodological approach used in this study, that is, a qualitative study using the phenomenography guiding principles. It also describes the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions underpinnings of phenomenography. This is followed by explaining the research design of the study and the criteria for participants' selection. The rationales for the selection of the methods, the framework of analysis, ethical consideration, and my data collection journey are also presented. Then, the analytical process of these data with reference to Orgill and Sutherland (2008) and Braun and Clarke (2013) systematic guidelines to carrying out

phenomenography thematic analysis, followed by the rigour of phenomenography research are discussed in detail.

Chapter 4 presents the findings for research questions derived from the interviews data. This chapter begins with a detailed description of academic reading perceptions and experiences. The patterns of reading strategy usage are presented as case studies followed by cross-cases synthesis. These cross-cases synthesis comprise a discussion of reading strategies dynamism and the factors influence these dynamism.

Chapter 5 brings together the findings of this research and discusses the possible meanings and their implications. The findings in Chapter 4 are first compared with those derived from the previous literature, and are then used to address the research aims and questions. This is followed by a discussion of salient and relevant new or emerging issues.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of the key research findings of the study, and concludes this study with the research contribution and implications of my findings. This chapter also acknowledges the limitations of the study, and suggests several recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

'Literacy is not seen as a uniform and universal construct, but rather as a dynamic set of linguistic, social and cognitive processes that are culturally motivated' (Kern, 2000, p.39)

2.1 Introduction and Overview

The purpose of the literature review is to provide a theoretical framework for this study based on the issues highlighted in Chapter 1. This section will begin by addressing definitions of reading, reading models and the relevance of L1 models to L2 reading. The existing literature has often been context specific or 'top down' in nature. This thesis will however argue for the defining role of learner views in terms of achieving successful reading outcomes and achievements. The subsequent sections of this chapter will focus on a review of previous studies on L2 reading to highlight a seeming lack of research using a bottom-up approach that focuses on learner voices. This chapter will also examine the need to expand current understanding and perspectives of the sociocultural aspects of L2 reading development that may suggest academic reading in English entails distinct experiences and cultural meanings for L2 learners. In this thesis, I will explore those L2 learners' perceptions of academic reading that might allow us insights into the value of authentic learner voices in L2 reading literature.

Overview of the chapter:

2.2 Definitions of Reading

2.3 Models of Reading

2.4 Reading Comprehension

2.5 Implications of Academic Reading Strategies Research

2.6 Linking the Sociocultural Perspective in Academic Reading Research

2.2 Definitions of Reading

The theoretical paradigms for the reading process have undergone numerous modifications over the past three decades of research. These changes being explored in various aspects such as psycholinguistic (Goodman, 1965), cognitive psychology (Kintsch and van Dijk, 1978) and social (Alexander, 1996; Reynolds, Sinatra and Jetton, 1996).

From the psycholinguistic perspective, Goodman (1967) defines the reading process as a 'psycholinguistic game' because it involves a selective process. For Smith (1971), fluent reading does not normally require the identification of individual words due to the ability to put letters to form words having 'very little to do with the actual process of reading (as opposed to learning to read) and that even the ability to identify words loses its importance when one 'reads for meaning' (p.9). It can therefore be inferred here that for psycholinguists, the focus is more 'on the semantics or meaning and how meaning is acquired, represented, and used during the reading process' (Alexander and Fox, 2004, p.9). However, this psycholinguistic view of reading has since shifted, following the influx of researchers from the cognitive psychology background.

The changing perspective on reading, once rooted in cognitive psychology, viewed reading, as described by Anderson (1977), as based more on information-processing theory (Alexander and Fox, 2004). Reading, from this perspective, acknowledges the influence of the reader's background knowledge on the eventual construction of meanings. The 'Schema Theory' is embedded into this perspective by Anderson (1984), who suggests that schema are activated in the course of the reading

process when the reader comprehends a message and 'is able to bring to mind a schema that gives a good account of the objects and events described in the message' (p.594).

After the period of cognitive psychology, the theoretical perspectives on reading adopted social and cultural views of reading. These views underline the reading process as being based on 'the creation of a mutual understanding arising in the social interaction of particular individuals in a particular context at a particular time' (Alexander and Fox, 2004, p.46). Such perspectives resonate with Rosenblatt's (1994) pragmatic concept of reading, in which the reading process is conceptualised based on the importance of meaning construction from texts. Reading is posited as a transaction between the reader and text (or authors), and is influenced by various factors such as social, ethnic, educational, cultural context and personal (Rosenblatt, 1994). It can thus be surmised that following the theoretical transformation, the views of reading have in themselves shifted from being a passive to an active process.

The sociocultural views of reading emphasise the interaction between the reader and text structures, pragmatics, content, context and topic based on their contextual situated realities. In view of the significant role of reader and text to reading comprehension, this thesis draws upon Wray and Janan's (2013) argument that the nature of reading over the past 20 years has shifted towards a more interpretive definition that emphasises meaning making as arising from a process in which readers interact with texts (p.73). As mentioned earlier, the basic premise underlying this view is that the cultural background will manifest itself in reading as a result of the interaction between text and reader.

2.2.1 L2 Reading

Although this study is focused on L2 reading, the aforementioned definitions could provide a better understanding of the processes involved in the reading process. Grabe (2004) suggests that L2 insights 'often converge with L1 reading research literature, permitting us to draw major implications from L1 research findings in general' (p.45). However, since language itself is not the major concern in L1 reading, it could be argued that research on this area is more focused on the reading process itself, and therefore differs from L2 reading. Apart from looking at the reading process, other research interests in the latter might examine language proficiency and its relation to L2 reading.

Birch (2007) views L2 reading as difficult to define, due to L1 interference. Apart from the reading process, other aspects of reading such as reading purposes, L1 background and language proficiency could contribute to L2 reading development (Grabe, 2009). For example, reading as a decoding process is important to L1 English early reading development, but would not be so relevant to describe early L2 reading development. An explanation of this would refer to L2 learners' already established knowledge of their L1 when they embark on learning to read in an L2. As Koda (2007, p.12) opines:

> 'children learning to read English must understand that each letter represents a distinct sound—either a consonant or a vowel (the alphabetic principle)—and then gradually work out the details of sound-symbol correspondences through print decoding and encoding experience. Although the same realisation (the alphabetic principle) is also required of children learning to read Korean, they must also realize that individual symbols must be packed into syllable blocks and then learn the specific ways in which syllable blocks are formed'.

The above example by Koda implies that decoding in L1 English and L1 Korean is varied and language-specific. Urquhart and Weir (1998) argue that the focus of decoding in early L2 reading development is similar to 'barking at print'. For example, L2 readers could

read 'with reasonably good pronunciation, but no comprehension' (Urquhart and Weir, 1998, p.17). Reading from L2 perspectives, then, might not necessarily be anchored to a decoding process because other social and cultural factors could in fact be influencing the L2 reading process and development.

As with L1 reading, the theoretical transformation in L2 reading has shifted from a psycholinguistic view towards a more cognitive and social perspective. For example, Bernhardt (1996) classifies L2 reading according to cognitive and social processes. Reading as a cognitive process 'means examining the reading process as an interpersonal problem-solving task that takes place within the brain's knowledge structures' (Bernhardt, 1996, p.6) whereas as a social process, it becomes 'rooted in the belief that texts are manifestation of cultures' (Bernhardt, 1996, pp.9–10). Reading is defined by Urquhart and Weir (1998) as 'the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language via the medium of print' (p.22). L2 reading therefore, from the cognitive and social perspective, is rooted in two key factors, namely the meaning-making process and cultural differences.

According to Grabe and Stoller (2011), L2 reading encompasses (1) linguistic and processing differences between L1 and L2 readers, (2) individual and experiential differences between L1 and L2 readers, and (3) sociocultural and institutional differences that influence L2 reading process and development. The premise underlying Grabe and Stoller's assertion appears to go beyond reading as a cognitive process, and highlights the significant role of the L2 readers' context of social interaction and culture during their reading activities. The implication here is that the widening focus of L2 reading necessitates the adoption of sociocultural views, in order to fully describe the reading development.

2.3 The Models of Reading

This section describes the reading process based on L1 reading models: (1) *bottom-up,* (2) *top-down,* (3) *interactive,* and (4) *transactional.* Although these models are based on L1 reading development, the theories can be drawn upon to help extend the perspectives and theoretical concepts underpinning L2 reading. Considering that the overarching structure of this thesis is on L2 reading, the relevance of L1 reading models to L2 reading is discussed in the following section.

2.3.1 Bottom-up

Gough (1972) describes reading as a *bottom-up* process because it starts 'with the stimulus such as the text, or bits of the texts' (Urquhart and Weir, 1998, p.40). Likewise, the *bottom-up* model emphasises reading as a (1) 'letter-by-letter analysis of the words on the page, without any input from information stored in memory' (Harrison, 2004, p.35), and (2) 'strict letter-by-letter, word-by-word analysis of the input string' (Rumelhart, 1985, p.720). However, there is a reservation with this approach to reading, since it might actually be unnecessary for readers to read every individual word in order to understand a text.

Another belief concerning the reading process is that reading does not always fixate on decoding that could lead to word recognition (Goodman, 1967; Smith, 1971; Stanovich, 1984). As Smith (1971) puts it, 'the ability to identify words loses its importance when one reads for meaning' (p.9). The *bottom- up* model does not address the interaction between reader and text in terms of (1) how meaning is constructed, and (2) how these meanings are comprehended. Reading, as outlined by this model, does not appear to provide a broader view of what the reader brings to the text. According to this model, comprehension is only achieved when 'the text has been read and the reading completed' (Rumelhart, 1985, p.720). Although it provides reading research with useful

conceptualisations of reading, the model lacks a thorough explanation of the mechanism underlying meaning construction and comprehension.

2.3.2 Top-down

The view underpinning the *top-down* model assumes good reading to be 'always conceptually driven' and 'lower-level processes important only in so far as they might signal or point toward conceptual features' (Bernhardt, 2011, p.36). This model is seen as a type of hypothesis testing, because the reader brings in his hypotheses while reading a text and verifies them by processing the stimulus (Urquhart and Weir, 1998; Stanovich, 1984). The general idea of this model emphasises that in order to read the lower level units (letters/words), a reader has to draw upon his higher-level processes. Therefore, if the 'bottom-up analyses starts by processing the stimulus' this model 'starts with hypotheses and then attempts to verify them by processing the stimulus' (Stanovich, 1984, p.34). In Rumelhart's (1985) acclaimed paper, *Toward an Interactive Model of Reading*, he suggests that this model outlines 'an accurate representation of the reading process. However, it is of very little help as a model of reading' (p.732). In view of this, the synthesis of basic premise underlying the '*bottom-up*' and '*top-down*' models could be due to the co-occurrence of both bottom-up and top-down reading processes as discussed in the following section.

2.3.3 Interactive

The interactive model incorporates the interaction between bottom-up and top-down processing. This model, as reinforced by Stanovich (1980), puts forward a notion that 'a pattern is synthesised based on the information provided simultaneously from several knowledge sources…a deficit in any knowledge source results in a heavier reliance on other knowledge sources, regardless of their level in the processing hierarchy' (p. 63).

Another conceptualisation of the interactive model as highlighted by Stanovich (1980) pertains to a compensatory manner that could 'lead to a reconceptualisation of the nature of individual differences in reading' (p.35). Meaning construction during the reading process involves the general interaction between a reader and text, influenced by (1) knowledge of the texts, and (2) background knowledge.

2.3.4 Transactional

In the *transactional* model, reading is viewed as a transaction between reader and text. The reading process, as defined by Rosenblatt (1994), is 'an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular pattern of signs, a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context' (p.929). Put more simply, the text in itself is nothing and has no meaning until a reader transacts with it. Meaning is derived as a result of the transaction or interplay between the reader and text. This model specifies other factors that influence the reading interaction, namely the social, educational, personal (e.g. background knowledge and motivation) and distinctive cultural contexts.

2.3.5 Are L1 Reading Models Relevant to L2 Reading?

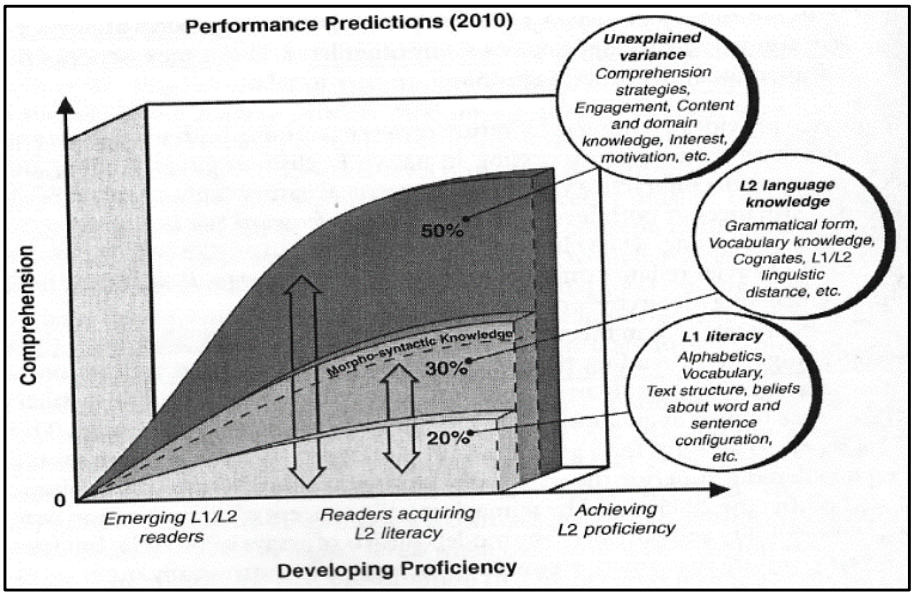
Whether the models for L1 reading are applicable to L2 reading is a contentious issue among reading scholars (Urquhart and Weir, 1998; Kern, 2000; Bernhardt, 2005; Grabe, 2009; Bernhardt, 2011). For example, Bernhardt (2011) points out that the most referenced models in L2 reading research are those by 'Goodman (1968) and Smith (1971) in 65% of published studies, whereas interactive models such as those posited by Stanovich (1980) are referred to by only 15% (p.36). Researchers in favour of the *top-down* model argue about the non-necessity of readers having to identify all the words in their reading; instead, it is suggested that the focus on the low-level reading processes might actually hinder the reader's interaction with texts and meaning- making.

The prevalence of *top-down* models in L2 reading research, however, contradicts Birch's (2007) view. Birch (2007) raises the necessity of considering the cognitive processing strategies (i.e. bottom-up strategies) due to many L2 learners not having attained the higher-order sub-skills. Therefore, they appear to have lacked linguistic efficiency with graphemic information. The *interactive* model, on the other hand, is often regarded as the most accurate exemplification of the reading process. For example, Grabe and Stoller (2011) indicate that L1 and L2 reading literature often assuming that 'one can take useful ideas from a bottom-up perspective and combine them with key ideas from a top-down view' (p.26). Despite its accurate exemplification of the L2 reading process, this model is, however, not extensively referenced in past L2 reading research.

The abovementioned models are theorised and developed based on L1 reading processes, due perhaps to research on L2 reading being relatively new and less developed in literature. To date, there has been only one L2 reading model available, that is the one developed by Bernhardt (2011). This model is grounded in Stanovich's (1980, 1984) interactive-compensatory theory of reading.

In Bernhardt's latest book on *Understanding Advanced Second Language Reading*, published in 2011, her compensatory-model of L2 reading demonstrates that 'L1 literacy knowledge and/or L2 grammatical ability as contributions to the L2 reading process' (Bernhardt, 2011, p.37). Bernhardt's model, however, is less developed with many unexplained variables yet to be researched and explained to fully describe the L2 reading process. These variables espousing L1 literacy, L2 knowledge and the other unexplained variances are predicted to co-exist during the L2 reading process. I reproduce as follow, Bernhard's Compensatory model of L2 reading in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Compensatory Model of L2 reading (adopted from Bernhardt, 2011, p.38).



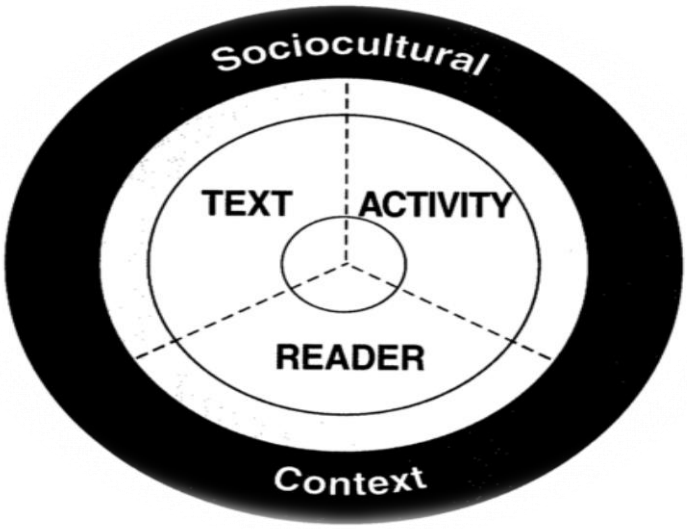
In tracing the development of this model since Bernhardt first developed it in 1995, it may be seen that the theoretical perspectives underpinning this model involve the cognitive and cultural perspectives of reading. For example, readers bring in different interpretations and inferences to the text based on their content and domain knowledge, motivation and interest. A major challenge that remains, however, is exploring the capabilities of this model to explain L2 reading development.

2.4 Reading Comprehension

The ongoing debate on L2 reading remains of interest among L2 reading scholars and has directed the focus of research to reading comprehension. According to Harrison (2004), 'in reading comprehension, the principle of indeterminacy operates in the following manner: there is such thing as a person's understanding of a text, but the more you probe it, the more the probing itself changes a person's state of understanding' (p. 53). To students, reading forms the basis of learning and academic achievements (Paris, 2005).

The RAND Study Group (2002) defines reading comprehension as 'the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through the interaction and involvement with the written language' (p.xiii). This process involves the interrelationship between the elements of (1) reader, (2) text, and (3) activity or purpose of reading that occurs within a larger sociocultural context (RAND, 2002). In addition, the sociocultural context mediates L2 readers' experiences just as these may influence the context. These interactions are represented by the RAND model of reading (RAND, 2002) in Figure 2.2.

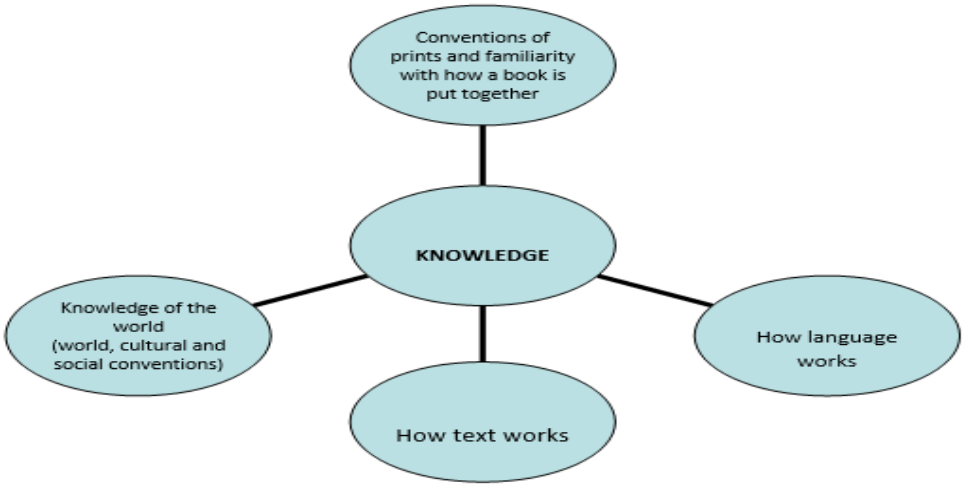
Figure 2.2: A heuristic for thinking about comprehension (RAND, 2002, p.12)



The premise of this model is the assumption that a reader brings in his or her own understanding and knowledge to interpret what they read, in order to achieve comprehension. This description of reading comprehension is echoed by Harrison (2004). Reading is seen as an intensely personal matter, books as cultural artifacts, and the activity something usually done in a 'social and cultural context (ibid). According to Harrison (2004), four types of knowledge are elicited in order for successful reading to occur (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: The four types of knowledge to understand a text

(Adopted from Harrison, 2004)



In addition to knowledge of the vocabulary, Harrison (2004) believes knowledge of the world is crucial for someone to understand a text, since reading involves the understanding of (1) world knowledge (e.g. world, cultural and social conventions), (2) how language works, (3) how text works as well as the conventions of prints, and (4) how a text is put together. Like the changes on theoretical views to reading and reading models described earlier, reading comprehension has similarly adopted the sociocultural aspect to describe the interactions between reader, text and reading activities.

2.5 Implications of Academic Reading Strategy Research

As discussed earlier in Section 1.2, the prevalence of research on academic reading in L2 is influenced by the influx of L2 readers in predominantly English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), Australia and New Zealand. Since reading comprehension is considered as the most important area of academic reading, the shift of focus in L2 reading research has therefore resulted in one

of the most extensively researched aspects in academic reading: L2 readers' reading strategy usage.

Research on L2 reading has been shaped by the theoretical views and models described in Section 2.2 and 2.3, particularly in terms of documenting the types of reading strategies used for academic reading comprehension. The following section provides a review of previous studies that have specifically focused on the cognitive and linguistic processing in reading.

2.5.1 Previous Studies on Academic Reading in a Second Language

2.5.1.1 ESL/EFL Learners' Reading Strategy Usage

Reading strategy usage between successful and less successful EFL readers in Thailand was investigated by Baker and Boonkit (2004). A total of 149 subjects were selected for the initial questionnaire. From this, 12 subjects were asked to complete a language learning journal, while 17 others, again from the initial 149, were interviewed concerning their responses on the questionnaire (ibid). A questionnaire, learning diaries and interviews were used to elicit both quantitative and qualitative data.

The findings indicated that (1) learners usually utilised reading strategies to solve their problems in reading, although they did not always select appropriate strategies for certain reading texts or tasks, (2) successful EFL learners had most often read in English and applied what they had learnt to other areas of their English skills more frequently, and (3) less-successful EFL learners used strategies such as translation, highlighting and taking notes more regularly than successful learners (Baker and Boonkit, 2004). Although this study adopted a mixed-method design, the qualitative data did not provide any additional explanations concerning the affective and social strategies that emerged from the quantitative analysis. Considering its significance in L2 reading, this aspect remains of interest for further investigation.

Cubukcu (2007) investigated the reading strategy usage of 229 sophomore and senior Turkish ESL teacher trainees in Western Turkey. The quantitative study adopted the Reading Strategies Scale and semi-structured interviews for data collection. This study found that 'the most frequently used strategies were underlining, visualizing, guessing, reading according to the questions, and finding out the main themes' (Cubukcu, 2007, p.97). The sophomore teacher trainees appeared to be using more reading strategies compared to their seniors, who demonstrated a lack of knowledge of these aspects. Both groups of teacher trainees were nonetheless aware of which strategies to use in comprehending a text (ibid). In summary, the sophomores and seniors alike used the bottom-up and top-down reading strategies when reading L2 texts.

Nambiar (2008) conducted a study of 315 Malaysian ESL readers in a secondary school in Malaysia by means of a questionnaire and semi-formal interviews. The findings revealed these types of reading strategies, namely, (1) memory, (2) cognitive, (3) metacognitive, and (4) compensatory. However, apart from utilising a range of reading strategies, the study participants did not favour analytical and critical reading skills. The lack of usage of these skills may be attributed to the influence of the students' prior reading practice in school (ibid).

In the Arab learning context, meanwhile, Malcolm (2009) conducted a survey of 160 Arabic-medical EFL learners' reading strategy usage in a university in Bahrain. The results indicated that learners with low-proficiency used bottom-up strategies (i.e. translation) quite frequently in their first year of study. However, these strategies were subsequently replaced by metacognitive strategies over the years of study, following their improved vocabulary.

Another quantitative study was conducted by Cogmen and Saracaloglu (2009) on 230 college Turkish students in Pamukkale University, Turkey. Their reading strategies comprised both analytic (metacognitive) and pragmatic (practical) elements, with the latter seemingly more dominant for academic success. Their dominance was influenced by the need 'to remember and construct the concepts while reading academic texts' (Cogmen and Saracaloglu, 2009, p.250).

Tabatabaei and Assari (2011) had initially examined 180 volunteer Iranian ESP learners in Islamic Azad University using the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS). The survey size was later trimmed to only 90 from the following main study areas: (1) Medicine, (2) Computer-Engineering, and (3) Law. They found that ESP learners demonstrated 'a clear preference for problem solving strategies regardless of their field of study' (p.213). These learners' prior L2 reading instructions was reflected through their patterns of reading strategy usage.

The Iranian ESP learners demonstrated 'a clear preference for problem solving strategies regardless of their field of study' (Tabatabaei and Assari, 2011, p.213). These patterns of reading strategy usage were illuminated through the learners' prior L2 reading instructions. Although this study was theorised based on the cognitive view of reading, the emergent findings indicated the need to explore the influence of context to investigate EFL learners' reading strategies preferences.

A quantitative study by Tengku Mohamad Maasum and Maarof (2012) on 41 EFL undergraduates at a public university in Malaysia attempted to clarify the metacognitive reading strategies employed when reading academic texts. The findings revealed that participants were (1) aware of the metacognitive reading strategies, (2) conscious of their cognitive process during reading, and (3) able to utilise a wide array of metacognitive reading strategies to achieve text comprehension. These reading strategies were classified

into global, support and problem solving. This suggested that the description of reading strategy usage was conceptualised based on the cognitive processing in reading.

The factors affecting the reading comprehension of 45 students from the English Language Teaching Department in an English-medium foundation university in Turkey were investigated by Nergis (2013). This study adopted a quantitative research design, using tests and Reading Strategies questionnaires. The analysis of data suggested syntactic awareness and metacognitive reading strategies as significant predictors of academic reading comprehension in L2 (ibid). However, the need to explore other variables such as genre knowledge, motivation and memory systems to explain academic reading comprehension was highlighted for further research (ibid). Thus, this study recommended a further exploration of the different pedagogical, cognitive and linguistic impact on comprehension.

In summary, the studies reviewed suggest that factors such genre knowledge, motivation, prior L2 reading instruction, current L2 reading contexts and changing reading purposes influence the patterns of reading strategy usage. Although the cognitive and linguistic theories of reading are often dominant, there are nevertheless several identified findings that should be explored, based on the sociocultural perspectives (e.g. Baker and Boonkit, 2004; Nambiar, 2008; Tabatabaei and Assari, 2011; Nergis, 2013). Considering the diversity in the ESL/EFL learning contexts and culture, what appears to be necessary here is for these factors to be described in terms of the social and cultural influences on L2 reading development.

2.5.1.2 L1 English and ESL L2 Readers' Reading Strategy usage

This section now reviews past studies comparing L2 readers' and L1 English reading strategy usage in non-ESL learning contexts. Sheorey and Mokhtari's (2001) investigation into the reading strategy usage of 152 ESL students and 150 US native English-speaking

students in two Midwestern universities in the USA using the SORS that was developed by Mokhtari in 1998-2000.

The findings suggested that both groups of students displayed similar awareness of almost all the strategies indicated in the SORS. Regardless of their reading ability or gender, the two groups indicated the importance of the categories of reading strategies in this order: (1) cognitive, (2) metacognitive, and (3) support. Both the ESL and American students with high reading ability showed comparable degrees of higher reported usage for cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies, compared to the lower reading ability group (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001). However, the ESL students attributed high value to support reading strategies, regardless of their reading ability level (ibid).

This study further highlighted that the interaction between the two possible forces of non-nativeness and reading ability was influenced by reading proficiency and L2 readers' level of proficiency (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001). The interaction between these variables was conceptualised based on the cognitive view of reading. However, the argument remains that factors such as non-nativeness and reading ability could be further described using a sociocultural framework.

In Tercanlioglu's study (2004), UK postgraduates' usage of reading strategies in L1 and ESL contexts was examined with participants comprising six native English-speaking British students and 11 from non-native English speaking backgrounds (e.g. Japan, Korea, Qatar, China, Greece and New Zealand). Demographic questionnaires, reading surveys, reading efficacy beliefs instrument and interviews were utilised over a three-month data collection period. The subsequent findings demonstrated a higher rating on the Anxiety and Difficulty scale for the ESL group, as a result of reading problems and confusion. However, the two groups 'still felt the need for their academic reading activities to be recognised and reinforced by others' (Tercanlioglu, 2004, p.566).

In addition, both L1 English and L2 non-native English speakers reported a wider range of cognitive strategy usage, with the former utilising these more frequently than students of other nationalities. The L2 non-native English speakers, on the other hand, reported a significantly higher reliance (as compared to the L1 group) on support mechanisms such as dictionary use, note taking, or underlining textual information (Tercanlioglu, 2004, p.568).

Useful information regarding reading strategy usage among non-native English speaking and native English speaking learners in a university could be derived from this study. Tercanlioglu (2004) nonetheless points that it has also demonstrated that 'very little may be assumed in cross-cultural research' (p.569). This implies that L2 reading research should direct its focus towards substantiating L2 reading development based on sociocultural perspectives.

2.5.1.3 Reading Strategy Usage in L1 and L2 Reading

The reading strategy usage of various groups of L2 readers has been the subject of past studies on L1 and L2 reading. For example, Kong (2006) investigated the reading strategies of four Chinese adult readers reading both Chinese and English texts. This qualitative study adopted think-aloud protocols and interviews to gather data. The patterns of reading strategy usage were analysed based on the linguistic and cognitive views.

Results of the study suggested two types of reading strategies utilised by the participants: (1) text-initiated (e.g. focusing on vocabulary, using text structure, summarizing and using pictures), and (2) reader-initiated strategies (e.g. invoking prior knowledge, predicting, evaluating, monitoring and translating). Factors such as prior experiences with L1 reading and L2 learning and exposure to the L2 culture prompted and affected such patterns of reading strategy usage. Although linguistic and cognitive

views were dominant in this study, the emerging factors that influenced the participants' usage of reading strategies related more to the social aspects of reading.

Tsai, Ernst and Talley (2010) examined 222 skilled and less-skilled Chinese EFL undergraduates' in Taiwan. This study focused on the correlation of L1 reading ability, L2 proficiency and employed reading strategies. While the quantitative analysis revealed almost no difference in the strategies used by skilled and less-skilled readers in reading L1 material, the notable difference was in the number used, with skilled readers utilising more strategies in L2 reading to increase their comprehension, compared with their less-skilled counterparts.

This finding by Tsai et al., (2010) supports the argument of L2 language proficiency as being more contributory to L2 reading comprehension than L1 reading comprehension. It might be thought that these researchers foregrounded their findings by associating the linguistic threshold hypothesis to describe the development of reading strategy usage. It could still be argued that the study itself was developed based on a combination of cognitive and linguistic views to describe the correlation of L1 reading ability, L2 proficiency and reading strategies.

In a different learning context and sampling, Alsheikh and Mokhtari (2011) conducted a study of 90 graduate and undergraduate native Arabic speakers in five Midwestern universities in the USA. This study adopted a mixed-method research design. A self-report survey of strategy use and a think-aloud protocol were employed for data collection.

The findings indicated that the reading strategies utilised when reading both English and Arabic texts consisted of (1) problem-solving strategies, (2) global reading strategies, and (3) support reading strategies. Nevertheless, more strategies were used when reading English texts. Alsheikh and Mokhtari (2011) reported that problem solving

strategies were prominent when the students encountered unknown vocabulary. The reading strategies used by the native speakers of Arabic when reading Arabic and English academic materials were theorised based on a combination of cognitive and linguistic views.

The governing principles of the cognitive view of reading were also elicited in Maarof and Yaacob's study (2011). They examined the L1 and L2 reading strategy usage of students in nine selected secondary schools in Malaysia. This study adopted a mixed-method design, using a reading strategy questionnaire and semi-structured interview with reading strategies divided into (1) direct and (2) indirect classifications. Several similarities were found in both L1 and L2 reading, although the findings indicated more strategies used to facilitate L1 reading.

Strategies such as 'taking notes on the content of the text, creating mental images when reading, using reference materials to help understand the text, and summarizing the text after reading were not employed in reading the L2 text due to language proficiency' (Maarof and Yaacob, 2011, p.221). A recommendation from this study was for future research to include the 'examination of types of strategies in relation to the cultural backgrounds of the readers and the cultural perspectives of the reading materials' (ibid).

The findings of the abovementioned studies reiterate the embedded assumptions in the cognitive view of reading being the primary highlight (Urquhart and Weir, 1998), with little focus on the socio-cognitive aspects (e.g. Kong, 2006). However, although the cognitive view was dominant in these studies, the researchers acknowledged the importance of the social and cultural perspectives to better understand reading strategy development in L2 reading. On this premise, this thesis will argue for the prevalence of more pragmatic explanations to describe L2 reading development, should the 'socially

conditioned predispositions and attitudes pre-empt the engagement of the cognitive faculties' (Ridgway, 2003, p.121).

2.5.2 Reading Strategy Classification

Reading strategies, according to Afflerbach, Pearson and Paris (2008) are deliberate, goal-oriented attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct the meanings of texts. The studies reviewed in the preceding section may have provided L2 reading literature with a comprehensive list of reading strategies such as problem solving, local or support, cognitive, global, metacognitive, text-initiated and reader-initiated to describe the nature of L2 reading (e.g. Taraban, Kerr and Rynearson, 2004; Kong, 2006; Cubukcu, 2007; Cogmen and Saracaloglu, 2009; Alsheikh and Mokhtari, 2011). To avoid ambiguity, this section aims to establish the strategies classification adopted from Sheorey and Mokhtari's (2001) descriptions of metacognitive, cognitive and support strategies (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Reading Strategies Classification
(Adopted from Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001, p.436)

Reading Strategies Category	Descriptions
Metacognitive strategies	Those intentional, carefully planned techniques by which learners monitor or manage their reading. Such strategies include having a purpose in mind, previewing the text as to its length and organisation, or using typographical aids and tables and figures.
Cognitive strategies	The actions and procedures readers use while working directly with the text. These are localized, focused techniques used when problems develop in understanding textual information. Examples of cognitive strategies include adjusting one's speed of reading when the material becomes difficult or easy, guessing the meaning of unknown words, and re-reading the text for improved comprehension.
Support strategies	Basically the support mechanisms intend to aid the reader in comprehending the text such as using a dictionary, taking notes, or underlining or highlighting the text to better comprehend it.

Originally developed by Mokhtari (1998–2000), this classification of strategies is used as a tool to measure native English-speaking students' awareness and use of strategies when reading academic or school-related materials (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001, p.435). This thesis has chosen this classification, since its principles have a focus on (1) 'meaning construction from text as an intentional, deliberate and purposeful act which is driven by the goals of reading and the nature of the text being read' (Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004, p.251), and (2) exploring reading strategy usage that might possibly be driven by the goals of reading and the nature of the text being read.

2.5.3 Issues with Previous Studies on Academic Reading Research in L2

The synthesis of findings in the reviewed studies suggests that reading strategy usage in academic reading research has been analysed based on the linguistic (e.g. Malcolm, 2009; Tsai, Ernst and Talley, 2010) and cognitive (e.g. Baker and Boonkit, 2004; Calis and Dikilitas, 2012; Nergis, 2013) views to describe the L2 reading development and processes. According to Zoghi, Mustapha and Maasum (2010), the 'importance of cognitive processing skills were noted by reading experts such as Miller (1965) and Cromer (1968) more than 40 years ago' (p.440). As theories, the linguistic and cognitive views are able to provide L2 reading research with rich findings, with these underlying theoretical frameworks adding to our understanding on ESL/EFL readers' usage of reading strategies. There is an argument however that past studies 'generically lump together L2 readers and collect 'cognitive' data without any in-depth consideration of L2 social backgrounds' (Bernhardt, 1996, p.16).

As discussed earlier, the theoretical framework for reading definitions, models and comprehension has witnessed significant change in the past three decades of reading research. A critical part of this change is the process by which the methodology has developed over the years (see Section 2.5.1). A review of past studies clearly indicates the

shift in the research paradigms. For example, Alsheikh and Mokhtari (2011) subscribe to both the positivist and interpretivist paradigms to provide extensive analysis of data. At this point, it can be argued that the positivist paradigm is no longer appropriate to justify L2 academic reading development since the reading process itself is no longer restricted to linguistic and cognitive activities.

Apart from the methodology, it is noteworthy to stress that very little is assumed on the sociocultural perspectives in past studies. Kern (2000) asserts that 'a sociocultural perspective is extremely useful in understanding how literacy practices are learnt and how they vary culturally and historically' (p.37). This is supported by Grabe and Stoller's (2011) argument that L2 reading development and process encompass (1) linguistic and processing differences between L1 and L2 readers, (2) individual and experiential differences between L1 and L2 readers, and (3) sociocultural and institutional differences. Although useful and relevant, gaps in the literature suggest that this perspective has not been extensively researched. It is with this view in mind that this thesis will argue that the sociocultural perspective could, and would provide a lens to substantiate the L2 reading framework.

2.6 Linking the Sociocultural Perspective to the Academic Reading Research Landscape

From the perspective of language learning, the sociocultural theory as put forward by Donato and MacCormick (1994) acknowledges the importance of social interaction and cultural institutions such as schools and classrooms on an individual's cognitive growth and development (p.453). This theory views language learning through the learners' direct interactions and experiences in their particular community of practice. Therefore, this exposure and observation could lead to their assimilation into their current community of practice.

Language learning from this viewpoint could go beyond the cognitive and social psychological conceptions of language learning. The learning tasks and contexts are perceived as situated activities (1) continually under development and (2) influential upon individuals' strategic orientations to classroom learning (Donato and MacCormick, 1994). Past research on L2 learning has made way to underpin language learning strategies based on a sociocultural framework (Gao, 2006; Palfreyman, 2006; Lamb, 2009; Magid and Chan, 2012).

Kern (2000) bases his argument on the concept of literacy from a sociocultural perspective. He posits that literacy involves 'communicative acts in which readers and writers position one another in particular ways, drawing on conventions and resources provided by the culture' (Kern, 2000, p.34). His assertion on the sociocultural dimensions of literacy is framed by Vygotsky's theory that views 'literacy (and indeed cognition in general) as not the personal, idiosyncratic property of an individual, but rather a phenomenon created by society, and shared and changed by members of that society' (Kern, 1994, p.35).

In his book, *Literacy and Language Teaching*, published in 2000, Kern proposes a framework of sociocultural dimensions of literacy involving (1) linguistic, (2) cognitive, and (3) social practice. These dimension 'are not only overlapping and interdependent, but also infused in each of the seven principles of literacy' (p.38). The following is a reproduction of these dimensions of literacy as described by Kern.

Figure 2.4: Kern's Dimension of Literacy (2000, p.38)

Sociocultural

- Collective determination of language uses and literacy practices
- Interweaving of literacy practices with other social practices
- Apprenticeship into ways of being (social acculturation, acquiring Discourses, joining the literary club)
- Social and political consciousness: problematizing textual and social realities
- Awareness of dynamism of culture and of one's own cultural constructedness

Linguistic

- Lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic knowledge
- Familiarity with writing system and graphic and organizational conventions
- Awareness of interdependencies at all levels (orthography, lexicon, sentence, paragraph, text)
- Awareness of relationships between oral and written language (including awareness of distinction between medium and mode of expression)
- Familiarity with genres and styles

Cognitive/Metacognitive

- Existing knowledge (schemata)–allowing a person to establish relationships among pieces of information and to predict, infer, and synthesize meaning
  - Declarative knowledge–the 'what'–facts, ideas, stories embedded in cultural contexts
  - Procedural knowledge–the 'how'–strategies for reading, writing, and understanding, also embedded in cultural contexts
- Ability to formulate and discern goals and purposes–including planning, monitoring, and revising–in line with cultural norms
- Ability to create and transform knowledge

A similar overview is adopted by Gee (2010), who suggests the existence of a direct link between literacy, social and cultural achievement. He also proposes the act of reading and writing as being concerned with someone's participation in various social and cultural groups. The literature on L1 reading, for example, 'sought perspectives that go beyond reading as a network of cognitive processes to a view of reading as a sequence of meaning-construction events capable of defining us, others, and our world' (Alvermann, Unrau and Ruddell, 2013). Research on L1 reading development is essentially better developed and widely researched from a sociocultural perspective (e.g. Forman and Cazden, 1985; Halliday, 1994; Gee, 2001; Lee, 2001; Reyes and Azuara, 2008; Dyson and Genishi, 2013; Heath, 2013) compared with L2 reading development.

From an L2 reading standpoint, one of the differences in L1 and L2 as highlighted by Grabe and Stoller (2011) is that of the sociocultural dimension, since 'reading development and reading instruction are strongly influenced by parental and community attitudes toward reading and uses of literacy' (p.52). Although the sociocultural influences

on L2 reading development have been emphasised, this aspect is yet to be developed further in L2 reading research (Grabe and Stoller, 2011).

To date, the dominant focus of L2 reading research is on reading comprehension, involving the textual information and the cognitive processes readers employ during their reading activities. Relatively few studies have conceptualised the L2 reading development and processes based on a sociocultural view (e.g. Abu-Rabia, 1996, 1998b; Chu, Swaffar and Charney, 2002; Taillefer, 2005; Huang, 2006; Zhang, 2008). This thus raises Mokhtari and Reichard's (2004) assertion that strategy use preferences should be considered in terms of the complex relationships between language, literacy and culture in general.

Such ideas are motivated by Bernhardt (2003), who believes reading research to have been 'marked historically by the overgeneralization that first language and second language are essentially the same' (p. 112). Mokhtari and Reichard (2004), quoting Bernhardt in their study, highlight the need to understand and accept that 'L2 readers come to the process of L2 reading with different social, cultural, and linguistic peculiarities that must be taken into consideration if we are to develop a more complete and useful theory of reading' (Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004, p.392).

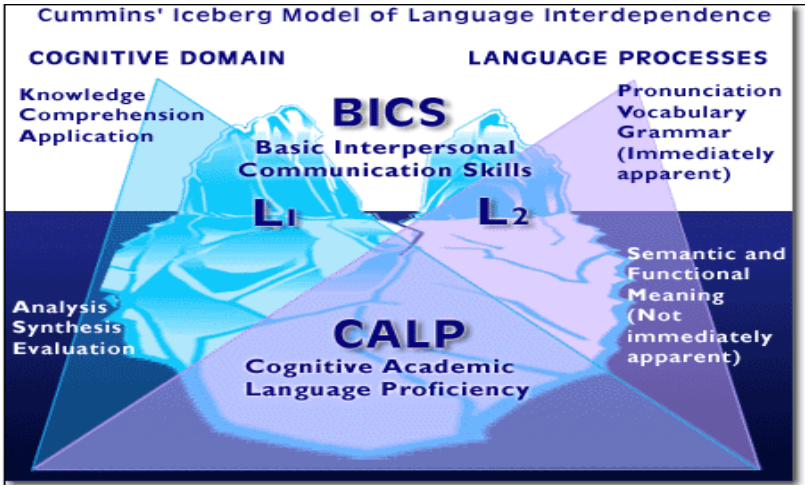
Another argument that will be propounded here is that the sociocultural perspective on academic reading comprehension has not been fully explored or substantiated within the L2 reading research. Previous theoretical stands to describe academic reading experiences seem problematic, and do not quite fit the context of this thesis. In order to expand on the ideas and theoretical stances in the L2 reading literature, this study will set out to conceptualise academic reading development using a sociocultural theoretical framework.

2.6.1 Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills or Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency?

As mentioned previously, the dominance of cognitive views that have shaped past studies on L2 reading makes it more challenging to define the construct of L2 proficiency among L2 readers (e.g. Koda, 2005; Grabe and Stoller, 2011; Lin and Yu, 2013). Whenever the aspect of proficiency is discussed, based on cognitive and linguistic views, it most often overlooks the influence of social and cultural factors. For example, L2 readers might be in a situation where they could speak and listen very well in L2, which means that they are likely to have achieved the required L2 oral fluency.

I would argue that a principal issue here is the need to draw a line between these aspects of proficiency in terms of (1) interpersonal communicative skills and (2) cognitive academic language. The underlying arguments regarding the level of proficiency discussed in this thesis are based on Cummins' (2008) Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Linguistic Proficiency (CALP). These aspects point to the distinction between everyday and academic reading language. Cummins (2008) suggests that the 'BICS and CALP distinctions highlight a similar reality and formalise the difference between conversational fluency and academic language proficiency as conceptually distinct components of the construct of 'language proficiency' (p. 2). This is illustrated in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Cummins' (1982) iceberg metaphor to illustrate the BICS and CALP continuum



Cummins theorises language to be of two dimensions: (1) academic and (2) social. The BICS model involves face-to-face conversational fluency, including mastery of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar language that learners have typically acquired from everyday activities before more complex and conceptual language proficiency is developed (Cummins, 2000). CALP, on the other hand, is often associated with schooling, and involves the abstract language abilities required for academic work that necessitate a more complex and conceptual linguistic ability, which includes analysis, synthesis and evaluation (ibid).

Cummins (2008) adds that CALP is 'developed through social interaction from birth but became differentiated from BICS after the early stages of schooling to reflect primarily the language that children acquire in school and which they need to use effectively if they were to progress successfully through the grades' (p. 3). Thus, the notion of CALP is specific to academic language proficiency, and 'represents an individual's access to and command of the specialised vocabulary and functions of language that are characteristic of the social institution of schooling' (Cummins, 2008, p.75). This distinction of another type of proficiency as argued here is important in tertiary

academic settings especially when (1) there is a large mass of international students' enrolment in pre-dominantly English-speaking country, and (2) English is used as the medium of instruction in predominantly non-English speaking countries. Despite the criticism of BICS/CALPS, another important issue to be discussed here is whether excellent L2 proficiency may be equated with effective reading.

2.6.1.1 Examples from the Literature on the Impact of Language Proficiency on Academic Reading

Past research on study abroad has been carried out to investigate the academic, social, practical and personal aspects of international students in their new settings. However, only a small number of these studies focused on reading competency. This section will review past studies on academic reading conducted with international students pursuing tertiary studies outside their home countries.

From the perspective of L2 reading, Grabe (2009, p.170) opines that L2 readers might 'encounter new learning expectations' that would influence academic reading development in various learning contexts. This implies that learners are varied, considering their diverse learning contexts. For example, 'a group of readers encountering the same text at the same point in time (e.g. in a class or a book group) will not have identical experiences with reading the text or the same reactions to or interpretations of it' (Hedgcock and Ferris, 2009, p.50). Even the same reader interacting with the same text at different points in her life will experience it differently because the reader has changed over time' (ibid).

In Campbell and Li's (2007) study, Asian students in New Zealand found 'many of the assigned academic readings…very difficult to read' (p.8). This made 'reviewing the concepts, ideas, and theories of these readings critically more difficult due to their lack of academic language convention' (ibid). The inference that could be made here is that Asian

students have different understandings of academic literacy due to their previous literacy and educational knowledge.

A further study was conducted on the language-related problems that Chinese students encountered during their first terms at a university in Hong Kong. The findings indicate that they faced 'considerable difficulties in adapting to the demands of university-level reading' (Evans and Morrison, 2011, p.392) with the participants' 'lack of a rich technical vocabulary preventing them from quickly and fully comprehending unfamiliar disciplinary genres' (ibid). These predicaments in academic reading as experienced by the Chinese students in Hong Kong were related to their lack of discipline-specific knowledge.

Similarly, a study on Chinese L2 readers studying in Malaysia revealed that academic reading activities were described as difficult and challenging (Ibrahim and Nambiar, 2011). These had thus often led to the exercising of various reading strategies to cope with the new reading demands in the host institutions. These Chinese undergraduates were only fairly proficient in English, and came from a Grammar Translation Method background. Their prior L2 instructions had a marked bearing on their ability to adapt to the academic reading demands 'which necessitated critical thinking and independent thought' (Ibrahim and Nambiar, 2011, p.3228).

Nambiar, Ibrahim and Meerah (2012) explored 2 Korean undergraduates' process of academic socialisation and the difficulties encountered in their host country, Malaysia. The subsequent findings put forward the fact that these students experienced various problems in both academic reading and writing such as (1) new vocabulary and (2) difficult texts with long and complicated sentences. Their inability to recognise different academic norms and conventions compounded their problems, 'prevented them

from accommodating and adapting to new literary practices', and 'deprived them of the opportunity to maximise their study abroad stint' (Nambiar et al, 2012, p.115).

What these studies appear to share is a focus on the aspect of academic reading, which has been identified as a major barrier in higher learning contexts. In higher learning institutions, reading is undoubtedly 'crucial in the process of disciplinary socialisation as it is the principal means by which an undergraduate acquires the academic knowledge that is subsequently consolidated and represented in written assignments' (Evans and Morrison, 2011, p.392). These studies re-affirm the importance of academic reading. However, they lack a detailed description on the participants' language proficiency.

The difficulty remains, then, that a lack of an established body of knowledge on the fine distinction between BICS and CALP merely reinforces assumptions as to 'the nature of language proficiency and the development of L2 proficiency which have prejudiced the academic development of bilingual students' (Cummins, 2008, p.79). Advanced L2 learners have often been marginalised in past research on L2 reading following the *a priori* assumption that they could manage and read academic texts types. I would, however, argue that in order to better understand academic reading development, studies on L2 reading would need to describe the types of proficiency that are required of L2 readers.

In line with Cummins' (2008) assertion, this study will argue that advanced L2 proficiency has not necessarily contributed to better comprehension considering the distinction between BICS and CALP. In view of this, there should be another important aspect in L2 reading research to address L2 learners with advanced proficiency. Jepson, Turner and Calway (2002) agree that fulfilling the entrance requirements of English language standards does not ensure that L2 readers would be well prepared to make adjustments to succeed in their new educational contexts.

2.6.2. Studies Examining the Influence of Cultural Background on ESL/EFL Reading

A prevalent question here is the issue of how L2 reading may be viewed from a sociocultural perspective. Relatively few studies, which will be reviewed in this section, have been conducted to examine this sociocultural outlook.

Both the social and cognitive dimensions of learning were explored in a study by Abu-Rabia (1996). This quantitative study involved 80 Jewish and 70 Arab students between the ages of 14 to 15 years from two intermediate schools in central Israel. Findings in this study highlighted cultural familiarity and instrumental motivation as significant predictors in L2 reading comprehension. The socio-cognitive dimension highlighted the influence of the 'historical legacy for both Jews and Arabs in Israel especially when language learning represents the cultures in conflict' (p.264-265).

Abu-Rabia further explored the learning of Hebrew by Arab students, focusing on the social and cognitive factors influencing their reading comprehension in Israel (Abu-Rabia, 1998a; 1998b). This quantitative study employed questionnaires, Arab and Jewish stories, multiple-choice questions and a test to gather data. The findings demonstrated cultural background as being important in the reading comprehension of (1) second language learners, and (2) cultural stories. Both studies also served to affirm that the social-ethnic tension between Arabs and Jews in Israel with the reflection of these social problems in Arab society had influenced schools and the process of learning Hebrew.

The abovementioned studies reflect the influence of the social context and historical background of the L2 readers in shaping their views and attitudes in ESL reading comprehension. These studies clearly demonstrate that when the reading process is analysed using a sociocultural framework, it could offer further exploration and provide

us with more than just the 'end of the story' (Ridgway, 2003). The downside of these studies, however, is the distinct lack of learner voices considering its top-down approach in the research conduct.

The impact of culture-specific rhetorical conventions on the reading recall was explored by Chu, Swaffar and Charney's (2002). This quantitative study administered questionnaires to 240 Chinese EFL college students in Taiwan. The findings show that the Taiwanese students (1) do not perceiving an overall difference between texts using two distinctly different rhetorical conventions, and (2) become more dependent on rhetorical cues and text structure to construct meaning in the absence of an appropriate content schemata. Readability, according to Chu et. al. (2002), 'is anchored in cultural expectations rather than universally normed cognitive ones' (p.532).

Contradictory findings, however, are found in the studies by Pulido (2004) and Stott (2004) on the impact of cultural familiarity on reading. In Pulido's quantitative study, the effects of cultural background knowledge on immediate incidental vocabulary on 23 adult university learners of Spanish as an L2 were examined by means of questionnaires and 2 Spanish and 2 English reading passages. The ANCOVA analysis emphasised the influence of cultural familiarity on the L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading.

Stott's (2004) quantitative study examined 20 Japanese learners of English in a teacher-training college in Japan. This study adopted a recall protocol procedure to elicit the role of cultural content and background knowledge in reading. The findings suggested that 'students would not necessarily understand a text on a familiar topic any better than a text from another culture nor are such texts necessarily more useful for learning purposes' (Stott, 2004, p.350).

If Pulido's study acknowledges the influence of cultural familiarity on reading, Stott, on the other hand, suggests a contradictory finding. Stott (2004) does not always see cultural familiarity as useful. These findings are a form of re-affirmation that L2 readers are different and resonate with Birch's (2007) assertion of the difficulty in defining L2 readers. This has therefore resulted in no specific agreed-upon sets of criteria to describe L2 readers in L2 reading literature.

Taillefer (2005) investigated the relation between exchange students' L1 approaches to literacy and the expectations of a Foreign Language (FL) context. This quantitative study distributed questionnaires to nearly 600 potential European study-abroad candidates (ERASMUS programme) and 169 university teachers from 17 universities in Great Britain, Spain and France. The study found statistically distinct academic literacy cultures and academic reading practices of students and teachers across the investigated regions.

These differences were attributed to the literacy practice in Britain, which emphasised academic reading as an integral part of study while it was significantly less important in Spain (Taillefer, 2005). French students demonstrated some characteristics of both British and Spanish literacy practices (ibid). From this, it could thus be seen that the L1 literacy practices of the Spanish and French students were transferred onto their foreign language reading processes. It was on the basis of these findings that Taillefer (2005) put forward a call for policy makers and educators to pay closer attention to the impact of culturally-distinct academic literacies on L1 and FL reading instructions, reading materials for discipline-specific courses and learners' views about learning in higher education contexts.

This section highlights the need to expand the scope of sociocultural aspects in L2 reading. The variables derived from the abovementioned studies, such as reading texts,

cultural influences on reading comprehension and academic literacy practice require further exploration to be fully cogent and developed. The synthesis of findings suggests that the complexity and embedded nature of these cultural influences should not be underestimated and seen as entirely prescriptive. The abovementioned studies, however, are top-down in nature, and may disregard learners' voices to describe their rich and varied reading experiences.

2.6.3 Studies Examining the Influence of Cultural Background on Reading Strategy Usage

Literature and research on L2 reading strategies seem to be a reflection of the evolution of research on learning strategies and learning styles (e.g. Chamot, 1998; Oxford, 1996; Chamot, 2004, 2005). These include discussions on successful and less successful learners' usage of learning strategies, as well as pedagogical issues related to the grammar translation method that has since shifted to accommodate a more 'communicative' approach. This shift has also highlighted the necessity for research on L2 reading development to pay closer attention to learners' situated contextual realities. Parry (1996) suggested an alternative approach that focuses on 'how particular individuals behaved on maximally different cultural settings to elucidate the question of the relationship between cultural backgrounds and individual strategies' (p.670).

In Parry's ethnography study of Nigerian and Chinese students in two different cultural settings, the findings re-affirm the stance that 'reading strategies can be seen at least partly as a function of culture and that differences in these strategies can often be explained in terms of how different cultural communities represent, use, and teach both language and literacy' (Parry, 1996, p.687). This study was orientated more towards learner voices, rather than teacher perceptions. The Nigerian students showed a preference for top-down strategies whereas the Chinese group was more inclined towards bottom-up

strategies (Parry, 1996). The conclusion drawn here is that cultural background is an important factor in the formation of individual reading strategies, although individual variation must always be acknowledged since both individual and culture might change in the very process of the L2 learning itself (Parry, 1996).

A small number of studies exploring L2 readers' reading strategy usage have helped to obtain more insightful applications to curriculum and pedagogical development. These studies, however, were conducted mainly in the USA or other ESL /EFL contexts. For example, Mokhtari and Reichard (2004) conducted a quantitative study on 350 college students comprising 141 L1 English-speaking students studying in the USA and 209 Moroccan EFL students studying in Morocco. They attempted to understand the differences in metacognitive awareness and perceived use of reading strategies by incorporating various social, cultural and linguistic contexts.

The findings indicated both groups of students as exhibiting 'a clear preference for using problem-solving strategies, followed by support strategies, and global reading strategies' (Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004, p.391). Despite the differences in term of sociocultural environments and linguistic background, similar patterns of strategy awareness and usage were reported when reading academic materials in English. However, the 'Moroccan EFL students attributed high value to support reading strategies, regardless of their reading abilities' (Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004, p.445) compared to the American L1 students. Despite its extensive and descriptive arrays of reading strategies, this study adopted the top-down approach, and lacked learner voices and perspectives.

A study focused on learners would investigate how particular interventions support reading development in strategic reading instructions. Zhang's (2008) experimental study sought the views of Chinese ESL students studying in Singapore. The

results showed some changes in terms of their perceived reading strategy usage and reading comprehension. These changes were influenced by (1) 'the constructivist nature of the training programme, (2) high levels of motivation, and (3) possibly the sociocultural context in which they studied collectively that contributed to their taking a positive attitude towards strategic reading instruction' (Zhang, 2008, pp.109–110). The basic premise underlying the participants' changing values highlighted the influence of new learning and social context that required academic literacy in English.

The effect of linguistic and cross-cultural differences on strategic reading habits of Mandarin and Arabic speakers' reading comprehension strategies was explored by Abbott (2010) using questionnaires, reading assessments and verbal protocol reports. This study found that Mandarin speakers utilised more bottom-up strategies while the Arabic speakers depended more on top-down strategies. These patterns of reading strategy usage were construed based on the structure of Chinese EFL textbooks and methods of teaching such as grammar translation and structural approaches to teaching EFL (Abbott, 2010). Arabic EFL students, on the other hand, were exposed to more communicative activities, which 'promoted the use of top-down reading strategies' (Abbott, 2010, p.34). These findings emphasised different patterns of ESL/EFL students' reading strategy usage.

The Chinese and Nigerian students in Zhang (2008) and Parry (1996) were clearly able to evaluate and express their opinions in relation to their experiences of reading, although there were constraints in samples and limited qualitative data. However, the image of passive and unchallenged learners was portrayed in Mokhtari and Reichard (2004) and Abbott (2010) due to the Moroccan, American, Chinese and Arabic learners' voices not being reflected in the findings of these studies.

2.6.4 Studies Examining the Influence of Context and Prior Reading Instructions on Reading Strategy Usage

Nambiar (2005) investigated the way Malaysian ESL learners read and the learning strategies drawn upon to identify important details necessary to do oral text summary at tertiary level. Think-aloud protocols and interviews were conducted with 10 participants from a public university. The identified reading strategies comprised (1) finding the main points in the text due to lack of inferencing skills, (2) using the dictionary, and (3) focusing on words instead of sentences in the text. These findings lent support to the assertion that Malaysian ESL learners' prior reading instruction in schools was focused on rote learning, reading doctored texts to cater to the structure needed for the reading comprehension question and lack of overall reading habits (ibid).

The findings of a case study by Nambiar (2007) on academic literacy among tertiary learners provide a clear depiction of the Malaysian ESL readers' academic reading experiences. Using think-aloud protocols, semi-structured interviews and a background questionnaire, Nambiar sought to identify the reading strategies employed by first-year undergraduates when reading an academic text. This study conceptualised both the cognitive and sociocultural views to describe the data.

The cognitive view underlying the findings, on the one hand, revealed dominant use of bottom-up strategies such as using dictionary, underlining or highlighting words, and writing the meaning in texts. The sociocultural aspect of the findings, on the other hand, suggested such strategies were prompted by difficult academic texts due to (1) a lack of exposure to challenging texts in schools, (2) reading habits, and (3) culture (Nambiar, 2007).

Another study was conducted to elicit the types of reading strategies used by 14 Malay students in a public higher education institution in Malaysia. This qualitative study used think-aloud protocols for both proficient and less-proficient students (Malaysia, 2007). The results found bottom-up strategies being used regularly because the students tended to 'pay greater attention to the linguistic aspects of the textual information, thus relying more on text-driven or bottom-up strategies despite the fact that they had a repertoire of varied comprehension gathering and comprehension awareness strategies at their disposal' (Malaysia, 2007, p.14). This study speculated past reading experiences in school as a strong influence on the students' reliance on the bottom-up strategies.

In the Iranian learning context, Zoghi, Mustapha and Maasum (2010) adopted a qualitative research design on 12 Iranian EFL learners using semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Several reading strategies such as underlining or highlighting the main points, using dictionary, guessing the meaning of the unknown word, breaking down the unknown word into pieces and finding the part of speech were used by these learners. These strategies, however, were not taught in the students' reading classes since the primary focus was on translation activities, reading aloud and answering comprehension questions (ibid). This study attributed the Iranian EFL learners' lack of reading strategies knowledge to (1) their deficiency in strategic reading and monitoring their own understanding of the material being read, and (2) some Iranian academic settings that may not provide the support on developing strategic reading behaviors to prepare them for the reading tasks required at tertiary levels (ibid).

Malcolm (2012) investigated the reading strategies used by Arabic speaking medical students studying for their degree through the medium of English. Her longitudinal study employed questionnaires and interviews to (1) describe the reading strategies changes and (2) elicit the factors influencing these changes in academic reading practices (Malcolm,

2012). The quantitative findings indicated similar patterns of reading strategies use as demonstrated in her 2009 study (see Section 2.5.1.1).

Support strategies such as translation and thinking about information in both languages were more dominant than cognitive and metacognitive strategies in Year One. Over the course of the study years, however, metacognitive strategies became more pronounced in their reading strategies repertoire. The qualitative data derived from the interviews in Malcolm's (2012) study outlined the changes in the Arabic medical students' usage of reading strategies driven by the 'changing purposes for reading and greater awareness of the future role of the medical professional' (p.25). It may be construed here that the academic reading development in that of Malcolm (2012) is conceptualised based on cognitive and sociocultural views.

Malcolm first conceptualised her study in 2009, based on a positivist paradigm. This paradigm however overlooked the interactive nature between the reader and text throughout reading comprehension. Her longitudinal study three years later adopted a combination of positivist and interpretivist paradigms to identify the changes in reading strategy usage. The shifting theoretical paradigms, as demonstrated in Malcolm's (2012) study, offer a comprehensive list of reading strategies and methodical description of reading strategies dynamism, and at the same time reflect the learners' voices in academic reading research.

2.6.5 Summary

In tracing the development of the abovementioned studies, it can be deduced that various characteristics of academic reading in diverse ESL/EFL settings could be anticipated by viewing reading through a sociocultural lens. This thesis also emphasises the interpretivist paradigm, which seeks to elicit a more subjective view of academic reading research.

Although this perspective is not singularly novel, this study remains of interest, since the points arising are echoed in the latter literature.

2.7 Components of Sociocultural Elements Relevant to Research on Academic Reading in an L2

This section now seeks to synthesise the identified components of sociocultural elements as outlined in the preceding sections. Text and reader factors underpin the sociocultural components here. Text factors emphasise L1 and L2 linguistic and genre differences while the reader factors consist of (1) motivation, and (2) background knowledge. In view of the L2 readers' idiosyncrasy in terms of linguistic, social and cultural factors, this section reviews past literature that specifically focused on text and reader factors.

2.7.1 Text Factors

A study driven by the sociocultural perspective has the purpose of exploring texts from multiple cultures. To quote Grabe and Stoller (2011), every culture has different ways of text and discourse organisation. As mentioned earlier in Section 2.6.2 and 2.6.3, reading texts and their linguistic features influence ESL/EFL reading and reading strategy usage. However, given the absence of an agreed-upon set of criteria for the linguistic differences, this section is an attempt to highlight the factors related to linguistic features in reading texts. Since this study is an exploration of a group of Malaysian undergraduates' academic reading experiences, text factors are discussed in terms of (1) linguistic differences between Malay (L1) and English (L2) texts, (2) text differences in L1 and L2, and (3) text complexity.

2.7.1.1 L1 and L2 Morphological Differences

I will firstly compare the English and Malay morphological differences in terms of structures, forms and categorisation of words. These differences involve affixes, determiners, copula 'be' and subject verb agreements (SVA). The affixes in Malay consist

of 'prefixes, suffixes, circumfixes and infixes, while in English, prefixes and suffixes are more prominent' (Mat Awal et al., 2007, p.5). English affixes could indicate or produce negative meanings but this phenomenon does not exist in Malay (ibid).

Prefixes in English, on the other hand, change the meaning of words, yet do not interfere with parts of speech. The parts of speech in words are only changed with the addition of suffixes. This phenomenon, however, works differently in Malay with some affixes changing the parts of speech without transforming the positive meanings into negatives. The affix difference in Malay and English is illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: The prefixes in Malay and English

Malay	English
Prefixes	
Pen- = **Pen**yakit (diseases) Pe- = **Pe**sakit (someone who is ill)	Im- = **Im**possible Dis-= **Dis**obedient Mal-= **Mal**nutrition Ir- = **Ir**regular

The prefixes in Malay such as (1) *pen-* and (2) *pe-* are used differently. When *pen-* is added to the root word '*sakit*', it forms a different meaning from '*sakit*' (pain) to '*penyakit*' (disease). According to Abdullah, Ahmad, Mahmod and Tengku Sembok (2009), 'unlike English stemmers which work quite well just by removing suffixes alone to obtain the stems, an effective and powerful Malay stemmer not only must be able to remove the suffixes, but also the prefixes, prefix-suffix pairs, and infixes as well' (p.434).

Apart from affixes, several research studies have investigated the structural differences between Malay and English languages. These studies posit that the structural differences between these two languages interfere with the learning of English grammar and the acquisition of English as an L2. For example, Salehuddin, Tan and Maros' (2006) contrastive analysis on the use of determiners between Malay and English found that the grammar in the former does not require any form of determiner.

In 2007, they further investigated the occurrence of mistakes in the use of articles, SVA and copula 'be'. They discovered that (1) Malay grammar did not necessarily require determiners, (2) there were no SVA rules, and (3) 'copula 'be' was the most problematic to Malay learners of English because of its multiplicity of forms and its non-existence in the Malay language' (Maros et al., 2007, p.7).

In a study of morphological analysis among lower secondary school students in Malaysia, morphology markers in adverbs such as '-ly' were found to be non- existent in Malay. Likewise, affixes such as '-s' to indicate plurality and '-ed' as in **walk<u>ed</u>** or **talk<u>ed</u>** to indicate past tense do not exist in Austronesian languages such as Malay (Jalaluddin, Mat Awal and Abu Bakar, 2008, p.111). The superlative in Malay, as pointed out by Jalaluddin et al. (2008) is 'indicated by **<u>words</u>** to specify strength like **<u>amat</u>**, **<u>sangat</u>** and **<u>paling</u>** while English superlatives are signaled by **<u>–est</u>** and **<u>the most</u>**. Therefore it may be inferred that Malay and English structural differences will not only restrain L2 acquisition, but might also influence academic reading development.

2.7.1.2 Differences in the Use of the Cohesive Devices

One of the prominent differences in Malay and English texts relates to differences in the use of the cohesive devices. According to Eason, Goldberg and Young (2012):

> 'much of the literature concerning text type and comprehension were addressing the issue of text cohesion, such as employing signalling devices (e.g. titles, summary paragraphs), using connectives to describe how sentences relate to each other (e.g. however, because), and explaining unfamiliar terms are all methods of increasing text cohesion whereas less cohesive texts require readers to rely on skills such as making inferences and recalling previous knowledge in order to fill in the gaps' (p.512).

Texts in Malay, for example, consist of a high occurrence of cross-referencing and repetition. Malay science texts employ the connectives to increase text cohesion (e.g. *bagaimana pun* ('however', 'although') and *di samping itu* ('in addition')) (Nathesan, 2008,

p.97). However, cross-referencing is more dominant than connectives in Malay academic texts across disciplines. Malay science texts utilise fewer cohesive devices compared to social studies and humanities texts. The quantitative analysis of cohesive device differences in Malay academic texts adopted from Nathesan (2008) is presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: A comparison of the cohesive devices in Malay academic texts (Nathesan, 2008, p.97)

Subjects	Cross-Reference (%)	Connectives (%)	Total (%)
History	78.9	21.2	100
Geography	93.3	6.7	100
Mathematics	83.5	16.3	100
Science	86.0	14.0	100
Islamic Education	85.0	15.0	100
Malay Language	94.8	5.2	100
Average	86.9	13.1	100

As seen above, Malay texts use a high degree of cross-referencing and repetition to show text cohesion. Figure 2.6 shows how Malay L1 readers use cross-referencing and repetition when reading a Malay text.

Figure 2.6: Cross-reference and repetition in Malay texts

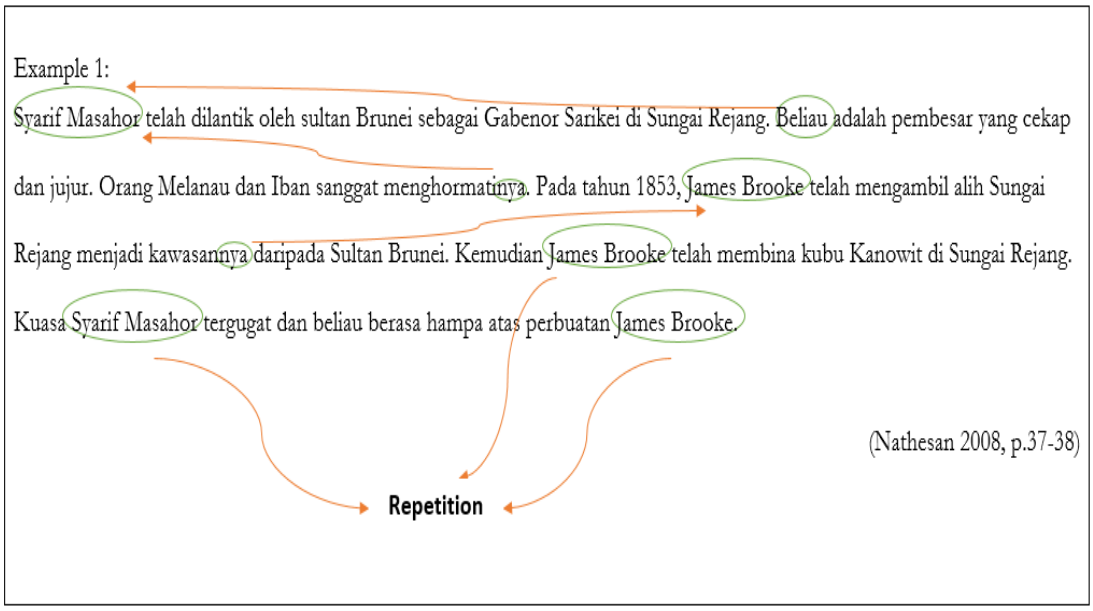


Figure 2.6 describes the repetition in Malay history texts (e.g. *Syarif Masahor* and James Brooke). The examples of cross-referencing involve the use of Malay pronouns such as '*beliau*' and '*nya*'. These types of cohesive devices, as employed in the sentences, are straightforward and make it easier to associate each sentence in the paragraph. To address the differences of use of the cohesive devices between Malay and English texts, the linguistic features comparison in English academic texts, adapted from McNamara (2013), is shown below.

Figure 2.7: Linguistic features comparison between the English science and language arts texts (McNamara, 2013, p.587)

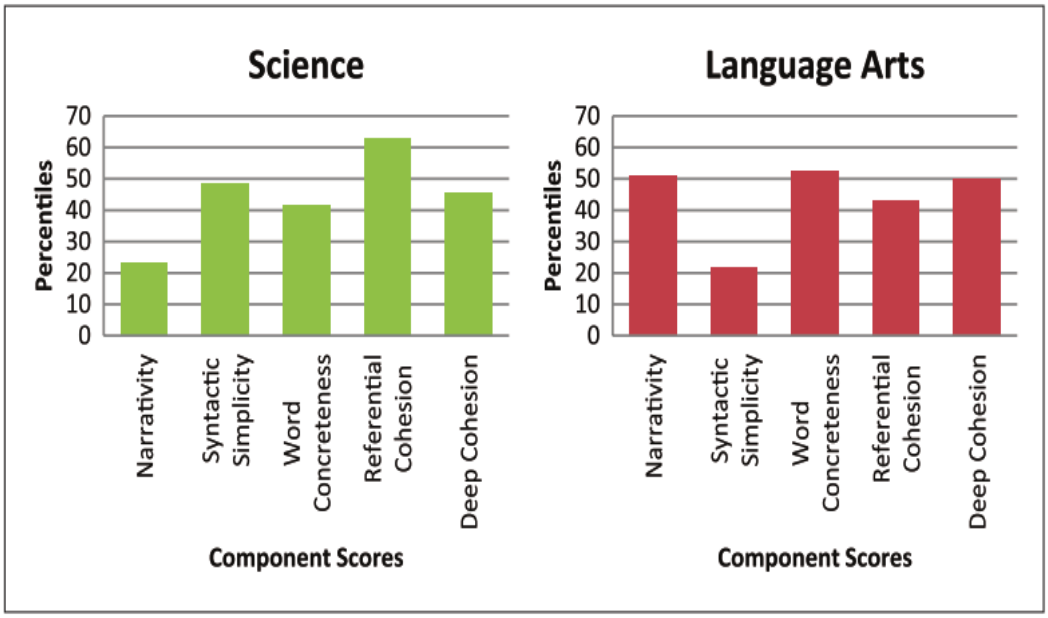


Figure 2.7 shows the different use of linguistic features between Science and Language Arts texts. In terms of its use of the cohesive devices, English Science texts contain more referential cohesion than Language Arts texts. Table 2.4 provides an example of an excerpt from an English text in a study by McNamara and Kintsch (1996) on the effect or influence of prior knowledge and text coherence .

Table 2.4: Making inferences while reading an English academic text (McNamara and Kintsch, 1996b, pp.279–280)

Example:
As frustration (1) mounted over the inability of the ARVN (2) to defeat the enemy (2) in the field (3), pressure to strike (4 & 5) directly at North Vietnam began to build. Although there was near unanimity among American officials over the aerial extension (6 & 7) of the war into North Vietnam, serious differences arose over both the objective and the methods to be used.

To comprehend the first sentence, readers must make the following inferences:
1) the frustrations are by Americans
2) the ARVN is the army of the South Vietnamese, the enemy is North Vietnamese
3) the field refers to a ground war
4) pressure to strike would come from the Americans
5) to strike directly generally requires an air attack, and most importantly that the Americans' frustration are causing the pressure to strike.

Comprehension of the first clause of the second sentence involves the backward inferences:
6) that an aerial extension is different from fighting in the field
7) it is equivalent to striking directly

The excerpt in Table 2.4 is analysed based on the effect of background knowledge and text coherence on readers' comprehension. McNamara and Kintsch (1996) suggested that for most participants, 'bridging-inference questions are difficult' (p.280) and 'inference processes would only be successful for participants who possess the necessary background knowledge'(p.283). As suggested by Eason et al. (2012), when there is less use of the cohesive devices readers are required to rely on skills such as making inferences and recalling previous knowledge to follow the text flow. It is based on such conclusion that this study will argue on the importance or relevance of background knowledge (which is discussed under the Reader factors in Section 2.7.2) in academic reading development.

As mentioned earlier, academic texts in both Malay and English employ various ways of using (1) signalling devices (e.g. titles, summary paragraphs), (2) connectives to describe how sentences relate to each other (e.g. however, because), and (3) types of cohesive texts that require readers to rely on skills such as making inferences and recalling previous paragraph in order to fill in their reading gap (Eason et al., 2012). Another aspect of L1 and L2 text variation could address cross-cultural differences in rhetorical forms, since culture and its 'expressions of collective consciousness' determine 'the rhetorical patterns of a language' (Dueraman, 2007, p.12).

Cohesive devices in both Malay and English languages, although used differently, are often regarded as having similar functions in sentence structures. From this, it may be deduced that Malay L2 readers would translate the connectors regardless of how these work in each language. L2 readers presumably must be well-equipped with 'extensive exposure and practice in reading and exploiting relevant and appropriate texts' (Grabe, 2009, p.216). Furthermore, inferring skills would be important, due to the need to transform information from clause-level meaning units to text comprehension (Grabe and Stoller, 2011). Thus, another point of contention here is that the knowledge of most of the vocabulary or the main concepts in texts alone could not lead to successful reading comprehension if the readers themselves are not familiar with text structures and the relationships between key ideas.

2.7.1.3 Generic Differences between Malay and English Texts

Malay and English texts apply different ways of organising writing. These differences could influence reading comprehension since L2 readers in advanced academic reading settings such as in universities would need both linguistic and genre knowledge. For example, L2 readers would need insights into discourse organisation and patterns of discourse organisation (Grabe and Stoller, 2011) for academic reading.

L2 readers might be familiar with the vocabulary and understand the main concept(s) of a text yet still be unable to 'follow the specific development of the text, the new information being presented or the arguments being made' (Grabe and Stoller, 2011, p.37). Thus, a major point in this section relates to different types of academic texts in Malay and English, as text difference could well influence Malay readers' L2 reading comprehension.

Malay text conventions differ significantly from those found in English texts. Koda (1994) pointed out that 'like other aspects of linguistic sophistication, discourse knowledge is language-specific' (p. 14). These text-specific conventions are possibly linked to cross-cultural differences in discourse and text organisation. Grabe and Stoller (2011) stressed that 'the organization of L2 text resources might not always match the L1 reading experience' (p. 53). Thus, Table 2.5 is aimed at providing a basic description on the generic differences between Malay (e.g. Nathesan 2008) and English Science texts (e.g. Fang, 2006; Fang, Schleppegrell and Cox, 2006; Wray, 2004; Wray and Janan, 2013).

Table 2.5: Generic differences between Malay and English science texts

Science Texts		
Language/ Texts Features	**Malay**	**English**
Syntactic	1) Contained lots of active voice (80.7%), while, passive voice consisted of 19.3%. There were a lot complex sentences (about 75.9%). 2) Dominant use of Verb and Noun phrases. 3) There were a lot of borrowed English scientific terms. The sentence structures, however, were not influenced by the English sentence structures. (Nathesan, 2008)	1) Use of passive voice, there was a tendency to avoid active voice (Fang, 2006). 2) Complex sentences and contained much higher lexical density (Wray, 2004). 3) This density of information was achieved partly through the use of longer and more complex nominal groups that incorporated prepositional phrases and clause embedding (e.g. a natural, non-living solid with a definite chemical structure; the heat and pressure deep inside the earth; the

		minerals that make up the rocks; a pattern that forms small crystals) (Fang, Schleppegrell and Cox, 2006, p.259). 4) Exclusive use of declarative clauses (Fang, Schleppegrell and Cox, 2006)
Morphology	1) Contained lots of Nouns. 2) Contained lots of prefix Men- (e.g. *Menerima*, *Mengesani*). 3) Malays science texts consisted of 36.5% linking words (e.g. *dan*, *tetapi*, *atau*). (Nathesan, 2008)	The use of grammatical metaphor through nominalisation. For example, a noun was substituted for a verb or where nouns were used as adjectives. E.g. How fast a car speeds up → car's acceleration (Wray, 2004)
Cohesion	1) Malay science texts consisted of 86% of cross-referencing (or repetition). 2) Malay science texts consisted of only 14% of connectives (e.g. Bagaimanapun, di samping itu, oleh itu). (Nathesan , 2008, p.68)	English science texts contained (1) causal connectives, such as because, so, nevertheless etc.); and (2) clarification connectives, namely, that is to say, in other words, for example etc.). (Wray and Janan, 2013b)

Previous research in academic texts highlighted several linguistic and text feature differences across disciplines and within a single discipline. Conrad (1996) explored the differences between research articles and textbooks for a Biology course wherein 'one of the many challenges for readers facing a new register was learning to understand how its language use differed from other registers, such as the difficulty that novice readers had in recognising the rhetorical nature of texts, including distinguishing interpretations from facts and recognizing human agency and personal attitudes' (p.321).

In addition, Snow (2010) examined the academic language and the challenge of reading for learning Science where the use of sophisticated words and complex grammatical constructions could potentially disrupt reading comprehension and block learning. In view of this, for students to become independent learners of science or social studies, help in learning academic vocabulary and how to process academic language is

critical if they are to have 'access to the all-purpose academic vocabulary that is used to talk about knowledge that they would need … in making their own arguments and evaluating others' arguments' (Snow, 2010, p.451).

Science texts appear to have somewhat lower word concreteness, and are relatively high in both syntactic simplicity and referential cohesion, whereas arts texts have more syntactic challenges for the reader, and include more cohesion gaps (McNamara, 2013). This could be due to science concepts being more abstract than those in language and arts and texts (ibid). Thus, generic differences in text conventions across languages and disciplines might place demands on academic reading comprehension.

When L2 readers are 'aware of the various types of genre and specific text structures, this knowledge allows them to access information more readily and accurately as they construct their personal interpretations of the text' (Alexander and Jetton, 2000, p.292). Goldman and Rakestraw (2000) further suggested that 'knowledge of structure is clearly important in efficient and strategic processing of text' (p.323) in addition to awareness of its specific development. Knowledge of genre conventions is usually acquired through immersion in the discourse community, with explicit instruction by expert members of the discourse community accelerating the acquisition of genre skills.

Hyon (1997, p.98) postulated that '[t]exts are not autonomous; they cannot be separated from roles, purposes, and contexts' which could impact on reader and writers, who might be influenced by past educational experiences, their experiences with the genre, culture, content, context, and a host of other mediating factors. Cultural and linguistic backgrounds in themselves would therefore not necessarily provide L2 readers with a literacy-rich environment. Instead proper instruction on genre conventions and the length of time spent in the community of practice to develop knowledge on how to handle various text types might be much more appropriate.

Examples from the Literature on Issues Related to Academic Discourse

Past studies have revealed linguistic knowledge pertaining to academic discourse as being important in achieving better reading comprehension (e.g. Snow and Uccelli, 2007; Snow, 2010; Miller, 2011; Fillmore and Fillmore, 2012). For example, there are some linguistic features in academic texts that may contribute to academic reading challenges, such as high lexical density, precision, abstract and technical concepts (Snow and Uccelli, 2007). In a later study, Snow (2010) reported the most commonly noted features of academic language to be 'grammatical embedding, sophisticated and abstract vocabulary, precision of word choice, and use of nominalisations to refer to complex processes - reflecting the need to present complicated ideas in efficient ways' (p.452).

Miller's study (2011) on university and ESL textbooks found academic writing in university textbooks to be 'transmitted within the noun phrase through various modification structures' (p.39), unlike academic writing in ESL textbooks. In addition, a high frequency of nominal modification features in terms of the lexico-grammatical differences is often found in the university textbook (ibid). Fillmore and Fillmore (2012) stated that academic texts would usually contain (1) informational density and (2) heavy noun-phrases.

Ting and Tee (2008) conducted a study on how Malaysian TESL undergraduates managed five common academic text-types and used generic structure and language features in their written assignments. The ways in which Malaysian undergraduates used the generic structure and language features in their written assignments for an academic purpose were analysed. This study has revealed several findings in terms of how language features such as modality, conditional clauses and connectors were used in their academic writing. Analysis of the cause-and-effect relationship in an explanation text indicated the undergraduates' preference for showing causality through content rather than connectors.

Although the overarching structure of Ting and Tee's study is on academic writing, it could still lend breadth to the potential of research into L2 readers' (or learners) understanding of the generic structure and language features in L2 texts.

The synthesis of findings suggests that linguistic knowledge is important for successful academic reading comprehension. In the context of Malay L2 readers reading academic texts in their L2, these differences in terms of linguistic processing could be based on (1) the L1 and L2 morphology, (2) syntactical structures and (3) use of cohesive devices. These issues will be discussed in relation to text complexity in reading.

2.7.1.4 Issues Related to Text Complexity

There is a considerable literature on the mismatch between the types of text used in schools with those found in tertiary education. The implication of text complexity concerns 'current standards, curriculum, and teaching practice not having done enough to foster the independent reading of complex texts which is so crucial for later college and university work, as well as for most adult careers, particularly in the case of information texts' (Wray and Janan, 2013b, p.559). Issues related to text complexity have been extensively researched in the USA. For example, Adams (2009) found that 'through analyses of student performance based on the American College Testing Program (ACT) the major stumbling block for the students is complex texts' (p.10). This is echoed in Hiebert's (2012) assertion that 'texts used in high schools and even those in middle school have been dumbed down over the past 50 years' (p. 26).

Passages in tests are also different from what the students have been exposed to in their reading materials (Adams, 2009, 2010; Hiebert, 2012). The significant difference between texts in school books and passages in the tests 'might well explain students' poor performance on their college entrance exams' (Adams, 2009, p.9). Adams (2009) further

described the mismatch of texts read in school with the education national policy regarding the students' literacy as:

> 'if it is a national goal to inspire more students to become engineers and scientists, then shouldn't the difficulty of our schoolbooks have increased alongside? If a goal is to ensure that our students will be able to stay sufficiently informed about scientific progress to conduct business, reflect on policy, and manage their family's health and education, then at minimum, shouldn't the difficulty of our schoolbooks keep pace with the difficulty of scientific publications aimed at the general public?' (p.13).

Conrad (1996) compared biology textbooks with composition course readings and biology research articles at university. This study found that 'one of the many challenges for readers facing a new register is learning to understand how its language use differs from other registers' (Conrad, 1996, p.231). An example of an issue in science texts was the 'difficulty that novice readers had in recognising the rhetorical nature of texts, including distinguishing interpretations from facts and recognising human agency and personal attitude' (ibid).

Similarly, Miller (2011) carried out another study on ESL reading textbooks vs university textbooks. The findings suggested that 'there were indeed some clear, pronounced lexico-grammatical differences between texts in some ESL textbooks as well as lower-division university textbooks and these non-academic ESL texts provided learners with a great deal fewer exposures to Academic Word List vocabulary than they would encounter in university textbooks' (Miller, 2011, p.44). This issue addresses the earlier discussion pertaining to students' lack of exposure to academic text discourse and patterns of discourse organisation, with the potential of being further intensified among those reading across languages who may come across diverse types of text in their L1 and L2 reading instruction.

Adams (2011) theorised that making the textbooks easier would be akin to ultimately denying students 'the very language, information, and modes of thought they need most in order to move up and on' (p. 9). For Fisher, Frey and Lapp (2012), the removal of struggle in reading comprehension might well have been one of the major mistakes of the past, made in good faith to improve reading achievement. Students should instead be provided with opportunities to struggle and learn since this will prepare them for the reading demands in tertiary education (ibid).

Although the main issues here relate to the mismatch of texts used in schools for academic reading preparation in tertiary education, Hiebert (2012) was also concerned with (1) the pedagogic implications of current texts used in schools, and (2) the guidance that is provided especially for beginning and struggling readers. Adams (2010), however, argued that advanced texts should be made accessible to less proficient readers, since 'the greatest benefits of literacy grow through reading deeply in multiple domains and about multiple topics' (p.10). Reading difficult and complex texts in schools thus benefits both proficient and less proficient readers in terms of building vocabulary and expanding domain knowledge.

In the context of Malaysia, relatively few studies have been conducted on reading texts in ESL textbooks (Mohd Sidek, 2012, 2011a). Mohd Sidek (2012) analysed reading passages in textbooks used in secondary schools. The findings suggested that that the overemphasis on narrative passages which were below grade-level texts appeared to ill-prepare Malaysian students for academic reading preparation in tertiary education (Mohd Sidek, 2012).

Similarly, in her analysis of the reading curriculum in Malaysia, a seeming mismatch between the reading curriculum and the reading passages found in textbooks used in school was highlighted (Mohd Sidek, 2011a). The curriculum demanded high

cognitive reading skills in terms of text selection and types of reading task. The passage analyses however suggested that the EFL textbooks used primarily narrative passages, the majority of these being below grade-level length (ibid).

Developing the ability to read complex texts requires hard work and effort from both teacher and student. However, this does not imply that texts should be simplified to (1) reduce reading loads, (2) remove reading struggles and challenges, and (3) teach only those reading skills related to passing examinations. Another point of contention here is that students depend on schools to become literate at the levels required for the digital age (Hiebert, 2012). This thesis will therefore highlight the possibility of the mismatch of texts in fostering reading proficiency in secondary schools. To quote Fisher et al. (2012, p.10), 'what is not negotiable is student achievement; what is negotiable is how teachers get their students to read worthy and complex texts'.

2.7.2 Reader Factors

Apart from looking at text factors, another issue in literacy involves the reader. This has raised interest in investigating the reasons that prompt students' inability to read proficiently at tertiary level. This section highlights a number of non-linguistic factors, such as the impact of (1) motivation, and (2) background knowledge on academic reading development.

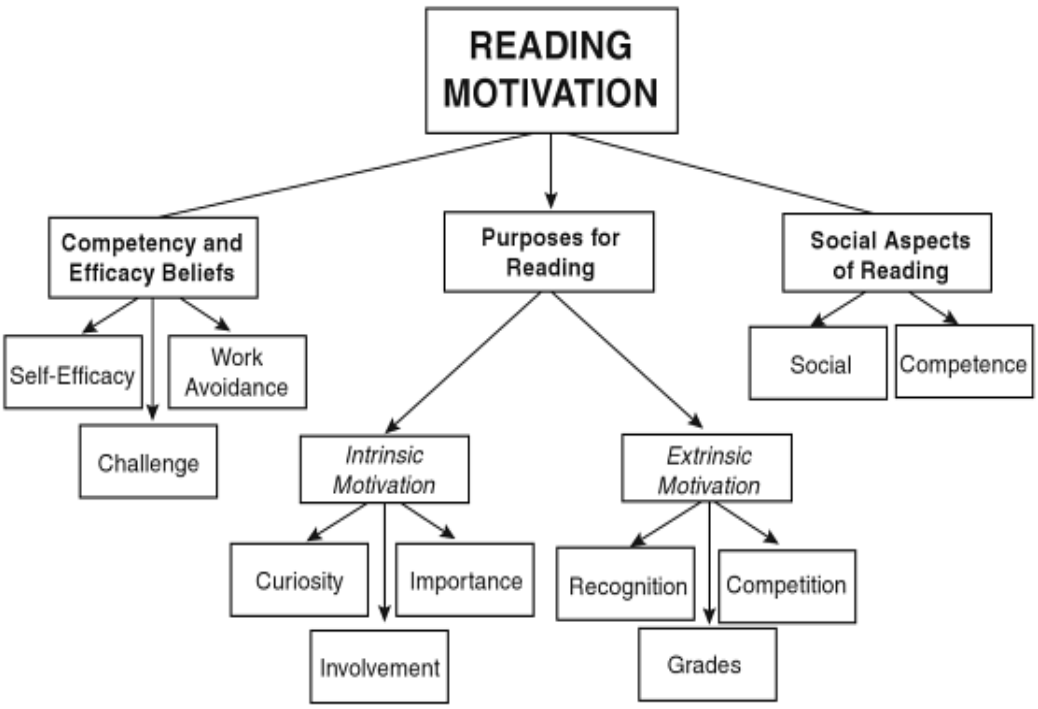
2.7.2.1 Impact of Motivation on Academic Reading

Reading in L1 English and motivation have been extensively explored by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995) and Guthrie et al. (2006; 2007). L2 motivation on language learning has similarly been the subject of numerous studies (e.g. Dörnyei, 1998, 2009; Lamb, 2009; Gao, 2008; Ushioda, 2011). As presented in Section 2.5.1.4, 2.6.2 and 2.6.3, motivation is found to influence reading strategy usage. However, despite extensive studies on L2

learning and motivation, past studies on L2 reading suggest that the motivation for language learning is different from the motivation to read (Grabe, 2009).

Driven perhaps by Wigfield and Guthrie's (1995) argument, Grabe (2009) reiterates the need to explore and develop the impact of motivation on L2 reading within its own domain. The aspect of motivation for L2 reading, as argued by Grabe, 'should not be influenced by issues of ethnolinguistic identity, travel, friendship, a desire to communicate, or use of communication strategies' (p.189). I would argue that in line with Grabe and Stoller's (2011) assertion, motivation for L2 reading should ideally be explored based on L2 learners' progress through different levels of education. Motivation for L2 reading, as outlined in this thesis, is based on Wigfield and Guthrie's taxonomy of reading motivation as shown by Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8: Wigfield and Guthrie's taxonomy of reading motivation
(Dunston and Gambrell, 2009, p.272)



When L2 learners progress through different levels of education, especially in a tertiary context, their academic-task demands may increase in tandem. In addition, when learners are reading for specialised courses, they are more likely to read texts for content, rather than as a vehicle for language learning. Thus the shift in their (1) learning context (i.e. secondary to tertiary education), and (2) reading purposes/goals may lead to 'differing (and perhaps more conflicting) combinations of motivation for reading L2 texts' (Grabe and Stoller, 2011, p.56).

Some of these differences are based on varying academic goals, socialisation practices from home and community, prior educational instruction or broad cultural frameworks for literacy use (Grabe, 2009). The next section will describe the impact of motivation on L2 reading derived from past research, in terms of the varying academic goals, societal and individual factors.

Examples from the Literature on the Impact of Motivation on Academic Reading

In a study involving 212 college business majors in Taiwan, Huang (2006) explored the perspectives on the types of situational factor that might motivate them to read their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) textbooks. This study found that Taiwanese L2 learners were driven by the factors of (1) EFL teacher facilitation, (2) reading requirements, and (3) text facilitation.

Mohd Noor (2006) investigated 6 Malaysian ESL learners studying in a university in Malaysia adopting the phenomenography approach, and utilised the individual in-depth interviews to gauge the participants' experiences. This study's findings were two-fold. Firstly, ESL learners' experiences were explained in terms of a deep approach, which described the influence of intrinsic motivation on the extensive use of reading strategies for better reading comprehension. Secondly, the surface approach to reading contradicted

the former approach due to poor application of reading strategies, text anxiety and the superficial comprehension of text.

In a later study, Mohd Noor (2010) investigated 6 Malaysian ESL learners' reading approach to academic expository texts, using three instruments: (1) reading texts, (2) in-depth interviews, and (3) observations for data collection. The findings revealed that the participants employed support, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. What is perhaps noteworthy here is that the reading texts and motivation had a bearing on the patterns of strategies used.

Hsu (2012) investigated Chinese university students' English reading motivation in China. The study participants were drawn from a university in southern Taiwan, involving 50 males and 50 females with two different general English proficiency level (better proficiency level students and lower proficiency students). Hsu (2012) noted the reading motivation to be divided into extrinsic and intrinsic categories with 'class requirement and grade as important elements in stimulating students' extrinsic motivation' (p.107) and personal variables such as attention and satisfaction being outer motivators. From this, Hsu (2012) concluded that personal satisfaction in terms of their performance created feelings of success and achievement in students. This study highlighted the role of motivation as integral in ensuring and sustaining students' participation in an extensive reading programme for learning success at the tertiary level.

Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield and Guthrie (2013) carried out a study 'to examine the relative predictive power of internal motivation, background knowledge activation, and student text-based questioning on the outcomes of reading comprehension and reading comprehension growth' (p.594). They suggested that the development of reading comprehension could, in fact, be predicted based on motivational constructs. These

constructs encompassing (1) student choice, (2) involvement, and (3) interest would predict L2 learners' reading comprehension growth (ibid).

Impact of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation on Academic Reading

Various research studies on L2 reading motivation have pointed to the positive impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on L2 reading development. For example, Dhanapala (2008) conducted a study on motivation and the L2 reading behaviours of university students in Japan and Sri Lanka studying arts and sciences. A total of 123 Sri Lankan L2 students representing four universities in Sri Lanka participated in the study. The Japanese sample consisted of 124 university undergraduates.

Findings revealed that L2 reading was influenced by the integration of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with the latter being more dominant than the former. Dhanapala (2008) attributed this to (1) the keenness of the Sri Lankan students to obtain both good grades and recognition, compete with others and read for external goals, and (2) Japanese students' motivation, oftentimes aimed at achieving good grades and reading for external goals.

Extrinsic motivation seemed to be more dominant than intrinsic motivation. However, both groups of students still relied on intrinsic motivation to nurture their extrinsic thrust. Therefore, intrinsic motivation is highlighted as fostering the desire to read for (1) personal enjoyment, (2) external demands and rewards, (3) reading interests, (4) acquiring reading skills, (5) obtaining better grades in the examinations, and/or (6) sharing their reading with colleagues and family members.

Jafari and Shokrpour (2012) conducted a quantitative study on reading motivation of 95 EAP students in an Iranian Medical university. The findings revealed motivation to be both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature, with self-efficacy as an added push. This intrinsic motivation was reflected in the students' desire to read based on their personal interest in

the topics and the enjoyment of reading engagement with their L2 reading (ibid). Extrinsic motivation, meanwhile, was characterised by external reinforcement, such as reading for grades, competing with peers to show superiority, and gaining approval from course instructors. This study suggested intrinsic motivation to have a significant role among proficient L2 readers while extrinsic motivation was more dominant among L2 readers with low proficiency.

In summary, the findings derived from these studies contribute to an increased understanding of aspects of motivation that might affect L2 readers' willingness to read. However, considering that the aspects, and the impact of motivation on L2 reading seem less researched than those on L1, this thesis could potentially discover similar, or indeed new aspects of reading motivation that may be developed within a specific L2 reading domain.

2.7.2.2 Impact of Background Knowledge on Academic Reading

> "I read about daffodils and never in my life have I seen daffodils. Thus, Wordsworth's famous poem is only read to accomplish a reading task".

The above passage depicts my personal experience as an L2 student reading English literature during my undergraduate study in Malaysia. The difficulty in understanding Wordsworth "Daffodils" was due to (1) there being no such flower in my home country, and (2) my living in a tropical country. This lack of background knowledge affected my comprehension of the poem at many different levels. The question however is this: how does the lack of background knowledge affect my competency in L2 reading? The assertion here is that this perceived lack (i.e. of daffodils and its significance to English spring season) did not in any way make me a less competent reader. I might be less competent in reading Wordsworth's poem yet I am still a competent reader in other situations.

Growing up in Malaysia, I learned to read in two languages (i.e. Malay and English). In Malaysia, I would be considered a competent English L2 reader. However, I still occasionally encountered problems in reading materials in subject areas such as English Literature and Linguistics during my undergraduate years. My reading experiences in subject areas were as described by Mokhtari's (2012) four types of knowledge in reading comprehension. These include (1) general knowledge of the world that readers acquire through reading of books, magazines, newspapers and other interactions with their environments, (2) specific knowledge about the topics or content of what one reads, (3) knowledge of language in terms of its forms and functions, and (4) knowledge of how information is organised or structured in texts across different disciplines (p.2). Mokhtari's typology of knowledge thus brings us back to the earlier discussions pertaining to text factors.

L2 readers need not only content knowledge, but must also be familiar with how the information is organised in texts. I would therefore argue that challenges in reading could address lack of knowledge on (1) specific subject areas, and (2) linguistic features within a single discipline and across disciplines. For these reasons, even proficient L2 readers may fall back to a level of less-fluent reading.

Examples from the Literature on Background Knowledge Impact on Academic Reading

Studies have suggested that background knowledge is a strong contributor to academic reading comprehension, and is central in helping readers to boost reading performance (O'Reilly and McNamara, 2007; Bernhardt, 2011; McNeil, 2011; Mokhtari, 2012; Taboada et al., 2013). In an investigation on the changes in college students' (non-native and native English language speakers) reading comprehension following reading or writing projects, Falk-Ross (2001) reported that when these learners had established background

knowledge on language and vocabulary, they appeared to be more engaged in purposeful reading, as well as in discussion and critical thinking. A study on the effect of text nativization and schema-based pre-reading activities on reading comprehension of EFL students found that cultural background knowledge plays an important role in the reading comprehension process (Rokhsari, 2012).

As noted earlier in Section 2.7.2.2, Taboada et al. (2013) not only suggested the importance of internal motivation to reading comprehension but also highlighted the importance of background knowledge activation on reading comprehension. The data of the study appear 'to support the view that background knowledge, student questioning and students' internal motivation make independent contributions to students' reading comprehension' (p.601).

Ozuru, Dempsey and McNamara (2009) alluded to the likelihood of both 'prior knowledge and reading skill influencing reading comprehension of Science texts with students' difficulty in learning new concepts alleviated to some extent by means of ensuring text cohesiveness thus making readers less dependent on their pre-existing knowledge' (p.239). Usó-Juan (2006), in a study on the compensatory nature of discipline-related knowledge and English-language proficiency in reading English for academic purposes, indicated that 'the higher the students' discipline-related background knowledge or English-language proficiency, the better their performance on the reading tests' (p.220). However, the assertion is that English language proficiency appears 'to be a more powerful predictor than discipline-specific knowledge' (ibid).

According to the Bernhardt's model of L2 reading (1991), background knowledge was at first considered as a stronger predictor in L2 reading. However, this has since changed following the evolution of her revised model of L2 reading in 2000, 2005 and

2011. Bernhardt (2011) suggested that 'background knowledge does not follow levels of proficiency but is, rather, a variable linked to personal idiosyncrasy' (p. 31).

There are still arguments surrounding the fact that background knowledge is not necessarily important for reading comprehension (Bernhardt, 2011; McNeil, 2012; Usó-Juan, 2006; Ozuru, Dempsey and McNamara, 2009). As stated earlier by Usó-Juan (2006), L2 language proficiency is found to be more dominant than background knowledge. Similarly, McNeil (2011) proposed self-questioning to be more important in L2 reading compared to background knowledge. However, it needs to be stressed here that McNeil's study had been more on general knowledge rather than discipline-specific knowledge.

To reiterate, past studies on the effect of background knowledge on reading comprehension have offered, at best, some inconclusive findings. This might be largely due to the limited research on the impact of background knowledge and discipline-related knowledge on reading comprehension. A reason for this would pertain to the absence of an agreed-upon set of criteria among L2 readers in L2 reading literature.

2.8 Direction of this Thesis

An implication that can be derived following the shifting theoretical views on reading definitions, models of reading, reading comprehension and research paradigms is that research on L2 reading could go well beyond the linguistic and cognitive processing to describe reading development. The argument in reading research remains that sociocultural 'factors do not always operate in the same way, either between L1 and L2 contexts, or across various L2 contexts' (Grabe and Stoller, 2011, p.52). That said, I would argue that L2 reading research in 21st century should explore and acknowledge L2 readers' exclusive sociocultural factors in terms of L1 and L2 differences, prior and current reading experiences or instruction, and the cultural and societal background.

Considering that the sociocultural perspective on reading needs to be further developed (Grabe and Stoller, 2011), the main focus here is to explore how the L2 readers' situated contextual activities might influence their experiences and perceptions of academic reading. Additionally, previous L2 reading research that has adopted cognitive, linguistic (see Section 2.5.1) and sociolinguistic (see Section 2.6.2. and 2.6.3) views of reading are top-down in nature. Therefore, I would suggest that there is a need to gather L2 learners' personal histories and perceptions of reading through the medium of English language for academic purposes. These perspectives on L2 reading might expand insights into L2 reading research using the bottom-up approach in an attempt to project their voices here.

The overarching structure of this thesis is, thus, to explore academic reading development from a sociocultural perspective by allowing any unexpected reading paths to occur in the L2 readers' current situated contextual realities. Past literature on L2 reading, particularly at the tertiary level, revealed that one of the challenges in academic reading pointed to L2 readers' transition from reading in school to university (e.g. Nambiar, 2005; Mohd Noor, 2010; Zoghi, Mustapha and Maasum, 2010; Tabatabaei and Assari, 2011). Some researchers have also begun to explore how English medium instruction could affect learners' achievement in higher education contexts (e.g. Abdul Majid, Mohd Jelas and Azman, 2003; Mohd Noor, 2006; Nambiar, 2007; Zainol Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi and Choon Lean, 2011).

These studies have nevertheless been conducted in either ESL or EFL local educational settings. Another ways of integrating the sociocultural perspective to L2 reading research was to explore L2 readers' reading experiences and perceptions when it involved a shift in learning context. For example, moving from a local L2 learning environment to a predominantly English speaking country.

A considerable number of studies was conducted on L2 learners stuyding in perdominantly English speaking countries, such as New Zealand, the UK and Australia (e.g. Li, Baker and Marshall, 2002; Ward and Masgoret, 2004; Guan and Jones, 2011). However, studies of L2 learners require further exploration, due to the increasing number of international students studying abroad (OECD, 2012). In addition, a critical part of research on L2 reading pointed to L2 readers' diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Thus, these diversities have made it more difficult for these studies to define and understand L2 readers and their L2/academic reading development.

According to Grabe and Stoller (2011), in spite of a remarkable accumulation of L2 reading research, there is in fact relatively little knowledge of the mechanics or processes of people becoming good L2 readers. There is indeed 'a regrettable void and lack of a single consistent theory that would explain L2 reading and how it is developed or learned' (ibid). The issues in L2 reading research as pointed out by Bernhardt (2011) are summarised in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Issues in L2 reading research (Bernhardt, 2011, p.121)

Issues	Direction of this thesis
1) Reading texts A reading study employing one text from the universe of texts runs the risk of disadvantaging subjects due to a particular topic or style.	Provide multiple opportunities for the participants to display reading proficiency by allowing them to choose their own reading materials through the freedom of navigating their own academic reading activities.
2) Reading activities/situations Failure of past studies to position their subjects toward the text(s) they were given to read. Bernhardt (2011) stated that L2 reading researchers 'need to analyse reader performances under different cognitive and affective stances, while accomplishing different reading goals since each of the	Position the participants under different cognitive and affective stances based on their reading purposes at any given time. Additionally, this study will attempt to conceptualise these reading activities based on **sociocultural perspectives.**

conditions and circumstances implies a potentially different set of performance data' (p. 225). The lack of studies that observed the same readers under different conditions or with different dispositions remains a major concern since it is clear that literacy is linked to different kinds of social conditions.	

While past studies have been valued for incorporating a sociocultural perspective and an interpretivist paradigm, the emphasis or context of this thesis is to seek unique variances in reading comprehension from the L2 learner's perspectives. A new perspective to explore L2 reading can, meanwhile, provide a different way of looking at reading strategy usage and academic reading experiences. The point of contention here is to consider the learner's perspective, first-hand experiences, emotions, attitudes and perceptions using the bottom-up approach. My stance here is that a sociocultural framework (1) can attain and elicit a rich and contextualised picture of academic reading as experienced by a group of Malaysian undergraduates in a study abroad context, and (2) to incorporate a reflective endeavour to project their voices on their behalf to the 'ears' of the other L2 learners and hence, to reinforce the existing themes in literature.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a detailed account of existing research on L2 reading by discussing its theoretical issues by eliciting the shifting theoretical views to reading before describing the L2 reading development. The sociocultural perspectives are described based on its capability to elicit more pragmatic exploration to describe L2 reading development and processes. This chapter has further discussed the domination of linguistic and cognitive views underpinning L2 reading research by reviewing previous studies on ESL/EFL and L1 English readers' reading strategy usage, L1 and L2 reading and other factors (e.g. prior reading instruction, motivation, individual differences). Then, this thesis suggests the

social turn in L2 reading research by expanding the sociocultural view to reading considering that empirical studies undertaken this view need to be developed much.

The two components relevant to sociocultural elements, such as text and reader factors are speculated to influence academic reading experiences and reading strategy usage. Inspired by Bernhardt's (2011) assertion that a longer period of time is needed to explore the L2 reading development, this thesis adopts the longitudinal approach and explore the participants' progress based on times to attain rich data inside the environment of an L1 English tertiary institution.

Academic reading activities are explored based on their current situated academic reading activities to allow for (1) unexpected reading paths to occur, and (2) allowing them to choose their own reading materials so much attention have been given to what they might see as influential on their academic reading experiences. In view of this, there is a scope for direct investigation of L2 readers' current and on-the-spot experiences concerning how they may perceive academic reading when there is a shift in a learning context. To address this inquiry the overall overarching research question has been suggested: **what are the perceptions and experiences of L2 academic reading when a group of Malaysian undergraduates come to study in a British university?**

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of four major sections. Section 1 will detail the theoretical paradigms underpinning a phenomenography research. This is then followed by Section 2, which include descriptions of research design, participants and research context. The third section will discuss research methods, pilot study and data collection phases. The final section will comprise descriptions of the actual data collection process, data analysis and language choices. This chapter will end with a discussion on issues related to validity, reliability and my role as a novice phenomenographic researcher.

Overview of the Study

The overall overarching research question that drove this study was: "what are the perceptions and experiences of L2 academic reading when a group of Malaysian undergraduates come to study in a British university?"

This was further operationalised into these following questions:

1) How do these participants perceive academic reading in a British university?
2) What reading strategies are utilised by the participants in their new learning context?
3) What are the changes in the participants' use of reading strategies over a period of two academic years as they read in a British university?
4) What influences the participants' changes in their reading strategies in their British university?

3.2 Section 1: Theoretical Underpinnings of Phenomenography

It is important for this research to establish the foundation of phenomenography. This term 'was first used by Ference Marton in 1981' (Svensson, 1997, p.160). The basic premise underlying phenomenography 'is to find and systematise forms of thought in terms of which people interpret aspects of reality - aspects which are socially significant and which are at least supposed to be shared by the members of a particular kind of society' (Marton, 1981, p.180). The essence of phenomenography is thus to learn about people's experiences of certain phenomena. These experiences are recognised based on commonalities and idiosyncrasies, but in between there seem to exist various modes of experiences or forms of thoughts that might be worthwhile studying (ibid).

This research has been based upon the basic underlying theoretical approach of phenomenography, which aims 'at description, analysis, and understanding of experiences; that is, research which is directed towards experiential description' (Marton, 1981, p.180). Here, I adhered to what Marton (1981, p.180) presents as 'to learn about people's experiences' of a certain phenomenon. In the case of my research, I positioned the phenomenon of academic reading as being rooted in the perceptions and experiences of ESL learners, because differences in thinking may reflect differences in both experiences and realities. In addition, the phenomenography stance also emphasises differences in thinking that may change and develop in different cultures and social realities.

In this instance, I would claim that phenomenography is seen as a suitable approach for this research 'to find and systematise forms of thought in learning about people's experiences' (Marton, 1981). Marton (1981) further introduced two distinct perspectives to describe realities in phenomenography, these being: (1) first-order, and (2) second-order perspectives. The former, as suggested by Marton (1981, p.178),

required researchers 'to orient themselves towards the world and made statements about it'. The latter highlights our orientation 'towards people's ideas about the world (or their experience of it) and we made statements about it' (ibid). In this research, the second-order perspectives is adopted in an attempt to learn about ESL learners' experiences of academic reading. This brings us to the ontological and epistemological assumptions of phenomenography, as discussed in the subsequent section.

3.2.1 Ontological Assumptions of Phenomenography

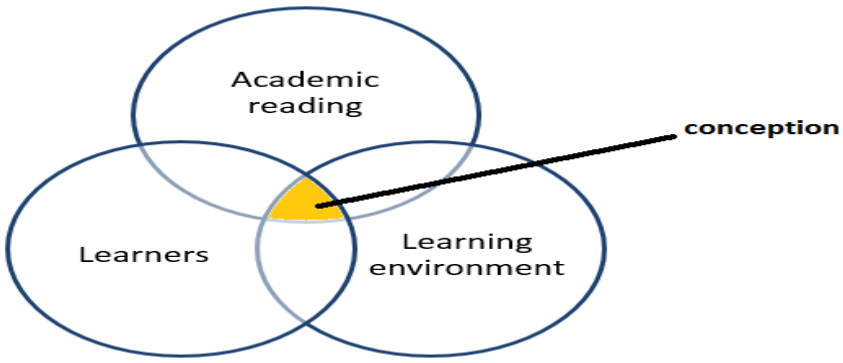
According to Hammond and Wellington (2013, p.114), ontology in social research 'refers to beliefs about the fundamental nature of reality, in particular social reality'. The ontological assumptions in phenomenography research, as mentioned by Svensson (1997, p. 165) concern social reality, but the nature of reality 'does not concern the ultimate base for or nature of everything but they do concern what is the more immediate character or nature of the object or phenomenon'. In view of this, the ontological aspect adopted here refers to a subjective reality that is negotiated within the group (Hammond and Wellington, 2013). This is concerned with the nature of conceptions in phenomenographic research.

Conception, as seen from the phenomenography lens, involves the study of the nature of reality and knowledge from a more subjectivistic and relative view (Svensson, 1997). Svensson (1997) further asserted that 'assumptions about the nature of conceptions made are closely related to assumptions about the nature of knowledge and thinking' (p.165). These conceptions are seen as relational to knowledge, because of their similarity in terms of how they are generated. According to Svensson (ibid):

> 'First knowledge is assumed to be based on thinking. It is seen as created through human thinking and human activity. However, knowledge is also seen as dependent upon the world or reality external to the individual and external to human activity and thinking, that which the activity and thinking is directed

towards. The most fundamental assumption is that knowledge and conceptions have a relational nature. Conceptions are dependent both on human activity and the world or reality external to any individual'.

In this research, conceptions are dependent on (1) learners (i.e. a group of Malaysian undergraduates), (2) academic reading, and (3) learning environment as seen below. The ontological assumption here will explore learners' ideas, beliefs, experiences and the nature of knowledge through descriptions of conceptions in their social reality (i.e. British university).



3.2.2 Epistemological Assumptions of Phenomenography

Epistemology in social research informs 'what we believe about how we come to know and understand the world' (Hammond and Wellington, 2013, p.57). The 'epistemological assumptions within phenomenography may be viewed through a methodological perspectives, since it has its own way of carrying out the research' (Pherali, 2011, p.17). Pherali believes descriptions of experiences or conceptions become the central part of revealing and understanding of knowledge to seek (1) meaning, and (2) similarities and differences in meaning (ibid). These interpretations of meanings are usually presented in the form of categories of descriptions derived from common themes related to the area of inquiry.

Looking at the subjective and relative view of knowledge in phenomenographic research, an interpretivist philosophical stance is adopted here. The goal of interpretivist research, according to Hammond and Wellington (2013, p.88), is 'to understand the meaning that cultural and institutional practices have for those taking part'. For example, as voiced by Mokhtari and Reichard (2004, p.392) we need to understand and accept that 'L2 readers come to the process of L2 reading with different social, cultural, and linguistic peculiarities that must be taken into consideration if we are to develop a more complete and useful theory of reading'. By taking an interpretivist view, these social, cultural and linguistic peculiarities help better to understand L2 reading, particularly academic reading development.

3.2.2.1 The Interpretivist View

The interpretivist view stems from 'Dewey's (1937) pragmatic position, in which a theory was not a formulation of some discovered aspect of a pre-existing reality *out there'* (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p.279). The interpretivist stance, as applied here, involved the exploration of the participants' perceptions of academic reading in a British university. Smith (1993) pointed out that 'the task for interpretivists is to elaborate what lies beyond epistemology and beyond the idea there were special, abstract criteria for judging the quality of research, especially because interpretivist(s) see criteria not as abstract standards, but as an open-ended, evolving list of traits that characterise what we think research should do and be like' (p. 153).

My role as a researcher involved exploring academic reading through how it was experienced and perceived by this particular group of Malaysian undergraduates. I sought responses from these participants so as to learn and study the phenomenon of interest, as seen through their eyes. However, I avoided 'leading questions' throughout data collection, to prevent subjectivity in my role as a researcher.

3.2.3 Methodological Assumptions of Phenomenography

According to Marton (1994), phenomenograpy research follows some methodological assumptions in terms of data collection procedures and analysis of data, as discussed in the following sections.

3.2.3.1 Phenomenographic Data Collection Procedures

Considering that this study sought to attain and elicit a rich and contextualised picture of academic reading among a group of Malaysian undergraduates in a study abroad context, individual interviews are adopted to gather data. The 'focus on specific parts of the interview expressing conceptions of objects or phenomena and the exploration concerns the interviewees' delimitation and experienced meaning of these objects' Svensson (1997, p.169). Interviews were the primary method, given that this study was guided by a phenomenography guiding principles. According to Green (2005) '[p]henomenography used interviewing as its primary means of data collection' (p.36). In phenomenographic interviews:

> 'we are trying to elicit underlying meanings and intentional attitudes towards the phenomenon being investigated. Typically, we do this through exploring concrete examples of the phenomenon provided by the interviewee. However, we are not interested in the details of the example per se, but in using them as a *medium* for exploring the way in which the interviewee is thinking about or experiencing the phenomenon, that is, those aspects of the phenomenon that they show awareness of. This entails going beyond 'what' questions ('what did you do?') to 'why' questions ('why did you do it *that* way?')' (Akerlind, 2005a, p.65).

In this regard, the rationale for adopting interviewing as a primary method pointed to the need to study the participants' ideas, beliefs and experiences of academic reading in a new learning context. The second rationale for utilising interviews was to investigate 'the variation in their understanding of the same phenomena' (Akerlind, 2005a). Considering that I was keen to explore their academic reading journeys, which involved a major shift in learning contexts, phenomenographic interviews could elicit

more underlying meaning of their different ways of seeing things. In addition, in phenomenographic interviews, researchers are required to bracket their own views so they would avoid adding their own concepts or ideas in an unplanned way.

3.2.3.2 Phenomenographic Approach to Data Analysis

Data from interviews represented the key aspects of the qualitative different or similar ways of conceptions, experiences, growth and development of a group of first year Malaysian undergraduates in terms of how they viewed academic reading in their new learning context. The first step taken for data analysis involved transcribing interviews verbatim.

These transcribed transcripts were then coded and analysed. The approach to phenomenographic data analysis here required the incorporation of 'key elements from the statements of a number of people' (Cherry, 2005, p. 57). This can be explained by the ontological and epistemological assumption of phenomenography, to (1) get access to beliefs and ideas variation in terms of how learners perceived academic reading in a new learning environment, and (2) gain 'understanding of knowledge as a matter of meaning and similarities and differences in meaning' (Svensson, 1997, p.167) before presenting the data in a form of categories of descriptions. These categories of descriptions derived from the common themes of meaning analysed from the transcripts. The rigour of phenomenographic approach to data analysis is discussed in Section 3.11.

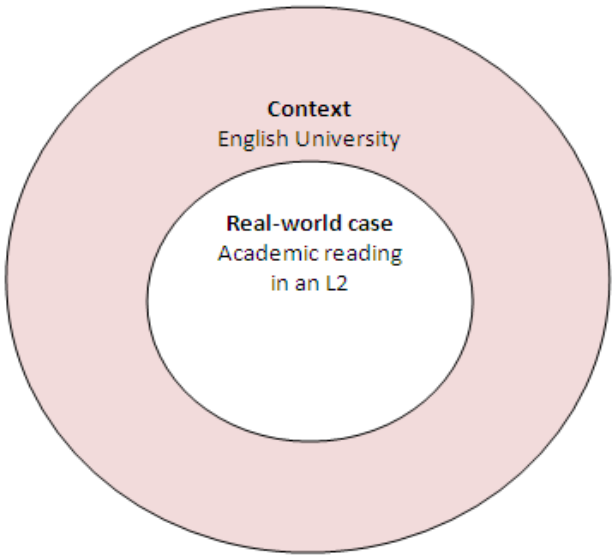
3.3. Section 2: Research Design

This section outlines the definitions and features of a case study. The rationale for using a case study is also discussed, followed by a description of research participants and context.

3.3.1 Case Study

This study adopted a case study design to explore the perceptions and experiences of the participants as they engaged in academic reading activities. In addition, the focus was on how coming into a new learning context (i.e. United Kingdom) affected their experiences and perceptions of academic reading. A case study allowed for more 'in-depth understanding of a real-world case, and assumed that such an understanding was likely to involve important contextual conditions' (Yin, 2014, p. 16) that seemed pertinent to my case. The real-world case pertained to how the participants' current contextual condition might influence their perceptions and experiences of academic reading. The contextual conditions here were the English university context (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: The scope of this research



Not only was the explanation about the real-world scenario that related to academic reading was important here but the focus also slanted towards (1) extensive and in-depth descriptions, and (2) a 'holistic and real-world perspective' (Yin, 2014, p.4) as viewed by the participants.

3.3.2 The Features of a Case Study

According to Yin (2014), 'the second part of the definitions of case studies arises because phenomenon and context are not always sharply distinguishable in real-world situation' (p. 17). A case study (1) copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest, (2) relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion and as another result, and (3) benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (ibid). As a result, other methodological characteristics become relevant as features of a case study.

The underlying feature of case studies adopted here is its concern with data collection and analysis, guided by the prior development of theoretical propositions. The possible themes and concepts underpinning academic reading, firstly, examined and dissected from past studies related to L2 reading and academic reading. These themes and concepts derived from past studies incorporated into theoretical and conceptual framework, as seen in Chapter 2.

There were some traditional concerns about case study research design that I tried to overcome prior to and while designing the research. Firstly, issues related to rigorous procedures were addressed. To avoid a lack of rigour, specific procedures were outlined and followed throughout this study (see Table 3.1). Secondly, due care was exercised prior to reporting all evidence, in an attempt to avoid bias. I would claim that the findings had

to be reported fairly, as it contributed to the additional area of knowledge. The other issue concerning case study research is the 'apparent inability to generalise from case study findings' (Yin, 2014, p.20). Considering that a sample was not represented here, my primary concern here was theory generalisation, 'and not to extrapolate probabilities' (Yin, 2014, p.21).

3.3.3 Rationales for Adopting a Multiple Case Study

This research adopted a multiple case study design because more than a single case was investigated (Yin, 2014). The rationale for adopting this design was to investigate the variations of beliefs, experiences and perceptions of each individual participant. That said, the rationale for adopting a multiple case study design was the need to build a general explanation that fitted each individual case, although there might be a variation of detail in each of these cases.

According to Creswell (2007), 'in a multiple case study or a collective case study, one issue or concern is again selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue…often the inquirer purposefully selects multiple cases to study different perspectives on the issue' (p. 74). Multiple cases are explored within a single site (i.e. British university) here. This step was taken to address the participants' differing perceptions and experiences of how they perceived academic reading in an English university context. This study was thus designed in line with Yin's (2014) five components of a case study research design. The steps taken to design the research are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1:Five components of a multiple case study

Five important components of a case study research design according to Yin (2014, p. 29)
Study Questions 1. I used the literature to narrow my interest to a key topic or two, not worrying about specific research questions. 2. I examined closely/dissected a few key studies relating to my interest. 3. I identified the questions in these few studies and whether they concluded with new questions or loose ends for future research.
Study propositions 1. Exploration: Supported what I wanted (provide reasons) to do with previous literature on academic reading in an L2 by defining and explaining reasons to carry out a research. 2. Recognised the purposes. 3. The rationales and theoretical propositions may probably be questioned once data has been gathered and analysis has taken place.
Unit of analysis: The cases Eleven first year Malaysian undergraduates in the United Kingdom who speak English as a Second Language.
Linking data to propositions 1. Pattern matching 2. Explanation building
Criteria for interpreting a case study's findings Identify and address rival explanations for the finding of the current research. The challenge during the design stage of my research was to "anticipate and enumerate the important rivals" (Yin, 2014, p. 36) so I would be able to include data about them as part of my data collection. This step was taken to complete the current case study, rather than to "justify and design" a future study if I only think of the rival explanations after data collection has been completed (Yin, 2014).

3.4 Research Participants

Eleven participants, consisting of 5 male and 6 female, participated in this study over a period of two academic years (February 2014 to May 2014 and October 2014 to February 2015). Their age group was between 20 to 21 years old. They were selected based on these characteristics:

a) first year Malaysian undergraduates studying at a university in the UK

b) Malay as the first language

3.4.1 Difficulty in Getting Voluntary Participation

It was a very challenging experience getting voluntary participation for data collection. I started looking for participants via Facebook groups, Facebook private messengers and emails prior to conducting the actual data collection. Unfortunately, there was only one response from a first year Malaysian undergraduate who showed his interest in participating in this study. He helped me to search for other research participants, and managed to find 5 participants (including himself). Despite getting his assistance, I needed another 5 participants. I decided to offer financial rewards so these participants would be paid based on interview sessions attended and the submission of diary entries. Upon offering financial rewards, about 18 first year undergraduates registered their interest to participate in this study. However, only 11 participants were selected, based on the aforementioned pre-determined criteria.

3.4.2 The Participants' L1 and L2 Levels of Proficiency

Since the *a priori* of this research was to investigate academic reading experiences of L2 students, I summarised the participants' level of English proficiency based on their IELTS results together with their level of L1 proficiency (see Table 3.2). L1 proficiency should be 'acknowledged for its critical contribution to explaining L2 reading performances' (Bernhardt, 2011, p. 33). However, past studies on L2 reading research most often failed to describe L2 participants' L1 proficiency (Bernhardt, 2011). Thus, the participants' L1 proficiency was established here based on their grades for Malay language in Malaysian Certificate of Education. The Malaysian Certificate of Education refers to the compulsory national examination for Malaysian secondary school and abbreviated as SPM (*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia*). Table 3.2 describes the participants' L1 and L2 proficiency levels.

Table 3.2: Participants' L1 and L2 proficiencies

Participants (n=11)	L1 proficiency (based on SPM grades for Malay language)	IELTS reading component	IELTS band
AF	A+	9.0	8.0
AY	A	8.0	7.0
DY	A+	9.0	8.5
HZ	A	9.0	8.0
KT	A+	7.5	7.5
KZ	A+	8.5	8.0
RG	A	7.0	7
RH	A+	8.5	8
RS	A-	7.0	7.5
SR	A+	6.5	7
SL	A+	8.5	8.0

3.4.3 Participants' Profiles and Linguistic Background

AF

AF came from Kajang, Selangor. He went to College for 2 years for his A-Levels prior to coming to the United Kingdom for his undergraduate studies. A rather interesting fact about AF was that he never went to pre-school before starting his primary school education. He stated that reading in Malay was never a problem to him, as he spoke Malay as his first language. Thus, he described his reading skills in Malay as a natural ability.

AY

AY came from Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu. She went to a college in Malaysia for her A-Levels prior coming to the United Kingdom. She was very proficient in Malay and spoke English mostly in an educational context. She first started reading English books when she was small. Her parents wanted enough exposure to the English language before she started primary one. However, she preferred reading Malay books because it was much easier to understand rather than English. Furthermore, she pointed out that her parents bought many English books due to the lack of children's Malay storybooks in

Malaysia's market. She collected the English Ladybird book series and was hoping for more books of the like to be published in Malay.

DY

DY came from Kajang, Selangor. DY spoke fluent Malay. However, she was exposed to English books when she was a child. It was rather interesting to learn that she spoke Malay with her parent but her parents bought lots of English books during her childhood. So, she first started to read in English. Her parents did not expose her to Malay reading materials, because they spoke Malay at home. So they assumed that DY would not face any difficulties in reading Malay books/texts once she started her education.

HZ

HZ came from Ipoh, Perak. He went to a college in Malaysia for his A-Level prior coming to the United Kingdom. He was exposed to both Malay and English reading materials during his childhood. However, he learned to read in Malay before learning to read English. When he read in English, he relied on phonics. In contrast, he reported that he learned the Malay grammar and rules before reading Malay books.

KT

KT came from Kajang, Selangor. She was exposed to both Malay and English books when she first started learning to read in pre-school. She learned to read in Malay first, despite having reading materials in both Malay and English at home. However, she was not an avid reader. She started reading when she was in secondary school. Her reading purposes during primary school were mainly for (1) for passing the exam, (2) fulfilling learning obligations such as to do her homework, reading comprehensions during language lessons in classrooms, and (3) taking part in NILAM programme. NILAM was a programme designed by Malaysian Ministry of Education to promote reading habits

among school children. She went to a college in Malaysia right after secondary school for A-levels.

KZ

KZ came from Kuching, Sarawak. When she recalled her reading experience, she reported that she did not read much both in Malay and English. She only started to read books in Malay and English when she joined a reading competition. In this competition the winner was chosen based on the number of books read. However, it was easier for her to read and understand Malay than English.

RG

RG came from Kluang, Johor. When she was in primary school, she was exposed to both Malay and English books. She pointed out that she had, firstly, learned English basic grammar. When she was familiar with the English grammar, her reading experience became more pleasant. However, she did not need to learn Malay grammar to be able to read Malay books. She recounted that reading in Malay was more straightforward. Considering that she spoke Malay as her first language, she did not bother to learn the grammar prior to reading Malay books.

RH

RH came from Johor Bahru, Johor. He started to read in Malay when he was four years old. He stated that when he was six years old, his parents bought a collection of Malay story books for him. He used to have the Malay version of Nancy Drew series. He started to read English books when he was between six to seven years old. He mentioned that there was a one or two year gap for him to read in English after he started learning to read in Malay. After that, he read both Malay and English books throughout his primary and secondary education. For leisure reading, he read both English and Malay books.

RS

RS came from Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu. He started reading Malay books when he was in primary school. He learned to read in English in primary school, but after learning the English grammar and vocabulary. He mentioned that he was never a fan of reading in both languages. However, reading in Malay was easier as it was more straightforward compared to reading in English. He did not enjoy reading because he mainly read for academic purposes.

SL

SL came from Selangor. He learned to read during pre-school. The interest to read in English developed when he was learning Science and Mathematics through the medium of English. Since then, he could read well in English. However, he preferred reading Malay books because it did not require a lot of effort.

SR

SR came from Shah Alam, Selangor. Her first reading experience started in primary school. She seldom read Malay books due to her school's expectation. In view of that, more English reading materials were provided by her school. However, she did not enjoy reading English books, due to language barriers. She read the English material mostly for academic purposes. She opted for reading blogs and online news in Malay rather than English.

3.5 Research Setting

This study was conducted in one of top universities in the UK. This university comprises four faculties, namely, (1) Arts, (2) Science, (3) Social Sciences and (4) Medicine. In May 2015, the student population was about 23, 570 of which 9, 317 were postgraduate students. There were 8, 608 international students enrolled in this university. In addition,

the Malaysian student population in the UK and Ireland was estimated to be about 14, 753 (Malaysian Higher Education Sector, 2012).

3.6 Section 3: Research Methods

This section outlines the methods used to gather data. The section comprises sub-topics such as (1) individual interviews, (2) reading diaries, and (3) a sequence of follow-up interviews.

3.6.1 Individual Interviews

The aim of the individual interviews was to explore the perceptions and experiences of academic reading among a group of Malaysian undergraduates when they entered a new learning context. Interviews were employed as the primary means of data collection to elicit and encourage the participants to reveal their ways of understanding academic reading that involved a major shift from a 'local' L2 setting to a new learning context. There were 2 interview sessions in Phase 1 of the data collection, particularly, to address Research Question 1. An interview protocol and a thematised interview protocol were used for Interview 1 and 2 in Phase 1 of data collection (see Section 3.9).

3.6.2 Reading Diaries

Reading diaries were employed as a method here because 'diaries were a valuable pedagogical instrument in themselves in that, when teachers asked students to introspect about learning, comment on the class, and communicate about what they were learning, students became more involved in the course and made connections between themselves and the course materials' (Porter, Goldstein, Leatherman and Conrad, 1990, p.227). By using reading diaries, I would be able to investigate 'issues not normally accessible through outside observation' (Bailey, 1990, p.233). In addition, it could also 'give us access to the participants' voices' (Bailey and Nunan, 1996, p.199). The aforementioned

rationales were the ultimate reasons for me to utilise a reading diary as a method in this study.

When readers read a text, they bring with them their own perspectives, experience, knowledge and other sociocultural factors throughout their reading activities. These were the aspects of reading which were important for my study, and yet they were inaccessible through outside observation. This was one of the gaps I mentioned in Chapter 2, where previous studies on L2 reading research failed to study the same readers under different reading conditions or with different reading dispositions. This issue remained a major concern, because it was clear that literacy was linked to different kinds of social conditions (Bernhardt, 2011).

The primary aim was not to set any specific reading diet for the participants, since a majority of the previous studies on L2 reading have prepared pre-determined reading texts for their subjects and have looked at the reading process from the outside perspectives. More often, they failed to position their subjects toward the text(s) they were asked to read under 'different cognitive and affective stances' (Bernhardt, 2011) while accomplishing different reading goals such as reading for assignment, presentation, seminar and examination. Each of 'these condition and circumstances might imply a potentially different set of performance data' (Bernhardt, 2011, p.225). In view of this, the present study expected any reading paths to occur while the participants carried out their academic reading activities for various purposes in different settings.

The rationale for utilising diaries was to probe more deeply into the reading activities concerning the problems arising while reading academic text, the strategies used to overcome the problems, and the possibilities of change and development in the participants' usage of reading strategies. Therefore, this method could help to elicit more introspection (Porter et al., 1990) about the aspects of academic reading.

3.6.3 Follow-up Interviews

The follow-up interviews were conducted after the submission of the first diary entry in February 2014. The primary aim of the follow-up interview was to elicit more responses from the participants based on what they wrote in their reading diary. Meanwhile, the second aim was to encourage them to keep up with the reading diaries. In addition, the third aim was to study the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives by getting the 'inside' rather than the 'outside' view. Since this study was guided by the phenomenography approach, the questions for the follow-up interviews were designed based on what was written in the participants' reading diaries (see Section 3.9.2 for more details about the follow-up interviews).

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues were considered in all stages of (1) data collection, (2) data analysis, and (3) reporting of data. While storing and reporting the data, the participants' details were not shared with anyone and were made anonymous. Pseudonyms were used to address any particular participants in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. In addition, the data were not disclosed to any other parties. The data was then made anonymous before it was presented to anybody else, including the research supervisor and the university.

The recorded interviews, the interview transcripts and the reading diaries were kept in my personal folders. The recorded interviews, interview transcripts and diary entries were not disclosed to anyone, including my supervisor. However, I disclosed one of the interview transcripts to my PhD colleague from the Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick to address reliability issues during the analysis stage.

3.7.1 Interviews Ethical Issues

Prior to conducting the interview sessions, the research participants were given consent forms (see Appendix G). The participants signed these forms, which covered ethical issues such as confidentiality and data access. The interviews were conducted at a public accessible place in a quiet meeting room. The room was conducive, considering its accessibility. Therefore, both the participants and I felt comfortable with the setting as there were other people in the venue.

The participants were explicitly informed of my status at all stages of the data collection procedures. They were allowed to withdraw from this study at any stage of the data collection. The data they provided were deleted should they discontinue their participation. However, no payment was made should they withdraw at any stage of data collection phase. The participant only signed the consent form if they agreed with the terms and condition.

I elicited clarification from the participants during the first meeting that they agreed to keep in touch with me for 9 months. They signed the consent forms and were informed that payment was based on their interview sessions and the number of diaries entry submissions. I established a good rapport with the participants and was flexible with the interview schedules. The interview sessions were carried out based on their free time and convenient. I started with the data collection in February 2014. Throughout the data collection phases, neither the participants nor I encountered any problems, such as miscommunication, issues of confidentiality and venue for interview sessions.

Permissions were granted by the participants for the interviews to be recorded for research purposes only. The permissions were granted in written form, and stated in the consent form. Additionally, I regularly requested verbal consent prior to conducting

the interview. These recordings would be used for my references only, and were not revealed to research supervisor, external examiners and inter-raters.

I allowed the participants to check and read the interview transcripts if they wanted to check for the accuracy of their interview transcripts or to delete anything they had mentioned during the interviews. But this was only permissible for the follow-up interview transcripts. For the phenomenography interviews in Step 1 of data collection phase, such action was not encouraged because the 'aim of the phenomenography interviews is to help the interviewees to express as completely as possible their perspectives on the phenomenon displayed through the opening scenario' (Bowden, 2005, p.29) and the transcripts were not read individually, but as a whole. In addition, I did offer focus-group discussions among the participants following the completion of data analysis to 'see if the categories encompassed their range of perspectives' (Bowden, 2005, p.30). However, none of the participants wanted to read both the transcripts and analysis of categories descriptions.

3.7.2 Reading Diaries Ethical Issues

Prior to the data collection phase, the participants were informed that their full commitment and dedication were required for the reading diaries throughout data collection procedure. It was stated in the consent form and everyone agreed to accept the terms and conditions throughout data collection phases. Their diaries were classified as confidential, were kept anonymous, used for this research and were not revealed to anyone else except the inter-raters (see Section 3.10.2).

3.8 Piloting

A pilot study was conducted at a university in the UK between November 2013 and January 2014. The purpose of the pilot study was to determine the suitability, practicality, reliability and validity of the instruments and procedures developed for this research fieldwork. There were three stages of piloting in this research, comprising the piloting of the (1) research participants, (2) research methods, and (3) research instruments. This section will detail the pilot report of participants' selection followed by pilot research methods and research procedures. The final section includes a description of the reflection on the pilot study.

3.8.1 The Outcomes of Pilot Study

3.8.1.1 Sample: Postgraduate and Undergraduate Participants

In the initial planning stage of the research, I chose both Malaysian undergraduates and postgraduates as participants. I conducted the first phase of the pilot study with two Malaysian postgraduates and three first year Malaysian undergraduates. The Malaysian postgraduates consisted of a Master's student and a first year PhD candidate.

The outcome of the pilot study revealed that it was impossible to track the master's students' reading strategies development, considering the duration of study. As in the case of the PhD candidate, time was obviously a barrier. It was very difficult to arrange interview sessions due to their hectic schedule. Therefore, I managed to meet my PhD pilot participant once for the think-aloud protocol and interview session. Throughout my quest to find at least 2 or 3 PhD candidates prior conducting the pilot, I only managed to get one participant. This was due to family commitments, as most of Malaysian postgraduates (especially PhD students) came to study in the United Kingdom with families.

Another identified hindrance was that the majority of the students came to study in the UK with a vast experience of the higher education system. They were accustomed to reading various types of academic reading material in English since many of them were university lecturers. The outcome of pilot interviews revealed that coming to learn in a new context suggested no impact on their reading strategies or perceptions. During the piloting, I failed to generate more data from the postgraduates.

I managed to get three Malaysian undergraduates when piloting this study. It was relatively convenient to arrange the think-aloud protocols and interview sessions with them. We chose Wednesday for the interview sessions, as they were free on 1pm onwards. While piloting the interviews, they discussed matters related to academic reading, such as (1) their perplexity with university's expectations, (2) the foreign university system, and (3) no prior experiences of academic reading and learning styles in university contexts. I thought that in one way or another, there was a sense of urgency for them to channel this perplexity and these perceptions based on their lived experiences studying in the UK. While piloting the research with these Malaysian undergraduates, more data were generated. These data were most likely to benefit the actual data collection.

3.8.1.2 Piloting the Research Methods and Research Procedures

1) Think Aloud Protocols

While planning the research methods design, I decided to utilise think-aloud protocols and individual interviews. However, the pilot results revealed a mismatch between the think-aloud protocols and the ontological and epistemological aspects of this study. I tried the think-aloud protocols with the postgraduates. They were requested to bring their own reading materials for the protocols. Prior to piloting this method, I viewed the think-aloud protocols YouTube videos to establish familiarity with how these protocols were conducted.

I started the session by asking the participants to read aloud and verbalise their thoughts while reading the text. When they fell silent, I urged them to continue talking. However, I failed to encourage them to read aloud and verbalised their thoughts. They mentioned that it was difficult for them to read aloud in front of me. They felt uneasy with these protocols. This situation, thus, hampered their interaction with the texts. Furthermore, they were not used to reading aloud in front of a stranger (i.e. me). These protocols made them feel that I was assessing their reading ability, although they were informed that no assessments were involved. Furthermore, the conflict of cultures prompted the failure of these protocols. As a result, no more data were generated while I was piloting these protocols.

Most of the time, I failed to embrace the essence of think-aloud protocols. As a novice researcher, I feel strongly that more professional research training was needed. From another vantage point, the method failed to provide me with what I needed most in my research, which was the "reflection" on the reading process itself.

Think-alouds provide a concurrent verbalisation of one's thoughts but they do not interfere with those thoughts processes in general (Ericsson and Simon, 1998). Therefore, the think-aloud is different from non-concurrent self-reports or introspection, as it does not require a reconstruction of, or a reflection upon one's thought (Pressley and Afflerbach, 1995). In addition, a think-aloud procedure was recommended by Pressley and Afflerbach (1995), Kucan and Beck (1997) and Trabasso and Magliano (1996) for assessing higher-order reading processes.

I was keen to explore the perceptions and experiences, and the various reflections concerning L2 learners' academic reading experiences in a more open-ended sense. Thus, unexpected reading paths were allowed, due to my *a priori* and overarching structure concerning actual academic reading experiences in new learning contexts. Therefore, I

decided not to utilise think-aloud protocols as a method, as a result of (1) its disparity with the research questions and theoretical paradigms, (2) my failure to conduct the think-aloud protocols accordingly, and (3) a clash between the participants' culture with the essence of these protocols. Following this, I had to choose another method that could generate more data during the actual data collection procedure.

2) Individual Interviews

Following the failure of the think-aloud protocols, I focussed on the pre-determined interview questions for the participants. The interview questions were piloted once to the postgraduates and twice to the undergraduates, who were not involved in the actual study. The pilot interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Initially, I used a modified survey questionnaire into interview questions during my first pilot interviews. The survey questionnaire was adapted from Hellekjær (2009). I reminded the participants that there was no right or wrong answer, and they were allowed to describe their experiences based on the questions asked.

The first pilot interview revealed that the research was not on the right track. The questions adapted from Hellekjær's (2009) study on reading strategies were inappropriate to the aspects of reading that I wanted to investigate considering that Hellekjær's study aimed to find out the problems and difficulties the respondents were facing with in academic reading. Besides, the questions were more suitable for a quantitative study.

The interview questions as shown by Table 3.3, were far too rigid, so that the participants' responses were basically influenced by the questions. This situation created an imbalance between how the participants wished to describe their academic reading experiences and the need to answer the interview questions accordingly.

Table 3.3: Sample of pilot interview questions

Examples of interview questions
1) How **quickly** do you **read English** texts on your reading lists? 2) Can you please describe how familiar are you with t**he words** in the **English** texts on your reading lists? Are all of the words familiar/unfamiliar? 3) What do you think of the **sentences in English texts?** • Are the sentences impossible to understand/understandable?

I decided to discard the "leading" interview questions and constructed new questions that could maximise the opportunity for the participants to elaborate more on their perceptions and experiences of academic reading in a new learning context. This step was taken so the interview questions in Interview 1 could introduce the research topic for the participants to reflect on any related recount of academic reading experiences both in Malaysia and the United Kingdom where appropriate.

Prior to piloting the second pilot interview, I decided to practise my interviewing skills, because the phenomenographic interviews were relatively new to me. In the initial pilot interview, I dominated the flow of the conversation. This completely contradicted the phenomenographic interview approach as it restrained the participants from describing their own direct experiences.

The mock interview provided me with valuable data that mirrored Akerlind's (2005b) description of phenomenographic interview as depicted in Section 3.2.3.1. When I listened to the recorded mock interview, I noticed that I utilised the semi-structured interviews by asking "what" questions. When the 'what questions were asked in such phenomenographic interviews, the outcomes tend to be less varied and they more or less reflect the standard, espoused theories available in the literature' (Bowden, 2005, p.17). This session further provided the study 'with valuable data such as to improve my

interviewer technique' (Green, 2005, p.37) in trying out the following types of prompts or pointers, as follows:

Seeking for clarification Tell me more about that … Describe that to me from start to end … **Playing the naïve** What do you mean? I am not clear… **Exploring Contradiction** It is interesting to me that earlier you talked about X, but later you talked about Y. Can you tell me about that?

Then, I trialed the new interview protocol in the second pilot interview. When I listened to the second pilot interview, it seemed to improve compared to the first pilot interview. However, the interview questions required some minor amendments to go beyond "what" questions to "could you describe?" questions since phenomenographic interviews were meant to explore 'the way in which the participants were thinking about or experiencing the phenomenon' (Akerlind, 2005a, p.65). Another outcome of the second pilot interview was that I had to work out on how to go about probing in a phenomenographic interview. This was due to some awkward moments when the participants were unsure of how to respond to my questions, and I ended up imposing my own conception of the phenomenon on the participants.

The interview protocol seemed appropriate at this stage. However, more probing was required in order to obtain a much deeper insight into how the participants actually perceived the academic reading in practice. In addition, it would require a better opportunity to explore and probe responses in a comfortable and non-threatening way. For example, asking for more information about their actual experiences rather than appearing to be 'testing their theoretical knowledge' (Bowden, 2005, pp.17–18). My primary purpose during the actual interview sessions was twofold: firstly, to encourage

the participants to reveal as much as possible about their ideas and their experiences, and secondly, to limit my own input in relation to the phenomenon during the interview interchanges.

In view of this, I decided to employ the unstructured follow-up questions as suggested by Akerlind (2005c) 'to encourage further elaboration of the topic' (p. 106). Therefore, I constructed the "follow-up questions" after analysing the first and second pilot interviews transcripts. The participants introduced some new ideas related to the aspects of reading that I wished to investigate, which required further probing and explanation. Both the interview protocol and the follow-up questions were piloted in the third pilot interview.

The outcome of the third pilot interview was that some re-wording of the follow-up questions was required. The changes in wording/questions comprised 'situated examples' (Akerlind, 2005b), such as asking about the individual's academic reading experience that may bring different aspects of the phenomenon. In addition, some questions requesting 'concrete examples' (Akerlind, 2005b) were also added, to clarify any particular contexts related to academic reading. Then, I piloted the follow-up questions in the fourth pilot interview.

The fourth pilot interview using the amended follow-up questions was successful in generating more data pertaining to my research questions. However, another drawback was the interview duration, where the participants were getting restless when the interview took more than 40 minutes. In this study, the participants were categorised as non-specialists, so they needed more time to respond to some of my interview questions.

This scenario contrasted with Akerlind (2005d) and Bowden and Green's (2005) research studies. Their research participants involved university's academics and researchers. The interviews in Akerlind's (2005d) study were conducted for 60-90 minutes

with 28 university academics. Meanwhile, there were 24 interviews with 24 RMIT researchers in Bowden and Green's (2005) study. Each interview took about 40-60 minutes. In their studies, the follow-up questions were embedded in the interview protocol.

The outcome of the fourth pilot interview here suggested that the participants were getting restless when too many follow-up questions were asked in one interview session. The greater risk of having restless participants would lead to more probing during the interviews. This could lead to adding my own views into their perspectives, which is against the phenomenographic approach. Thus, I decided to divide the individual interview in Step 1 into two sessions during the actual data collection procedure.

The rationale for having two interview sessions was to achieve one of the primary aims of the actual interview sessions, which was to avoid adding my own concepts or ideas to the phenomenographic interview in an unplanned way. I piloted this step in the final pilot interview. The outcome of the final pilot study showed that the participants were more focused when the interview was divided into 2 sessions.

3) Reading Diary

Initially, I was not planning to utilise a reading diary as a method. However, the failure of the think-aloud protocols prompted the need to select other appropriate method. Previous studies (e.g. Bolger, Davis and Rafaeli, 2003; Halbach, 2000; Huang, 2005) highlighted the benefits of employing diaries to (1) elicit more reflections in terms of learning experiences, provide 'ears' to learner voices, and (2) find out learning challenges and difficulties that were sometimes inaccessible from the outside observation.

I decided to utilise a reading diary due to some highlighted issues as reflected throughout piloting think-aloud procedures such as (1) pre-selected texts had the risk of disadvantaging the participants in terms of a particular title or writing style, and (2) they

did not reflect my earlier premise, namely to provide 'a multiple opportunities for the participants to display their proficiency in reading' (Bernhardt, 2011, p.121). Therefore, I opted to employ reading diaries as a method, considering the freedom and flexibility it offered for the participants to select their own texts under various unpredictable reading conditions.

Piloting the Reading Diary

The result of the pilot reading diary suggested that the participants needed proper guidelines for writing about their reading activities. This was due to the fact that they needed to focus on only academic reading. In this study, the aspects of reading that I wanted to investigate involved academic reading in a new context encompassing (1) patterns of reading strategy usage, and (2) the changes and development in the participants' use of reading strategies while reading various types of academic texts. Looking at the main aspects of reading that I wanted to investigate, I established the key themes in the reading diaries as follow:

1) reading for assignments
2) reading for seminar/presentation
3) reading for lectures
4) reading for final exam

These themes provided further guidance to focus on the specific details related to academic reading activities. Initially, I was not paying attention to other details such as the medium of reading prior to piloting the reading diary. However, one of the pilot participants pointed this out in her diary entries. She reported that she used different reading strategies when reading print-based and online-based texts. These different media might influence the participants' usage of reading strategies. Therefore, the reading diary

format was amended. One section was included for the participants to specify the text medium (print or screen).

The initial plan for the submission was on a weekly basis. However, the result of the pilot reading diary revealed that more time was required to record academic reading activities. For example, there was only one entry submission out of the expected three pilot reading diary participants. Therefore, the lack of data from the reading diaries affected the construction of the follow-up interviews questions.

Following two separate discussions with the pilot participants and my research supervisor, we decided that the reading diaries should be submitted every fortnight. The rationales were (1) to provide more time for the participants to maximise their reading activities, and (2) to encourage more diary submissions.

4) A Sequence of Follow-up Interviews

There were two pilot follow-up interviews. The first pilot follow-up interview was not implemented as scheduled. These interviews were supposed to be conducted a week after the diary submission. As mentioned earlier, there was only one submission that disrupted the first pilot study for the follow-up interview.

After revising the duration for diary submission from once a week to fortnightly, more data was generated by means of reading diary entries. It took about one week to analyse the entries, and extra care was taken to construct the interview questions based on what was written in the reading diaries. Table 3.4 shows the sample of a pilot diary entry.

Table 3.4: A sample of an entry during pilot study

Date	Activity	REASON for doing this particular activity on this day	Problems	CAUSE of problem (s)	Follow-up
30 Jan 2014	Reading 1 academic journal on intercultural crisis communication (Online)	A class on the subject were on a few days, so I had to get this done ASAP.	Other than the usual technical and difficult/ new words nothing of explicit problem when reading the article. However, some paragraphs are too difficult to understand.	Technical and difficult and new words, the article structures	Highlighted key words, and if there were words that I did not understand, I would Google them. Stop reading and printed it out.

The follow-up questions as shown by Table 3.5 were constructed based on the above diary entry:

Table 3.5: Examples of the follow-up interview questions

1) Can you please explain about "technical and difficult/new words"?
2) Can you please give me more examples of "technical and difficult/new words"?
3) Can you please tell me more about the article structures?
   - Why do you think it is difficult?
   - Can you please tell/show me the example of that "structures"?
4) Why do you have to
   - highlight key word and word that you do not understand?
   - Stop reading and print it out?
5) Can you please explain more about "I would Google them"?

A week after analysing and constructing the questions, I conducted the pilot follow-up interviews. The participants were able to reflect on their reading activities when questions related to what they had written in their diaries were posed. The pilot follow-up interview session went well, as the participants were given the opportunity to rectify and explain their reading diary entries.

In hindsight, I was able to probe more responses about (1) their academic reading challenges, and (2) the measures taken to solve them while reading at their own pace. This session was very helpful, as the participants were both expressive and responsive in conveying their actual academic reading activities. When reading the pilot follow-up interview transcripts, I detected the emergence of interesting patterns of changes/development in their reading strategies/purposes/motivation since they started their undergraduate courses in September 2013.

3.8.2 Piloting Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures underwent various changes following the outcome of the pilot study. I personally struggled to determine the most appropriate methods to use to gather rich data. However, I learned that while some methods were appropriate for the previous studies on reading research, they did not fit the context here. In view of this, I revised the methods and data collection procedure (1) to validate the feasibility of the research questions, and (2) to ensure they were suitable to the participants.

After piloting several methods, I revised the final data collection steps in this order. Firstly, I conducted the individual interviews to establish rapport with the participants. This will be addressed later as phase one of data collection. Secondly, phase two of data collection involved reading diaries followed by a sequence of follow-up interviews. These steps were taken to maximise the academic reading activities throughout data collection phases.

3.8.3 Potential Findings in the Actual Data Collection

During the pilot study, the participants' responses were plausible in terms of their perceptions and experiences of academic reading in an English university context. For example, the participants viewed academic reading in their new context as more

challenging, due to (1) the level of English language, and (2) reading texts. The entries in the reading diaries revealed more information about the participants' academic reading activities, reading strategies, problems and challenges. Thus, using this as a theoretical framework enabled suggestions to be made about academic reading particularly among Malaysian undergraduates in their new learning contexts.

3.8.4 Reflection on the Pilot Study

I went through a several learning processes while trialling the proposed methods. The pilot was largely successful. I managed to identify relevant methods to fit the research context. In addition, I was able to (1) identify the limitations of think-aloud protocols, and (2) evaluate my research skills to validate the feasibility of the research questions. The piloting of think-aloud protocols was a good learning experience for me. I learned that think-aloud protocols that seemed appropriate in past studies did not necessarily elicit sufficiently rich data in the context of this study. This can be explained by the participants' idiosyncrasies in terms of the social and cultural background that affected the feasibility of think-aloud protocols as a research method.

The pilot study also provided an opportunity for me to practise my interview skills. Prior conducting the pilot interviews, I arranged a mock phenomenographic interview with my PhD colleague studying at the Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick. This step was taken so as to focus on my interview techniques.

Although having prior experience in conducting semi-structured interviews for my undergraduate research project, master's dissertation and academic research, conducting a phenomenographic interview was a totally new experience for me. I further practised these interview techniques such as (1) eliciting information from participants, and (2) listening to them carefully before asking further questions. This enhanced my

interview skills and developed my confidence to proceed with the actual data collection process.

Apart from gaining some experiences in terms of conducting the individual interview to be more organised, the experience throughout the pilot study allowed me to be aware of some practical issues that might arise in the actual data collection. For example, the interviews had to be well-organised and required proper timetabling due to constraints such as time and venues.

3.9 Data Collection Phases

Data collection procedures were divided into 2 phases over a period of 9 months, from February 2014 until February 2015 (excluding June 2014 – September 2014). The rationale for collecting longitudinal data was to maximise the possibility of academic reading activities. Table 3.6 illustrates the whole process of data collection.

Table 3.6: Data collection phases

Phase of study	Research activities
Phase 1 February 2014	Step 1: Interview 1 and Interview 2 Activity: Individual interviews
Phase 2 February 2014 – February 2015	Step 1: Reading diaries and submission Activity: Recording their reading activities in reading diaries. Activity: Email the entries in word processing format. Step 2: Follow-up interviews Activity: Individual interviews
	Interviews The recorded interviews from Interview 1 and 2 in Phase 1 were transcribed before I started with the Phase 2 of data collection.
	Reading diaries entries The entries are analysed concurrently since the interview questions for the follow-up interviews based on what was written in the participant's entry.

3.9.1 Phase 1 of Data Collection: Individual Interviews

There were 2 individual interview sessions in Phase 1. Interview 1 started with the participants responding to some initial questions about academic reading in the United Kingdom. Initially, the first interview aimed 'to begin with some kind of (superficially) shared topic, verbalised in term which the participants and I both recognise as meaningful' (Ashworth and Lucas, 2000, p.299). Interview 2 was conducted as a follow-up to Interview 1. The first aim of Interview 2 was to ask some follow-up questions for the participants to elaborate on their academic reading experiences and clarify some concepts which were mentioned in Interview 1 (e.g. L1 and L2 reading, reading strategies, reading purposes and motivation). The second aim was to thematise the aspects of their experiences which were not previously thematised in the protocol used for Interview 1.

3.9.1.1 Interview Design

There were 2 interview sessions in Phase 1 of the data collection process. The former aimed to gain an understanding of the phenomenon with the participants by using the interview protocol (see Appendix B). The latter was more like a 'follow-up' session as suggested by Akerlind (2005b). The 'follow-up questions were often more important in eliciting underlying meaning than the primary questions' (Akerlind, 2005a, p.65). Thus, the follow-up questions were asked in Interview 2.

The questions in Interview 1 took the open questions form (see Appendix B), asking the participants what they thought of academic reading in the United Kingdom, how they went about it etc. I encouraged the participants to elicit more examples of their academic reading experiences throughout Interview 1. In Interview 2, the questions comprised situated examples and questions requesting concrete examples (see Appendix C).

3.9.1.2 Interview 1: Interview Protocol

The interview protocol in Interview 1 functioned as a guideline in an open-ended sense, since the 'phenomenographic interview was a little bit different as I need 'to avoid introducing new material that was not part of the planned interview structure for all interviews and cannot ask additional impromptu questions' (Green, 2005, p.36). Another reason for having the Interview protocol in Interview 1 was to 'encourage the interviewees to reveal as much as possible about their ideas and their experience' (Bowden, 2005, p.18).

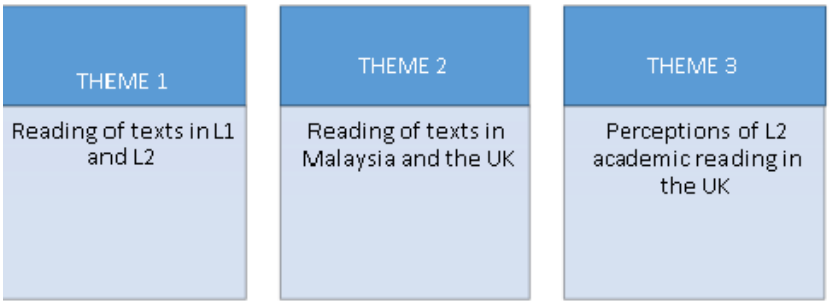
The guideline was used to establish a conversational style interview, in line with Marton's (1994) argument that 'the interview has to be carried out as a dialogue, [and] it should facilitate the thematisation of aspects of the subject's experience not previously thematised' (p. 4427). However, the interview protocol did not introduce new ideas. Only the interviewees were to introduce new ideas, because the purpose of the interview was to find out the aspect of academic reading the interviewees saw as relevant as well as what their views were (Bowden, 2005). Therefore, the interviewees were encouraged to reflect on and reveal how they experienced academic reading in a new learning context in Interview 1.

I also sustained the interview focus (i.e. academic reading) and allowed individual perspectives and experiences to emerge. This step was important to grasp the essence of the participants' experiences that could lead to the thematisation of academic reading. These themes were later used as a guideline to construct follow-up questions in Interview 2 as the focus was on eliciting the meaning of the themes, as perceived by the participants (Akerlind, 2005b). In view of the participants' language background, I had both Malay and English version of the Interview protocol. More explanation about language choice is provided in Section 3.12.

3.9.1.3 Interview 2: Follow-up Questions

The follow-up questions (See Appendix C) were designed to be based on the outcomes of the pilot interviews (see Section 3.8.1.2). The follow-up questions were not formed through predetermined ideas and questions from me. However, techniques in asking follow-up questions were practised/tried out during pilot studies to give me enough practice and exposure to interviewing the participants. The questions were also written in both Malay and English. There was a sense of urgency for me to 'frame these questions on the run […] it [was] vital to 'get this right' and feel comfortable and confident with the process' (Green, 2005, p.65) throughout Interview 2. Figure 3.2 shows the key themes in the follow-up questions in Interview 2.

Figure 3.2: The key themes for follow-up Interviews



The follow-up questions in Interview 2 consisted of situated examples and questions requesting concrete examples, asking about the individual's academic reading experience which was 'embedded within a particular context, and a different context may bring different aspects of the phenomenon into awareness…the questions requesting concrete examples was to clarify any particular context that the participants had in mind and to explore his or her understanding' (Akerlind, 2005b, p.106) of academic reading, the participants' growth and development as L2 readers in an English university.

3.9.2 Phase 2 of Data Collection: Reading Diaries and a Sequence of Follow-up Interviews

3.9.2.1 Step 1: Reading Diaries and Submission of Reading Diaries

In Step 1, the participants were asked to keep reading diaries. The aim of this step was to allow for any unexpected reading paths to be recorded (e.g. print-based reading, screen-based reading or both). The submission of each entry was scheduled once every fortnight.

3.9.2.2 Reading Diaries Procedure: Entries, Format and Submission

Any type of reading activities was recorded, such as how the participants read academic texts, the problems or challenges they encountered with academic reading and what they did to solve any reading problems. The key themes, as mentioned in Section 3.8.1.2, could stimulate the structure of my data because the participants were able to focus on academic reading activities, and not leisure reading. This step was taken to ensure a sufficient depth and structure in the reading diaries entries as the questions for follow-up interview sessions would be based on it.

There was no specific format for the reading diary. However, I prepared 2 models of the reading diaries (see Appendix D). At the same time, I encouraged the participants to create their own personal diary format. Furthermore, I encouraged them to write/describe their academic reading experiences in a more open-ended sense, considering the possibilities for unexpected reading paths to occur (e.g. reading prints, screen or both). Flexibility was offered in terms of language preferences because the participants appeared to code-switch between Malay and English.

3.9.2.3 Step 2: A sequence of Follow-up Individual Interviews

The aim of this step was to probe more deeply into the responses, based on what was written in the reading diary entries. The first sequence of the follow-up interview was conducted after the first submission of diary entries in February 2014.

Preparing to Interview

Preparation for the follow-up interviews was somewhat different from Interview 1 and Interview 2 in Phase 1. The follow-up interview for every participant hinged on what was written in the participants' reading diaries. Thus, the follow-up interview sessions were more flexible in terms of design.

Follow-up Interview Protocol

The questions for follow-up interviews drew on the reading diary entries. Prior to conducting the follow-up interviews, these steps were taken: (1) diaries were read, and (2) questions were constructed based on the diary entries.

Follow-up Interviews Design

The follow-up interview sessions offered more flexibility. The participants were allowed to recount their academic reading experiences based on what was written in the reading diaries. Although the interview questions were constructed based on their reading diary, they were allowed to talk about anything that they could recall while writing their reading activities in their diaries. However, some key questions were needed to maintain consistency in the participants' recollections. For example:

1) How do you think your reading techniques/strategies have changed since you first arrived here?
2) How do you think you have changed as a reader since you first arrived here?

These questions were vital to track the participants' academic reading experiences to (1) explore their use of reading strategies, and (2) track the changes or development in their use of reading strategies. This step was taken following the outcome of the pilot study. It was important to ask a few compulsory questions, as this helped to identify the patterns of reading strategies use and the reading strategies dynamism.

The questions which were posed during the follow-up interviews were more personal as they were based on how they experienced academic reading at their own pace and in their own time. This method provided me with "an access" to the **black box** in the participants' mind where they (1) recounted their academic reading experiences, (2) re-stated the problems and solutions they had taken to survive in an academic world, and (3) showed the actual texts they were struggling with while participating in this study. Thus, the follow-up interview sessions provided me with the depth of data needed for a more thorough understanding of academic reading as seen through the participants' eyes.

3.10 Section 4: Actual Data Collection

3.10.1 Phase 1 of Data Collection

Making Contacts

A week before conducting Interview 1, I had the first meeting with the research participants. The aims of the meeting were to (1) establish rapport with the participants, (2) explain the research and what was to be expected from them (i.e. attending interviews sessions and keeping reading diaries), and (3) distribute the consent forms. In the consent form (see Appendix G), information about my research, recorded interviews and the terms and regulations was provided. The participants were paid based on the number of interview sessions attended and reading diary submission.

Discussion about the venue, day and time also occurred during the first meeting. We reached a consensus that Wednesday (1pm) suited everyone, since there were no lecture sessions or activities thereafter. As for the venue, we agreed to conduct the interview sessions in a public accessible place which was conducive to recording the interviews.

Individual Interviews

There were 2 interview sessions in Phase 1, consisting of (1) Interview 1 and (2) Interview 2. In interview 1, responses were elicited based on how the participants experienced and perceived academic reading in their new learning context. In addition, these responses were used to construct the follow-up questions for Interview 2. These interview sessions were conducted on 5 and 12 February 2014. Table 3.7 shows the details of the interviews in Phase 1 of data collection.

Table 3.7: Details about the interviews in Phase 1 of data collection

Participants	5 Feb 2014 (Interview 1)	12 Feb 2014 (Interview 2)	Hours of interview
AF	1	1	1:35:35
AY	1	1	1:10:38
DY	1	1	1:45:13
HZ	1	1	1:30:45
KT	1	1	2:00:15
KZ	1	1	2:20:22
RG	1	1	2:10:15
RH	1	1	1:20:25
RS	1	1	1:45:30
SL	1	1	1:50:10
SR	1	1	1:30:28

Interview 1

Before I started interviewing the participants, they filled out a demographic form (see Appendix A). Some information such as their scores for the IELTS reading component was essential in determining their English reading competencies. Considering that I needed to establish their L1 proficiencies, this study has, thus, attempted to provide information about the participants' language background. As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, their L1 knowledge might influence academic reading comprehension in an L2.

I started Interview 1 by asking more common questions related to participants' studies and activities. This step was taken to make them feel more comfortable and relaxed throughout the interview sessions. I also reminded them that should they feel uncomfortable, they were allowed to withdraw from participating in this study. Before I started the interview, I asked for their consent to record the interview sessions. A high-technology smartphone was used as a digital recorder as it was more practical for me to transfer the recorded interviews to my Dropbox folders via Wi-Fi connection.

The interview was conducted in the students' hub. The students' hub was a comfortable and conducive place, as it was quiet and private. The hub was a publically accessible place, but there were meeting rooms inside the hub where I had made the booking prior to conducting the interview sessions. Therefore, both the participants and I were more relaxed, because we knew there were other students/staff outside the meeting room. Therefore, all of the interview sessions (including the follow-up interview sessions) were conducted in students' hub.

I asked all the questions in the interview protocol for Interview 1. In doing so, I allowed the participants to express their views and experiences based on the questions that were posed to them. During the interview, I used the interview protocol which was written in Malay. However, the participants were encouraged to use the language they felt most comfortable with; 9 participants spoke Malay throughout Interview 1 whereas the other 2 participants preferred to code-switch between Malay and English. Again, after the end of the interview session, I assured the participants that the recorded interviews would be used for my research purposes only. Section 3.12 provided more details concerning language choices throughout the data collection procedures.

Interview 2

Interview 2 was a follow-up session to Interview 1. However, the interview questions in Interview 2 were more semi-structured, given that these questions were more thematised in nature. I started the interview by asking some common questions about their studies. Then, I asked them to recount their experiences and views on academic reading. The participants provided more in-depth responses during Interview 2 since they felt more comfortable with me after several meetings. They were more open when expressing their feelings and the problems which were related to L2 academic reading.

Similar techniques were sustained, so both interviews were uniform in terms of questioning techniques and approach. Again, I asked for the participants' consent before recording the interview. A similar recording device was used and the recorded interviews were transferred to my Dropbox folder immediately after the interview sessions. During Interview 2, all of the participants spoke Malay with some code-switching to English. Malay was used throughout Interview 2 because the follow-up questions were very much personal as they needed to recount their academic reading experiences both in Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

Recording and Transcriptions

Recordings were made in the meeting room using a smartphone. All interview recordings proceeded without technical difficulties. The recordings were then transferred to the hard disks of my two notebooks and transcribed by me. There were a total of 22 interviews in Step 1. The transcription process was facilitated by Nvivo10 software. Nvivo10 offered greater control in terms of repetition, audio speed and playback. These functions were helpful throughout the transcribing phase, especially when the main data were mostly gathered by means of interviews.

Transcription Procedures

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim by me. They were typed in Nvivo10. Each interview was labelled using the participants' initials. For further checking purposes, all transcriptions were saved in my hard disks, Dropbox folder and personal email for backup. All transcriptions were stored in a labelled folder (e.g. IV1 for interview 1 and IV2 for interview 2).

3.10.2 Phase 2 of Data Collection: Reading Diaries and a Sequence of Follow-up Interviews

Step 1: Reading Diaries and Submission

The participants started to record their reading diaries after the completion of interviews in Phase 1. Two weeks were allocated to record any academic reading activities in their reading diaries. They submitted their diaries on Sunday every fortnight. They emailed me the diaries, since all of them recorded their reading diaries as Word documents. The pages of their reading diaries were between four to ten pages depending on the font size and type, content and layout (portrait and landscape). All of the participants recorded their reading diaries in table format.

The participants wrote in Malay with some code-switching to English in their reading diaries. However, the participants' code-switching did not influence my understanding of what they intended to express in their writing. Perhaps, coming from the same language background with the participants was an added advantage for me. I had not experienced any problems while analysing the contents. Besides, all doubts regarding what were written in the diaries were clarified as further questions. These were then addressed during the follow-up interview sessions. Similar techniques, as described in Section 3.9.2.1, were sustained throughout diary analysis to construct the questions for

the follow-up interview sessions. The following table indicates the learner diary entries collected during this period.

Table 3.8: The participants' diary entries

Participants	2014							2015		Total
	Feb	March	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	
AF	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
AY	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
DY	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
HZ	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	13
KY	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
KZ	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
RG	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
RH	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
RS	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	13
SL	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	13
SR	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14

Reading Diary Analysis and Storage

I spent one week analysing each entry, and concurrently constructed the questions for the follow-up interview sessions. The number of questions written for the follow-up interview sessions was based on the reading diaries. The greatest number of interview questions was 15 and the lowest number was 8. However, there was a key theme in the reading diary, whereby the participants had to write about how they read for their final examination, which was consistently asked about throughout the follow-up interview sessions. I re-read the entries better to understand and familiarise myself with the participants' actual academic reading experiences.

For diary analysis, Bailey (1990) recommends a five-stage procedure requiring reading the diary repeatedly and then looking for recurring patterns and significant events. However, this procedure did not seem appropriate in this study, since the diaries were only primarily a stimulus for follow-up interviews. Thus, I analysed the diaries based on their manifest content as proposed by Sarantakos (2005, p.300), referring 'to the visible,

surface text, the actual parts of the text manifested in the document [in this case, the diaries]: the words, sentences, paragraphs'.

I finalised the pre-determined categories after several readings. Then, I checked the criteria for categories with my PhD colleague from the Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick. We established the criteria for categories by comparing our lists and looked for similarities and differences. The final categories were established based on their frequency and intensity, consisting of:

1) problems while reading L2 academic texts
2) strategies used to solve the problems
3) reasons for such problems to occur during academic reading activities

A week later, I arranged the time slots for the first follow-up interview sessions. The participants selected the day and time for interviews. Again, I reminded them that the follow-up interview session would be conducted as a follow-up to their reading diary submission. Hence, the questions asked were based on what was written in their diaries. I needed to remind my participants continually of the activities for each procedure, so the participants were aware of the data collection progress. This step was taken because I wished to re-establish the rapport, as they were involved in this study for 9 months.

The reading diaries were stored in both my external and internal hard-disks, Dropbox folder and personal emails for data back-up. Each reading diary was labelled using the participants' initials (e.g. RD1_RH, RD2_RH, RD3_RH). The label indicated the method of data collection, which was "Reading Diary" (RD) followed by the number of diary submitted and the participant's initial. Each diary submission was stored in different folders (e.g.RD1, RD2, RD3).

Step 2: Sequence of Follow-up Interviews

During the follow-up interviews, I asked all the prepared questions but not precisely in the same words or the same order. This step was suggested by Akerlind (2005, p. 113) 'to keep the interview as comfortable and conversation-like as possible, in order to facilitate a frank exploration' of their actual academic reading activities. Since the questions were based on their actual reading activities, I further encouraged the participants to talk explicitly about their reading activities that were not recorded in the reading diaries.

A more positive outcome of conducting a series of follow-up interviews was that I was able to probe for more clarification based on what they had written in their reading diaries. For example, if they mentioned that they needed to highlight certain words while reading, I asked them to further justify this. In doing so, the participants were able to explain their reasons for choosing certain strategies. Obviously, although some participants were using slightly similar strategies, there was variation in their justification which I found very appealing for further analysis.

Another interesting situation during the follow-up interview sessions was when 2 participants (AF and RS) brought along their academic reading texts and pointed out the paragraphs/sentence structures which were difficult for them to read and comprehend. Another 3 participants (RG, KT and DY) emailed me the texts, which were difficult for them to read. Thus, during the follow-up interviews I was able to probe for more responses based on what written in their reading diaries, as well as get some samples of authentic academic texts. The questions that were posed during the follow-up interviews were more personal, as they were based on how they experienced academic reading at their own pace and in their own time.

This session somehow provided me with access to the participants' minds as they recounted their academic reading experiences, re-stated the problems and solutions taken to survive in an academic world as well as showing me the actual texts they struggled with while participating in my study. Thus, the follow-up interview sessions provided me with a surplus of data that could lead to an in-depth understanding of academic reading from the participants' inside perspectives. The sequence of follow-up interviews was completed in February 2015. Similar steps were taken throughout the follow-up interview sessions, where the questions were constructed based on the participants' entries. All interviews were conducted in both Malay and English. There was a large amount of code-switching between these two languages during the interview sessions. Table 3.9 and 3.10 summarise the details of the follow-up interviews.

Table 3.9: Details about the follow-up interviews

Participants	**2014**							**2015**		**Total**
	Feb	**March**	**Apr**	**May**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	
AF	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
AY	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
DY	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
HZ	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	13
KY	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
KZ	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
RG	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
RH	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14
RS	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	13
SL	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	13
SR	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	14

Table 3.10: Summary of follow-up interviews data

Participants	Total duration of interview
AF	8:27:06
AY	7:51:00
DY	7:08:33
HZ	7:10:00
KT	9:06:16
KZ	7:12:30
RG	8:33:03
RH	7:20:16
RS	7:25:10
SL	7:58:22
SR	9:31:00

Recording, Transcriptions Procedure and Storage

Similar recording systems were used, and the outcomes were transferred to my Dropbox folder after the interview sessions via Wi-Fi connection. All interview recordings proceeded without technical difficulties. The recordings were then transferred to the hard disks of my two notebooks and transcribed by me. Malay was used throughout the follow-up interview sessions with some code-switching to English. The interview recordings were transcribed from beginning to end. The transcription process was facilitated by Nvivo10 software. Each interview was labelled using the participants' initials. However, all transcripts were stored in different folders, to avoid confusion in data storage for all interview sessions.

All transcriptions for each of the follow-up interview sessions were collected in a labelled folder (e.g. FIV1, FIV2, FIV3 and so on). In each folder, there were different labels for the participants. For example: (1) *FIV1_RH* for participant *RH* in the folder for follow-up interview 1 (FIV1), and (2) *FIV2_RH* for participants *RH* in the folder for follow-up interview 2 (FIV2). For further analysis and checking purposes, all transcriptions were saved in my internal and external hard disks, Dropbox folder and personal email for backup.

3.11 Data Analysis

3.11.1 Individual Interviews

A phenomenographic approach, of the type suggested by Orgill and Sutherland (2008), was employed for the interview data in Phase 1 of Data Collection. The steps involved in data analysis procedure as suggested by Orgill and Sutherland (2008, p.135) can be seen below.

Table 3.11: Framework of data analysis for Interview 1 and 2

Steps	Data analysis framework
1	Transcribed interviews verbatim
2	**First review** • Read through the transcripts several times, look for both similarities and differences within them. • Developed initial categories using Nvivo10 that described different ways the participants perceived/experienced academic reading in the United Kingdom. **Second review** • Re-examined interview transcripts to determine if the categories were sufficiently descriptive and indicative of the data. • Involved modification, addition and deletion of the categories descriptions. Continue the process until the modified categories seemed to be consistent with the interview data.
3	**Categories descriptions** Discussed the categories descriptions with the inter-raters to decide which categories would be used for further analysis of the data. Thorough descriptions on the attempts in arriving to the categories can be seen in Chapter 4.
4	**Defining and finalising** • I used Nvivo10 software for data coding, analysis and to assign portions of the transcripts to their corresponding category descriptions. • The categories of descriptions were discussed individually in findings and discussion sections.

Analysis of Interviews Data

For research question 1, the participants were treated as a collective case to seek collective views pertaining to perceptions and experiences of academic reading. I was keen on Akerlind's (2005c) suggestion of reading the whole transcripts because 'the greater context provided by the whole of transcript approach was seen as presenting greater opportunities for interpreting the underlying meaning or intention associated with particular words and phrases used by the interviewee' (p. 117). Thus, the transcripts for both Interviews 1 and 2 were firstly read as a whole, and were later analysed to arrive at the categories of description. The data were then grouped and assigned to their corresponding descriptions.

Establishing the Categories of Descriptions and Themes

The organised interview data were analysed using the categories of description approach as suggested by Orgill and Sutherland (2008), Bowden (2005) and Akerlind (2005a). Prior transcribing the interviews, I attended several Nvivo10 workshops and learned how to use it via YouTube. This qualitative data processing software was relatively easy to use. The interviews were transcribed in Nvivo10. The preliminary and the finalised categories of descriptions were then managed by the 'coding' function available on Nvivo10.

Step 1: Transcribed Interviews Verbatim

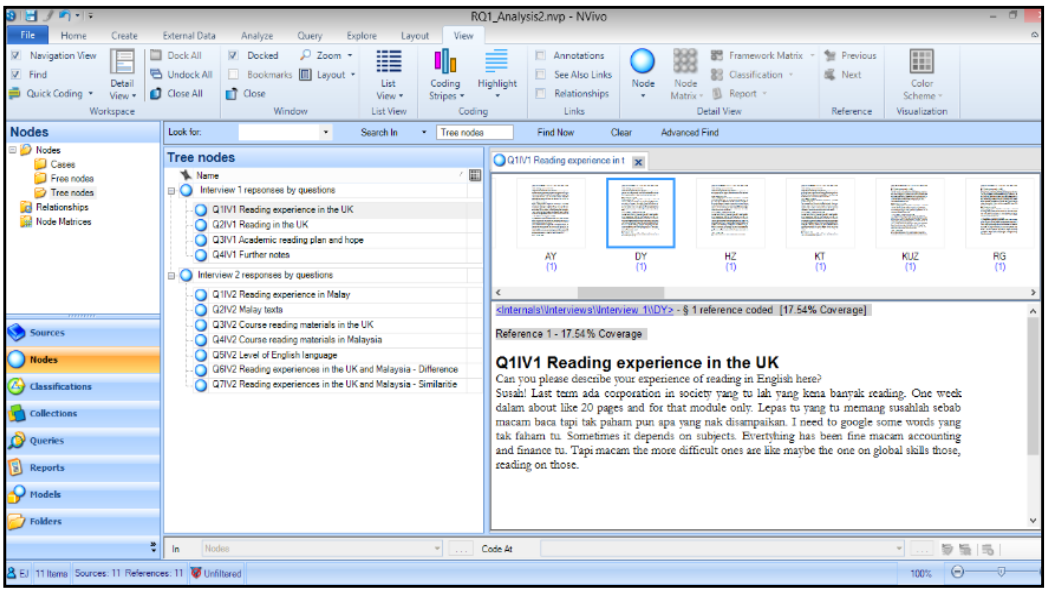
I began my analysis by transcribing each of the interviews verbatim. The interview transcripts were the data that I analysed to look at a group of Malaysian undergraduates' perceptions and experiences of academic reading in the UK. These transcripts were transcribed in both Malay and English, due to code-switching during the interview sessions. I retained the authenticity of the transcripts based on the participants' actual use of both languages. A mixture of both English and Malay as used during the interviews was also retained during the analysis stage. This step was taken to ensure the authenticity

of the transcripts, and also to obtain the real meaning of what the participants said during the interviews. Translation into English was necessary only for reporting the findings, in which only the portions of the transcripts which were used to report the findings were translated into English.

Step 2: First Review – Familiarisation Stage

The interview responses were sorted by question, since the interviews had a structure, where each interview item showed a consistency in terms of how it was structured (see Appendix B and C). This step was done by using the auto-code by heading function in Nvivo10. Figure 3.3 shows the interview responses sorted by questions in the Nodes folder.

Figure 3.3: The interview responses were sorted by questions in Nvivo10

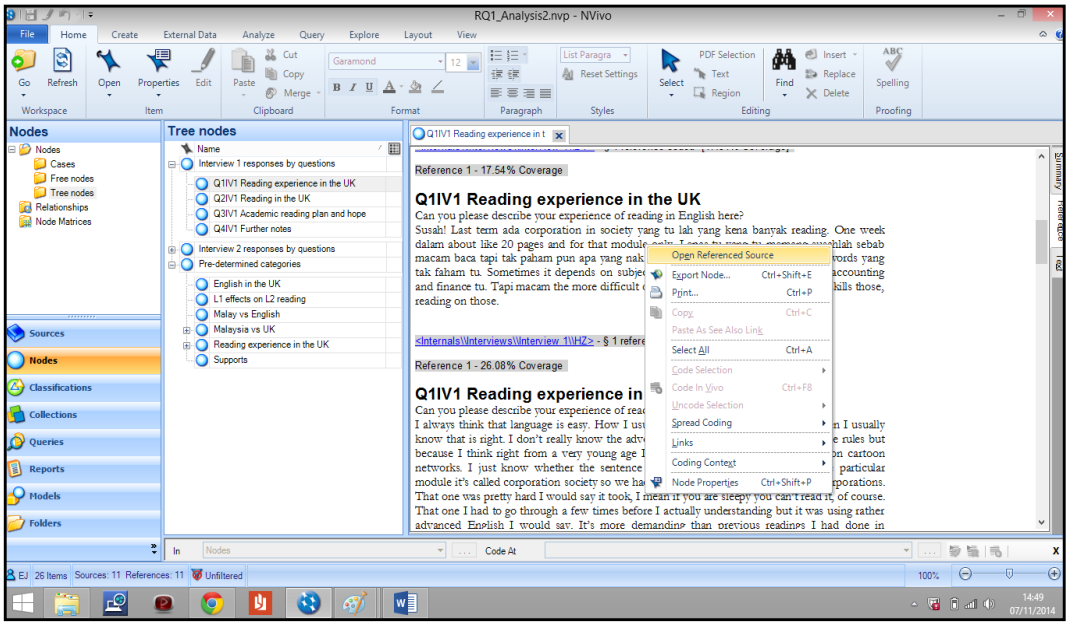


During the familiarisation stage, these transcripts were read as a whole before they were sorted by questions, as suggested by Orgill and Sutherland (2008) and Akerlind (2005a) for phenomenography analysis. Then, the similarities and differences in the transcripts were further determined. These approaches to data analysis were achieved via the function available on Nvivo10. The steps taken during the familiarisation stage

involved (1) the interview responses were sorted by questions, (2) the patterns of the participants' responses, and (3) the identified patterns were later described as pre-determined categories and sub-categories.

Although the participants' responses were sorted by questions, the full transcripts were available on Nvivo10. Therefore, I was able to read the full transcripts to ensure that the responses were read 'as a whole whenever the transcripts was consulted' (Akerlind, 2005b, p.117). This step was taken to ensure that the responses 'were never read out of context' (ibid).

Figure 3.4: The Open Referenced Source function to see the whole transcript



The whole transcripts were available for each of the sorted responses via the 'Open Referenced Source' function, as shown above (see Figure 3.4). In addition, the complete transcript for the particular participant underwent a reading and coding process. This function available in Nvivo10 helped to substantiate that the transcripts were always read as a whole and in context during the analysis stage (Akerlind, 2005b).

Figure 3.5: The whole transcript

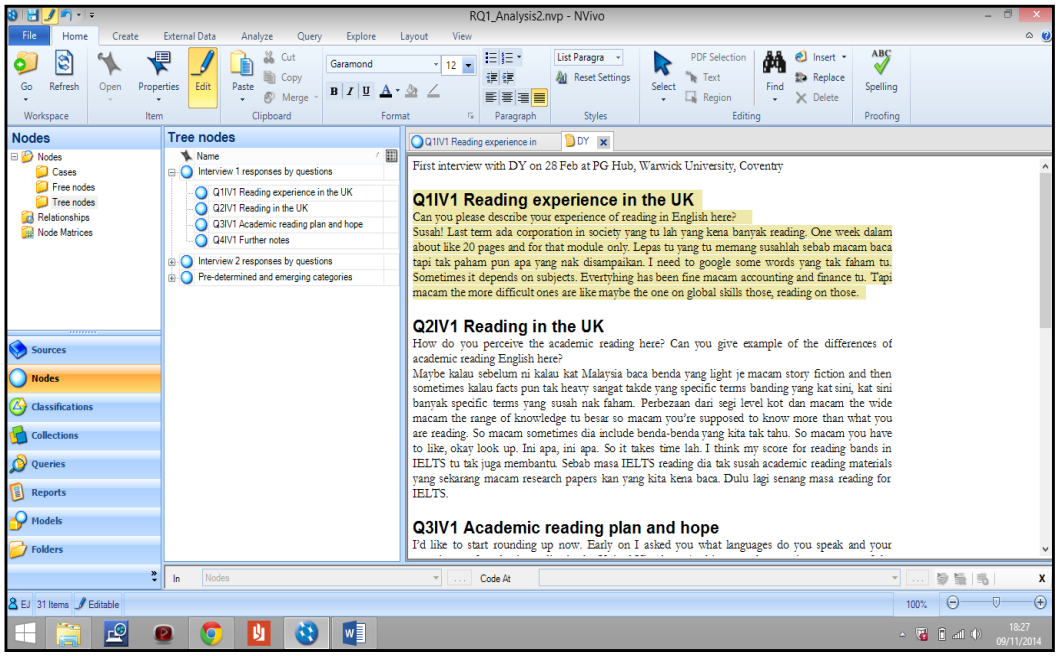
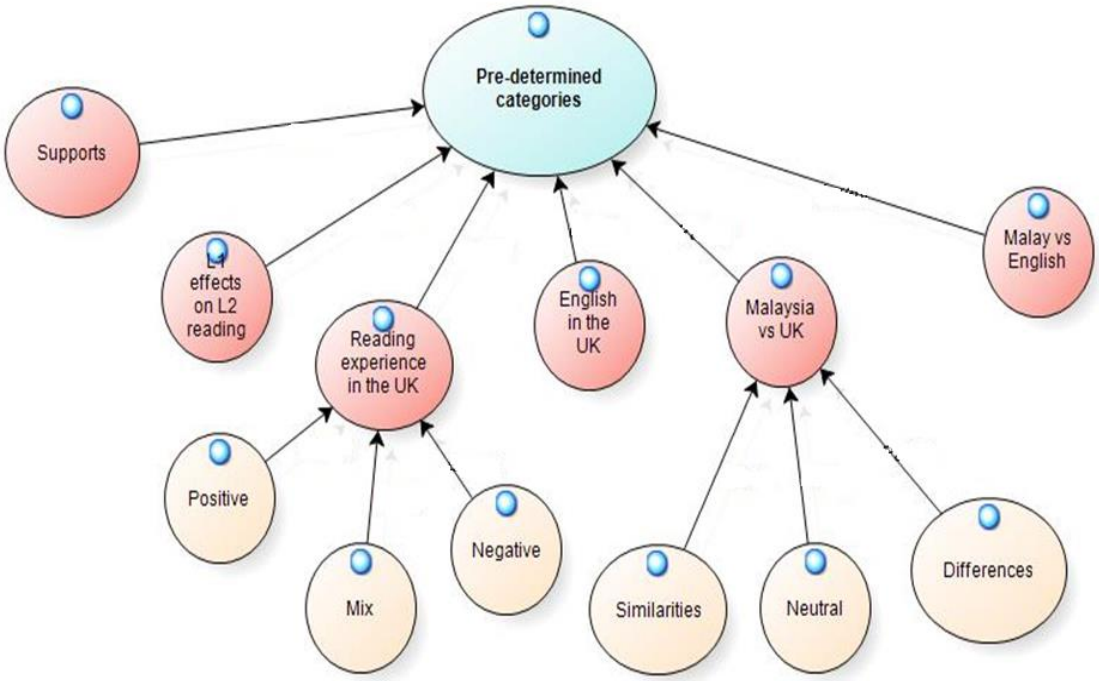


Figure 3.5 illustrates the whole transcript in Nvivo10 after the responses were sorted by questions. While reading these responses, I looked for both similarities and differences within them. After that, I started to develop the initial pre-determined categories and sub-categories to describe the different ways that these Malaysian students experienced academic reading in the UK. Similar steps were repeated during a span of 4 weeks, because the primary principle of a phenomenography analysis was to seek consistency while developing the categories of descriptions (Åkerlind, 2012). I created a free node folder for a list of categories that would later be used in Step 3 of data analysis.

During this stage, it was imperative for me 'to maintain an open mind during the analysis, minimising any pre-determined views or too rapid foreclosure in views about the nature of the categories of description' (Åkerlind, 2012). Several categories and themes were developed 'on the go' following several re-readings and categories grouping during the iterative process of categories description.

Figure 3.6: Pre-determined categories



Step 3: Second Review - The Iterative Process of Categories Descriptions

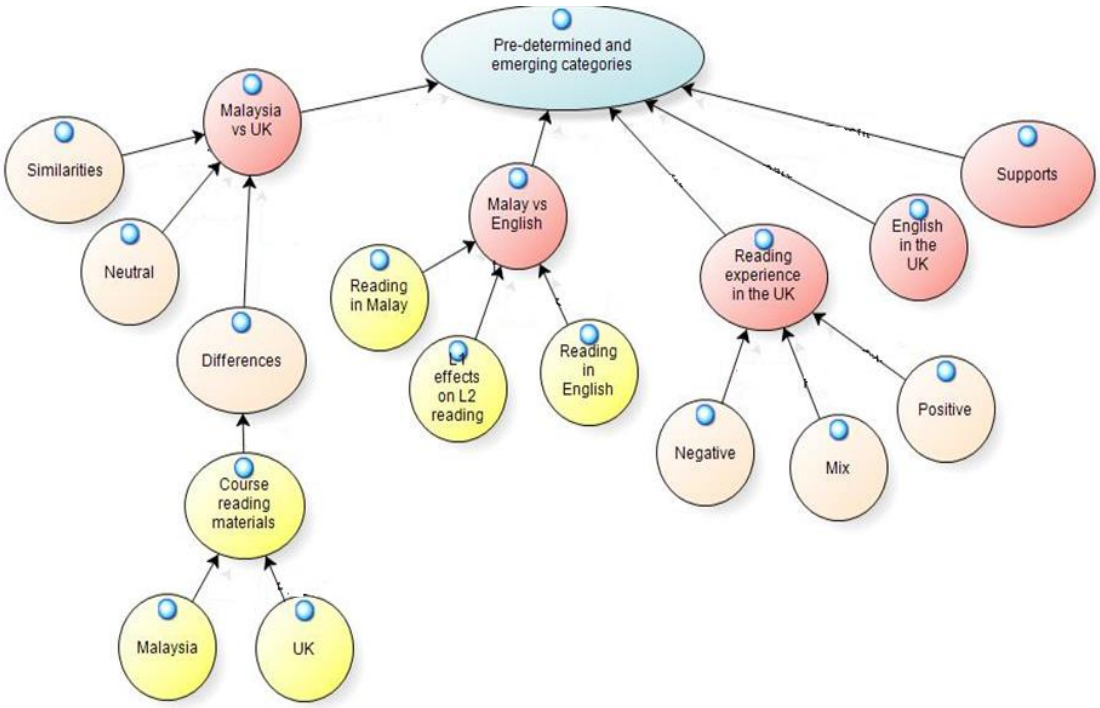
Figure 3.6 illustrates the pre-determined categories and sub-categories during this stage. During the iterative process, I had to read and re-read the interview transcripts that would 'lead to a series of iterative cycles between the transcript data, researcher interpretations of the data and checking the interpretations back against data' (Akerlind, Bowden and Green, 2005, p.87). During this stage of the analysis, I re-read the interview transcripts to examine whether the initial categories which were pre-determined earlier were 'sufficiently descriptive and indicative of the data' (Orgill and Sutherland, 2008, p.135). These pre-determined categories underwent three rounds of this iterative process prior defining and finalising the categories of descriptions.

<u>First round of Iterative Process</u>

The checking of categories involved several processes of 'modification, addition and deletion of the category descriptions' (ibid). The pre-determined categories underwent

several processes of modification, addition and deletion during this stage of review (Orgill and Sutherland, 2008). Figure 3.7 shows the first round of iterative process.

Figure 3.7: First round of iterative process



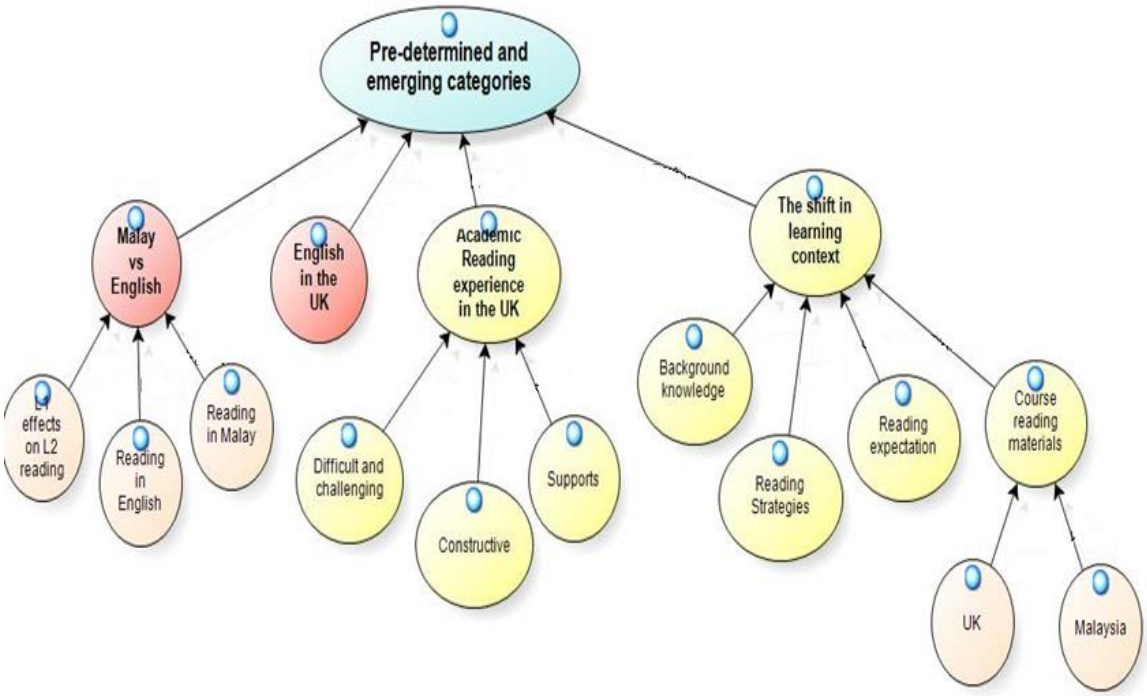
After re-reading the transcripts, several sub-categories emerged. In view of this, I added a new sub-category under 'Malaysia vs UK' node, which comprised course reading materials (in the UK and Malaysia). Other sub-categories such as (1) reading in Malay, and (2) reading in English were added under the 'Malay vs English' node.

Another category modification involved the 'L1 effects on L2 reading' which was classified as an independent category during the familiarisation stage (see Figure 3.6). Through this process, the L1 effects on L2 reading category was specified as a sub-category (child node) into the 'Malay vs English' node due to linguistic interdependence. These modified and new nodes were highlighted in yellow, as can be seen above.

Second Round of Iterative Process

The second round of the iterative process was carried out in the following week. This step was taken to ensure that I was able to return to analyses with an open-mind so as to re-establish my familiarity with the data (Akerlind, 2005a). During this stage, I classified the sub-categories (negative, mixed, positive) into more specific headings, such as difficult and challenging, (2) constructive, and (3) support. These were among the themes identified and derived from the interview data to describe academic reading perceptions and experiences.

Figure 3.8: Second round of iterative process



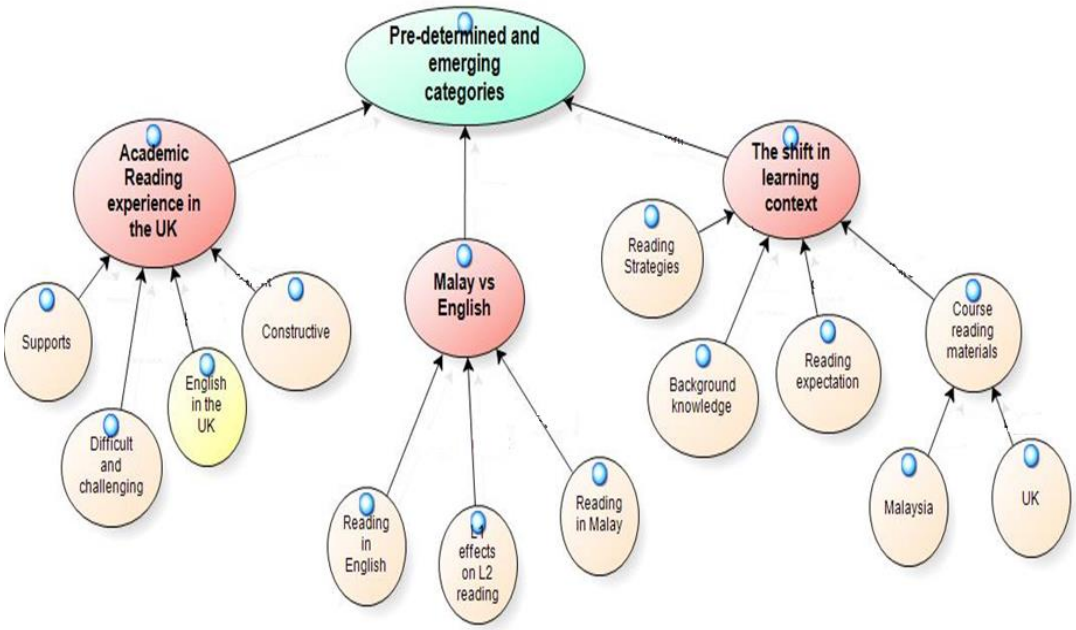
As can be seen above, I altered the heading 'Reading experience in the UK' to 'Academic reading in the UK', since this study focused on the aspect of academic reading. In addition, the sub-categories underwent some deletion and modification after the transcripts had been read several times. Changes to this category and sub-categories were highlighted in yellow.

Another category modification involved 'The shift in learning context' where, initially, it was categorised as 'Malaysia vs UK' (see Figure 3.7, page 137). However, it was changed, since some new sub-categories emerged from the data during this iterative process. The interviews data in this node embodied various aspects related to academic reading, namely, (1) background knowledge, (2) reading strategies, (3) reading expectations, and (4) course reading materials (in the UK and Malaysia).

Third Round of Iterative Process

I continued the third round of this iteration process after taking a one week break to return to the analysis with an open-mind as well as to re-establish my familiarity with the data (Akerlind, 2005a). During this stage, some of the categories showed coding consistency when I did the cross-checking between the transcript data, my interpretations of the data and checking the interpretations back against data (Akerlind, Bowden and Green, 2005). However, there was a slight modification in one of the independent categories.

Figure 3.9: Third round of iterative process



The slight modification shown in Figure 3.9 involved the 'English in the UK' node which was highlighted in yellow. This node was refined as a sub-category under the category 'Academic reading experiences in the UK'. This step was taken considering that this study highlighted the participants' academic reading experiences and perceptions in a British university.

Step 4: Defining and finalising

The category development at each stage of the analysis was analysed separately. Then, the category groupings were checked and discussed with two PhD colleagues from the Centre for Education Studies. This step was taken to address the consistency between the categories of description with the transcript data before assigning the portions of the transcripts to their corresponding category descriptions (Bowden, 2005; Akerlind, 2005a; Orgill and Sutherland, 2008; Åkerlind, 2012). During this stage, the 'groups of quotes are arranged and re-arranged, are narrowed into categories, and finally are defined' (Marton, 1981, pp.42–43).

The defining and finalising of categories of descriptions was achieved by the visualisation function (cluster analysis and tree map) in Nvivo10 to check for coding consistency. To enhance further the refining and finalising stage in the analysis of coding patterns, I utilised the tree-map coding in Nvivo10 to determine how much coding had been done. This visual perspective helped to define and visualise the dominant themes and explore the connection between them.

The finalised categories encompassed (1) academic reading experiences in the UK, (2) the shift in learning context, and (3) reading in Malay and English. Meanwhile, I refined both the sub-categories in 'Course reading materials' to 'Discipline-specific genre' and 'Discipline-specific vocabulary and structures' to conceptualise a discussion based on academic texts (see Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10: The finalised categories of descriptions

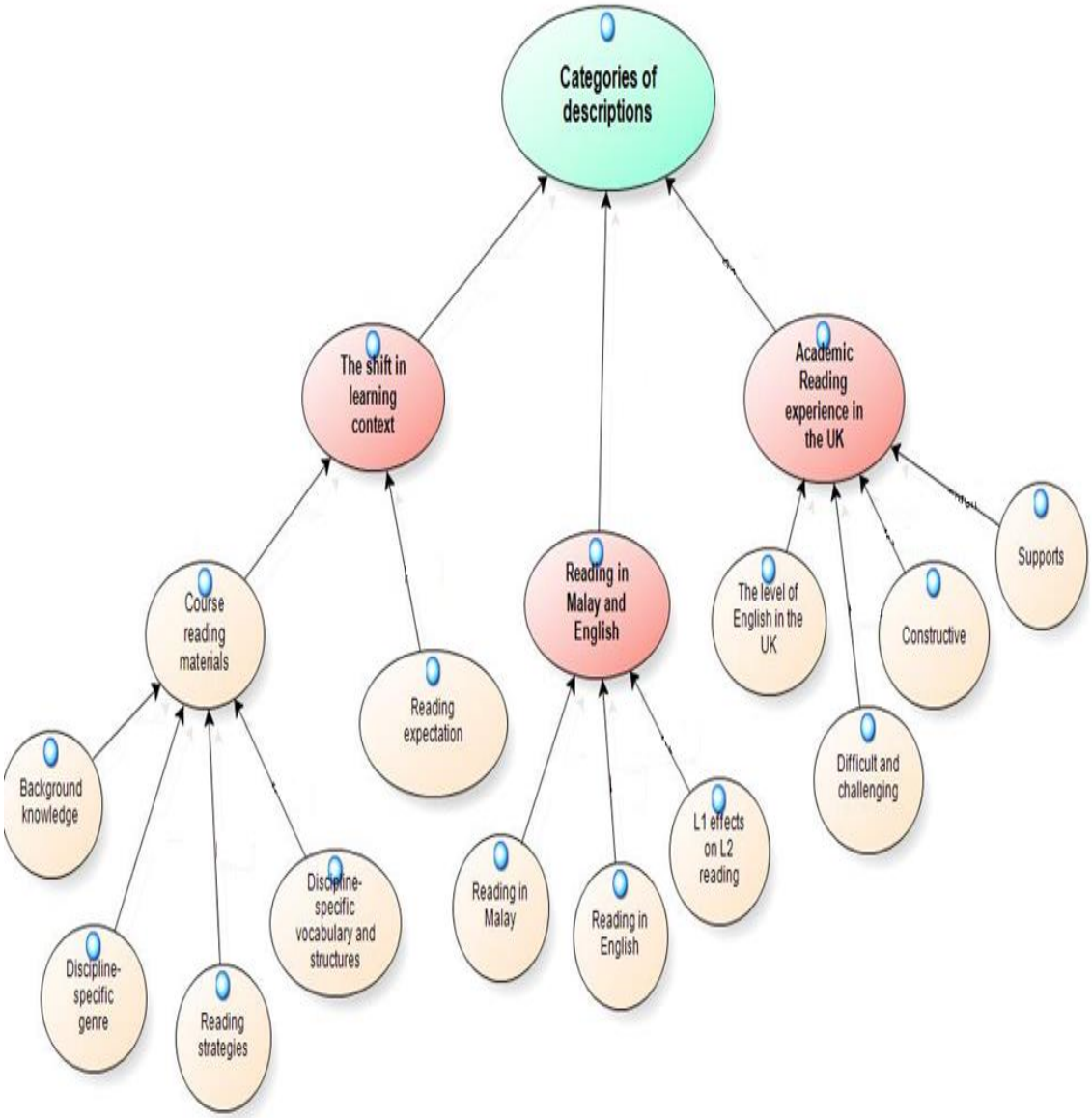


Figure 3.10 shows the finalised categories of description derived from the transcripts. There was another category modification which involved the 'Background knowledge' into the 'Course reading materials' categories. Finally, I reached the end of iteration process when I reached data saturation. Data saturation was achieved when the modified categories were finally consistent with the interview data and when the transcripts were no longer showing any new emerging categories.

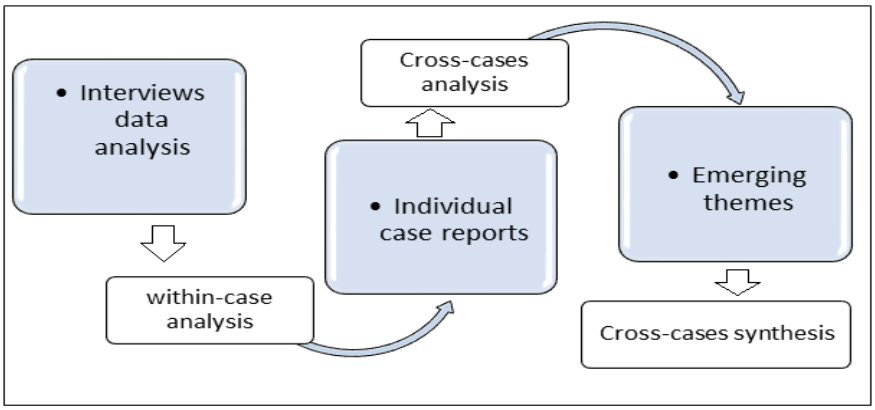
3.11.2 Follow-up Interviews

In Phase 2 of data collection, the data was collected in February 2014 to May 2014, October 2014 to February 2015. There were 151 individual follow-up interviews in Phase 2 of data collection. The analysis was guided by phenomenography thematic analysis, as suggested by Orgill and Sutherland (2008) and Braun and Clarke (2013). When analysing, I looked for data that emphasised 'similarities and differences in meaning' (Svensson, 1997, p.167).

Data analysis at this stage espoused an individual case basis to adopt second-order perspectives. The ontological assumption in phenomenograpy is not to capture any particular individual's understanding, but to capture the range of understandings within a particular group (Åkerlind, 2012). However, there seemed to be a necessity to project individual voices here, in an attempt to learn about their experiences and provide an interpretation as how they viewed it.

These interpretations were later synthesised based on 'similarities and differences of patterns' (Yin, 2014) in terms of reading strategy usage, the dynamic nature of reading strategies and factors influencing strategies dynamism across cases. Case synthesis aimed 'to move from a single case to a cross-case analysis in determining how many cases shared similar/different characteristics' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.183). In addition, the synthesis provided holistic or collective views based on the epistemological assumptions underlying the phenomenographic approach, whereby the interpretation of meanings are usually presented in a set of categories of description based on the analysis of the set of interview transcripts as a group. Figure 3.11 shows the data analysis framework for follow-up interviews data.

Figure 3.11: Data analysis framework for follow-up interviews data



The interviews were transcribed using the transcription function in Nvivo10, and were then saved in internal folder for the coding and analysis stages later. Constant re-reading and note-taking were aided by using the function available in Nvivo10 during the initial phase of data analysis. The aim of this phase was 'to become intimately familiar with the dataset contents, and to begin to notice things that might be relevant to research questions' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 204). The transcribed follow-up interviews were later analysed for initial readings and 'noticings' (ibid) during the coding stages. Seven stages were involved to aim for meticulous analysis. Table 3.12 shows the framework of data analysis for follow-up interviews.

Table 3.12: Framework of data analysis for follow-up interviews

Stage	Thematic Analysis
1	Transcribed interviews verbatim
2	Reading and familiarisation; taking note of items of potential interest
3	Complete-coding; across entire dataset
4	**Searching for themes** <u>First review</u> • Read through the transcripts several times, look for both similarities and differences within them. • Developed initial categories using Nvivo10 that described different ways the participants perceived/experienced academic reading in the United Kingdom. <u>Second review</u> • Re-examined interview transcripts to determine if the categories were sufficiently descriptive and indicative of the data.

	• Involved modification, addition and deletion of the categories descriptions. Continue the process until the modified categories seemed to be consistent with the interview data.
5	**Reviewing Themes** Reviewing the themes developed in Stage 4 of analysis
6	**Defining and naming themes** <u>Categories descriptions</u> Discussed the categories descriptions with the inter-raters to decide which categories would be used for further analysis of the data. Thorough descriptions on the attempts in arriving to the categories can be seen in Chapter 4.
7	Writing – finalising analysis

Stage 1 and 2: Transcribed the Interviews, Reading and Familiarisation

The series of follow-up interviews was transcribed verbatim using Nvivo10 on an individual case basis. Later, the transcripts were read while taking note of the items in the data of potential interests, such as (1) identifying the patterns of reading strategy usage, (2) tracing the changes in reading strategies, and (3) identifying the factors that influenced these reading strategy changes. The aim of this stage was to become 'intimately familiar with the dataset's content, and to begin to notice things' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.204) relevant to my research questions as well as to engage with the data to get ready for the coding stage.

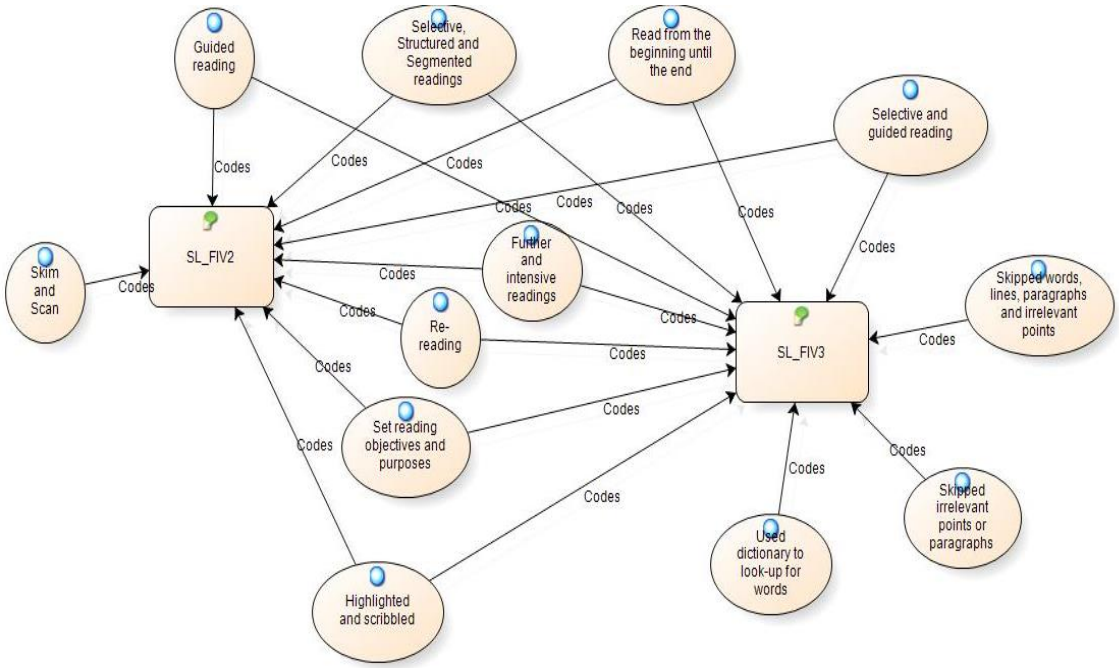
Stage 3: Coding

The approach to coding in pattern-based form during this stage was called a 'complete coding'. The aim was 'to identify anything and everything of interest or relevance to answering research questions, within the entire dataset' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.206). For this analysis, I treated the cases individually to illuminate the bottom-up approach in an attempt (1) to disseminate these participants' voices in this study, and (2) to embrace its own 'sense of individuality' while reporting the findings. The interview data were scrutinised based on the specific research questions of this study. In this instance, the data

were first coded relevant to research questions and only later in the analytic process did I became more selective (Braun and Clarke, 2013). I started the open coding in Nvivo10 for Research Question 2 with the first case study. These cases were analysed based on the participants' initials, in ascending order.

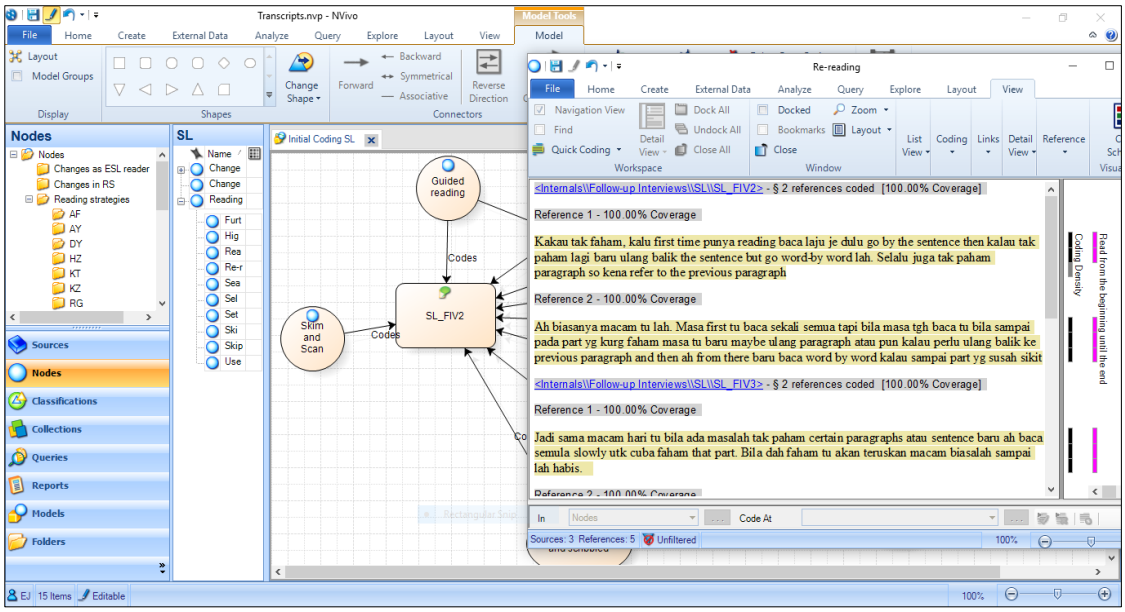
I relied on Nvivo10 throughout data analysis stage, due to the nature of phenomenography study that required contextual interpretation of data. Åkerlind (2012) asserted that the interview 'transcripts or expression of meanings is interpreted within the context of the group of transcripts or meanings as a whole, in terms of similarities to and differences from other transcripts or meanings' (p.117). Nvivo10 provided the function to help organise and classify the data, for example (1) self-reported reading strategies, (2) dynamic use of reading strategies and (3) the factors influenced these dynamism, in context. Figure 3.12 shows the initial coding to identify reading strategy usage from the transcripts.

Figure 3.12: Initial coding of self-reported reading strategy usage from the interview transcripts



The coding function in Nvivo10 allowed me to interpret the data in context. Each piece of coded interview data was embedded and easily accessible in each of the model items, as shown below.

Figure 3.13: The function available in Nvivo10 to view interviews data in context



Stage 4: Searching for Themes- From Codes to Candidate Themes

The themes were developed from the codes after several processes of 'reviewing the codes and the collated data relating to each code, with the aim of identifying similarity and overlap between codes' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.225). These codes, thus, underwent pattern identification to capture data in relation to research questions and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the interviews data (Braun and Clarke, 2013). I started looking for patterns in the data related to the (1) reading strategy usage, (2) reading strategy dynamism, and (3) factors influencing these strategies dynamism across interview excerpts. The coding process for each of the participants was firstly coded within individual cases prior to synthesising these cases.

The cross-cases syntheses were conducted twice. Firstly, I examined across interview accounts to look for patterns of reading strategy usage in Years One and Two. Secondly, the cross-cases syntheses were carried out to (1) explore these participants' dynamic nature of reading strategy usage, and (2) examine the factors influenced these reading strategies dynamism. This stage of the analysis was conducted in three months because a lot of time was needed for coding and analysis, which included (1) immersion in the data, and (2) took some distance from the data to allow for identification of similar, overlapping data and patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The themes were then identified based on the meaningful and important patterns across data sets that provided an answer to my research questions (ibid).

Stage 5: Reviewing Themes

After the identification of 'candidate themes' (Braun and Clarke, 2013), the reviewing process was achieved by the visual mapping function in Nvivo10. These themes were later mapped out using the visual representation available in Nvivo10 to address each of the cases on an individual basis. These revisions as guided by Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 234) involved stages such as:

> (1) going back to my coded and collated data to see if minor tweaks, such as reorienting the themes slightly, by revising the central organising concepts slightly, or shifting coded data in and out of different themes, might create a better data-fit theme.
>
> (2) revision by going back to the whole (un-coded) data set (or the sub-set of the dataset) to do a final re-read of all the data items and to ensure that the themes capture the meaning of dataset in relation to my research questions.

Stage 6: Defining and Finalising Themes

This stage of the analysis was achieved by the visualisation function (cluster analysis and tree map) in Nvivo10 to check for coding consistency. Based on a thorough examination of these categories of description, the collective experiences of the research participants were finally presented in the form of categories, as follow: (1) reading strategy usage (e.g. support strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies), (2) reading strategy dynamism, and (3) factors influencing reading strategy dynamism.

Stage 7: Writing-up

The themes obtained supported by relevant excerpts taken from the interviews data to show the participants' account, can be seen in Chapter 4.

3.12 Language Choices throughout Data Collection Procedure

The interviews in this study were conducted in Malay, which was the participants' mother tongue, with some code-switching to English. These Malaysian undergraduates were bilingual. In Malaysia, Malay is the national language whereas English is accorded second language status, as stipulated in Article 152 of the country's language policy (Mat Awal et al., 2007). This is followed by other significant languages such as Mandarin, Tamil and indigenous languages in Pahang, Sabah and Sarawak. Malay and English languages are taught in schools as compulsory subjects.

Another reason for code-switching in this study was that some of the participants were using certain concepts and terminologies to describe their academic activities. Since most of the interviews were conducted in Malay, the original wordings were retained to ensure their originality. The data were only translated if they were quoted in the findings chapter.

3.13 Rigour of Phenomenographic Research: Reliability and Validity

According to Åkerlind (2012, p.125), 'Guba (1981) and Kvale (1996) believe that reliability from a qualitative research perspective may be seen as reflecting the use of appropriate methodological procedures for ensuring quality and consistency in data interpretations'. Meanwhile, validity 'is widely regarded as the extent to which a study is seen as investigating what it aimed to investigate, or the degree to which the research findings actually reflect the phenomenon being studied' (Åkerlind, 2012, p.123). This section will outline the measures taken to strive for reliability and validity.

3.13.1 Checking Interpretive Rigour in Phenomenography Data Collection Methods

Interview

The validity of the interviews relied on 'the processes that were used at all stages of phenomenographic research' (Akerlind, Bowden and Green, 2005, p.90). The utmost care exercised throughout the planning phase was clearly explained and justified here. The planning phase included working out who to interview and outlining the data collection framework (deciding and designing the interviews). This framework provided me with a proper guideline that could maximise the issue of validity, because it displayed a transparent process of participants' selection and methods selection as well as the design of interviews.

Piloting the interviews offered tremendous assistance to minimise bias in designing the questions. In addition, rigid procedures in phenomenographic interview questions design were in themselves adequate in minimising bias as previously discussed in Section 3.8.1.2. From a qualitative research perspective, reliability was seen through the use of appropriate methodological procedures for ensuring quality and consistency in data

interpretations (Sarantakos, 2005). Overall, this study strived for rigour by employing the guidelines adapted from Green (2005, p.45):

- preparation for interviewing.
- open-ended but focused interviewing technique.
- strategies to avoid as far as possible unplanned researcher impact during interviewing (e.g., prompts without adding a new concept, re-phrasing that does not alter the words of the interviewee).
- interviewing: strategies for consistency which was trialled during the practise of interviewing with my colleague and during pilot studies.

Reading Diaries

To obtain the reliability and validity of using diaries as a method, it must 'achieve a level of participant commitment and dedication rarely required in other types of research studies' (Bolger, Davis and Rafaeli, 2003, pp.591–592). To address these issues, the participants were required to submit their diaries every fortnight over a span of 9 months. By doing so, it limited diary studies to 'less in-depth reporting' (Bolger, Davis and Rafaeli, 2003) regarding academic reading activities throughout the data collection procedure. In addition, it allowed for a 'prolonged engagement' (Sarantakos, 2005) to achieve the dimensions of reliability in practice.

The authenticity of diaries was preserved by not making any corrections to grammatical errors and preserving their nature, with a mixture of both Malay and English languages being used in most of the participants' reading diaries. The follow-up interview sessions were another measure which was taken to ensure the reliability of using diaries as a method here. This session allowed the participants to 'check the appropriateness of the terms of reference of interpretation' (Sarantakos, 2005, p.90) in their diaries. By doing

so, the participants were able to explain more about what they had written in their reading diaries.

Follow-up Interviews

The validity in the follow-up interviews could be seen in the relevance of this method to the research objectives, and more specifically, research objectives 2, 3 and 4. Apart from using interview as a suitable method, extra measures were taken by carrying out the study in the 'natural environment (an English university context) of the research participants and taking into consideration the life and conditions of the researched' (Sarantakos, 2005, p.87). I was very concerned with some issues during the interviews, such as interviewer's bias, subjectivity and leading interviewees which might influence the data.

The amount of bias was minimised by adhering to the interview questions. I tried not to interfere during the interview by providing more freedom for the participants to express their ideas freely and only interrupt if need be. The interview experience I gained while interviewing the participants in pilot studies and Phase 1 of data collection helped to solve some of the interviews problems, such as bracketing my own views, minimising interruption and ways of asking questions. In addition, the recorded pilot interviews were utilised to improve my own interviewing techniques.

In response to issues related to validity and reliability of an interview, I adopted some of the techniques of enhancing validity suggested by Åkerlind (2012), Akerlind, Bowden and Green (2005). First of all, the interview times and place were scheduled based on the participants' convenience. In this study, the participants chose Wednesday at 1pm as the agreed time for their interviews. I prepared the interview time slots for each of them, from 1pm until 6pm. Secondly, I adopted some interview techniques such as starting off the interview by asking about their leisure activities and progress in studies to develop rapport, trust and openness.

3.13.2 Checking Interpretive Rigour in Phenomenography Data Analysis

Issues related to interpretive rigour in data analysis were addressed based on Åkerlind's (2012) suggestions. Åkerlind (2012) suggested the involvement of 'several researchers for evaluating or offsetting the potential impact of having only one researcher's perspective on the data' (p.125). In view of this, I adhered to coder-reliability check where two researchers independently coded a sample of interview transcripts and compared categorisations.

Coder-Reliability Check

I avoided any bias and early judgments when reading the transcripts, to bracket whatever personal views and perspectives might contaminate the analysis later on (Bowden, 2005; Åkerlind, 2012). To avoid bias and early judgment in my analysis, Bowden (2005) suggested a team analysis, whereby all team members 'played devil's advocate role most of the time' (p. 23). For the individual analysis, the 'ways of acting as your own devil's advocate during individual analysis' were suggested by Akerlind, Bowden and Green (2005, p.89). They further indicated that:

> 'playing you own devil's advocate should involve taking breaks during the analysis so that you can return to it with an open mind…Also, when checking tentative outcomes against the transcript data, it is important to consciously and actively look for negative examples. Further there are ways of gathering feedback from others on your preliminary outcome even when working alone' (p.89).

Checking for interpretive rigour in a phenomenograpy analysis could be achieved by means of inter-rater consultations as well as gathering feedback. This may be achieved by seeking feedback from others on the preliminary outcome by presenting in research seminars and submitted conference papers as well as to refereed journals (Akerlind, 2005a). In the context of this study, the interpretative rigour of my phenomenography analysis was achieved by means of (1) re-reading the data as a whole, (2) individual

checking, (3) inter-rater consultations with two PhD colleagues, and (4) gathering feedback from others.

The process of re-reading the data as a whole, as suggested by Green (2005) and Akerlind (2005a), was achieved by taking some breaks from reading the transcripts, to avoid bias. Following this, I put my analyses aside for a few weeks while I carried out the follow-up interviews in Phase 2. In doing so, I was able to (1) return to the analyses with an open-mind, (2) re-check the transcripts, and (3) re-establish my familiarity with the data. The establishment of the categories was designed 'to sustain cycles of scrutiny, debate and testing against the data' (Green, 2005, p.59) until I had reached data saturation.

Considering that my data were gathered entirely from the interviews, the validity of their responses was determined based on the consistency of responses in terms of their patterns of reading strategy usage. Two of my colleagues working on educational research played the role of "devil advocates" (Bowden, 2005). Their roles involved reading the 'whole transcripts from the data set, playing a devil's advocacy role towards my constitution of categories of descriptions, and discussing other possible meaning-structure outcomes' (Akerlind, 2005b, p.126) with me.

The consistency of the categories that I developed earlier was checked using a coding comparison query in Nvivo10. The percentage agreement calculation involved my source's content with other raters to check the percentage of coding similarities. The inter-raters' coding analysis showed that 80% of my coding was consistent with that of the other raters. According to Vermunt, Van Rossum and Hamer (2010, p.49), 'these codings should be above 75% to be deemed acceptable or good in phenomenographic research'. Thus, inter-rater checking showed a consistency in terms of how I developed the categories of descriptions earlier.

The iterative cycles continued until data saturation. This was achieved when the categories of description reached a plateau. Each of the finalised categories and the sub-categories were discussed thoroughly in the reports on the findings, with its corresponding portions taken from the transcripts as can be seen in Chapter 4.

Communicative Validity Checks

This approach to validity checks involves ensuring that the research methods and final interpretation are regarded as appropriate by the relevant research community by gathering feedback (Åkerlind, 2012; Akerlind, Bowden and Green, 2005). These research communities included presenting in research seminars or conference presentations, papers submission and publication in peer-reviewed journals to provide obvious sources of such validity checks (ibid). The methods and data of this research presented in various conference presentations and research seminars in order to obtain feedback from research community between 2013 and 2015.

Pragmatic Validity Checks

The outcome of this study may be judged to be useful to body of knowledge and valuable to an intended audience. Entwistle (1997, p.129) asserted that '[s]ome researchers argue that it is in terms of this second purpose that the research approach should be judged'. 'For researchers in higher education, however, the test is generally not its [phenomenography's] theoretical purity, but its value in producing useful insights into teaching and learning' (ibid). As can be seen in Chapter 6, this research provides some useful suggestions for a community of education that can benefit teaching and learning practice, particularly in regards to academic reading.

3.14 My Role as a Phenomenographic Researcher

Coming from an ESL background, I acknowledged that my experiences might contaminate the data with biases. With my ESL teaching background and personal knowledge in this field, I was aware that this might be subjective and interfere with the context of this study. Therefore, my role as a researcher here was to elicit responses concerning the area of interest as seen through their eyes. To avoid leading the participants based on how I viewed academic reading, I bracketed my own views, and did not add my own concepts or ideas that could contaminate the data throughout data collection process. For example, I avoided probing with leading questions while interviewing, to prevent subjectivity in my role as a researcher (see Section 3.9 and 3.10 for more details).

3.15 Chapter Summary

The ontological and epistemological assumptions of phenomenography underlined the research design. These aspects in my theoretical framework influenced my decision making in terms of methods' selection, data collection procedures and the analysis framework. The research design described the participants' selection and linguistic profiles, pilot study and data collection procedures. Data collection phases encompassed the qualitative approach using a case study guided by phenomenography principles. The analysis framework comprised phenomenography and thematic analysis based on the requirements of the research objectives (e.g. studying experiences, perceptions and prolonged engagement of academic reading activities). In this chapter, a detailed description of both the ethical issues and consent process was included, followed by rigour of phenomenography research. The next chapter presents the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the interviews conducted. The qualitative results include the data collected through individual interview sessions in both phases of data collection procedures. Analysis of interviews will particularly concern participants' accounts of and rationales concerning (1) their perceptions on academic reading, (2) patterns of reading strategy usage, (3) reading strategy dynamism, and (4) the factors influencing reading strategy dynamism in a university in the UK. The findings will be reported based on the research questions.

Overview of the chapter:

4.2 How do these participants perceive academic reading in a British university?

4.3 What reading strategies are utilised by the participants in their new learning context?

4.4 What are the changes in the participants' use of reading strategies over a period of two academic years as they read in a British university?

4.5 What influences the participants' changes in their reading strategies in their British university?

4.6 Chapter summary

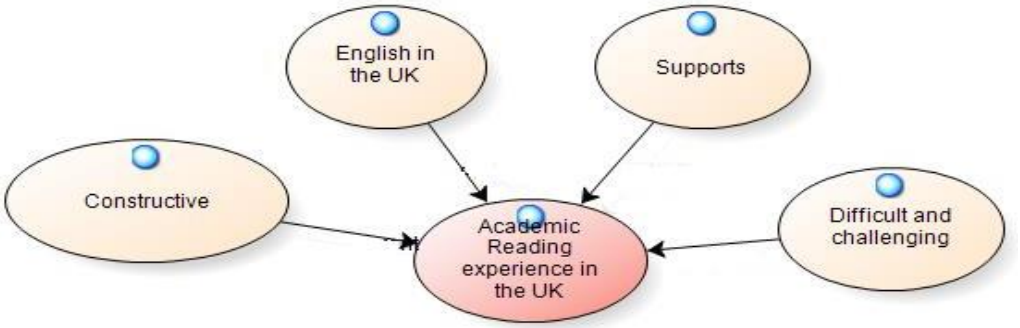
4.2 Research Question 1: How did these Participants Perceive Academic Reading in a British University?

The three categories of descriptions of academic reading perceptions, consisting of (1) academic reading experiences in the UK, (2) the shifting learning context, and (3) Malay and English language differences will be explained in the following section.

4.2.1 Academic Reading Experiences in the UK as Perceived by a Group of Malaysian Undergraduates in a British University

This category focuses on the various experiences of a group of Malaysian undergraduates in a British university as shown in Figure 4.1. Their experiences were influenced by the negative and positive aspects of academic reading when they first arrived in the UK. Thus, it can be deduced that the participants' experiences were a mixture of both aspects.

Figure 4.1: The sub-categories of Academic reading experiences in the UK



To begin with, academic reading was considered as difficult and challenging due to the overwhelming demands of academic reading. The participants needed to read more references in a short time, which was impossible since it involved re-reading to achieve reading comprehension. For example:

> Very hard. Very, very hard especially those written by scholars like Oxford journals and stuff like that is really difficult to understand. I have to read it like 5 times or 3 times. Even that, after that also I can't really understand it properly. Normally in the seminar when the lecturer describes what they are trying to say then I could understand what it means. You need to read a lot here. I don't really read much in Malaysia. (Transcript 9)

Despite some negative remarks, they shared some relatively constructive comments, which described their (1) passion and curiosity to learn, and (2) motivation to read better when they were given assignments. For example:

> I never thought that I would like reading journals but I quite like it now. So I usually go to the library or online, I start to read journals no matter how challenging it is. I think the challenge makes it interesting. I think I'm okay but I know that I have to improve my reading skills. But after midway to my first term…I started to…it was like on a subconscious level. I was not really conscious that I've read more. My reading pace used to be very slow but I think through improvement I start to read faster. For example, right now I can read a typical journal of 20-30 pages, maybe in half an hour. In the first term - I need more than a day to read one. (Transcript 1)

Looking from another perspective, academic reading was also associated with their perceived level of English in the UK. According to the participants, the English here appeared to be more advanced than the English in Malaysia. In view of this, they had most often googled or looked up words when they were reading:

> (When) we come here the language is much different. I find it quite difficult. You have to really read through and then we have to read the dictionary for certain words and yeah for academic reading. The English here is not like the English in Malaysia. It's pretty high level here and in Malaysia is more simple English. (Transcript 7)

They had to read the texts vigilantly, as their reading purposes in a new learning context was more to (1) comprehend the content, (2) synthesise the points, and (3) bring in their own stances when reading the texts. This was different from their prior reading experiences. In Malaysia, reading texts were mainly used as a vehicle for English language learning in Malaysia. Therefore, the reading focus was mainly on grammar and answering comprehension questions:

> The changes are drastic maybe because it's academic reading and very academic which is heavy with facts. I also read academic texts in Malaysia. But, the English texts I read are mostly for English language as a subject. So it's more towards learning the language and while reading my focus is more on the grammar. But here, my reading is for academic matters, so my concern is not to think so much of the language but more to find the points related to the modules that I'm reading. (Transcript 10)

Reading support was needed by the participants in terms of motivation, academic reading workshops and English language courses. Although they came with excellent IELTS scores (see Section 3.4.2 for their IELTS scores), challenges in academic reading were inevitable. They mentioned that the IELTS did not prepare them for the reading demands in their new learning contexts:

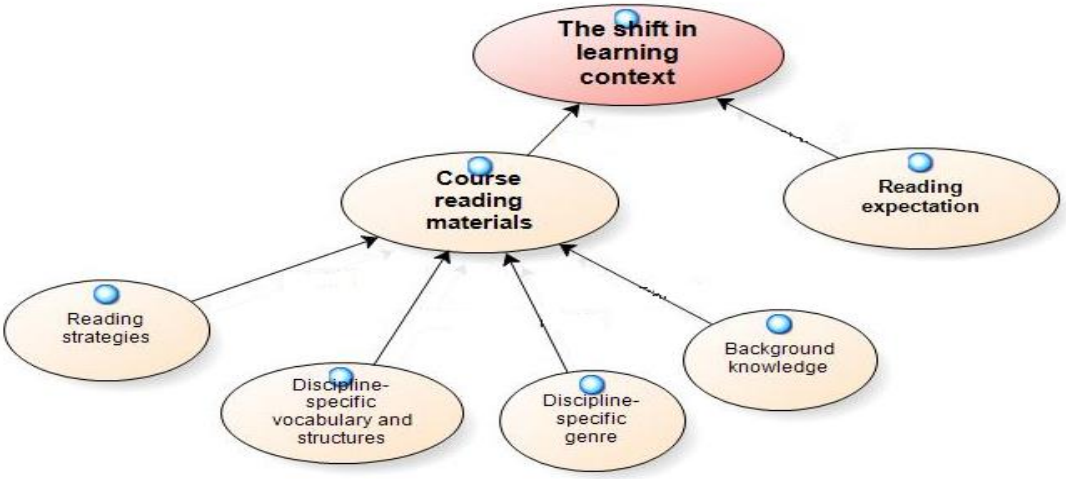
> Actually on the process before coming here, I actually started reading so I will be more equivalent with the UK people…so there will be no culture shock. But what I see is that the reading I did in Malaysia is not really up to standard. So, I should read more here. I think I need to improve my reading and to read fast. I think I read many times especially the articles I don't understand so I need to improve on that. I don't have any English courses in Malaysia except some classes for IELTS. The same here. No English courses to prepare me for reading. (Transcript 5)

These findings suggested that academic reading experiences in a British university were twofold. First, it was a positive experience when the challenges in academic reading were approached with (1) motivation, (2) passion, and (3) interest. Second, it was a negative experience due to the overwhelming demands of academic reading. These experiences were associated with their perceived role of the much advanced level of English in the UK and lack of reading preparation.

4.2.2 The Shift in Learning Context: From a Malaysian Context to a British University

This was a rich area. The participants' experiences in relation to their new learning contexts in terms of English grammar, vocabulary, difficult academic texts and repetitive reading, are as shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: The category and sub-categories for the shift in learning context



The most obvious defining perspective in the area of academic reading as reiterated by the participants pointed to their reading texts. Thus, this category was divided into (1) the course reading materials in the UK, and (2) reading expectations. The predicament of the course reading materials was precisely related to the intricacies of the discipline-specific genre. They recounted differences between the course reading materials in a British university and Malaysia. Many responses highlighted their lack of academic reading preparation. They described the lack of preparation in terms of the reading materials, such as:

> Here, I read more journals and more academic text books or online journal. I seldom read fiction here. I read lecture notes too, but it doesn't really help so I have to read all the books or journals. (Transcript 1)
>
> Text books and research papers. I was quite taken aback with the academic reading materials for that particular module, because I never read research papers. A-level or IELTS never prepared me for that. (Transcript 3)

Another concern raised relates to discipline-specific vocabulary, sentences, paragraphs and texts structures. New vocabulary and complicated sentences structures hindered academic reading comprehension which thus decelerated their reading pace. Therefore, their lack of academic literacy meant that they were less able to convert word-reading

skills into reading comprehension. For example:

> Like some articles use difficult words and some are easy words. I think the articles have more difficult words and maybe I think some words are just new, which I never read in Malaysia until I come here. (Transcript 5)
>
> The academic reading here is not as easy because of the words, sentences and so on. (Transcript 6)

In addition, they described their anxiety when reading confusing sentences and paragraphs structures. These structures in academic texts were reported to impede reading comprehension. This might be explained due to (1) limited implicit knowledge of the basic syntactic structures, and (2) limited exposure to how a range of genres was structured in English. The excerpt below further illustrates the reading challenges related to genre-specific vocabulary, sentences and paragraph structures:

> The structures would be quite different from normal academic writing. The easy structured article are easy to understand and the complicated one is difficult to understand. (Transcript 5)

Apart from this, the participants highlighted the importance of background knowledge for successful academic reading in a British university. The aspects related to background knowledge comprised technical terms and specific concepts in academic texts. The participants acknowledged the importance of these technical terms and concepts in their reading, because they could lead to better and more successful comprehension, for example:

> Some of the concepts and terms are new so I'm not familiar with them, so I have to google every new term and concept. (Transcript 2)
>
> There are a lot of specific terms which are difficult to understand. Something that we are not exposed to is quite difficult. Like here, you need more like a prior reading for lectures and seminars. (Transcript 3)

The aspect of background knowledge, as depicted above, is reported based on the lack of exposure to specialised terms and text structures that had, thus affected their reading pace. In addition, they recounted the reliance on the dictionary and technological tools,

for example *Investopedia* and google, to look up unfamiliar terms. Reading for specialised courses brought a considerable impact to academic reading perceptions and experiences.

The obstacles identified were directly prompted by the different use of vocabulary, sentences, paragraphs and texts structures across disciplines or within a single discipline. In addition, they also pointed out that the academic reading texts contributed to academic reading challenges. According to the participants, these texts necessitated a different approach to reading:

> I read straight from the laptop so I can copy and paste to google words I don't understand. I read on the topic, I try to understand the main concept in it, after that I'll read on the section. I structured it first then I read. I tried reading but I was lost so I need to structure it before reading. I didn't do like this in Malaysia because the English in Malaysia is straightforward. In Malaysia I just read and understand as the materials are very easy to understand. (Transcript 2)
>
> I seldom looked up words in dictionary in Malaysia but I do it here because the reading materials are more serious and difficult. I read many times to understand something which is maybe too boring (laugh) or difficult for me to read. The way I read is still the same, like I take a break while reading. (Transcript 6)

Another viewpoint concerning the shift in learning context related to its impact on reading expectations. These were thus explained from various facets such as (1) academic reading needs, (2) university and departments expectations, and (3) lecturers' expectations. In addition, they never expected the level of reading in a British university to be different. There was no strong assertion in their responses that directly pointed to the influence of their new learning contexts on academic reading experiences. However, it is necessary to consider the British reading culture and academic literacy practice. For example:

> The shelves in my room had slowly shifting from fiction to a mix of academic books...so that's in term of the difference. But I don't expect the academic reading demands is like this here...to be honest. I didn't expect such a huge difference in the level of reading and writing in the university so I was quite shocked like the first few weeks especially when coming here. (Transcript 1)

The findings suggested that course reading materials could be the most prominent factor to influence academic reading experiences. As mentioned previously, the participants' academic reading perplexities were linked to (1) technical terms and concepts, and (2) complex sentences, paragraphs and text structures. They further reiterated that the course reading materials in Malaysia were simpler and easier.

> The range of knowledge gap is massive so you're supposed to know more than what you are reading. I think my score for reading in IELTS was not helpful at all. During IELTS the reading materials were not even comparable to academic reading materials here, such as the research papers. Reading for IELTS was much easier. Reading here is more difficult to understand. So, it makes me worried about lecturers. I'm worried if I'm not up to their standard. (Transcript 2)

It can be deduced that this group of Malaysian undergraduates' academic reading experiences and perceptions were influenced by the texts they were reading here. They had diverse reading expectations. However, the agreed consensus in the interview responses was that difficult and complex academic texts required more advanced reading skills and cognitive academic language proficiency.

4.2.3 Malay and English Language Differences

Another important finding in this study concerned the role of L1 knowledge on L2 reading development. This category represents linguistic interdependence in academic reading (see Figure 4.3). The participants stated that they read differently when reading in Malay.

Figure 4.3: Reading in Malay and English

Some comparisons were made between Malay and English texts in terms of their grammar, texts and sentences structures. Clearly, academic reading was challenging regardless of whether or not these participants were reading in their L1 or L2. Besides, they had not read any academic texts in their L1 since secondary school. The examples in the excerpts below further reinforce this category:

> My reading in Malay would depend on the text, the content and how it was written. If I understand the words I don't have to look up words in a dictionary. I usually read from the top to bottom from the first word to the end. I must say it depends on the texts but normally my reading in Malay is effortless. (Transcript 8)

Looking from another vantage point, reading in English was reported to be difficult. In this instance, they read word-by-word and read slowly, for example:

> I'm generally a slow reader. I mean, I like to read word by word. Usually for research academic reading, I read it many times. (Transcript 3)

Some findings pointed to issues concerning the role of L1 on reading comprehension:

> I translated what I read in English into Malay. I would think of it in Malay, the words I would transfer to Malay but I would still read the sentences in English. Then, I will try to understand it in Malay. I don't do it when I read simple sentences.(Transcript 7)

In this context, however, L1 knowledge only resurfaced in the first few months in the UK. Reliance on L1 knowledge was less significant towards the end of Year One. However, it was seen that linguistic interdependence re-surfaced, which involved reading difficult texts, as shown by the following excerpts:

> I think initially after a few months here, by interacting and speaking more English I start to think less in Malay. Does it makes sense? When I first arrive I rely on Malay quite heavily but now there is less reliance on Malay in my reading. It's quite a different reading experience although the content is the same but the way the language is structured is a bit different so I don't think that affects me in any way. (Transcript 1)

> I will transfer the words to Malay and then try to understand it in Malay. I started doing it when I first came here especially when I read the journal articles. I never did that in Malaysia. Sometimes, I read and I need to translate it to Malay to understand...but not all the time. Only when I read difficult texts. (Transcript 11)

Linguistic interdependence, from the participants' perspectives, was among the most obvious defining circumstances derived from their interview responses. Clearly, the participants compensated for their lack of academic reading skills with L1 knowledge (1) when reading difficult academic texts, and (2) to achieve academic reading comprehension. This finding suggested that even advanced L2 learners could not escape the intricacies of academic reading.

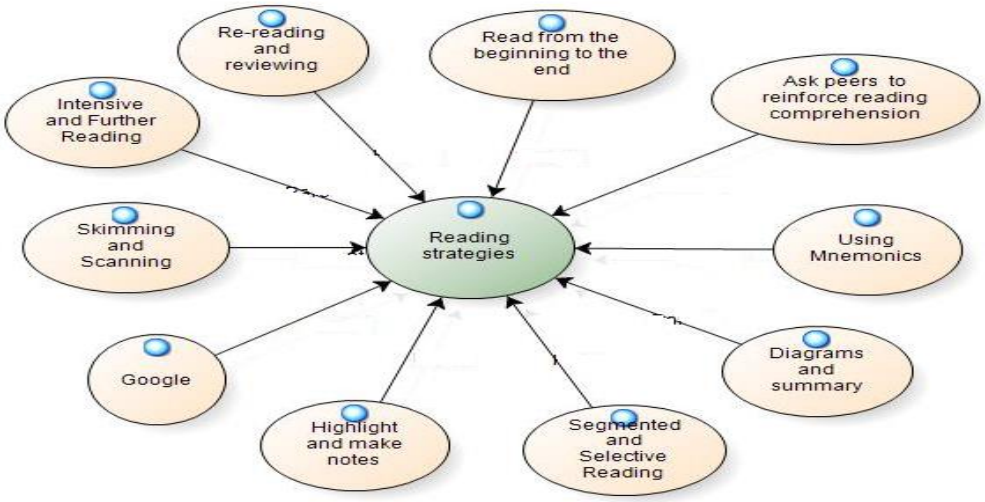
4.3 Research Question 2: What Reading Strategies Were Utilised by the Participants in their New Learning Context?

This section now presents the results derived from self-reported data throughout longitudinal data collection phase. The findings suggest that the participants reported some similar use of reading strategies. However, there were some identified strategies that were unique and only used by specific participants. In view of this, this section only highlights the unique strategies utilised by the participants. A complete description of their use of reading strategies, the collective summary of the most common strategies in terms of similarities and different reading strategy usage are presented in Section 4.3.3. This section aims to describe reading strategy usage based on individual cases, to represent the participants' voices here.

Case Study 1: AF

AF was a remarkable participant as he perceived academic reading in a British university in a very positive manner. Figure 4.4 shows the reading strategy usage as reported by AF.

Figure 4.4: Reading strategy usage as reported by AF



AF was the only participant in this study who was using mnemonic strategies when he was reading academic texts, for example:

> If I read something and it is a bit complex or too long I tried to summarise things. This is what I usually do. Sometimes thing like…especially definitions…er…that reach…ah....sometimes two or three lines long, so I try to extract the key thing that must be included in the definitions and I tried to put it into...ah...you know..ah...like the definition for Globalisation. I remember it as SATE...S.A.T.E (spelled it out). So it makes it easy so I know that it has the social aspect, and there's a transnational dependant and then the technological as well as the economics side to it. That's what I mean by mnemonics (Transcript No. AF3)

AF reported that he highlighted and wrote some notes while reading. This helped to memorise his readings especially for the exam. He used online search engines such as Google to look up new words or terms. However, this was usually aimed at new technical terms, for example:

> It's just that because it's something new, I need other points so I can't just rely on the notes so I have to go to google for example and I used Wikipedia quite a lot to understand, especially if I read something new (Transcript No. AF10)

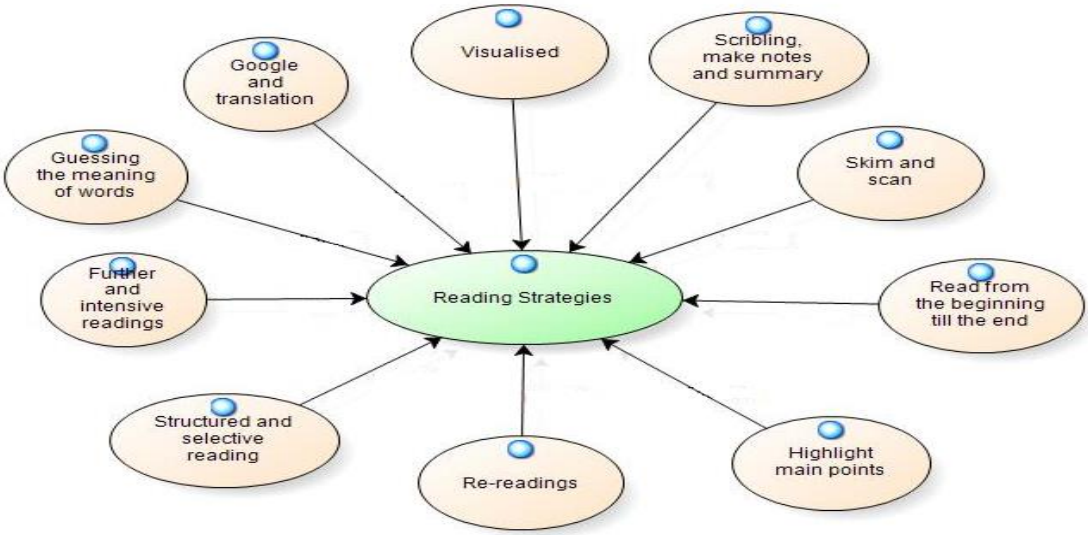
He experienced a lot of academic reading challenges in the first few months in the UK. He had thus approached the challenges with a rather positive attitude such as attending

academic reading workshops, reading academic texts from different disciplines (e.g. literature and philosophy) and reading for leisure.

Case Study 2: AY

AY, by contrast, described in negative terms her own academic reading experiences in the first few months in the UK. She reported that the level of English language and complex academic texts were overwhelming. Figure 4. 5 shows AY's reading strategy usage.

Figure 4.5: Reading strategy usage as reported by AY



In AY's account, the level of English language in academic texts was different from the texts in Malaysia. As she put it, the English in Malaysia was more straightforward. What was interesting about AY was concerning her use of the translation strategy despite her advanced L2 proficiency. She mentioned that:

> I still have to look up certain words in dictionary and I will write their meaning on top of the words. (Transcript No. AY5)

In addition, the data suggested that she was one of the participants in this study who visualised while reading, for example:

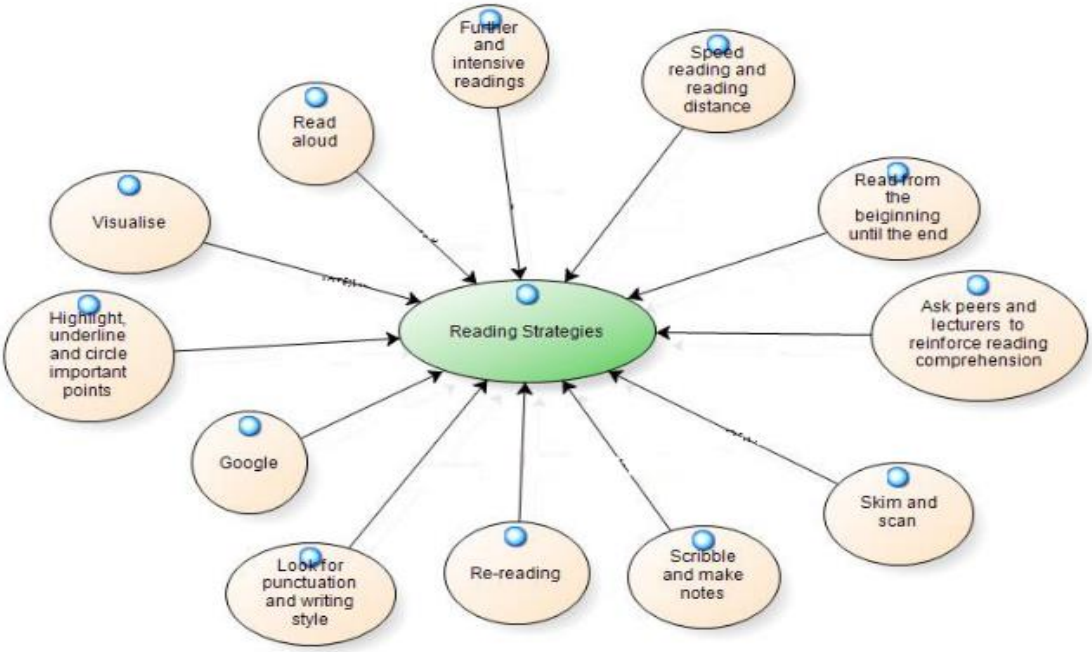
> I visualise to understand it and then in the seminar, the seminar tutor explains more about the text contents. (Transcript No. AY4)

In the first few months in the UK, she utilised bottom-up strategies (e.g. highlighted points, translation, googled/looked up words).

Case Study 3: DY

Problems related to syntax and her pessimistic perceptions of academic reading has led DY to utilise a myriad of reading strategies throughout two academic years, as shown below:

Figure 4.6: Reading strategy usage as reported by DY



DY found herself focusing on the syntax when she was reading academic texts. She recounted her pessimistic perceptions of academic reading in her new leaning context when she first arrived. The most unique strategy that was only utilised by DY was that of speed reading and reading distance, for example:

> The instructor said that reading distance should be at the correct distance so it's easier for your eyes to move. So after attending the workshop I tried the reading distance and speed reading skills in second year. (Transcript No. DY4)

Reading aloud was reported when she was confused with the texts:

> I read aloud when I was confused with my reading. (Transcript No. DY4)

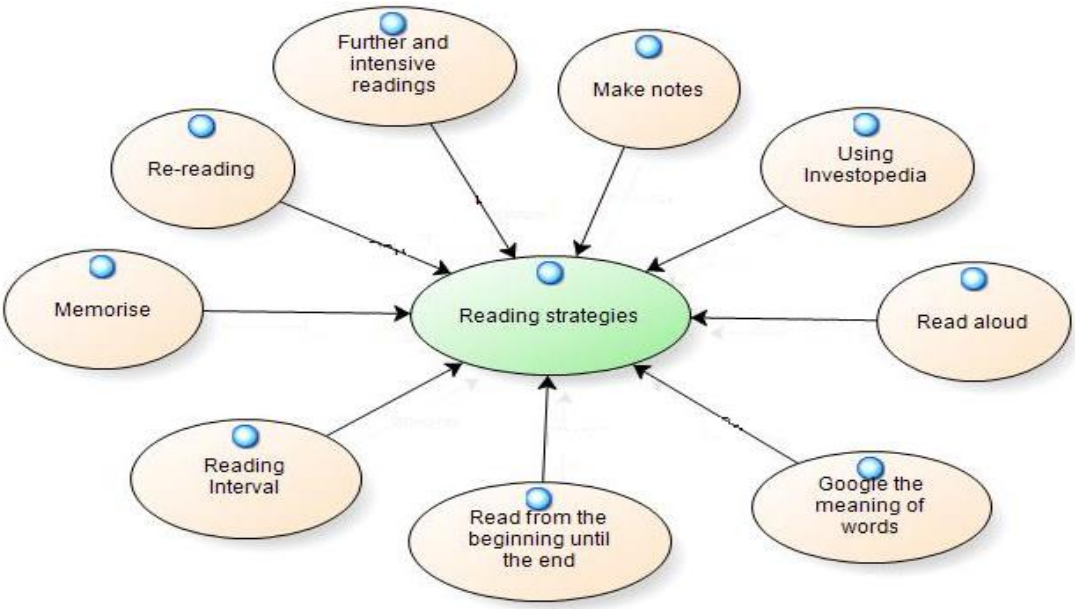
She also claimed that she would read using a different tone and look for punctuation when she was reading lengthy and difficult contents:

> Like the intonation, when you read…when there were commas it helped me to pause and look at the reading continuation. If the sentences were too long, in the end I won't get what I read. (Transcript No. DY2)

Case Study 4: HZ

HZ was explicit about his decision to experiment with the reading strategies that worked best for him in the first few months in the UK. Therefore, the academic texts' rigorous structures and specific technical terms were not especially overwhelming, due to his optimism in meeting academic reading demands. He was complacent in applying these strategies while reading in Year One that can be seen in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7: Reading strategy usage as reported by HZ



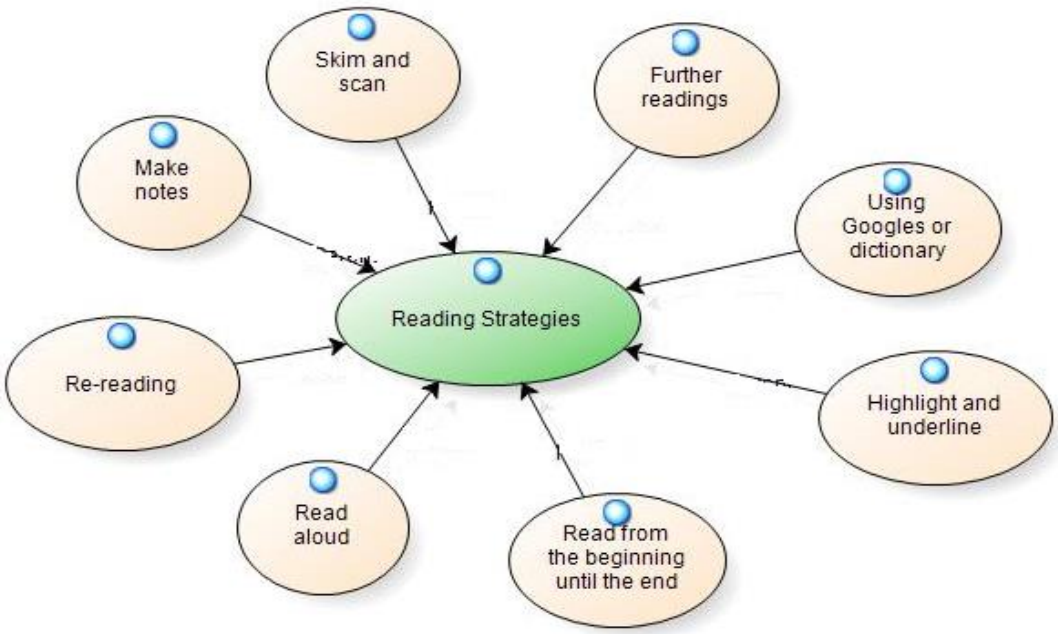
Some of the distinctive strategies used by HZ included (1) using Investopedia to look up technical and discipline-specific terms, and (2) memorising the information when he was reading academic texts. He reported that:

> Sometimes like, for example finance terms, Investopedia has a short explanation not only a definition. When I read anything related to economics or Finance, in general, Investopedia really has a short explanation as well as examples sometimes even formulas related to that...so I like Investopedia. (Transcript No. HZ3)
>
> My problem is when I do academic reading I really as much as possible I want to memorise it. I think it is something which was trained in Malaysia because in Malaysia you had to, like for biology, you just had to memorise most thing. Sejarah (History) SPM mostly memorising even A level for that matter. When I was reading economics, of course I can understand the context. But sometimes I want to read it a few times because I want to write like that because I think the writer did so well so I didn't know that I can do it any better than this. So, I would want to read it a lot of time so it gets stuck in my mind. (Transcript No. HZ8)

Case Study 5: KT

KT perceived academic reading negatively. She disliked reading in both reading/learning contexts. Prior arriving in the UK, she read for academic purposes in Malaysia. She perceived reading as a compulsory task for academic purposes. KT's insights seemed to be built more firmly on her reading purposes, which pointed to academic survival, both in Malaysia and England. Figure 4.8 shows KT's self-reported reading strategy usage.

Figure 4.8: Reading strategy usage as reported by KT



As with DY, KT reported that she would read aloud when she was reading academic texts, for example:

> Em, ah I think for me I can't read it myself. I can't just read silently because I will lose focus but when I read out aloud I'll be more focused because I'm reading out loud and I'm hearing my own voice. So, I can concentrate more on what I'm doing rather than just reading quietly. Reading something quietly in my mind won't really work for me. (Transcript No. KT1)

KT further highlighted that academic reading texts influenced her use of reading strategies. For example, she would re-read difficult texts with long and complicated sentences:

> Some of the articles are published by Oxford so there are structure of the sentences quite...kind of complicated. It's not straightforward like how like English reading book stuff like that so it makes things more difficult. So, you have to like read the sentences again and again to get the idea. (Transcript No.KT5)

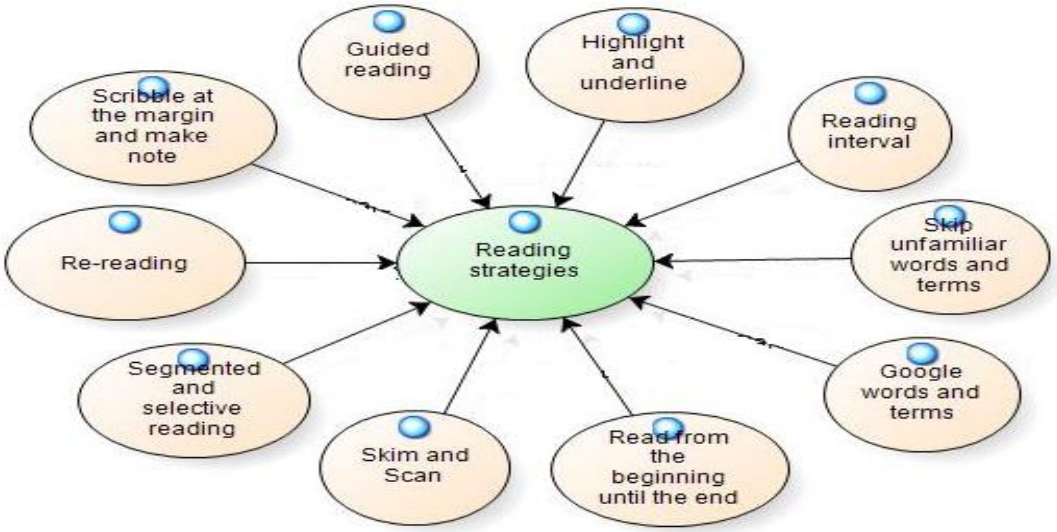
The significant finding concerning KT's use of reading strategies was that of her preferences in the reading aloud strategy. She reported that she read aloud since secondary school:

> When I was in Malaysia I usually read out loud since I was 13. I think it's just me who like to…like …I like to talk to myself. So that, I'm like teaching myself, it's like someone teaching me. It's like... when I read out loud I think like I'm teaching myself and telling myself, okay, you have to do this and this article is about this. (Transcript No. KT6)

Case Study 6: KZ

KZ's academic reading in the UK was stressful due to (1) reading volume and (2) the advanced level of English language. Figure 4.9 illustrates reading strategy usage as reported by KZ.

Figure 4.9: Reading strategy usage as reported by KZ



She highlighted the needs to cope with the increasing amount of reading and the struggles to read complicated sentence structures, specific and specialised terms. In considering her reading challenges in terms of the syntax and specialised academic vocabulary/terms/concepts, KZ resorted to using an online search engine such as google.

> I need to look up words if I don't understand especially the terms and words specific to my course. (Transcript No. KZ3)

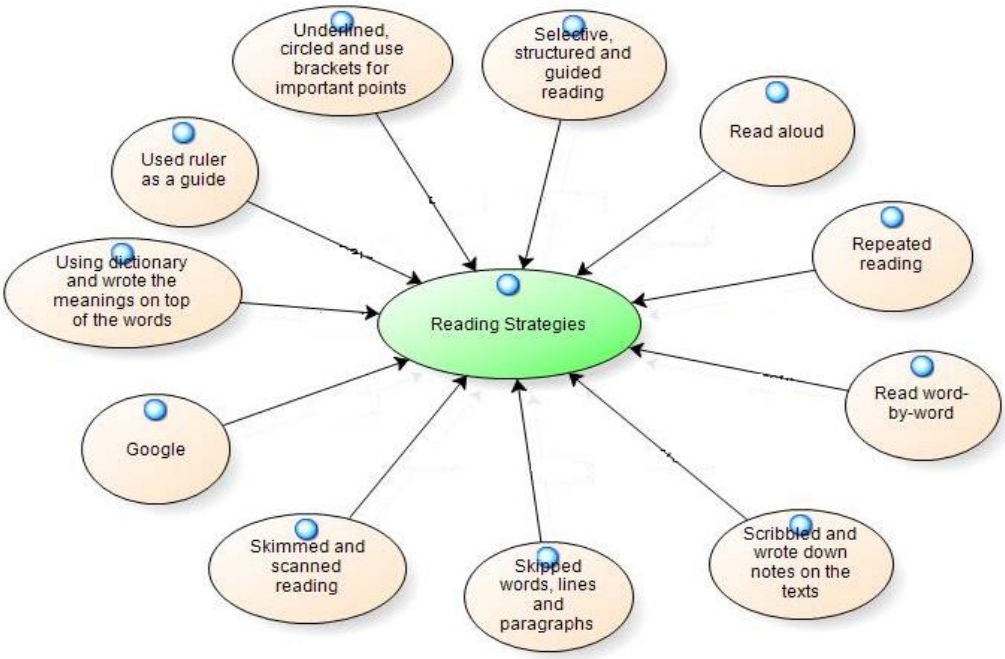
In addition, she found that these reading challenges necessitated the need for reading intervals:

> Em, take a break if it's boring. If it's interesting, I can just read it in one sitting. Well, you know you can just read mindlessly but you won't be getting any input from the reading. (Transcript No. KZ4)

Case Study 7: RG

The academic reading perplexity as reported by RG underlined the academic reading demands, the academic texts linguistic characteristics (e.g. journal articles) and the level of English language in the first few months in the UK. For this reason, she disliked academic reading and was forced to read for academic survival. Figure 4.10 shows RG's reading strategy usage.

Figure 4.10: Reading strategy usage as reported by RG



The most significant finding concerning RG's use of reading strategies was her use of a ruler or pencil to guide her reading, as follows:

> I will use a ruler to read journal article and text books but not lecture notes due to the font size. (Transcript No. RG1)
>
> I start out with just reading using a ruler or pencil as a guide. If I just read it like that, I tend to skip line so I use ruler and, sometimes pencil, as a guide. (Transcript No. RG3)

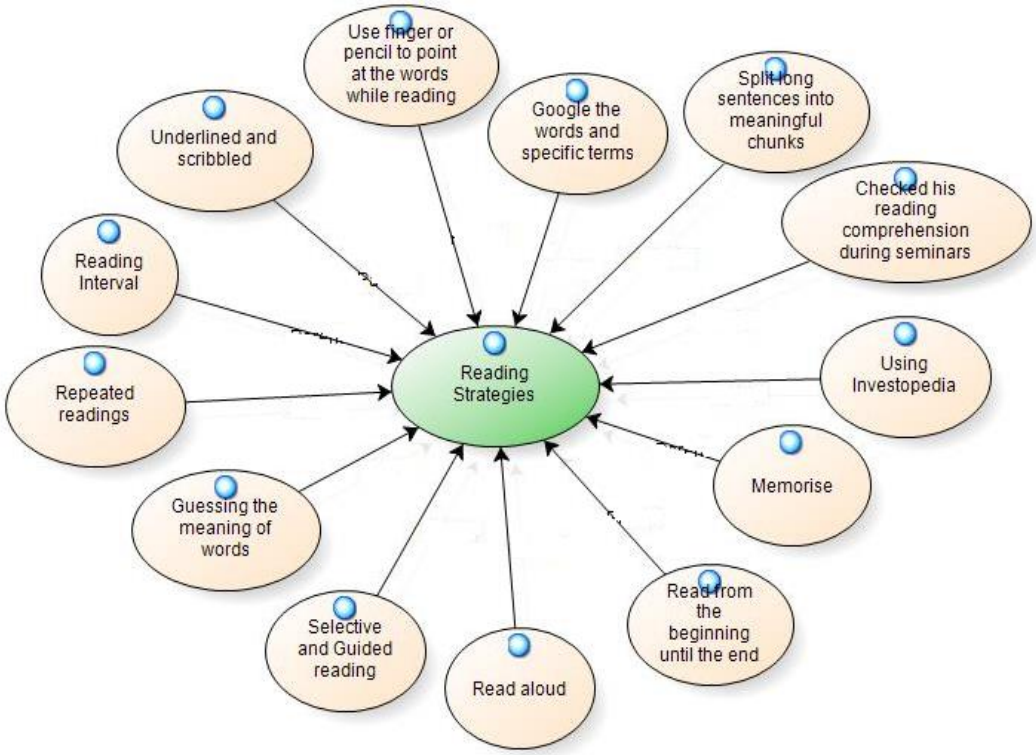
She (also) used a dictionary to look-up words. She mentioned that she was surprised that she had to rely on a dictionary, because she stopped using it since primary school:

> I will just check the dictionary for any words I don't understand. It was really unexpected because the last time I had to rely on a dictionary when I was in primary school. (Transcript No. RG2

Case Study 8: RH

RH approached academic reading in the UK with a very positive attitude. This can be explained by his reading habits, and he even considered himself to be an avid reader. The self-reported reading strategy usage can be seen in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11: Reading strategy usage as reported by RH



As shown by Figure 4.11, RH utilised a myriad of reading strategies. One significant finding, however, was that of his mechanistic manner of reading. For example, he was splitting long sentences in the texts to comprehend the texts.

> Sometimes I try to make sense of the sentence, sometimes because the writer of the book does not include things such as a comma or something that will make a difference to the sentence. (Transcript No.RH1)

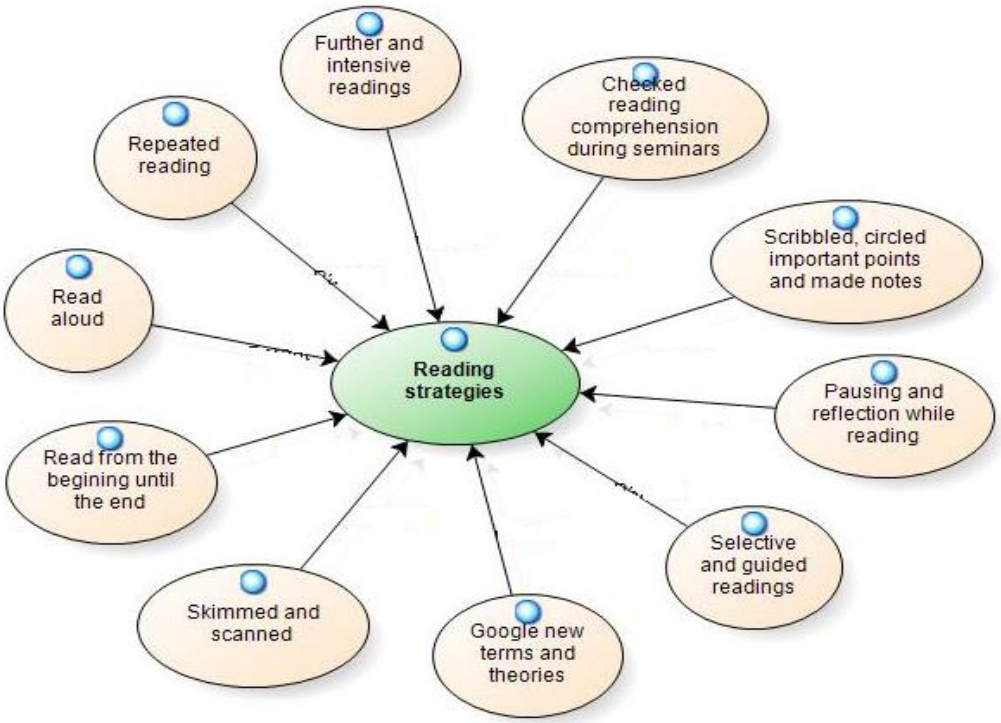
Similar to KZ, RH was relying on reading intervals to cope with academic reading demands. He reported that he started to feel agitated due to the increasing amount of reading and the advanced level of academic texts, which contradicted his positive approach to academic reading demands when he first arrived to study in the UK.

> If I lose my focus then I switch to maybe drinking tea or something. After, I finish the whole chapter or the whole article. (Transcript No.RH9)

Case Study 9: RS

RS mentioned that he was not an avid reader in Malaysia. His readings were usually confined to passing the examination, and he never read for leisure either in Malaysia or the UK. When RS first arrived in a British university, he was confused and annoyed with the academic reading demands made. The overwhelming academic reading experiences in the first few months in the UK hindered his comprehension. Therefore, he utilised various reading strategies to accomplish reading comprehension in his new learning context, as shown by Figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12: Reading strategy usage as reported by RS



The majority of participants reported the use of search engines such as Google. However, RS was the only one who appeared to look-up the theories on Google. This could be due to the problems related to reading the journal article.

> I will google the meaning of the terms, concepts or theory, then after I understand the meaning, I will continue reading. (Transcript No.RS3)

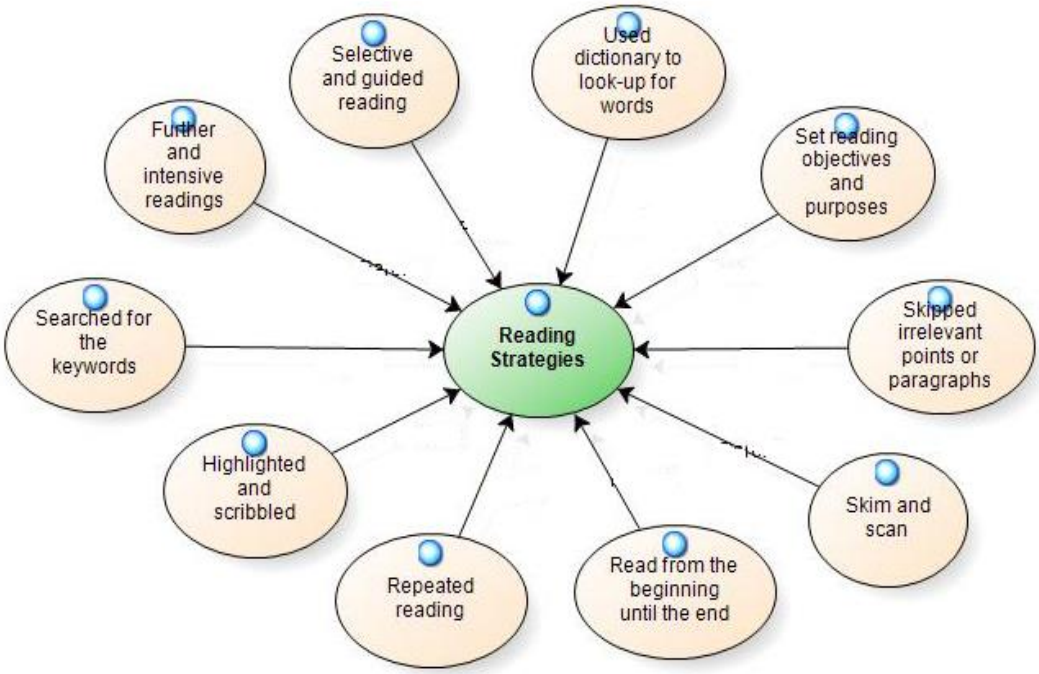
RS had paused most often and did some reflection upon his reading. For example:

> So I mean I have to stop and I have to think about the theory deeper. Probably google it and what does this theory mean and I have to see other types of explanation. I understand what it is really about and continue reading because without understanding the theory I can't read what they say about that because it's mostly about the theory. (Transcript No.RS1)

Case Study 10: SL

Academic reading in the UK was a really challenging task for SL, due to discipline-specific genre and vocabulary. This led to his perplexity with academic reading demands. In this instance, an array of reading strategies was employed to achieve effective reading comprehension, as shown below.

Figure 4.13: Reading strategy usage as reported by SL



One of SL's most unique strategies was setting reading objectives and purposes before reading:

> Before I read, I set my reading objectives. For example, I need to find out what are the concepts or theories that I should get from the reading. (Transcript No. SL2)

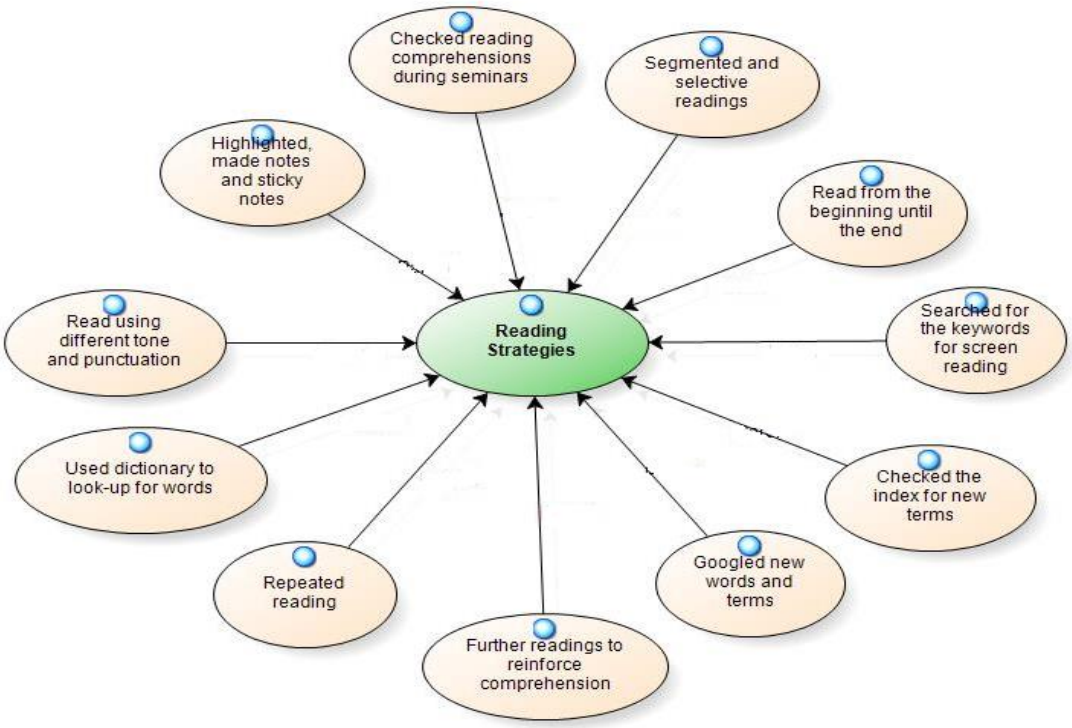
He mentioned that he would usually search the keywords to navigate on-screen based reading, and skipping irrelevant points or paragraphs, such as:

> The advantage for on-screen reading was I could easily search for the words. For example, I typed certain keyword on the search menu to ease my reading process, whereas this function was not available for print-based readings. (Transcript No. SL4)
>
> I would skip irrelevant parts and paragraph such as unnecessary examples to explain some concepts/situation or theories. I would usually get the general idea or concepts by reading the title. (Transcript No. SL5)

Case Study 11: SR

Academic reading was perceived as difficult and challenging by SR when she was asked to describe her academic reading experiences in a British university. Thus, she resorted to utilising various reading strategies, including looking up words in a dictionary and re-reading. Interestingly, the aforementioned strategies were last used during primary school in Malaysia. Figure 4.14 illustrates SR's self-reported reading strategy usage.

Figure 4.14: Reading strategy usage as reported by SR



The most unique strategies used by SR, involved (1) checking the index to look up new terms in her discipline-specific texts, and (2) placing commas in complex and long sentences to help with her reading:

> The finance reports contained a lot of unfamiliar terms that I don't know. I would mostly google the definition. But, certain terms required specific definitions. So, I would refer to the index and read how these terms were used in context. (Transcript No. SR3)
>
> If the sentences were too long I think the comma was really helpful. If you put commas in different places, it gives a different meaning. (Transcript No. SR1)
>
> If I were to read long sentences, it was either I would put a comma in it or read using tone. (Transcript No. SR4)

Similar to SL, she utilised the 'searching for keywords' strategy for reading on-screen based texts. For example:

> I liked reading online articles because I could search the keyword easily. For example, there were some guided questions prepared by the lecturers. So I would just search the keywords and read the specific sections. Print-based reading lacked this type of reading interactivity. (Transcript No. SR2)

4.3.1 Cross Cases Synthesis: A group of Malaysian Undergraduates' Self-Reported Reading Strategy Usage in a British university

We have already heard the participants' voices concerning their use of reading strategies. This section now starts by comparing and synthesising of reading strategy usage in Year One and Two. As mentioned in the previous section, a group of Malaysian undergraduates reported a myriad of reading strategy usage throughout the longitudinal data collection phase. The findings revealed that there were differences and similarities in reading strategy usage among the participants. Table 4.1 shows the summary of the participants' self-reported reading strategy usage. The reading strategies as shown on the next page were used to ease academic reading activities. These strategies are classified based on Sheorey and Mokhtari's (2001) strategies classification, as noted in Section 2.5.2.

Table 4.1: A group of Malaysian undergraduates' self-reported reading strategy usage in a British university

Strategy classification according to the findings of this study	Reading strategies	Participants
Support Strategies Basically the support mechanisms intended to aid the reader in comprehending the text such as using a dictionary, taking notes, or underlining or highlighting the text to better comprehend it.	Highlighting, underlining, circling and bracketing important points, writing notes while reading, using sticky notes	All
	Drawing/writing diagram and summary	AF, AY and KT
	Using technological tools (Google, Investopedia and Look-up)	All except KT
	Translation	AY and SR
	Look-up for meaning of words and writing down the meanings	HZ, RG, SL and SR
	Checking reading comprehension by asking peers and lecturers or by attending seminars	AF, DY, RH, RS and SR
	Further and intensive readings	All except KZ, RG and RH
	Using ruler to guide reading	RG
	Using finger or pencil to point at the words while reading	RG and RH
	Searching the keywords	SL and SR
	Checking the index for new terms	SR
Cognitive strategies The actions and procedures readers use while working directly with the text. These are localized, focused techniques used when problems develop in understanding textual information.	Memorise (e.g. using mnemonics)	AF, HZ and RH
	Read from the beginning to the end	All
	Re-reading (repeated reading)	All
	Guessing the meaning of words	AY and RH
	Visualise	AY
	Reading aloud	DY, HZ, KT, RG, RH and RS
	Pausing and reflection while reading	RS
	Reading interval	HZ, KZ and RH
	Speed reading and reading distance	DY
Metacognitive strategies Those intentional, carefully planned techniques by which learners monitor or manage their reading.	Segmented, selective and structured readings	All except HZ and DY
	Skimming and scanning	All except HZ and SR
	Looking for punctuation, writing style and reading using different tone	DY and SR
	Skipped unfamiliar words, terms, lines and paragraphs	KZ, RG and SL
	Set reading objectives and purposes	SL
	Guided reading	KZ and RG
	Splitting long sentences into meaningful chunks	RH

4.3.1.1 Patterns of Self-Reported Academic Reading Strategy Usage in Year One

The section presents the synthesis of academic reading strategies utilised by the participants. Table 4.2 illustrates the overall patterns of reading strategy usage in Year One. There were 17 reading strategies, consisting of 8 support strategies and 6 cognitive strategies. Meanwhile, only 3 metacognitive strategies were reported to be used by the participants.

Table 4.2: Self-reported reading strategy usage in Year One

Year One (Feb 2014 - May 2014)		
1	Sup1	Writing/drawing a reading diagram and Summary
2	Sup2	Highlighting, underlining, circling and bracketing important points.
3	Sup3	Using dictionary and search engine (i.e. Google) to look-up words
4	Sup4	Checking reading comprehension by asking peers and lecturers or by attending seminars
5	Sup5	Translation
6	Sup6	Using ruler to guide reading
7	Sup7	Using finger or pencil to point at the words while reading
8	Sup8	Writing notes while reading, used sticky notes
9	Cog1	Memorise (using mnemonics)
10	Cog2	Reading from the beginning to the end
11	Cog3	Re-reading
12	Cog4	Visualise
13	Cog5	Reading aloud
14	Cog6	Pausing and reflection while reading
15	Metacog1	Skimming and scanning
16	Metacog2	Looking for punctuation, writing style and read using different tone
17	Metacog3	Splitting long sentences into meaningful chunks

The participants' reliance on support strategies in Year One was recognised as the outcome of reading strategies reinvention and reliance on L1 resources/knowledge. For example, they reinvented reading strategies such as reading using a ruler, finger and pencil

(e.g. RG and RH). These strategies were generally used when they first started learning to read in L1 and L2. Despite their advanced L2 proficiency, they opted for a dictionary and search engine such as google to look up words. In this instance, the finding suggested a reliance on L1 resources/knowledge, despite their advanced L2 proficiency.

They also preferred to utilise cognitive strategies. For example, they were inclined to memorising, reading the texts from beginning to end, re-reading, visualising, reading aloud, pausing and reflecting while reading. They reported that these were among the strategies they usually utilised in Malaysia, which explained the wider composition of these strategies in Year One. Meanwhile, metacognitive strategies were hardly utilised. There were some use of these strategies as can be seen in Table 4.2. However, the focus inclined towards a mechanistic manner of reading. This was demonstrated by the participants' focus on syntax and grammar (e.g. Metacog2 and Metacog3).

From another vantage point, it was noteworthy to highlight that only three types of metacognitive reading strategy were used by these participants in Year One (see Table 4.2). Therefore, it may be surmised that none of them displayed a uniform set of reading strategies patterns, due to different (1) cognitive and affective stances, and (2) reading goals and purposes. To sum-up, the patterns of reading strategy usage over the course of 9 months were varied and interchangeable.

4.3.1.2 Patterns of Self-Reported Academic Reading Strategy Usage in Year Two

A similar composition of reading strategies use was reported by the participants in Year Two. However, a significant transformation in terms of types of reading strategy usage was identified at this stage. 11 new reading strategies emerged, encompassing 4 support strategies, 3 cognitive strategies and 4 metacognitive strategies as can be seen in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Self-reported reading strategy usage in Year Two

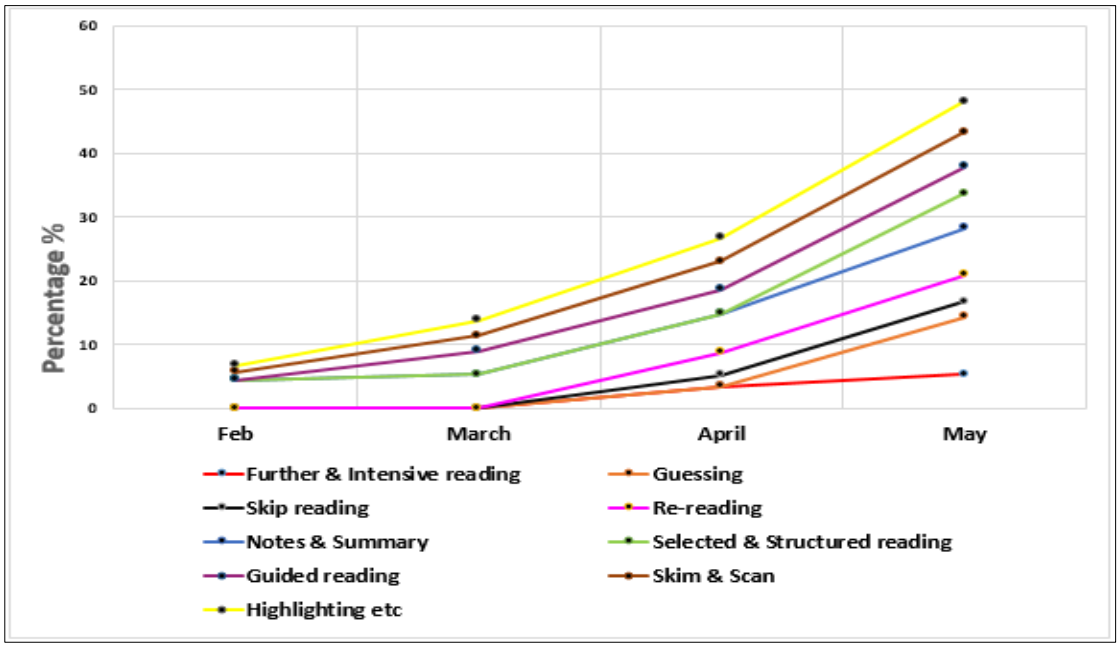
Year Two (Oct 2014 – Feb 2015)		
1	Sup1	Writing/drawing a reading diagram and summary
2	Sup2	Highlighting, underlining, circling and bracketing important points
3	Sup8	Writing and scribbling on sticky notes
4	Sup (new1)	Further and intensive reading (e.g. using other support system like other reading materials to aid comprehension
5	Sup (new2)	Searching the keywords (e.g. new technical terms/concepts)
6	Sup (new3)	Checking the index for new terms
7	Sup (new4)	Using technological tools (e.g. Investopedia and Lookup)
8	Cog2	Reading from the beginning to the end
9	Cog3	Re-reading
10	Cog (new1)	Guessing the meaning of words
11	Cog (new2)	Speed reading and reading distance
12	Cog (new3)	Reading interval
13	Metacog1	Skimming and scanning
14	Metacog (new1)	Segmented, selective and structured reading
15	Metacog (new2)	Skipping unfamiliar words, terms, sentences and paragraphs
16	Metacog (new3)	Guided reading
17	Metacog (new4)	Set reading objectives and purposes

In Year Two, support strategies continued to dominate the reading strategy composition. Meanwhile, the cognitive and metacognitive strategies shared a similar composition of use (see Table 4.3). In addition, 4 Support, 3 Cognitive and 4 Metacognitive strategies emerged. The findings posited that the patterns of reading strategy usage underwent some changes. In view of this, the dynamic nature of reading strategies in Year Two emphasised a concept of trajectory, revealing changes in their use of reading strategies over a period of two academic years. These changes are further interpreted in the following section.

4.4 Research Question 3: What Were the Changes in the Participants' Use of Reading Strategies Over a Period of Two Academic Years as They Read in a British University?

This section starts with the reading strategies trajectories derived from analysis of follow-up interviews data. The findings indicated the participants' gradual but definite change and development in reading strategy usage. A substantial pattern of reading strategy dynamism was seen over a period of two academic years spanning February 2014 to May 2014 and October 2014 to February 2015. Figure 4.15 displays the self-reported reading strategies trajectory from February 2014 to May 2014.

Figure 4.15: Self-reported reading strategies changes and progression (Feb 2014 – May 2014)



There were progressive changes and development in reading strategy usage from February to May 2014. In these few months, strategies such as (1) writing notes and summary, (2) selective and structured reading, guided reading, (3) skimming and scanning

followed by (4) highlighting, circling, underlining and bracketing important points recorded a progressive growth. The participants reported that:

> For the note-making on sticky notes, I just try it recently, at first I refused to jot down notes in my text books because I wanted to sell them to my juniors later. But, I found it to be more convenient than highlighting, underlining and circling the points in the texts. Well, it was much easier for me to read during A-level so I didn't make notes. Now, I need to write notes.(Transcript No.DY2)
>
> When I read various academic texts, I summarised their similarities and differences. I started to sribble on the blank space of the texts I read this semester. I never did that before. I have to re-read difficult academic texts many times, which I never did in Malaysia because the texts were much easier and more straightforward. (Transcript No. AY3)

Meanwhile, the participants only started to employ (1) re-reading, (2) skip reading, (3) guessing the meaning of words, and (4) further and intensive reading from March 2014 onwards.

> I had to re-read difficult texts. Sometimes, I also had to read the same sentences many times until I could understand it. (Transcript No.SL7)
>
> Sometimes I just skipped some sentences or paragraphs because I would still be able to understand the texts. (Transcript No.KZ4)
>
> Another thing maybe is I do research here. I never did research in Malaysia for academic reading. I just read and rely on the text books there. But here when I read an article, I can't just depend on it. I have to conduct research by searching and reading other sources too. (Transcript No.AY4)

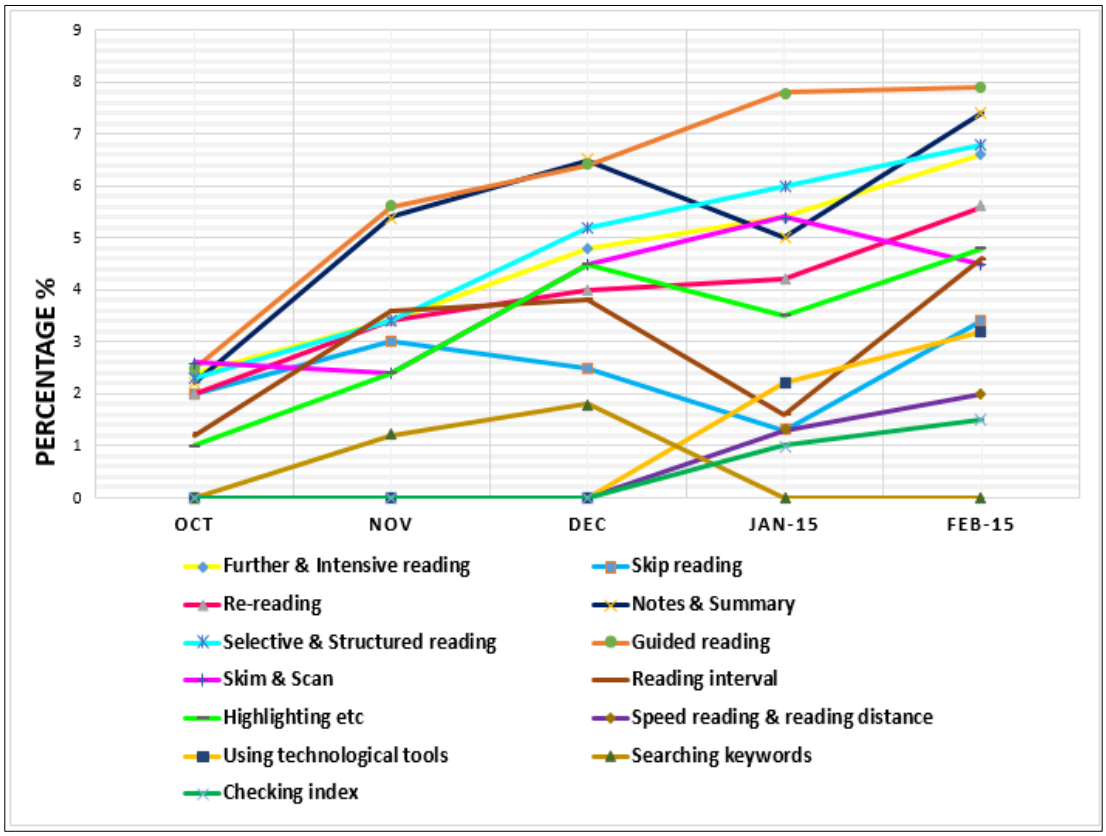
However, further and more intensive reading strategies reached a plateau towards May 2014. Meanwhile, other strategies such as (1) re-reading, skipped reading, (2) writing notes and summary, (3) guided reading, highlighting etc., guessing meaning of words, (4) selective and structured reading as well as (5) skimming and scanning, recorded a significant increase of usage among the participants.

> Selective reading is one which I didn't do much last year, but I do it quite often this year. If the texts consisted of many pages, I would read based on the sub-headings. (Transcript No. RG6)

> For the past two assignments, I just read based on the sub-headings. I didn't use a ruler lately because I didn't read word-by-word compared to first year. I read based on sub-headings now. (Transcript No.RG5)

The findings further revealed a considerable amount of change and progression in the participants' use of self-reported reading strategies from October 2014 to February 2015. To illustrate this, Figure 4.16 shows the self-reported changes and progress of reading strategies, with the data charted at the group levels of reading strategies. The chart did not reflect a relatively straightforward pattern.

Figure 4.16: Self-reported reading strategies trajectory (Oct 2014 – Feb 2015)



There were some dramatic ups and downs in the patterns of reading strategies' trajectories. Strategies such as (1) guided reading, (2) further and intensive reading, (3)

selective and structured reading followed by (4) re-reading showed a dramatic increase as the months progressed.

> I have to read a lot, although lecture notes and journal articles were given. I had to find and supplement these reading materials. (Transcript No.DY7)
>
> For journal article, I would firstly read the abstract followed by the introduction and conclusion to get the gist. (Transcript No.KZ7)
>
> I learned by looking at how my tutors did it during seminar. For example, they would start with the abstracts, skipped some of the equations and discussed the analysis or findings. I learned the selective reading skills during the seminar. (Transcript No.KZ8)

Re-reading was inevitable due to course content which were getting more in-depth and complicated compared to Year one.

> My readings were getting more difficult in the second year of studies. I had to re-read the texts to understand the concepts or ideas. (Transcript No. RH8)

At this stage, they became more familiar with academic specialised texts and established disciplinary knowledge in their specialised courses. The aspect related to disciplinary knowledge is further discussed in Section 4.5.2.4.

The upward trend interpreted based on self-reported reading strategies analysis, such as (1) writing notes and summary, (2) highlighting, underlining, circling and bracketing important points, (3) skipped reading (lines, paragraphs and pages), (4) skimming and scanning as well as (5) reading interval could react in the opposite way of progression from October 2014 to February 2015. It appeared that there was a decline in each of the reported strategies in January 2015. This, however, started to increase in February 2015.

This similarity was not reflected for reading strategies such as (1) skipped reading, and (2) skimming and scanning. Skipped reading strategies showed a decline in December 2014 and January 2015, and gradually increased towards February 2015. Meanwhile, the

skimming and scanning strategies showed a double downward trend in December 2014 and January 2015. These patterns of reading strategies, as reported by the participants, were influenced by time constraints:

> I feel lost when reading but sometimes when I have time constraints I skim and scan. I also skip irrelevant paragraphs, points and sections. (Transcript No.SR9)
>
> I think I'm very busy this year so I usually skim and scan. (Transcript No.RH9)
>
> Due to time constraints, I prefer to skip irrelevant paragraphs, sections or points. I find that skimming and scanning saves lots of my reading time. (Transcript No.SL10)

Searching the keywords was identified as a new strategy that was consistently used from October to December 2014.

> I love reading online articles because of easy navigation. For example, I could just search the keywords in the texts that could bring me to that specific page. This strategy helps to get the answers to the questions provided by the lecturers. (Transcript No. SR10)

Another interesting trend presented by searching the keywords strategy was the sudden decrease to reaching a plateau from January 2015 onwards. The plummeting trajectory of this strategy was related to reading screen-based academic texts.

> I prefer to read print texts because I could scribble something there or at the bottom while reading it and underlined important parts. I could do that on screen, too. But, I didn't like it because I would lose my reading focus, especially if I was reading academic texts. It would also affect the time I spent reading screen-based texts. (Transcript No.RH13)

Another contrasting pattern was shown by the other reading strategies such as (1) using technological tools, (2) checking the index in the textbooks, and (3) speed reading and reading distance. They were not in use during the start of a new academic term commencing October 2014. The participants started incorporating technological tools

(e.g. Investopedia and Lookup) to support academic reading activities commencing December 2014, which showed an increase towards February 2015.

> The most obvious change is technology. For A-level, I only read whatever my teachers give me I didn't really use too much technology but now I am using it a lot. Everything is online. (Transcript No. HZ11)

Reading strategies such as (1) speed reading, reading distance, and (2) checking the index showed a moderate increase from January 2015 onwards after some participants attended a speed reading workshop organised by the university.

> I signed-up for the speed reading workshop out of reading frustration. They taught me about reading distance, where it should be on the correct distance so it would be much easier for your eyes to move. Then, I practised it during my second year to read much faster. I never knew about reading distance in Malaysia. (Transcript No. DY14)
>
> I need to refer to the textbooks index and read how the definition was contextualised in the reports. I found that it was really important to understand all the terms in my course to help me in my reading. (Transcript No. SR12)

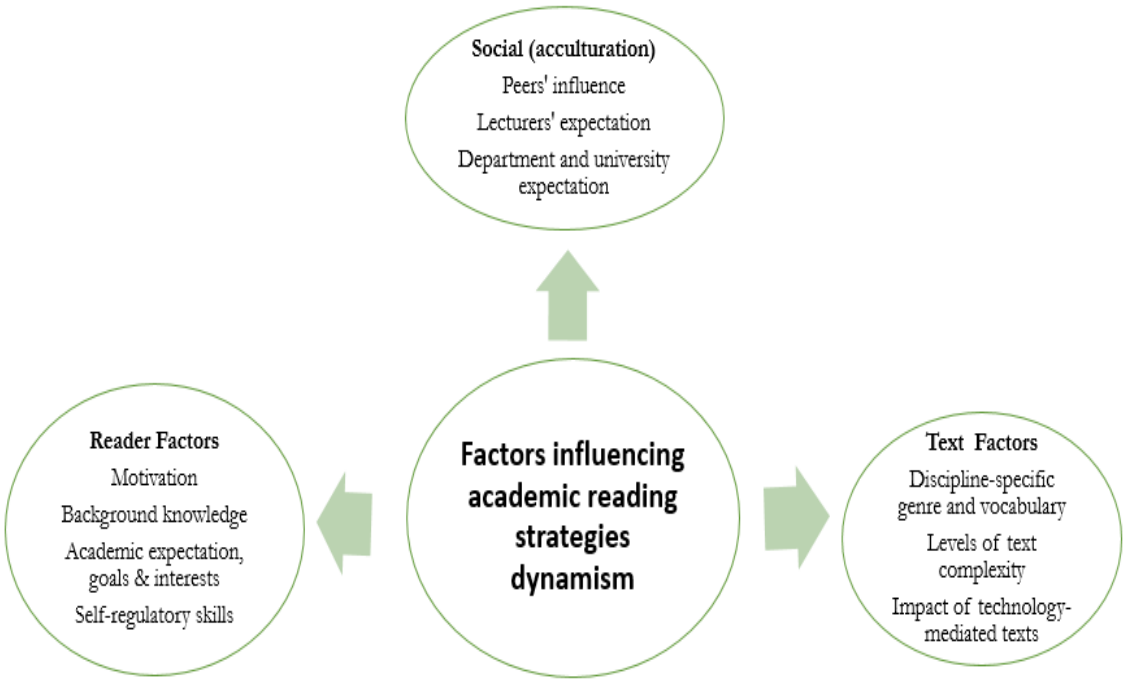
To sum up, the findings revealed that distinctive changes in self-reported academic reading strategies across participants never showed a resolute consistency. It emerged from the data that every participant demonstrated various patterns of reading strategy usage which were unique to his/her own social and individual conditions. Such unpredictable patterns of reading strategies changes and progression resulted from influences of various factors that will be discussed in the following section.

4.5 Research Questions 4: What Influenced the Participants' Changes in their Reading Strategies in their British University?

Throughout this study, the participants experienced persistent academic reading strategies discovery. The data revealed that these discoveries could be attributed to sociocultural factors. By the end of Year Two, these participants reiterated that academic reading challenges were not influenced by advanced level of English language in contrast to their perceived role of English in Year One (see Section 4.2.1).

The findings of this study derived from series of follow-up interviews in Phase 2 further revealed the sociocultural influences on reading strategy dynamism, as shown by Figure 4.17. Data interpretation focusing on sociocultural factors comprised (1) text factors, (2) reader factors, and (3) changing epistemological beliefs on L2 reading and practice.

Figure 4.17: Factors influencing academic reading strategies dynamism



4.5.1 Text Factors

As discussed in the Literature Review (see Section 2.7), text factors have a possible impact on academic reading strategy development. In view of this, it may be seen that the findings derived from the interview data raised issues related to (1) text complexity, (2) discipline-specific vocabulary and structures, and (3) technology-mediated texts, as can be seen below.

4.5.1.1 Text Complexity

According to the participants, for example AY, DY, HZ and SL, their reading texts in Malaysia were carefully selected and prepared by their lecturers:

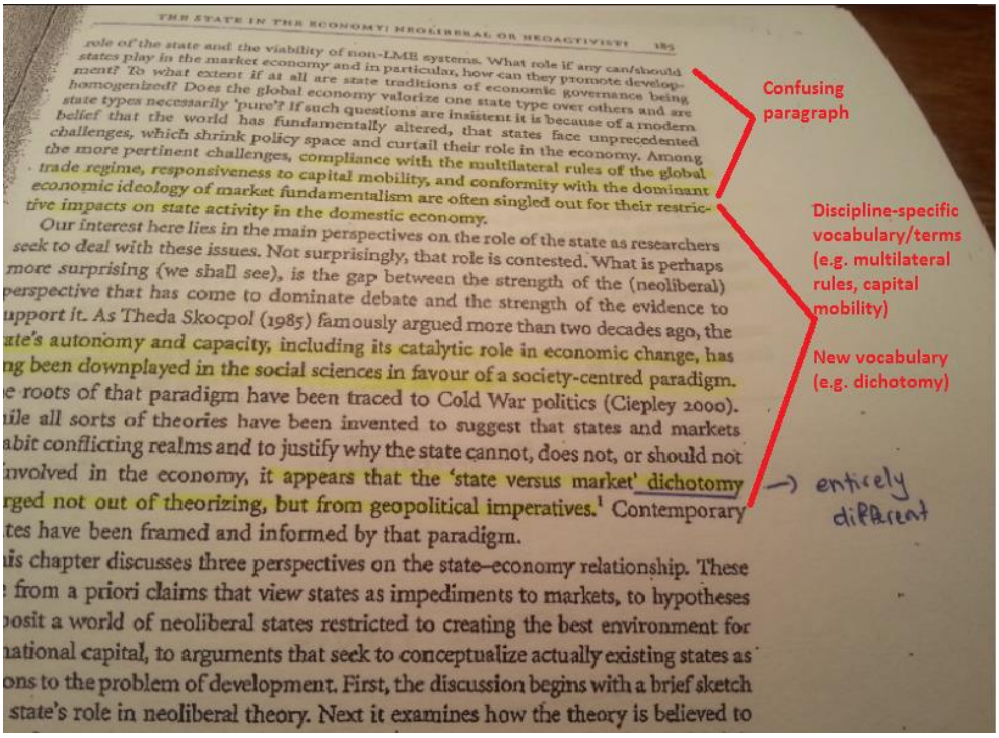
> I just read the lectures notes prepared by my lecturers so it's simplified and easier to read. (Transcript No. AY5)
>
> For A-level, the academic texts were usually given by our lecturers and then text books. Not so many research papers. (Transcript No. DY3)
>
> In Malaysia, I usually read text books and notes prepared by the lecturers. (Transcript No. SL3)

Following their lack of exposure to various types of academic text in the previous learning context, the interview data suggested that many of them were unprepared for academic reading demands in university. This may be explained by their lack of exposure and knowledge of academic texts features and organisation. For example, DY was distracted with the citation and referencing in journal articles. Meanwhile, AF would read academic texts verbatim, which decelerated his reading pace. He usually spent one week reading an article.

> I was disturbed by the 'brackets', citation, author's name and year. I didn't know at first why it should be there. (Transcript No.DY5)
>
> Last term I studied statistics. So, I think everything in the article was important and tried my best to digest everything that I read. I didn't know how to read it but I later found out that I just had to read the abstract or method and discussion. (Transcript No. AF5)

KT, for example, experienced a transition from reading easy texts to complex and challenging academic texts. In addition, reading specialised texts further intensified her academic reading perplexity. She spent one academic year acclimatising herself to reading specialised texts of various genres. KT had voluntarily shared the academic texts she was reading in Year One. She encountered several reading challenges when reading academic texts, such as reading specific language features in her subject area (e.g. accounting and economics) and complex and long sentences. KT emailed me the reading text following the follow-up interview session (see sample text 1).

Figure 4.18: Sample Text 1: Case study KT
(Examples of long, confusing sentences and specific terms)



As can be seen in Sample Text 1, her reading challenges included technical/specific terms (e.g. multilateral rules and capital mobility). In addition, Sample Text 1 shows some examples of complex and long sentences, specific terms and new vocabulary. KT appeared to be re-reading, highlighting and underlining complex/important sentences,

looking up words and writing definitions of words in the margin. KT reported that she never re-read, highlighted, underlined, looked up words in dictionary or wrote at the text margin when reading easy and familiar academic texts (both in Malaysia and England). This finding suggested that her dynamic use of reading strategies was influenced by her interaction with the level of text complexity. Therefore, variation across academic texts within a single and different disciplines, such as research articles, textbooks and reports contributed to her confusion with regard to the linguistic features of academic texts.

In another instance, RS reported some problems when reading research article structures in Year One. Sample Text 2 shows the problem he encountered when reading a research journal.

Figure 4.19: Sample Text 2: Case study RS
(Examples of confusing text structures)

2 Globalization: A Social and Economic Phenomenon

2.1 What is Globalization?

Globalization is one of the most cited catchwords of our time and is used to describe a process of social change on the macro level of societies. Today, many social and economic phenomena such as peace, crime, migration, production, employment, technological developments, environmental risks, distribution of income and welfare, and social cohesion and identity are considered to be affected by the process of globalization (see, e.g., Brakman, Garretsen, van Marrewijk, van Wittelcostuijn 2006; Cohen and Kennedy 2000; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton 1999; Scholte 2005). We define *globalization* as the process of intensification of cross-area and cross-border social relations between actors from very distant locations, and of growing transnational interdependence of economic and social activities (see, e.g., Beck 2000; Giddens 1990). Giddens (1990: 64) holds that with globalization "the modes of connection between different social contexts or regions become networked across the earth's surface as a whole."

Too many references given which can distract my reading

RS was often distracted when reading the text (see Sample Text 2). He mentioned that he had never experienced reading journal articles. Thus, unfamiliar text structures influenced his academic reading strategy usage in Year One. For example, he spent most of his time searching for the cited references, and read those to understand unfamiliar technical jargons and concepts.

> It was time consuming. I mean…I had to google the terms and read other reading materials to grasp the gist of an article, for example. For sometimes in the articles, I didn't really know what I should read and which points needed to be taken from it. (Transcript No.RS5)
>
> There was this one part where it was too long the first few parts that I didn't understand because the sentence was really complicated. The sentences were written in different ways. So I can't seem to grasp the gist of the text. (Transcript No.RS6)

4.5.1.2 Discipline-specific Vocabulary and Structures

Findings related to discipline-specific aspects are described here. The participants pointed out that some academic texts consisted of various styles of writing. These styles affected academic reading strategies preferences. For example:

> Like some articles used difficult and easy words. The articles had more difficult words. Maybe some words were new to me which I had never read in Malaysia until I came here. (Transcript No. RG4)
>
> Most of my reading were on journals. The language was quite hard. So, I had to look it up. If I just read it I won't be able to understand it. (Transcript No. DY2)
>
> I think it's not because of the words in the texts, it's more to do with the sentence structures. (Transcript No. SL12)

A prominent finding was that the participants highlighted the influence of text structures on academic reading usage. Although they were considered novice academic readers, they recognised some intricacies in academic texts.

> It depends on the publishers and writers also. The newly written article is easier to read compared to those in the 80s and 70s. The structures are so different from now. The author like in the 80s, the way they write - the sentences structures are more different than those written in the 2000. It's more to do with the publisher and the texts I guess. (Transcript No. KT3)
>
> Like the sentences and paragraphs are really long with complex sentences. The words used were similar to the words we usually used for daily speech. My understanding on the same article was quite different from the native speakers. So, it was kind of challenging and frustrating at times. (Transcript No. RS7)
>
> I would like to point out that when I read particularly in HRM...human resource management. I think the language was kind of flowery. Sometimes, the sentences were constructed in a way that it didn't convey any real meaning, at least to me. To understand the context matter was harder in academic reading. (Transcript No. RH7)

Another participant reiterated that:

> I was reading 'Corporation in Society' last semester and the subject required a lot of reading. I had to read lengthy texts. It was really difficult to understand the sentences and was really depressing. Like I said before it was really stressful to read. (Transcript No. SR3)

4.5.1.3 Technology-Mediated Texts

There were several instances concerning the impact of print-based and screen-based texts on reading strategy dynamism. In addition, texts organisation and structures affected the patterns of reading strategy usage, such as HZ and SL.

> I liked to read online article because I could go through it easily. The required reading, for example, was focussing on certain points in the article. So, what I would do was to search the keywords without having to get through every paragraph. Print-based texts lacked effective navigation. (Transcript No. SL4)
>
> Sometimes when I was reading screen-based texts I sometimes needed to look up specific new terms used in it, such as finance terms. So, while reading the texts it would be easier to look up these terms in Investopedia. So, screen-based readings maybe were more convenient in terms of storage capacity and mobility. (Transcript No. HZ4)

From those who disagree with on-screen readings, there came various types of feedback and experiences. Prominent amongst them was a similarity in sustaining reading momentum. In addition, the participant such as AY, DY, KZ, RG, RH and RS disliked reading screen-based texts because of these reasons:

> Another thing would be for reading screen-based and print-based texts. The way I read was different because I prefer print-based texts. For online reading, I had to read the main points repeatedly. I prefer prints because it was much easeir to highlight and scribble at the margin. (Transcript No. AY9)
>
> Reading on paper was more engaging because I could highlight and write some notes on it. I could also click and highlight screen-based texts but the reading experiences were not similar to reading prints. Reading on-screen texts had less impact on my comprehension. (Transcript No. DY10)
>
> Reading print-based texts was different. I would read the whole texts on screen but I would skip some of the pages if I were to read print-based texts because it was much easier to flip the pages. Reading screen-based journals was definitely different from reading prints. (Transcript No. KZ8)
>
> When I read online texts, I would not use a ruler but would zoom the words. (Transcript No. RG8)
>
> I think I preferred reading printed materials. When I read screen-based texts I would feel dizzy. (Transcript No. RH3)
>
> I printed the online text out. (Transcript No. RS7)

4.5.2 Reader Factors

In this section, the themes underpinning reader factors are divided into motivation and background knowledge. The three constructs underlying motivation consisted of (1) the impact of competency, self-efficacy and autonomy, and (2) changing reading goals and purposes. This will be followed by the impact of background knowledge on reading strategy dynamism.

4.5.2.1 The Impact of Motivation on Reading strategies Dynamism: Competency and Autonomy

The participants enjoyed their reading autonomy in a British university. These participants, such as AF, KT, HZ, KZ and SL started to read more frequently and read various academic reading materials for extensive knowledge. Their readings in Malaysia were usually prescribed by teachers and lecturers, however, it was different here. In view of this, they could choose their reading based on their own preferences and interests.

Initially, academic reading was felt to be discouraging because the participants disliked their courses and the amount of academic reading tasks had made it more demanding especially in Year One. However, their academic reading experiences had changed from challenging to acceptable when they gradually developed an interest in their courses in Year Two.

> Maybe I'm more interested in my field now. I never read non-academic texts related to my course. But now I read the core modules, supplement my readings by looking for related non-academic texts. I re-read some difficult modules which I studied last year. I need to study the modules again this year but I found it much easier to read compared to last year. (Transcript No. AF14)
>
> It's only when I come here that we started to read, I have a lot of things to read. I think it's better because it makes me more knowledgeable. (Transcript No. KT13)
>
> I'm more positive with my academic reading activities now. I think I'm more interested in what I'm studying right now which has made academic reading much easier and more manageable than last year. There are so many readings that I can anticipate in the coming semester, but it's for my own benefits so yeah, I'm more positive with my reading now. (Transcript No. KZ14)

When they were given autonomy in reading, they admitted that they enjoyed academic reading. This can be explained by the freedom given to manoeuvre their own reading activities such as selecting their own reading materials and reading diverse academic texts, which were not necessarily related to their field of studies. Thus, these findings outlined

the participants' motivation to (1) become competent readers, and (2) practise reading autonomy.

Another participant reported that academic reading in previous learning contexts was usually aimed at passing examinations, which was, in some ways, related to the wide composition of the 'bottom-up strategies'. For example, verbatim reading, re-reading, translation and looked up words in dictionary or using search engine (i.e. Google) dominated the reading strategy patterns in Year One.

The ambiguity of academic reading as experienced by the participants highlighted that academic reading in Malaysia lacked rigorous academic reading preparation. For example, DY reported that her readings were confined to the texts which were prepared and selected by her teachers when she was in Malaysia.

> I accepted the fact that I had to read a lot and I have to work for it where I have to get more information because in Malaysia I will avoid reading if I could. During A-levels, all examples and points were given by my teachers. So, I just have to read it. (Transcript No. DY3)

In Year Two, she seemed to develop an awareness to escape her interdependence on the reading lists given by her lecturers in the new learning contexts, in contrast with her prior reading practice. She had thus seized the opportunity to read a diverse range of academic texts following her growing awareness to practise reading autonomy in a new learning context.

> I have to read a lot here. Although lecture notes and journal articles are provided, I still have to read more by finding other reading materials on my own. If I don't do that I won't be able to participate in dicsussion. So, it's more to fulfill my academic participation and the awareness of my academic reading. If I don't read and have no further reading, it will be difficult for me to understand and survive my course. (DY/FIV3)

4.5.2.2 Self-Efficacy

The findings also suggest that the participants had successfully practised their self-regulatory skills because they managed to overcome problems in L2 academic reading such as a slow reading pace and poor reading comprehension. In this instance, KZ and RS was optimistic about the academic readings in Year Two rather than in Year One. KZ had developed more interest in her course, and became more familiar with the discipline-specific texts and vocabulary. However, she hardly had time to read beyond her syllabus boundaries, because she was also keen on her social life in university. Meanwhile, RS saw the growing volume of academic readings as another pressure that prompted self-efficacy.

> There are still more readings to do now, but I still think that it's still manageable even though the readings keep increasing as I progress into another year of my study. I have to finish my reading so I can play and go to the gym. I have to finish my work first to enjoy my social life. (Transcript No. KZ13)
>
> I guess what motivated these changes were the academic reading demands. The academic reading was becoming very challenging, and I had to keep improving myself. (Transcript No. RS6)

Another criterion favoured by the participants was the usefulness of academic reading and the ability to put their own stance to the texts they were reading, for example:

> I think because I didn't read with an open mind prior coming to the UK. I noticed that for academic reading I needed to be more open minded. When I read here, I looked at different points, different perspectives to get the points. The sentences were quite complicated. However, when you looked at different points of view, you would understand the message it was trying to convey. The way I viewed academic reading was different from the way I viewed it in Year One. (Transcript No. RG12)

One participant recounted that his reading efficacy was closely linked to his prior academic reading experiences in Malaysia. He suggested that the learning styles here motivated him to read more efficiently. He also raised issues of the need to invoke critical reading skills for academic reading in the UK.

> Mainly because of the learning style here. For example, the seminar questions were not straightforward, whereby mostly involved opinion-based questions. So academic reading shouldn't always about 'quoting' the text but I had to express my opinions of the texts. I lacked this skill. Maybe I would relate this to my prior academic reading experiences in Malaysia where I usually read to answer the questions. These questions were usually taken from the texts which didn't require critical reading. Here, most of the time, I had to read and think critically. I had to be an active reader here in the sense that I had to come up with my own opinions to address the points I read in the texts. (Transcript No. SL12)

4.5.2.3 Changing Reading Purposes and Goals

Another participant claimed that they gradually developed academic reading curiosity towards the end of Year One. They recounted that the reading purpose in Malaysia was mainly to pass the examinations. For example, HZ's prior academic reading experiences were aimed at rote learning and memorising. He felt more enlightened here when he had slowly reconstructed his reading beliefs from being a passive to an active reader, and able to read across syllabus boundaries.

> I'm trained to question about things and be more critical with my reading. So I really like it. For my A-level course, I just read related to what I was studying. Well, I don't read for exam purposes here. (Transcript No. HZ11)

Some participants shifted their reading purpose from 'reading and memorise' to 'read and understand'. They had, thus, gained self-confidence in navigating their own academic reading paths.

> I understand the text rather before I will just remember the points and then not understanding it. So, I try to understand what I'm reading now rather than remembering it. (Transcript No. AF10)
>
> I had to read, at the same time, my brain is thinking rigourously too. I mean I had to be alert and think really fast. Reading here didn't require memorising because I had to process more information and looked at it from my perspectives. (Transcript No. AY9)
>
> I should not just depend on others and by going to the seminar to understand my readings. I find it very helpful and enjoyable if I read before I go to the seminar because I can share my opinion, bring my own argument and interpretation so I can argue about that. I guess it's more satisfying that way. (Transcript No. RS9)

These findings revealed that their changing reading purposes (i.e. reading for examinations, seminars and assignments) affected the patterns of reading strategy dynamism. There was a substantial change from reading from beginning to end in Year One to become more selective in reading. In addition, they had recently started to write down only the important and interesting points in their notes, for example:

> Now, I just write down the notes for certain ideas that I am interested in because I want to really read about that thoroughly. So, I will just write it down so as to remind me to research for that idea. (Transcript No. RS12)

Some positive progress with academic reading demands were derived from the interviews data. The majority of the participants had gradually accepted the overwhelming reading demands accompanied by a definite self-motivation for academic survival.

> Some articles are very interesting, especially those that I could relate to the real world. So, I am more interested and motivated now compared to when I first arrived here. (Transcript No.RG14)
>
> I want to do well in my study, so I need to read to be knowledgeable. So it's more to my academic achievement and to gain more knowledge. (Transcript No. SR12)

Some participants took almost one academic year to adapt to reading various complex academic texts. After the acclimatisation phase, they became more pragmatic with their academic reading tasks and demands. In addition, they highlighted the importance of academic reading to prepare them for professional courses, rather than reading theoretical and abstract concepts.

> I just want to gain more knowledge. I don't read before because I feel that I won't use that knowledge. But, now I read because I feel that it is worth having more knowledge. Though I'm not using it now, it might be useful for my future, to get a job for example. So, it is worth getting wider knowledge to engage in a conversation with others. (Transcript No.RS11)
>
> I enjoy academic reading now because I get more practical knowledge about my course. When I first arrived, the materials were not directly related to what I'm studying. But, in the second year, the reading texts are more practical in a way that it is related to my future, to what I'll do. So, I could finally understand my reading and apply the knowledge to my course now. The articles are not getting

> much easier, but I manage to find it interesting and useful. Thus, I enjoy reading it because I like to read about something that is more realistic. (Transcript No.SL14)

4.5.2.4 The Impact of Background Knowledge on Academic Reading Strategies Dynamism

There were several references to the impact of background knowledge on academic reading strategies dynamism. For example, SL mentioned that he lacked exposure to academic text genres such as journal articles and reports. He thus relied on bottom-up strategies to approach those types of academic texts. However, his shifting academic reading strategies in Year Two were influenced by his familiarity with discipline-specific academic texts:

> I seldom use the dictionary now because academic language has an identical writing style. The sentence structures and vocabulary are almost similar, especially for texts that are written in the same field. So, once I became more familiar with all those, it was much easier for me to read them. (Transcript No. SL10)

Another participant mentioned the significance of background knowledge to ease academic reading comprehension.

> I can cope with academic reading now. Last year, I think I took quite a long time to read. I usually take a break in between reading. But now I think I can read more paragraphs and more chapters without having to take frequent breaks. Maybe I'm more familiar with academic texts, terms and concepts. (Transcript No. KZ14)
>
> Readings are much easier now because I'm more familiar with the texts and I can read them much better than before. It is still difficult but it is more manageable. (Transcript No. AY13)

Another participant developed background reading after reading a lot of academic texts in Year One.

> After reading quite a number of difficult academic reading materials, I could finally understand these texts much easier than before. (Transcript No. RH12)

Following their established background knowledge, it was surprising to learn that the problems in academic reading was that of the sentence structures in discipline-specific texts rather than their perceived level of the English language in the UK (see Section 4.2.1).

> When I'm more familiar with the academic texts and their writing style, I could read it much better now. So, the academic texts adaptation phase is really important for me in terms of a much improved reading pace. I would say that my reading problem has nothing to do with the English language, it's more to do with the academic texts' level of difficulty and sentence structures. (Transcript No. SL12)

4.5.3 Changing Epistemological Beliefs on L2/Academic Reading and Practice

The participants in this study believed that the shifting learning contexts changed the way they read. Generally, they also showed an awareness of the impact of shifting learning contexts on their reading beliefs and practice. For example, AF started reading both academic and non-academic texts because of the course requirements. However, his reading beliefs and preferences were later driven by his own willingness to read for self-enrichment as a result of peer influence:

> I have changed in the nature of things I read. Well another thing is my friends from Malaysia and other countries read a lot of stuff here. For example, my friend is doing economics but he is reading physics too, although he is not studying the subject. So this kind of exposure makes me read the books from other subject areas. So it may start like I was forced to do it. But, lately I do it because I like it and I enjoy reading diverse stuff. (Transcript No. AF10)

The participants also experienced a different reading culture in both countries (for example, Malaysia and UK). The majority of them were not avid readers in Malaysia (except AF and RH). Therefore, they experienced some 'culture shock' in the first few months in the UK. They had never expected that academic reading experiences here could at times be overwhelming. Some of them expressed their astonishment at looking

at some of their peers who managed to read books of different disciplines despite their hectic schedules. In addition, they were encouraged by their lecturers to read diverse reading materials for knowledge enrichment, so they would be able to participate actively in seminars and discussions.

> I'm trained to question about things and be more critical with my reading rather than just absorbing what I read. Reading is much wider. (Transcript No.HZ13)
>
> I read more books compared to in Malaysia. I liked reading financial times and economics magazines. These were the recommended reading materials in my course. I was interested in reading it because I would gain a lot of knowledge by reading diverse reading materials. (Transcript No.KT14)

Another example of the influence of contexts was the cultivation of reading interests among the participants. They had gradually, started to read more diverse academic reading texts that were not essentially prescribed in their course reading list and expanded to reading non-academic materials as they progressed into Year Two. Therefore, they appeared slowly to assimilate to the reading culture in their new learning contexts. For example:

> I read more about different things here in the sense that I'm much more curious about what a phrase means and what the words means in that particular sentence. I started to be more curious and I need to know more about the world. Maybe when you are in a university your mindset changes. I like my course very much as it gives me a much wider perspectives, which is not only confined to the modules I'm taking. (Transcript No. HZ12)

The need for extensive reading was at first encouraged by their lecturers. Subsequently, it was developed through their own observations in the lecture rooms and the library.

> Over here, I can afford to read more books because I have the time and I am encouraged to do that. The environment of the university is important, too. I usually go to the library and I see people are reading and working a lot. I'll always prefer to read in the library compared to my house because people in the library are always reading. (Transcript No. HZV13)

4.6 Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to identify issues related to the academic reading experiences of a group of Malaysian undergraduates in a British university spanning two academic years (February 2014 to May 2014 and October 2014 to February 2015). This research was conducted in two phases of data collection. In the first phase of study, I investigated the participants' perceptions and experiences of academic reading in the first few months in the UK. In the second phase of study, I explored the participants' (1) self-reported reading strategy usage, (2) reading strategy dynamism, and (3) the factors influencing reading strategy dynamism as they became more familiar with academic reading. This chapter highlighted several significant findings such as the following:

- Academic reading challenges were associated with the mismatch between the academic reading expectations of these Malaysian undergraduates and their situated contextual realities due to differences in terms of: (1) the perceived changing role of English in the UK, (2) their prior L2 reading instruction with this influence being reflected through text complexity (e.g. texts types, linguistic characteristics and text organisation) and, (3) their actual L2 proficiency and their lack of CALP.
- A significant finding that emerged from the data pointed to the participants' reinvention of reading strategies as shown in their 'child-like' reading experiences. The reading support strategies they used in Year One of their University courses were similar to those used in early literacy development, for example reading using a pencil, ruler or finger to guide their reading.
- The participants' reliance on L1 resources (i.e. translation) in the first few months in the UK outlined the possibility that language transfer was still occurring regardless of their already advanced level of L2 proficiency.

- The development of and progression in the reading strategies they used in Year Two could be due to their developing metacognition awareness in academic reading that was transforming them into better and more skilled readers.
- The patterns of reading strategy development across the two academic years demonstrated that every participant was unique in terms of their own social and individual conditions.
- Their reading strategy dynamism could be attributed to sociocultural issues such as text factors and reader factors.
- The shifting learning contexts in which they operated influenced their academic reading perceptions, experiences of and epistemological beliefs about L2/academic reading through their current lived experiences in a British university.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

'L2 reading must account for issues that are qualitatively different from L1 issues'

(Grabe and Stoller, 2011, p.35)

5.1 Introduction

This purpose of this chapter is to bring together the findings of this research and discuss its possible meanings, and their implications. The findings in Chapter 4 are first compared with those derived from previous literature and then used to address the research aims and questions. This is subsequently followed by a discussion of the salient and relevant, new or emerging issues. The structure of Chapter 5 is as shown below:

5.2 Research Questions 1

5.3 Research Question 2

5.4 Research Question 3

5.5. Research Question 4

5.6 Other issues emerging

5.7 Summary

5.2 Research Question 1: How did these Participants Perceive Academic Reading in a British University?

The shifts in the learning context, as suggested by the data, were associated with many factors. The participants, who started reading in English at the pre-school stage when they were about 5 and 6 years old, came to study in a British university in their early twenties. When they recounted their academic reading perceptions in their new learning contexts, there were noticeable differences with respect to their reading experiences in

terms of (1) the participants' perceived role of English in the UK, (2) academic reading preparation for tertiary education, (3) text complexity issues and (4) the BICS/CALP.

5.2.1 The Participants' Perceived Role of English in the UK

The participants came from a context where English was used as a second language in education settings. In Malaysia, English is accorded second language status, as stipulated in Article 152 of the country's language policy (Mat Awal et al., 2007). Although the English language is considered an L2, it is used as a foreign language in other domains for daily interaction (e.g. shopping malls, markets, and public services). Maros, Tan and Salehuddin (2007) described the language situation in Malaysia as a scenario whereby:

> '… [for]… Malay students, most of them tend to use the Malay language when interacting with their family members and friends in their home environment as well as in school. They also used their mother tongue to converse with their non-Malay peers who were fluent in the Malay language too' (p. 2).

Prior to commencing their studies in the UK, the participants had learned English in an educational setting, whereby 'a strong emphasis was given on the teaching of reading and writing skills and the mastering of grammatical rules' (Musa, Lie and Azman, 2012, p.39) with 'the teaching and learning of the language…seen as learning a subject, focusing on the mechanics…without making connections to how it was used in real communicative events' (ibid). However, their perceptions of the role of English appeared to change when they came to study and live in an environment where English was the main language of communication with lecturers, advisors and peers (Braine, 2002). Thus, they were no longer reading English as a subject here.

In a study on the shifting motivational discourses among mainland Chinese students in an English medium tertiary institution in Hong Kong, Gao (2008) sees the role of English in the students' new learning context as 'no longer an academic subject for compulsory high-stakes examinations, but (becoming instead) the medium of

instruction' (p.607) which then posed a serious problem for the participants in his study in terms of their 'previous educational experiences of learning English as a separate academic subject' (p.612). Similarly, this study affirms that the participants perceive the changing role of English somewhat negatively (for example RS, RG, KT, SL, AY and SR). In the new learning context, they are required to learn through the medium of English, which has made academic reading more challenging and difficult.

Malaysia-based students are also required, albeit nominally, to read and write in English. Several local universities however have implemented a national language policy whereby specific programmes or subjects are to be wholly conducted in the Malay language. 73% of the total number of private and public higher education institutions in Malaysia use English as a medium of instruction (Mohd Sidek, 2012). Malaysian undergraduates in local universities therefore appear to have more leeway in terms of language choice in their studies. In this regard, it may be deduced that Malaysian undergraduates studying in the UK are subject to different language experiences and situations compared to their counterparts studying in universities in their home country.

5.2.2 Academic Reading Preparation for Tertiary Education

Another challenge in academic reading as suggested by the finding of the present study is the level of academic reading preparation prior coming to study in the UK. Similarly, a recent study conducted by Mohd Sidek (2014) in Malaysian contexts suggests that the 'current reading instructional design in English language secondary textbook and reading comprehension instruction only partially prepares students for tertiary reading in the English language' (p.521-522). Therein lies a seeming inconsistency between these participants' academic reading preparations in Malaysian schools and their reading demands in the British university.

Although they were also required to read for content in college for their A-level courses in Malaysia, English was also learned as an academic subject, with the mechanics of language, and this subject focused on more than the students' ability to handle various types of academic text. Furthermore, academic texts provided in schools and colleges were prescribed and pre-selected by teachers and course lecturers. It may be argued here that the participants' perceptions of academic reading were influenced by their previous experiences of learning English as an academic subject. In view of this, issues related to academic reading preparation are further discussed in terms of text complexity (as discussed in the following section) and its impact on reading strategy usage that can be seen in Section 5.3.1.1.

5.2.3 Text Complexity Issues

In the first few months in the UK, the biggest hurdle in reading initiatives pertained to various types of academic text for specialist reading. The academic texts read in university, as reported by the participants, were different from the texts they had encountered in school in terms of (1) the idiosyncrasies of academic language, its discourse features, and (2) how these were used in different types of academic text such as journal articles, research reports and textbooks. Previous studies on L2 learners in tertiary education such as in international contexts (e.g. Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004; Tercanlioglu, 2004; Huang, 2006; Alsheikh and Mokhtari, 2011; Taillefer, 2014) and the Malaysian learning contexts (e.g. Mohd Sidek, 2011; Maarof and Yaacob, 2011; Tengku Mohamad Maasum and Maarof, 2012) did not describe academic reading development in terms of issues related to text complexity.

As noted in Section 2.7.1.4, students in the USA and Malaysia lacked exposure in reading challenging texts that could well prepare them for the reading demands in tertiary education (e.g. Hiebert, 2007, 2012; Adams, 2009, 2010; Mohd Sidek, 2011a; 2011b). Given the issue of text complexity as debated at the beginning stage of this study, this was aligned with an *a priori* viewpoint concerning the types of text that students should read in schools. For example, in Adams' (2009, p.10) study, analyses of student performance based on the ACT (American College Testing) Program finds the major stumbling block for the students to be complex texts. Similarly, Hiebert (2012) indicates that 'there can be no argument that texts used in high schools and even those in middle school have been dumbed down over the past 50 years' (p. 26).

A study conducted by Fillmore and Fillmore (2012) argues that texts should not remain simple for school students, because they need skills such as communicating complex ideas and information. As such, the lexical and grammatical resources of mature discourse are necessary if students are to succeed in their education and careers. In the context of the USA, previous studies on SAT indicated a decline in the scores of college-bound students in 1962, a downward slide which has remained unchanged until today, and which is due to the prevalence of low-level textbooks (Adams, 2010). Likewise, another study on the college entrance exam in the USA revealed that complex reading texts are contributory to a large degree to poor performance in the examination (ACT, 2006).

It is noted in the current study that there was a greater difference between the texts that the participants were reading in their homeland and those in the UK. This was highlighted previously by Adams (2010) who pointed out that in the USA learning context, students lacked the 'instruction or experience with "grown-up" text levels towards preparing them for the reading demands of college and life' (p.5). The present

study, similarly, revealed the participants' struggle in reading journal articles, research reports and even textbooks due to their lack of experience with complex academic texts in school.

This finding has further echoed Adams' study (2009), in which it was seen that the difficulties in reading might 'lie at the crux of the literacy challenge' (p.13). From the perspective of L2 reading research, Kim (2015) asserted that text difficulty played an important role in L2 reading among South Korean undergraduates in a university in South Korea, regardless of their proficiency level. Although text difficulty has been touted as important in preparing for the reading skills and demands of university learning, previous studies on reading text analysis in both ESL and native L1 English readers' school textbooks found that struggles and challenges in reading were removed from the reading texts (e.g. Conrad, 1996; Adams, 2009; Miller, 2011).

The literacy challenges that have been removed from the reading texts in textbooks include the linguistic characteristics of academic texts such as informational density and high-noun phrases (Fillmore and Fillmore, 2012). Yet another identified problematic feature of academic texts consists of discipline-specific, academic vocabulary and the generic and the rhetorical features of academic texts (Hyon, 1997). The other commonly noted features of academic language as put forward by Snow (2010) and Fang (2006) are (1) conciseness, achieved by avoiding redundancy, (2) the use of high density of information-bearing words, ensuring precision of expression, and (3) a reliance on grammatical processes to compress complex ideas into fewer words.

In the context of Malaysia, a study conducted by Mohd Sidek (2011) to determine the effectiveness of Form Four English language textbooks in preparing students for tertiary reading in English argued that the 'reading instructional design in the English language secondary textbook and reading comprehension instruction only partially

prepares students for tertiary reading' (p. 551-552). Past studies in Malaysia also revealed a situation whereby many students were unable to process academic texts at university level, due to a significant lack of familiarity with academic text discourse (e.g. Nambiar 2005; Nambiar 2007).

The students' inability to deal with content area texts was also due to insufficient direct exposure to the discourse structure of such text types at school level (Ting and Tee, 2008). If this case is reflective of current reading instructions in schools, it is not surprising that university students such as the participants in the present study experience various academic reading challenges when confronted with complex academic texts. As Fillmore and Fillmore (2012) put it, 'in ways that appear to be little understood, even by literacy experts, the language used in complex texts of the type students should be reading in school was different in numerous ways from the language of ordinary talk' (p.61).

It may be surmised that the synthesis of findings derived from the previous literature, both in international and local contexts, appear to further reinforce the findings of the current study. However, considering that some of the reviewed studies were conducted in ESL/EFL learning contexts, language proficiency could pose another challenge in academic reading apart from text complexity, with much of the debate centring on its direct link to reading comprehension success (Alderson, 1984; Urquhart and Weir, 1998; Birch, 2007; Hudson, 2007).

Previous studies conducted with native English speakers and fluent non-native English language speakers in predominantly English-speaking countries suggest that the effect of discipline-specific texts on reading to be inevitable (Conrad, 1996; Hyon, 1997; Snow and Uccelli, 2007; Adams, 2009, 2010; Snow, 2010; Miller, 2011; Fillmore and Fillmore, 2012). The findings of these studies present a scenario whereby even native and fluent non-native speakers of English are likely to encounter academic reading challenges

when reading discipline-specific texts, a clear indication that language proficiency might not be the primary indicator for successful academic reading.

The present study further indicates that despite the participants' advanced L2 proficiency, they are still experiencing numerous challenges in reading specialised texts, and might initially lack an understanding of forms and functions of these texts. In addition, they might lack the reading skills that could prepare them to cope with academic reading demands in university. A possible effect of this might be the longer period needed to read and understand specialised texts with discipline-specific linguistic features and vocabulary. As Fang, Schleppegrell and Cox (2006) put it, 'without an understanding of and appreciation for the forms and functions of academic texts, students will be severely handicapped in reading' (p.486).

The text complexity issue here is seen in the participants' inability to manage academic texts when they were reading for specialised and professional courses at the tertiary level, with the issue more universal rather than a context-specific problem (Falk-Ross, 2001; Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004). The influence of texts on L2 reading development is revisited in Section 5.5.1 since text complexity issues in academic reading may appear to influence the pattern of reading strategy usage.

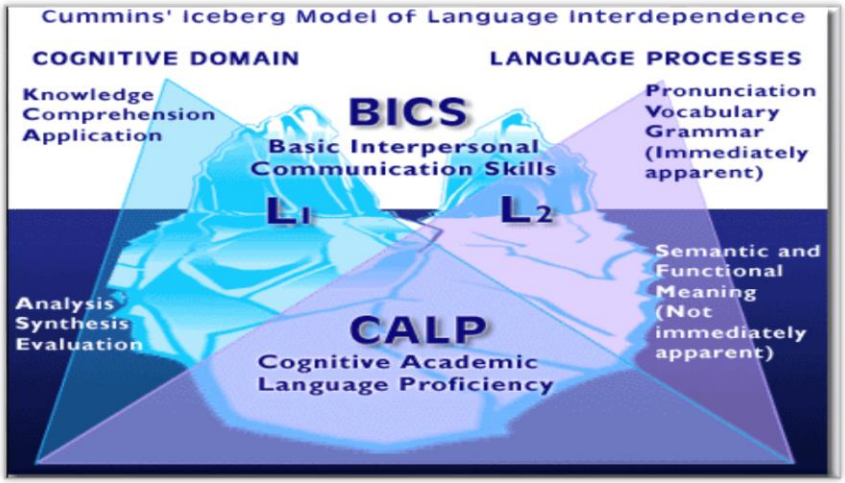
5.2.4 Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills or Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency?

In this study, the majority of the participants perceived academic reading rather negatively (e.g. AY, DY, RG, KT, RS, SR and SL) with their perceptions being two-fold. Firstly, it is difficult and challenging due to the changing demands of reading tasks and text complexity. Secondly, the level of the English language in the UK, as reported by them, appeared to be more advanced than Malaysian English. There therefore might well be a

discrepancy between the participants' perceptions of the English language in a British university and their actual L2 proficiencies. However, as argued previously in the literature review (see Section 2.6.1) a better distinction in terms of the L2 readers' proficiency should be made in L2 reading research.

This thesis conceptualises the participants' perceptions of the mismatch between the level of English in the UK to their actual L2 proficiencies based on Cummins' (2008) Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Linguistic Proficiency (CALP). These aspects of proficiency are discussed based on the distinction between L2 readers' struggles with everyday language and academic language, as illustrated in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Cummins' (1982) iceberg metaphor to illustrate the BICS and CALP continuum



The major standpoint of my thesis pertains to Cummins' (2008) fine distinction between BICS and CALP to explain the aspect of language proficiency. Another speculation concerning this aspect involves the participants' struggles with everyday language and academic reading tasks. In view of this, the present study argues that the participants have developed BICS (i.e. everyday language) but lack CALP, for example,

the abstract language required for academic work which involves a more complex, conceptual, linguistic ability that includes analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Cummins, 2000). Therefore, this study suggests that the BICS/CALP distinction highlights the discrepancy between the participant' perceived view of the level of English in the UK and their actual L2 proficiencies.

The findings of this study appear to challenge Birch's (2007) view, as noted in Section 2.3.5, regarding the need for L2 reading instruction to pay attention to bottom-up skills due to L2 learners' lack of higher-order sub-skills and linguistic efficiency with the graphemic information. Birch's views may appear relevant to either emergent L2 learners or L2 learners with a low level of L2 proficiency. In contrast, I would infer that the participants here have reached the higher-order sub-skills and might be linguistically efficient in regards to the graphemic information in L2 reading, yet lack the cognitive academic language proficiency for more specialised courses.

Another important discovery that was not envisaged at the beginning of this study pertains to the participants' reliance on L1 resources mainly in the first few months in a British university. I started writing this thesis with the assumption that L2 ability and BICS/CALP were more important than L1 knowledge. However, my data has since suggested that there is a fragment of linguistic interdependence to compensate for any lack of CALP. This alludes to the important role of L1 knowledge in academic reading, in addition to L2 proficiency. A discussion concerning the impact of L1 literacy on academic reading development is provided in Section 5.6.2.

5.2.4.1 Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

The issue regarding proficiency appeared to be highly controversial among the participants, because they had started to question their English language ability in the first few months of their courses. It needs to be emphasised here that these participants were

at an advanced level of L2 proficiency, based on (1) their IELTS achievement bands, and (2) had met the English Language entrance requirements as stipulated by their British universities. Ironically, these advanced L2 proficiencies were not translated into how they perceived their own proficiency in their new learning contexts

The challenges in academic reading were arguably based, then, on the mismatch between their actual L2 proficiency and the changing role of English. This initially appeared to influence their reading skills, ability and confidence in the first few months of studying in the UK. Previous studies of L2 learners have similarly found academic reading to be overwhelming and demanding, especially at the beginning of their studies. For example, the difficulties and challenges in academic reading faced by Chinese learners in the study by Nambiar and Ibrahim (2011) involved the lexicon in reading textbooks, sentence structures and grammar.

The participants here were proficient in English as compared to the Chinese undergraduates in Nambiar and Ibrahim (2011) who were only fairly proficient in the language. Both groups of students, however, came from a diverse English language learning environment. While China emphasises the grammar translation method, Malaysia, on the other hand, is focused on communicative language teaching. Despite their different proficiency levels and teaching methods, both groups appeared to struggle with the academic reading demands in university. Previous studies on international students in New Zealand also found English language as one of the major barriers for this group (e.g. Li, Baker and Marshall, 2002; Ward and Masgoret, 2004; Campbell and Li, 2007; Guan and Jones, 2011).

Although greater language proficiency and background knowledge have been valued as being important for specialist reading (Grabe, 2009), findings from previous studies found that a low level of linguistic ability could be compensated for by a high level

of discipline-related knowledge (e.g. Usó-Juan, 2006). Cummins (2008) argued that academic language proficiency may 'represent an individual's access to and command of the specialised vocabulary and functions of language that were characteristic of the social institution of schooling' (p.75). This study similarly argues that a group of Malaysian undergraduates' advanced L2 proficiency might not compensate for their lack of CALP.

In another study on Korean and Chinese students in their host institutions (e.g. Malaysia and New Zealand), the findings suggested that these learners encountered various problems in both academic reading and writing that may address text complexity issues such as (1) unfamiliar vocabulary, (2) difficult texts with long and complicated sentences, and (3) lack of a rich technical vocabulary and unfamiliar disciplinary genres (Evans and Morrison, 2011; Nambiar, Ibrahim and Meerah, 2012). Likewise, the participants in the present study faced similar problems when they were confronted with discipline-specific texts.

The academic reading situation as depicted above further supports Grabe and Stoller's (2011) assertion that 'L2 readers can read fluently when they know almost all of the words and can process the text fluently but any new and difficult text may throw them back to a level of less fluent and inefficient reading' (p.51). In view of this, this study could imply that the lack of CALP has thrown a group of Malaysian undergraduates back to a level of less fluent and inefficient reading.

As noted in Section 2.6.1, this study raised the issue of the connection between excellent L2 proficiency and effective academic reading. Based on the mismatch between the participants' actual L2 proficiency and their perceived level of the English language in a British university, this study clearly demonstrates the need to underline the distinction between BICS and CALP, to describe academic reading development. To sum up, this

study proposes that L2 proficiency is important, although it may not necessarily be the major contributor to specialised reading.

Although the BICS/CALP distinction has been criticised as too simplistic and general (Gómez, Freeman and Freeman, 2010), this study appears to echo the BICS/CALP distinction, due to its 'appealing specific conceptual distinction that has important implications for policy and practice' (Cummins, 2008, p.79). The underlying challenges to academic reading in a British university, as reported in this study, serve as a guideline for policy makers and practitioners to be more sensitive with international bilingual (or multilingual) students, based on their academic language proficiency in terms of prior L2 learning and reading experiences in their home countries.

5.2.5 Summary

The mismatch between the participants' expectations and the situated contextual realities are based on the changing role of English in the UK and lack of academic reading preparation for tertiary education. It can be summarised that the participants had different understandings of academic reading, due to the influence of prior L2 reading instructions, with this influence reflected through text complexity issues. Finally, the mismatch between their actual L2 proficiency and the perceived level of English language in a British university draws upon the BICS and CALPS distinction.

5.3 Research Question 2: What Reading Strategies were utilised by the Participants in their New Learning Context?

In this section, self-reported reading strategies are classified into different categories. This classification is derived from the data based on the analysis of findings and matched to that of Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) descriptions of the metacognitive, cognitive and support strategies originally developed by the latter (1998–2000) as 'a tool for measuring native English-speaking students' awareness and use of reading strategies while reading academic or school-related materials' (p.435).

Sheorey and Mokhtari's strategy classification was selected as a guide to classify the reading strategies, because its premise was based on (1) meaning construction from text 'as an intentional, deliberate and purposeful act which was driven by the goals of reading and the nature of the text being read' (Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004, p.251), and (2) the exploration of reading strategy usage that might possibly be driven by the goals of reading and the nature of the text being read (e.g. academic reading and texts). Although the reading strategies inventory was used to collect quantitative data in the previous L2 reading research, its descriptions were relevant, and matched the reading strategies as reported here.

Metacognitive (global) strategies are defined as intentional, carefully planned techniques by which learners monitor or manage their reading (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001). The identified self-reported metacognitive strategies in this study included setting reading objectives and purposes, guided reading (e.g. attention given to section headings), skimming and scanning, splitting long sentences into meaningful chunks (using other textual features to enhance reading comprehension), looking for punctuation and writing style and skipping unfamiliar words, terms, lines and paragraphs and segmented, selective and structured readings.

Cognitive strategies encompass the actions and procedures that readers used while working directly with the text, which involve localised and focused techniques when problems arise in the process of trying to understand textual information (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001). Some examples of cognitive strategies as reported in the present study involved re-reading, guessing the meaning of words, reading from the beginning to the end, and reading aloud. Other usage of cognitive strategies involved visualising while reading, pausing and doing reflection while reading, reading intervals, speed reading, adjusting the distance between the eyes and books, and memorising (using mnemonics).

Finally, support strategies were reported to be widely used by the participants in this study. These strategies were basically defined as the support mechanisms to aid the reader in comprehending texts. Examples of support strategies in this study comprised writing notes and summaries while reading, highlighting, underlining, circling and bracketing important points, searching for keywords, checking the index for new terms, checking reading comprehension by asking peers and lecturers or by attending seminars, using ruler/finger/pencil to guide reading/to point at the words while reading, looking up meaning of words and writing down the meanings (e.g. using dictionary, google and Investopedia), drawing a reading diagram, further and intensive readings, and translating.

These three categories of reading strategies were reported as the wider range of strategies used by the participants when reading academic texts. This finding appears to corroborate the findings of previous studies on L2 readers, which involved the prevailing use of such strategies to facilitate comprehension (e.g. Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001; Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004; Mohd Noor, 2006; Maarof and Yaacob, 2011). However, reading strategy usage in the present study, apart from being identified as varied, was exclusive to the type of texts read at a particular time and the reading goals/purposes.

This was due to 'context-specific' issues, as discussed previously in Section 5.2 (e.g. reading for specialised courses and text complexity issues).

5.3.1 Interpreting the Participants' Self-Reported Academic Reading Strategy Usage in Year One

The participants reported that in the first few months in the UK, they were more inclined to experiment with various types of reading strategy. Their use of support and cognitive strategies was useful in dealing with intimidation and reading anxiety when confronted with lengthy, complex and unfamiliar academic texts. This finding is reinforced by Mokhtari and Reichard's (2002, p.253) argument on support strategies, which could provide (1) 'a useful function for some of the students who seem to invoke them as needed', and (2) 'the support mechanisms aimed at sustaining responses to reading'.

The support strategies, however, might hamper reading comprehension because reading an academic text requires skills such as 'integrating individual sentence meanings into a coherent text-level representation and … constructing a global meaning that integrates multiple sentences' (Best, Rowe, Ozuru and McNamara, 2005, p.66). On the one hand, it may be argued that the participants knew how to integrate individual sentence meanings into a coherent text-level representation when reading the L2 texts. On the other hand, when challenged with specialised academic texts, they relied mostly on support strategies.

Their use of support strategies appears to be consistent with Cogmen and Saracaloglu's (2009) findings in terms of their usefulness for remembering the desired information. At this stage of academic reading, the focus was on rote learning because of the need to memorise the information to pass their examination that could explain the lack of usage for both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. At the beginning of their studies, their reading purposes were aimed mainly at sustaining reading and for rote

learning. This has echoes of other research in the field (e.g. Nambiar, 2005, 2007; Malaysia, 2007; Zoghi, Mustapha and Maasum, 2010) which might suggest that the participants' prior L2 reading instruction have influenced their patterns of reading strategy usage.

Their use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies was often more focused on the 'surface approach to reading, such as displaying a limited ability to use textual schema and links between paragraphs, being unsure of the reading strategies used, and having anxiety of text' (Musa, Lie and Azman, 2012, p.40). Like the support strategies, this study further proposes that the participants' use of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies were mainly aimed at the mechanics of the language than the content words.

5.3.1.1 Influence of Prior L2 Reading Instruction

As discussed previously in Section 2.6.4 and 5.2.2, reading strategy usage is linked to prior L2 reading instructions. In Grabe's (1991) study on German and English readers, it is reported that 'German EFL readers attend more to function words, while the L1 English readers 'attend more to content words' (p.388). Likewise, the findings of a study conducted by the Malaysian English Language Teaching Centre (Malaysia, 2007) indicated that bottom-up strategies were used regularly by Malaysian learners because much greater attention was aimed at the linguistic aspects of the textual information.

The current study further demonstrates that the participants are focussing on the mechanics of the L2 language and its functions. Their mechanistic reading manner, rather like German EFL readers and their counterparts studying in Malaysia, further reinforces the assertion in the previous research (see Malaysia (2007), Section 2.6.4 of the literature review). The instructional practice for ESL reading activities in Malaysian public secondary schools, as pointed out by Mohd Sidek (2011b), focuses on the Initiation-

Response-Evaluation format (i.e. students read silently, the teacher asks questions, students respond and the teacher evaluates said response).

Nambiar (2005) also indicates that 'L2 reading instructions are usually conducted in a mechanistic manner, with learners required to read a text first, underline difficult words and then use a dictionary to source the meaning of the each. Comprehension questions are used to identify important ideas in the text; a very popular method in school is to get learners to identify the main ideas' (Nambiar, 2005, pp.2–3).

Since reading instruction in Malaysia as depicted by Nambiar (2005, 2007) is framed by the exam-oriented learning, students are taught (1) to answer comprehension questions not based on a holistic understanding of the text, but more on skimming and scanning through to seek specific information, (2) to focus on the mechanistic manner of reading, (3) to provide specific or exact answers that often do not require concerted critical thinking processes, and (4) to read prescribed academic texts. The participants in the present study reported that similar reading approaches were practised throughout their A-level courses in Malaysian colleges.

This study also speculates that the mismatch between prior L2 reading instructions and the reading texts in schools have left participants with academic reading deficiencies. The participants lacked the skills needed for academic reading such as (1) reading and learning by making connections with the ideas, (2) synthesising the information, and (3) bringing their own stances to the texts (e.g. Nambiar, 2007; Nambiar and Ibrahim, 2011; Nambiar, Ibrahim and Meerah, 2012).This is in line with the *a priori* speculation on prior L2 reading instructions and text complexity, as noted in Section 2.6.4 and Section 2.7.1.

To reiterate, this finding appears to reinforce Miller's (2011) assertion that 'we have yet to determine the degree to which the language in commonly used ESL reading texts truly matches the language in the academic texts students will encounter '(p. 34). A conclusion that is suggested here is that past reading experiences in school might have influenced the students' reliance on the bottom-up strategies, or the support strategies as in the case of this study.

As a result of the influence of prior L2 reading instruction and experiences on the participants' current situated contextual realities, a similar reading practice was thus adopted (e.g. rote learning and memorisation). Reading practice and instructions have been described by Nambiar (2005, 2007) and Mohd Sidek (2011b) as a situation whereby students were mainly tested on the vital skills needed to answer comprehension questions in examinations in Malaysia. While this practice was valued in the previous educational context, it may be argued that the basic skills and strategies to read for rote learning, memorisation and examination have indeed appeared to hamper reading comprehension for specialised courses.

The above description of the participants' prior L2 reading instruction is indicative of their possible familiarity with the strategies that could help them read English texts in a mechanistic manner, as demonstrated by their use of the support strategies (i.e. look-up words in dictionary) in Year One. This study therefore argues that their extensive use of support strategies in academic reading in Year One could be due to (1) their prior L2 reading experience and instruction, (2) too much focus given to the linguistic aspects in the reading texts, and (3) reading to pass examinations.

5.3.1.2 The Child-like Readers: Reading Strategies Reinvention

A significant finding that emerged from the data was regarding the use of reading strategies similar to that of young (or inexperienced) readers. This is speculated based on their perplexity when reading new and challenging academic texts (for example RG, AY, SR, KT, RH and SL). Their use of support strategies was similar to those used when they first learnt to read not only in their L2, but also in their L1 (e.g. reading using a pencil, ruler and finger).

Another important finding concerns the participants' reliance on L1 resources (e.g. using translation) in the first few months in the UK. This is consistent with Malcolm's (2009, 2012) findings on Arabic-speaking medical students' use of translation strategies in their first year of study (see Section 2.5.1.1. and 2.6.4). This suggests that their reliance on L1 resources could be due to their lack of knowledge on the discipline-specific texts and linguistic and discourse features.

The participants' use of translation strategies involves mental translation from L2 to L1 (e.g. words and sentences) to comprehend texts in the former (Goh and Hashim, 2006; Maarof and Yaacob, 2011; Kim, 2015). This finding is important because it appears to 'dispel the myth' (Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004) that advanced L2 readers do not invoke strategies such as translation, considering that they have reached the L2 threshold. This study points to a possibility of language transfer occurring regardless of the L2 readers' proficiency. As Mokhtari and Reichard (2004) put it, 'although it is difficult to determine to which language or languages (first, second, or third language) such strategies could be attributed, the reading skills and strategies multi-literate readers possess have been shown to be transferable from one language to another' (p.391). Insights from this study indicate that the participants' L1 knowledge interferes at the beginning stage of academic reading in a British university.

This study also speculates that 'child-like' reading experiences are re-invented because reading for 'more specialised' courses in a foreign country could be similar to reading experiences for early literacy development in elementary school. Therefore, the speculation here is based on these assumptions: (1) the early childhood concept of reading is applied to reading for specialised courses in tertiary education, (2) the participants revert to a level where they have not 'mastered the knowledge and skills required for the automatic recognition of words' (Adams, 1994, p.142), and (3) the participants' reliance on L1 resources (i.e. translation) at the initial stage of academic reading could be similar to how they had first learnt to read in the L2.

5.3.1.3 The Transformed Readers: Reading Strategy Adjustments

Various strategies were tested and modified along the academic reading journey in Year One, with a wider range consisting mostly of the support and cognitive types. In the initial stages of study in the UK, these participants employed those strategies that could help sustain their reading focus for rote learning and memorisation (e.g. Nambiar; 2005). This finding is in line with that of Abdul Razak and Amir's (2000) study of a comparison between high and low proficiency students' use of reading strategies in a Malaysian higher education institution context whereby the writers argued that high proficiency students usually employed the cognitive, metacognitive and social (support) reading strategies. The participants in this study appeared to be using similar strategies, albeit only a few metacognitive strategies in Year One.

These patterns of reading strategy usage, however, contradicted Abdul Majid, Mohd Jelas and Azman's (2003) findings in terms of reading strategy usage between proficient and non-proficient Malaysian ESL readers studying in Malaysia. They asserted that proficient readers were able 'to adjust and evaluate their own reading only through their use of the metacognitive strategies compared to non-proficient readers' (Abdul

Majid, Mohd Jelas and Azman, 2003, p.6). In contrast, the current study reveals despite the participants' advanced L2 proficiency and reading fluency in Malaysia I would argue that they had yet to achieve metacognitive awareness in academic reading.

Another identified reason for the lack of metacognition sense pertains to the participants' initial perceptions of academic reading in a British university that consisted of both positive and negative perceptions. Their negative reactions and impressions of academic texts might have influenced the extensive composition of the support and cognitive strategies than the metacognitive strategies. The lack of metacognitive strategy usage could well be a result of prior reading habits, whereby the participants, by their own admission, hardly read while in Malaysia.

In a survey conducted by the Malaysian National Library in 2006 with a sample of 60,441 respondents, the findings indicated that the literacy rate in Malaysia had slightly decreased to 92% from 93% in 1996 (2006). Most 'students were not motivated to read for leisure may be because they had been encouraged to regard reading as school work from the start' (Zainol Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi and Choon Lean, 2011, p.8). Thus, the combination of results derived from previous and present studies suggest that the reading habits and the lack of reading culture in Malaysia could be attributed to the participants' lack of metacognitive awareness and preparation for academic reading (e.g. Mohamed, Chew and Kabilan, 2006; Nambiar, 2007; Mohd Yusof, 2010; Mohd Sidek, 2014).

5.3.2 Interpreting the Participants' Self-reported Use of Academic Reading Strategy Usage in Year Two

Reading strategy change and progression were inevitable in Year Two. The factors underpinning these changes could be seen through their growing awareness of (1) various types of discipline-specific texts, (2) written academic discourse, and (3) themselves as 'able and better' readers. This awareness appeared to be less developed in Year One. This

stage of reading may be identified as a significant milestone in the participants' academic reading journey, because it may suggest the beginnings of an awareness of 'a multitude of reading strategies available for use' (Tengku Mohamad Maasum and Maarof, 2012). Thus, the patterns of reading strategies used in Year Two were characterised by a focus on (1) academic texts genres, structures and linguistic features (Falk-Ross 2001; Fang 2008), (2) a careful management of time and effort (Macaro and Wingate, 2004), (3) developing a metacognitive sense of academic reading (Malcolm, 2009, 2012; Mokhtari, 2012), and (4) achieving high grades so they could get good jobs (Gao, 2010).

5.3.2.1 Reading Strategies Dynamism in Year Two

The use of some new support strategies involving intensive and further readings, checking indexes, searching for keywords and using technology were reported by the participants in Year Two. A combination of both old and new support strategies may suggest a growing awareness of the types of strategies to use during their interaction with texts. This awareness could have stemmed from their changing reading goals such as (1) to gain more information about their specialised courses, and (2) to read for professional improvement.

It may also be speculated that their dynamic use of reading strategies could be due to their developing metacognition awareness in academic reading, which might have transformed them into better and more skilled readers. Likewise, previous studies on metacognition awareness indicate that when L2 readers develop a sense of metacognition in reading, they become more aware of which strategies to use, have better strategy regulation, and their reading comprehension may improve (e.g. Alsheikh and Mokhtari, 2011; Hong-Nam, Leavell and Maher, 2014; Hong-nam and Page, 2014; Zhang, Goh and Kunnan, 2014). Additionally, the emergence of cognitive and metacognitive strategies

could be due to their developing background knowledge on various academic genres and linguistic characteristics of academic texts (McNeil, 2011; Mokhtari, 2012).

Previous cognitive strategies, as used in Year One (see Section 5.3.1) were reported as ineffective because these appeared to decelerate reading pace. For this reason, strategies that could help them study and gain information were employed in Year Two. It can therefore be assumed that some new cognitive strategies had emerged, such as guessing the meaning of words, speed reading, reading distance and reading interval, because their use required less reading effort and time.

New metacognitive strategies such as segmented, selective, structured readings, skipping unfamiliar words/terms/lines and paragraphs, guided reading, setting reading objectives and purposes as well as using contextual clues have started to emerge in their reading strategy inventory. In Year Two, strategies such as looking for punctuation and writing style, reading using different tones and splitting long sentences into meaningful chunks were identified as laborious. At this stage of reading, the participants were focused on the texts' content and information as a result of the changes made to their reading purposes and goals. Each strategy change is further interpreted in Research Question 3.

5.3.3 Summary

The patterns of self-reported academic reading strategies in Year One were perhaps a reflection of the lack of metacognition in academic reading, a situation manifested through the participants' extensive use of support strategies and cognitive strategies useful for specialised reading in the first few months in the UK. These strategies provide support in terms of (1) completing the required readings, and (2) fulfilling academic reading tasks and demands. Towards the end of Year One however, these support strategies were perceived as time-consuming due to demanding and increasing reading tasks and volumes. What appeared to be needed at this stage of reading were strategies that could

help the participants to read more effectively, but with less effort and time. The metacognitive strategies used towards the end of Year One thus helped accelerate their reading pace.

To sum up, their use of reading strategies in Year One were characterised by (1) prior L2 reading instructions, (2) their needs for rote learning, memorisation and reproduction, (3) reading dependency on the mechanics of language rather than textual gist and contents, (4) lack of awareness about the need to be critical and analytical in reading, and (5) lack of the reading habit and culture. Various reading strategies were therefore adopted based on what they read, notwithstanding the testing and modification of those strategies (Grow, 1996) as they progressed along their academic reading journey in Year One.

The emergence of new cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies initiated changes in the participants' reading strategy usage in Year Two, with support strategies deemed to be ineffective and no longer used (e.g. translation, reading using pencil, finger and ruler). However, useful support strategies were modified and their use sustained. From this, it may be inferred that the dynamic use of reading strategies in Year Two was influenced by (1) the change in reading purposes and goals, and (2) the development of a sense of metacognition in academic reading.

5.4 Research Question 3: What Were the Changes in the Participants' Use of Reading Strategies Over a Period of Two Academic Years as They Read in a British University?

This section describes the changes and development in the participants' reading strategies as they read in a British university. This progression throughout the longitudinal data collection was divided into (1) reading strategies reinvention, and (2) reading strategies adjustments. The participants' reading strategy usage started off with reading strategies

reinvention (beginning part of Year One) and subsequently led to the testing and modifying of a myriad of the support strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies by the end of Year One and in Year Two. These strategy changes and development are discussed as follows:

5.4.1 'Out with the Old and In with the New': The Modification and Addition of Reading Strategies

5.4.1.1 Interpreting the Participants' Dynamic Use of Support Strategies

A wider range of support strategies was used by the participants in both Year One and Two. They had, however, ceased to use support strategies such as reading using pencil/ruler/finger, using dictionary, translation and checking reading comprehension by asking peers and lecturers during seminars in Year Two. A previous study on the change in awareness of reading among Arab-speaking medical students suggested that the dictionary was used less frequently in Year Three. These Arabic students 'had overcome this problem with time, by reading more and through changing their study methods, ignoring difficult words, and looking for the whole meaning' (Malcolm, 2012, p.16). Likewise, these Malaysian undergraduates in this study appeared to rely on the dictionary less frequently in Year Two, due perhaps to their developing metacognitive awareness and background knowledge. In addition, the length of time spent for academic reading might have influenced their dynamic use of reading strategies.

i) Slow Reading Pace and Growing Reading Volumes

Strategies such as reading using pencil/ruler/finger, using dictionary, translation and checking reading comprehension among the Malaysian undergraduates were no longer apparent in Year Two, due to time constraints. This study speculates that another reason for support strategies modification might be due to slow reading pace as the most noteworthy problem in academic reading (e.g. Hellekjær; 2009; Lin and Yu, 2013). In

addition, the increased reading volume demanded by their study necessitated the termination of these strategies. As mentioned by AF, these strategies 'might be useful for academic reading survival but not for reading comprehension'.

ii) Developing Academic Reading Efficiency

At the beginning of this study, the participants relied on a translation strategy due to the difficulty of processing the required reading. In doing so, L1 resources would have been drawn on for them to make sense of what they were reading. However, translation strategy has been and is still debated as a strategy that might in fact obstruct L2 reading comprehension in L2 reading literature.

In this study, the argument regarding the translation strategy is two-fold. Firstly, its use brings about a positive impact in terms of the support it could provide in facilitating academic reading for novices and inexperienced L1 readers required to engage in intensive reading for specialised courses. Previous studies on effective use of translation highlighted its usefulness for L2 reading development. Goh and Hashim (2006) suggested that translation was useful to manage vocabulary difficulties, to confirm, to reason through or guess an unfamiliar L2 word, and to help verify the accuracy of comprehension or check comprehension. Similarly, it could facilitate comprehension when L2 readers come to points in the text they find difficult (Upton and Lee-Thompson, 2001). Thus, it appears in this study that L1 knowledge can play a significant role in supporting L2 reading comprehension and development, especially in the early stages of reading for specialised courses.

Secondly, the translation strategy could negatively impact L2 reading comprehension, because it might 'contribute to inaccurate comprehension' (Kern, 1994, p.445) due to L1 and L2 academic texts having different structures and orientation. In addition, past studies on the use of the translation strategy in L2 reading suggest that (1)

translating L2 to L1 is considerably different from processing something on a familiar topic in the participants' L1, thus these differences may take more effort that could disrupt the reading process (e.g. Hyon 1997; Malcolm 2011), (2) translation is not a solution for comprehension difficulties (e.g. Kern 1994), and (3) translation is not necessarily effective at all times, since it is not always possible to find an English equivalent idea in the participants' L1 (Li and Munby, 1996). The awareness that reading comprehension could not be achieved when too much focus is given to every word in the text might explain the participants' decreasing use of the translation strategy in Year Two.

Despite both the positive and negative impact of this strategy in L2 reading, it may be argued that this strategy played a critical and useful role in Year One in the initial stages of reading for specialised courses. Although this strategy was not envisaged to be used at the beginning stage of writing this thesis, the data derived from the analysis nonetheless suggests a contradictory finding, which echoes Bernhardt's (2011) and Grabe and Stoller's (2011) assertions that L1 knowledge (1) is presumed to be a significant predictor for L2 reading development, (2) is invoked at the beginning of L2 levels, and (3) is utilised when L2 readers are reading texts that are difficult for them.

In Year Two, translation use started to decrease as the participants developed their academic reading efficiency. This pattern of strategy use is in line with the findings of Kern (1994). In Kern's study of native English-speaking students reading French as L2, it is argued that their decreased use of the translation strategy could be due to (1) having developed a metacognitive sense in improving their comprehension of academic French texts, and (2) the 'existence of progressive stages of L2 reading development whereby readers rely less and less on the L1 as an aid to understanding as they gained experience in reading' (Kern, 1994, p.447).

Li and Munby's (1996, p.205) assertions are further reinforced here whereby the translation strategy might be used when (1) L2 readers are 'not capable of thinking directly in English when faced with difficult content', and (2) they have 'stopped literal translation, but could not help the mental translation'. Although these Malaysian undergraduates in this study appeared to stop literal translation, mental translation is inevitable as a means of coping with difficult texts and content. The findings of this study re-visit the role of L1 resources, and provide more understanding of how L1 knowledge can contribute to L2 strategy development and use in L2 reading processes, as argued by previous L2 scholars (e.g. Koda, 1988; Kern, 1994; Bernhardt and Kamil, 1995; Bernhardt, 2011; Grabe and Stoller, 2011). To sum up, translation is an inevitable phenomenon among L2 readers regardless of their level of L2 proficiency.

iii) Support Strategies Modification

It might be indicated here that some of the support strategies utilised in Year One had undergone some modification in Year Two. For example, dictionary use was modified into technological tools reliance instead (e.g. *Investopedia* and *look-up* applications). Participants searching for keywords and text indexes utilised the available functions in the Google search engine when they were reading Pdf texts.

Another reason for this change could be due to the shift of medium from print to technology-mediated texts. In Year Two, the participants were inclined to look up technical and specific terms, instead of using the 'word-by-word' approach. This points to other support strategies, such as checking reading comprehension by asking peers/lecturers, and translation, as requiring more effort and being time-consuming since they in fact needed more immediate feedback during their reading activities. This might therefore explain their preference for further and intensive readings instead, so as to avoid any disruption to their reading (Hellekjær, 2009).

This finding, on the other hand, appears to contradict Baker and Boonkit's (2004) findings on reading strategies usage between 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' Thai undergraduates. Support strategies 'such as translation, and highlighting and taking notes were most often used by the low-proficiency group than the high-proficiency group' (Baker and Boonkit, 2004, p.320). Although the Malaysian undergraduates in this study ceased to use the translation strategy in Year Two, their use of the other support strategies such as highlighting, and taking and writing notes were similar to the low-proficiency group of Thai undergraduates. Thus, the assumption that these Malaysian undergraduates made extensive use of support strategies in both Year One and Two may re-affirm the influence of prior L2 reading instructions as discussed earlier. It may be asserted that since these strategies do not disrupt the reading process, this might explain its sustainability in Year Two.

5.4.1.2 Interpreting the Participants' Dynamic Use of Cognitive Strategies

A few cognitive strategies such as memorising, visualising, reading aloud, and pausing and reflecting while reading were replaced with guessing the meaning of words, speed reading, reading distance and reading interval. Only two cognitive strategies were retained in Year Two, involving re-reading and reading from the beginning to end.

i) Convenient Cognitive Strategies for Short-sighted Reading Goals

The cognitive strategy changes in Year Two were based on the participants' experiences in using them for successful academic reading throughout Year One. This study indicates that strategies such as re-reading and reading from beginning to end are probably useful for examination. As similarly claimed by Gorsuch and Taguchi (2008), where the former strategy was identified as one that could 'increase reading fluency and comprehension' (p.266). Likewise, the re-reading strategy was indicated as the strategy of choice among

ESL readers in previous L2 reading research (e.g. Saumell, Hughes and Lopate, 1999; Karim and Hasan, 2007; Alsheikh and Mokhtari, 2011; Yüksel and Yüksel, 2012).

The continuity of the re-reading strategy in Year Two pointed to the participants' improved reading fluency. In addition, reading purposes, such as reading for examinations, assignments, and presentations, influenced their selection of 'convenient' strategies to achieve these short-sighted reading goals. Likewise, Saumell et al. (1999) view the increasing reading rate as a short-sighted goal to complete all the readings that the courses required. Apart from this, acquiring good grades could well be another motivating reason. Cogmen and Saracaloglu (2009) viewed these strategies as useful and convenient in helping readers to remember the desired information better.

ii) Emergence of New Cognitive Strategies

The emergence of new cognitive strategies such as guessing the meaning of words, speed reading and reading distance as well as reading interval were observed in Year Two. This pattern of cognitive strategy use appeared to be consistent with that found in previous studies on L2 reading strategies, where these were used by L2 readers due to their perceived usefulness for academic reading comprehension (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001; Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004).

The participants reported that increased reading volumes may require some reading strategies that could help accelerate reading speed and complete the required readings for their courses. Saumell et al. (1999) opined that cognitive strategies may not only help students to achieve reading comprehension but also assist these L2 readers to cope with the increased reading volumes. Thus, it may be speculated that increased reading volumes and time constraints could be among the factors contributing to the emergence of some new cognitive strategies.

During the data collection phases, the participants reported that they were reading some new subjects in Year Two. Learning and reading about new subjects may be challenging, especially when reading for specialised courses with the type of language that students would not normally (or ever) use in their everyday social interactions (Fang, 2008). The whole process may require more reading time to master both the content and the language in these specialised texts. Additionally, time constraints may leave them constrained with specific reading tasks completion, regardless of whether or not they can process and understand the texts.

As a result, new cognitive strategies such as speed reading, reading distance and reading interval were included in their strategy repertoire in Year Two. At this stage of their study, the participants might have been overwhelmed with not only the level of academic texts, but also the reading volume. Previous studies suggested that many university students experienced considerable difficulty in adapting to the demands of university-level reading (e.g. Macaro and Wingate, 2004; Nel, Dreyer and Klopper, 2006; Evans and Morrison, 2011). Apart from studying, these participants may be actively involved with university co-curricular and social activities (e.g. HZ, KZ and RH).

In view of the abovementioned constraints in academic reading in Year Two, it can be argued that the reported cognitive strategies used in Year One such as reading aloud, memorising, visualising, and pausing and reflection while reading were perceived as time-consuming. Therefore, the emergence of new cognitive strategies in Year Two were mainly aimed at accelerating the reading process to ensure the required reading for their courses could be completed on time.

5.4.1.3 Interpreting the Participants' Dynamic Use of Metacognitive Strategies

From another vantage point, the use of a wider range of metacognitive strategies was reported in Year Two. The self-reported reading strategies in Year One consisted of only

3 metacognitive strategies. However, the emergence of 5 new metacognitive strategies such as segmented, selective and structured reading, skipped reading (e.g. unfamiliar words, terms, lines and paragraphs), guided reading, setting reading objectives/purposes and using contextual clues were reported by the participants in Year Two. Skimming and scanning nevertheless appeared to be used in both years of studies.

i) Developing Metacognitive Awareness

It can be speculated that the emergence of metacognitive strategies in Year Two emphasises these Malaysian undergraduates' developing metacognition sense in academic reading and had 'more control of the cognitive information process' (Hong-nam and Page, 2014, p.211) on types of reading texts and reading purposes/goals. The present study posits that the reasons for their developing metacognition are three-fold. Firstly, the participants gradually gained experiences in reading different types of texts since Year One (e.g. Malcolm, 2009; 2012). Secondly, developing metacognitive awareness of academic reading might be due to the length of time spent for reading academic texts and 'through their immersion into the academic discourse community' (Ting and Tee, 2008). Thus, academic reading appeared to be more acceptable or even effective as they progressed further in their studies. As mentioned by AF: 'the way I read may change. I might read differently in my final year, too'.

Thirdly, the participants became more interested in gaining more knowledge and practical skills in Year Two as opposed to merely focussing on rote learning and memorisation. Negretti and Kuteeva (2011) assert that when metacognitive awareness is fostered among novice university students, it can destabilise their simplistic theories of texts, and enrich their views of the complexity of text processing, negotiation, and production within academic communities. In view of this, the present study postulates that not only does metacognitive awareness in academic reading help L2 learners read for

assessments purposes, but it can also help them gain overall understanding of the courses for their own personal learning goals.

Much of the previous research about metacognition in L2 reading affirms that readers' metacognitive awareness was related positively to their success in L2 reading comprehension (e.g. Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001; Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004). For example, in Mokhtari and Reichard (2004), the role of metacognition in reading influenced the pattern of strategy awareness and usage for both L1 native English and L2 readers when reading for academic purposes. Similarly, metacognitive awareness was important for L2 reading comprehension among Chinese-speaking students in a university in China (Guo and Roehring, 2011). In addition, the present study also speculates that metacognition awareness in L2 reading can offer potential approaches for successful academic reading at tertiary levels.

The emergence of metacognitive strategies and awareness in Year Two was presumed to be based on the participants' growing awareness of the academic texts they were reading and them becoming 'better and able' readers. Previous studies on metacognitive awareness have revealed that the developing metacognition sense could (1) develop learners' awareness of their learning goals (Tengku Mohamad Maasum and Maarof, 2012; Rahimi and Katal, 2012), (2) develop learner autonomy (Hong-nam and Page, 2014; Hong-Nam, Leavell and Maher, 2014), and (3) construct responsive readers (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001; Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004; Alsheikh and Mokhtari, 2011). Therefore, the current study assumes that metacognitive reading strategies instruction is important to foster academic reading proficiency, and should be integrated within the university's reading instruction curriculum for both pre-sessional academic reading classes and workshops.

5.4.2 Summary

In this study, the dynamism of reading strategies is influenced by the 'dynamic interaction' between texts and reader. It can be argued that when a group of Malaysian undergraduates are confronted with new, difficult and complex academic texts they appear to rely on their L1 knowledge. However, if and when the participants become aware of the complex process in academic reading at university level they might be better able to consciously and actively invoke a repertoire of reading strategies. This study has however further suggested that they were more selective in using their L1 knowledge, and only invoked the effective reading strategies following their developing metacognition sense in academic reading. Janan (2011) puts it in the following way: changing approaches to comprehension could involve new reading skills and strategies which could then subsequently affect the way readers interact with texts.

Following Janan's (2011) views on the changing approaches to comprehension and reading strategies dynamism, this study discusses these involvements based on text and reader factors. The former encompassing (1) differences in the use of the cohesive devices (e.g. Nathesan, 2008; Wray and Janan, 2013b; McNamara, 2013), (2) the impact of discipline-specific genre on reading strategy dynamism (e.g. Paltridge, 2002; Osman, 2004; Mohd Zin, Wong and Rafik-Galea, 2014), and (3) the impact of technology-mediated texts on reading strategy dynamism (e.g. Rho and Gedeon, 2009; Vernon, 2010; Chou, 2011; Huang, 2012). The reader factors, meanwhile, comprise the impact of (1) motivation (e.g. Grabe, 2009; Kim, 2011; Pirih, 2015), and (2) background knowledge (e.g. Harrison, 2004; McNeil, 2011; Rokhsari, 2012; Tricot and Sweller, 2013) on academic reading strategy dynamism.

5.5 Research Question 4: What Influenced the Participants' Changes in their Reading Strategies in a British University?

Reading strategy dynamism in the present study emphasises the reader's interaction with texts. The overarching structure of my thesis is inspired by Wray and Janan's (2013a) changing 'views about the nature of the reading process over the past 20 years towards a more interpretive definition which emphasised that making meaning through reading comes from a process in which the readers interact with texts' (p.73). This interaction allows unexpected reading paths to occur and extend the existing literature on academic reading in an L2. Its implications on reading strategy development and usage in a British university are explored from the sociocultural perspective.

As mentioned previously in Section 5.4, the participants' reading activities were influenced by both their developing metacognition with regard to the texts they were reading (i.e. text factors) and themselves as ESL readers in a predominantly English-speaking country (i.e. reader factors). In this study, these factors are interpreted based on the sociocultural framework as seen in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Sociocultural conceptual framework

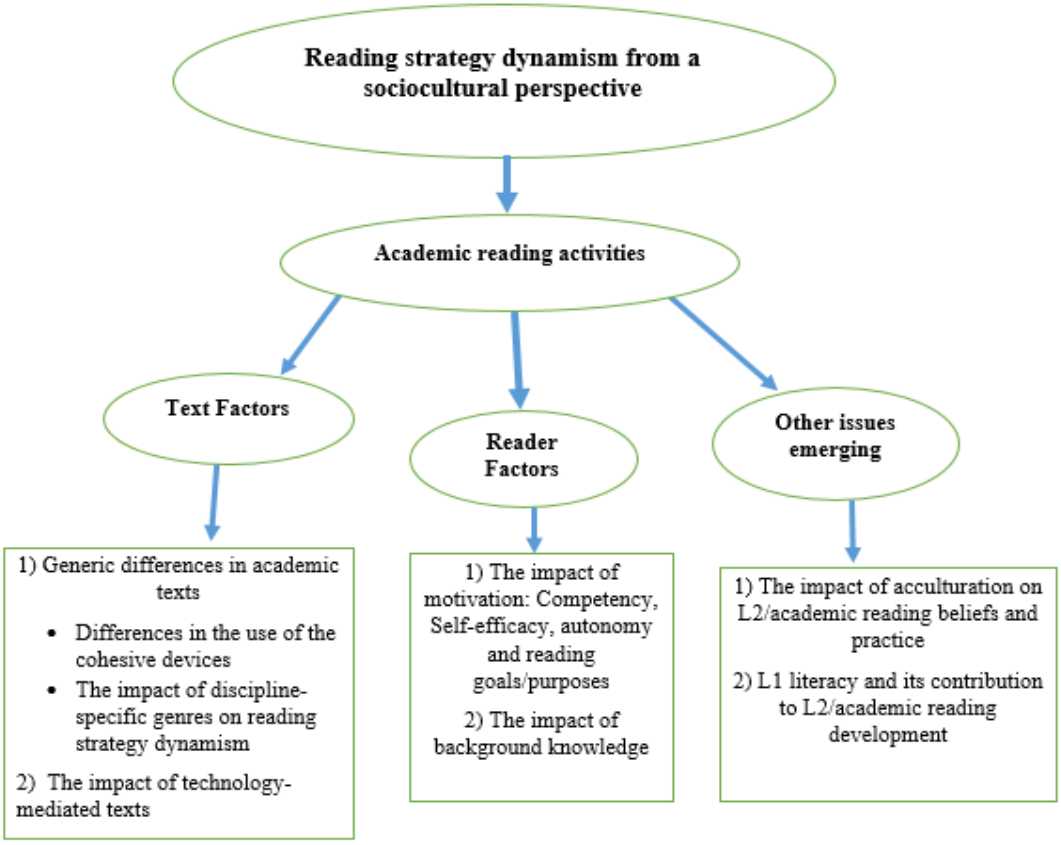


Figure 5.2 illustrates the complex interaction of these variables such as (1) text factors, (2) reader factors, and (3) other emergent issues. In addition, this study further contends that the participants' dynamic use of reading strategies is developed from the duration spent for academic reading and their 'immersion into the academic discourse community' (Ting and Tee, 2008) which have reflected the essence of the sociocultural theory.

5.5.1 Text Factors

Based on this study's *a priori* on the impact of text factors on reading strategy usage, it is worth reflecting 'the degree to which the language commonly used in ESL reading texts truly matches the language in academic texts that students will encounter' (Miller, 2011, p.34). This study postulates that the interplay between the participants' interaction with texts is an important finding because of its impact on the pattern of reading strategy usage.

They perceived academic reading to be different from their previous reading experiences in Malaysia, due to different linguistic features in the academic texts. These features may encompass (1) confusing, long and complex sentences, and (2) unfamiliar discipline-specific vocabulary and genre, which were at first mistaken for advanced level English in the UK.

The participants were obviously experiencing the text 'anxiety factor' (Mohd Noor, 2006, p.73), an element that can be explained by the findings of the current and previous studies, whereby students in secondary schools were hardly exposed to discipline specific language and text features that could prepare them for academic reading at university level (e.g. Nambiar, 2005; Fang, 2006; Wray and Janan, 2013b; Mohd Sidek, 2012, 2014;). Therefore, another speculation on the dynamic use of reading strategies in this study can be made based on the mismatch between the texts read in school and those at university.

To reiterate, one of the reasons as highlighted in Section 5.2.3 was the dumbing-down of texts in schools. Previous study on text complexity revealed that the difficulty of the texts in textbooks had been significantly reduced by 'making the textbooks easier… an approach that ultimately denied students the very language, information, and modes of thought they needed most in order to move up and on' (Adams, 2010, p.9). Similarly, this study indicates that a group of Malaysian undergraduates' lack of exposure in reading complex texts in secondary schools might be closely associated with the challenges they later encountered when reading various academic texts at tertiary level. It can thus be speculated that the issues related to text complexity could influence the dynamic nature of reading strategies in a British university.

A view presented by Mesmer, Cunningham and Hiebert (2012) is that 'readers brought their experiences with previous texts to a reading interaction, but particular reading events for beginning readers occurred with the features of the individual text' (p.237) because each individual text might have different words, syntax, and discourse structure. The findings of Kendeou and Van Den Broek (2007) further added to our understanding of the role of text structure in terms of its influence on reading comprehension. Likewise, the present study suggests that the participants' lack of exposure to various types of academic texts in Malaysia could not prepare them for their academic reading transition in a British university.

In another study by Ozuru, Dempsey and McNamara (2009), the importance of text features on comprehension of science, in addition to background knowledge and adequate reading strategies training, was emphasised. Likewise, Fang, Schleppegrell and Cox (2006) also suggested that the 'identification of regular features of academic language and explication of their varied functions in different genres and school subjects were critical to understanding the language demands of schooling' (p.268). Similarly, the findings of the present study suggest that the participants' lack of exposure to various language functions in academic genre may influence their reinvention, modification and use of new reading strategies in a British university.

In view of this, the participants' dynamic use of reading strategies in this study are postulated based on these assumptions: (1) generic differences in L1 and L2 (e.g. Abu Bakar, Abdul Hamid, Mat Awal and Jalaluddin, 2007; Abdullah, Ahmad, Mahmod and Tengku Sembok, 2009), and (2) differences in the use of the cohesive devices (e.g. Fang, 2006; 2008; Nathesan, 2008; Snow, 2010; Wray and Janan, 2013). The RAND Study Group (2002) argued that 'the impact of different text features on readers with varying capabilities would offer considerable help in understanding comprehension

phenomenon' (p.xv). Thus, the next discussion is related to the impact of generic differences in academic texts on the participants' dynamic use of reading strategies and its effect on reading comprehension.

5.5.1.1 Generic Differences in Academic Texts

This study focuses on bi-literate L2 readers who are reading for specialised courses in L2. When they first arrived to study in a British university, the perception was that the English language would be more advanced, which had further intensified their academic reading anxiety. They had, however, reported that the reading challenges were mainly on the academic texts which did not involve their language proficiency *per se*.

Considering the prominent role of texts as the major influence on the reading strategies dynamism, the differences in Malay and English science texts are further highlighted in this section. As noted in Section 2.7.1, the findings appear to contradict this study's *a priori* view of the generic differences between L1 and L2 texts that influenced reading comprehension. Little is known about the influence of L1 texts on their use of reading strategies. The data generated did not provide extensive exploration concerning the L1 and L2 genre differences. The participants reported that (1) they had not read any academic texts in Malay since they left secondary schools, and (2) their academic texts for the A-level courses in Malaysia were mostly in English.

This study, however, speculates that the L2 text generic differences between a single discipline and across disciplines might influence the dynamism of the reading strategies used. Previous researchers who studied academic texts had highlighted several linguistic and text feature differences from both different disciplines and within a single discipline (e.g. Conrad, 1996; Snow, 2010; McNamara, 2013). It was claimed that different linguistic features in specific academic texts might influence reading comprehension. Similarly, the present study suggests that these differences might not only have affected

the participants' dynamic use of reading strategies but probably also placed a demand on reading comprehension due to the participants' confusion with different linguistic features in academic texts. These differences are discussed in terms of the use of the cohesive devices and discipline-specific genre.

Differences in the Use of the Cohesive Devices

One of the linguistic features that has influenced the participants' use of reading strategies relates to the role of cohesion in the academic texts. As mentioned previously, discipline-specific texts across languages (e.g. Malay and English), within a single, and across disciplines may have different uses of cohesive devices. For example, Wray and Janan (2013) suggested that there were 'differences in the use of cohesive devices between these text types: (1) science texts having more causal (because, so, after all, nevertheless, etc.) and clarification (that is to say, in other words, for example, etc.) connectives, whereas (2) narratives have more additive (also, as well, furthermore, moreover, etc.) and temporal (before, after, next, until then, etc.) connectives' (p.559). Likewise, texts written in different languages may also have different uses of cohesive devices due to a cross-cultural difference in rhetorical forms (Takala et al, 1982).

As noted in Section 2.7.1, L1 texts such as Malay Science texts used fewer cohesive devices compared to the texts for social studies and humanities (Nathesan, 2008). Similarly, L2 texts had differences in the use of cohesive devices. For example, the English Science texts had more referential cohesion than those for Language Arts. McNamara (2013) however indicated that the L1 English readers appeared to be more interested in reading because of the syntactic challenges and the cohesion gaps in the texts for them to interpret. The Malaysian undergraduates in this study, who were reading social studies, contradicted McNamara's (2013) finding because the syntactic challenges and cohesion gaps in the academic texts made them less motivated to read.

The present study suggests that the cohesion gaps in the reading texts necessitate inferencing ability, which these Malaysian undergraduates appeared to lack. This finding echoes that of Mohd Zin, Wong and Rafik-Galea's (2014) study on critical reading ability among Malaysian students at the tertiary level in Malaysia whereby they were observed to lack analytical and inferencing skills when reading academic texts. The previous studies on Malaysian students in Malaysian tertiary institutions have also suggested their lack of inferencing skills as the reason for their poor ability to read critically (Kaur, 2013; Kaur and Sidhu, 2014).

To reiterate, the findings derived from the data appear to contradict this study's *a priori* assumptions, as noted in Section 2.7.1. The earlier assumption was that Malay L2 readers would be translating the connectors regardless of whether or not these worked differently in each language. Nevertheless, the findings suggested that differences in the use of the cohesive devices in L2 texts: (1) within a single, and (2) across disciplines have not resulted in translation. Therefore, the speculation here would be that the lack of inferencing skills highlighted the point that knowing most of the vocabulary or the main concepts in texts might not lead to successful reading comprehension. Furthermore, readers should be familiar with the text structure and the relationships between key ideas.

The Impact of Discipline-specific Genres on Reading Strategy Dynamism

Another factor identified that appeared to affect the reading strategy dynamism pertained to various discipline genres at the tertiary level. Osman (2004) reported that 'students who were linguistically proficient may still not be able to handle specialist genres' (p.1). Likewise, Paltridge (2002) asserted that 'the range of genres was even greater and this situation was further complicated by…having different ideas of what a text, such as an academic essay or a research paper, should look like, and what it should say' (p.19). Thus,

this section discusses the impact of discipline-specific genre on these Malaysian undergraduates' reading strategy dynamism in a British university.

These participants reported that the academic texts used in Malaysian schools and colleges were mostly confined to textbooks and PowerPoint handouts. This is an important finding because it highlights the importance of genre-based instruction and reiterates the issues related to text complexity, as discussed in Sections 2.7.1 and 5.2.3. This study proposes that the generic features of academic texts appear to be an important aspect throughout the participants' academic journey in a British university. They were found to experience some problems when reading the academic texts, such as research reports.

Paltridge (2002) conducted a study on *Academic Literacies and the Changing University Communities* which revealed that university students were also required to read and understand a wide range of written genres, such as specialist academic texts, research reports, university handbooks, degree regulations, course outlines, assignment guidelines, as well as interpreting the written feedback that they get from academic staff' (p.19). Osman's (2004) findings on genre-based instruction in writing demonstrated that 'students needed the cognitive processes to understand the construct of any professional genre to enable them to produce these genres effectively' (p.26). Although these research studies were conducted to explore writing instructions, they could still describe the impact of discipline-specific texts on reading strategy usage. This may imply that 'knowledge of the generic features of any type of genre provides insight into the working of the genre' (Osman, 2004, p.26). In line with Paltridge's (2002) and Osman's (2004) assertions, the present study therefore suggests that these participants' lack of genre awareness may have influenced their reading strategy dynamism.

In another study conducted by Mohd Zin et al., (2014) on the critical reading ability of Malaysian students in Malaysia, it is suggested that the 'contributing factor to their poor performance is because they were not able to relate their knowledge of the text to appropriate knowledge of the content and text genre' (p.52). This finding is aligned with the present study, in which these Malaysian undergraduates demonstrated their lack of knowledge of text genre such as the research reports and specialist academic texts. Therefore, I would further re-emphasise the importance of genre awareness for the participants, because of its strong impact on reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009). Although genre-based instruction was criticised as 'not popular especially in the field of education' (Osman, 2004, p.17), 'genres were important for reading comprehension because they introduced distinct levels and types of discourse structuring' (Grabe, 2009, p.249). This argument, as it appears in the context of this study, has provided a fertile ground for hypothesis testing.

5.5.1.2 The Impact of Technology-mediated Texts on Reading Strategy Dynamism

Another significant finding that has emerged and was not foreseen at the beginning of the research was the impact of technology-mediated texts on the dynamism of reading strategies. As Chou (2011) puts it, 'research investigating L1 readers in academic contexts may have contributed a great deal to the L2 reading field but it cannot fully represent L2 readers' needs and experiences, especially with respect to the newer domain of electronic texts' (p.415). Thus, this study attempts to overcome these limitations by describing the ontological and epistemological differences in terms of the participants' reading strategy usage when they engaged with screen-based texts.

I would further argue that the integration of technology to L2 reading can be very challenging for L2 readers, due to the need to cope with the shift in the text medium (e.g. Chou 2011). These Malaysian undergraduates (except HZ, SL and SR) reported that reading on-screen texts was both difficult and tedious. Most of their reading materials in a British university included print-based and screen-based texts (e.g. e-books, online reports and e-journals). The findings suggested that although they would read the screen-based texts, their reading preferences would incline instead towards reading print-based texts. Similarly, previous studies on online readings found that L2 readers preferred to print screen-based texts for intensive readings (e.g Karim and Hasan, 2007; Rho and Gedeon, 2009; Vernon, 2010; Letchumanan and Tarmizi, 2011).

Some of the factors as pointed out by Chong et al. (2008, p.372) that have possibly hindered the interest in reading e-books could be (1) the difficulty of reading from a computer screen, (2) reading for too long on a computer was tiring and made them lose concentration, (3) difficulty in navigating through the e-books, (4) difficulty in skimming or scanning through e-books, and (5) difficulty in finding relevant information. In addition, previous studies on e-books usage and acceptance in both international and Malaysia contexts have revealed that a majority of students in tertiary education hardly read these book types, despite their knowledge in internet applications and a positive attitude towards e-book services (e.g. Ismail and Zainab, 2005; Abdullah and Gibb, 2006; Karim and Hasan, 2007; Chong, Lim and Ling, 2008; Letchumanan and Tarmizi, 2011).

Berg, Hofffman and Dawson (2010) explored the undergraduates' information retrieval processes in electronic and print books, whereby they surmised that 'although the current generation of undergraduate students were highly computer literate, they did not intuitively know how to navigate and use e-books effectively' (p.523). Their findings further revealed that the 'apparent disconnect between their perceptions of print and e-

books seems to have contributed to the lack of potentially useful information retrieval methods not being transferred between the two formats' because they 'appeared to understand the conventions of print books, which resulted in more direct processes for information-seeking but are unclear about both the structure and functionality of e-books' (Berg, Hoffmann and Dawson, 2010, p.524).

In this instance, then, another issue arising here may draw our attention to these Malaysian undergraduates' lack of familiarity on the structure and functionality of technology-mediated texts although 'most e-books and e-journals are set up to look very similar to print books' (Berg, Hoffmann and Dawson, 2010). This, therefore, points to speculation based on these arguments: (1) the L1 and L2 generic differences are intensified on technology-mediated texts, (2) reading on-screen texts for academic purposes required different use of reading strategies different from reading prints, and (3) their lack of academic genre awareness is transferable onto another reading platform.

These findings may further emphasise the impact of technology on reading apprehension among the participants, due in part to their confusion not only with the structure and functionality of technology-mediated texts but also their lack of awareness of the various printed academic genres in Year One (see Section 5.5.1.1). Considering that 'different genres lead readers to different usage processes' (Rho and Gedeon, 2009, p.220), this could add to the already complex capabilities of different media to support different usage processes (Coiro and Dobler, 2007; Rho and Gedeon, 2009).

The present study also argues that reading strategy dynamism may be invoked when reading academic texts in a different medium due to prior L1 and L2 reading experiences in Malaysia. Malaysia is still grappling with the use of e-books and its use in school is a relatively new paradigm (Embong et al., 2012). For this reason, it can be speculated that these Malaysian undergraduates have only started to incorporate the use

of technology (e.g. *Investopedia* and *look-up* application) when reading research reports, textbooks and specialist academic texts in a British university.

Looking through another lens, the participants (for example HZ and SL) preferred to read the on-screen texts rather than print as they traversed their academic reading journey in the UK. In HZ's case, he was interested in reading on-screen texts in Year Two following his discovery of the ProQuest database. He reported that the database accommodated his reading purposes, for example, reading for research-based assignments. Using the technological tools was one of the changes in HZ's use of reading strategies (see Section 4.5.1.3), because he was keen on his MacBook applications, such as *Investopedia* and *Lookup* to ease academic reading activities.

Previous studies related to on-screen readings discovered some positive findings concerning the use of technology on reading approaches, achievements and learning styles. The positive outcomes encompassed (1) the processes and choices made as skilled readers comprehended that Internet text were both similar to and more complex (e.g. required forward inferencing skills and drawing on prior knowledge) than what previous research studies suggested for reading printed informational text (Coiro and Dobler, 2007) and (2) students who used 'e-textbooks for their education courses had significantly higher perceived psychomotor and affective learning than students who chose to use traditional print textbooks' (Rockinson-Szapkiw, Courduff, Carter and Bennett, 2013, p.264). As in the case of HZ, technology accelerated his reading pace and helped significantly to navigate his academic reading activities in terms of portability and storage capacity.

On the other hand, SL shifted his preference from print to on-screen texts after purchasing a tablet during summer holidays in 2014. He started reading on-screen texts in Year Two. Interestingly, he was one of the participants here who reported a wider

range of metacognitive strategies use in Year Two. Therefore, the speculation for this argument derived from the assumption that proficient L2 readers should be given more time and exposure to read on-screen texts. Therefore, this might suggest that SL's reading strategy dynamism is influenced by technology-mediated tools because 'e-reader products and mobile devices are more advanced and suitable for academic use and may continue to change the reading experience' (Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2013, p.260).

This argument, however, is based on two out of eleven participants' positive feedback regarding the impact of technology-mediated texts on reading strategy dynamism. Nevertheless, the authentic voices of these non-native English speaking undergraduates and novice academic readers who shared their academic reading journey in a British university brought their experiences and insights into this research (and perhaps L2 reading literature). This aspect of a less explored territory in L2 academic reading might challenge the findings of previous studies, which have mostly stated that university students preferred reading print as opposed to on-screen texts (e.g. Huang, Chern and Lin, 2009; Berg, Hoffmann and Dawson, 2010; Siegenthaler, Wurtz, Bergamin and Groner, 2011; Chou, 2011; Huang, 2012).

Reading experiences are likely to have changed now and in the future along with the rapid growth of technology. Reading in the 21st century require L2 readers' ability 'to read visual printed text well and use printed text literacy (whether on paper or on the screen) to learn new information, acquire new skills, and develop academic expertise' (Grabe, 2009, p.384). Previous studies on technology-mediated texts in L1 settings often suggested that most of the participants demonstrated some positive feedback with regard to its potential in content delivery formats and accessibility points (e.g. Vernon, 2010; Woody, Daniel and Baker, 2010; Huang, 2012; Shariman, Razak and Noor, 2012; Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2013).

Chou (2011, p.415), however, posited that 'in the context of ESL and EFL only a few studies investigated strategy use by ESL or EFL students' (e.g. Son, 2003; Akyel and Erçetin, 2009; Huang, Chern and Lin, 2009; Huang, 2012). For example, Son (2003) asserted that the use of hyperlinks in computer-mediated texts was helpful and useful for learning. Similarly, Huang (2012) postulated that ESL learners indicated some positive feedback on the e-book potential but noted some difficulties in reading them. Akyel and Erçetin (2009) have, meanwhile, suggested that the processing strategies used by advanced learners of English were basically not different from those reported for printed texts although certain processing strategies were not used in hypermedia reading.

A commonality in these findings relates to the positive reaction towards technology-mediated texts following the rapid growth of portable reading devices. However, the mismatch between reading expectations, on-screen reading strategies and guidance reverted ESL learners' positive reaction towards reading on-screen texts due to the lack of insight on the benefits of on-screen texts for reading comprehension. Therefore, the present study deduces that the aspect pertaining to academic reading, particularly among ESL (or perhaps EFL) learners coming from developing countries and studying in developed nations, requires further exploration.

To sum up, L2 readers (and EFL readers) should be equipped with 'the essence of new forms of literacy' (Schmar-dobler, 2003), such as skills-based courses to cope with the current advancement of technology in academic reading. As Chou (2011) puts it, 'because of the high demands for cognition and metacognition in academic reading, the issue of the environment in which students read (print-based or screen-based) was an especially important one' (p.411). Therefore, it may be speculated that academic reading in an L2 might change today or in the future, because of the dynamic interaction between reader, texts and its medium.

5.5.2 Reader Factors

At the beginning of this study, these Malaysian undergraduates' academic reading journey was presumed to be based on these factors: (1) the impact of motivation, and (2) the impact of background knowledge. The findings derived from the data suggest that reading strategy dynamism could be unique to the individual participants as a result of their varied approaches to academic reading. Following these Malaysian undergraduates' various academic reading activities and experiences, the data have generated some new sub-themes, such as (1) the impact of competency, self-efficacy and autonomy on academic reading, and (2) the impact of reading purposes and goals on motivation for L2 reading. The subsequent sections will first discuss the impact of motivation followed by background knowledge on reading strategy dynamism.

5.5.2.1 The Impact of Motivation on Reading Strategy Dynamism

Motivation for L2 reading here is developed within its own domain (i.e. L2 academic reading setting) in an attempt to address the concern raised by Grabe (2009) as noted in Section 2.7.2.1. Wigfield and Guthrie's (1995) motivation framework for L1 reading is used in this study due to the lack of literature dealing with motivation for L2 reading (Grabe, 2009; Grabe and Stoller, 2011). The nature of data in this study suggests that reading strategy dynamism started to come about as a means of academic survival in Year One.

Later, in Year Two, the need for academic survival was internalised to achieve learning goals and personal satisfaction, due to their growing metacognition. The constructs related to motivation will be discussed based on Wigfield and Guthrie's taxonomy of reading motivation, such as (1) competency and self-efficacy, and (2) purposes for reading (e.g. intrinsic and extrinsic motivation). The impact of competency,

self-efficacy and autonomy on motivation for L2 academic reading are discussed in the following section.

i) The Impact of Competency, Self-Efficacy and Autonomy on Reading Strategy Dynamism

Inspired by Dubin, Eskey and Grabe's (1986) claim concerning the notion of reading and motivation, this section now discusses the participants' competency and self-efficacy when there were constraints, such as an assessment of the freedom of choice to read in the academic world. Freedom of choice in this study entails these Malaysian undergraduates' sense of competency and self-efficacy following the freedom to (1) manoeuvre their own academic reading activities, and (2) choose, select and complement the reading lists given with their own selection of reading materials.

Reading in a British university, as reported by them, was different from the reading experiences in their homeland. In Malaysia, 'the pick and choose nature of teaching materials in the curriculum is at the EFL teachers' discretion' (Mohd Sidek, 2012, p.36). This was demonstrated through their (1) lack of competency and efficacy in manoeuvring their reading activities (e.g. to supplement the reading lists with other reading materials and choosing ineffective strategies to complement reading activities), and (2) their over-dependency on course instructors when they had first arrived to study in a British university in Year One. Their reliance on course instructors after commencing their studies echoes Wingate and London's (2007) description of the first year undergraduates' 'epistemological beliefs that stemmed from their previous learning experience at school because they perceived learning as the passive absorption' (p.395).

I would argue that: (1) these Malaysian undergraduates appear to focus on the mechanics of language, and (2) their academic reading activities were usually based on others' expectation (e.g. parents and teachers) with the aim of passing the national

examination when reading in Malaysia. However, they were encouraged to exercise their reading competency and self-efficacy to navigate their own academic reading activities in their new learning context. In Year One, they were expected 'to manage their learning and acquire academic literacy independently' (Wingate, 2007, p.392). Thus, this may suggest that their developing practice of competency and self-efficacy were motivated by the pressures for independent reading.

These participants also mentioned that the subsequent changes to their reading strategy usage resulted from the laborious reading time and efforts needed for some readings. This seems to contradict Pirih's (2015) argument regarding the 'high estimated cost of reading engagement (time and effort invested) that may lead to reading avoidance' (ibid). Reading avoidance was not reported here, because the participants may have been motivated to read when they felt more competent at reading, following their developing metacognition and background knowledge in Year Two.

Later, in Year Two, the findings revealed that gradual adjustments were made to reading strategies, due to the growing volume of reading. However, this demand in academic reading provided them with the autonomy to (1) manoeuvre their own reading paths, and (2) choose their own reading materials to complement the required reading for their courses. This was one of the aspects of academic reading that they appeared to lack in Malaysia. Similarly, the finding of a study on the Japanese L2 learners in a longitudinal study conducted by Judge (2011) suggested that autonomy provided these learners with the access to read and choose various reading materials that have, eventually, motivated them to become avid readers.

In the context of my study, these Malaysian undergraduates were at one time reading based on others' expectation (e.g. teachers, parents). When they started to practise

their autonomy in reading, they seized the opportunity to change the way they read. In addition, their new learning context lent greater support to independent reading.

In Year Two, they could rely exclusively on their competency and self-efficacy. For example, the participants had taken the initiative to make subsequent changes to their reading strategy usage based on their reading tasks and academic demands. On the one hand, this finding may support the view that student choice and involvement may contribute to reading comprehension growth (Taboada et al., 2013). On the other hand, this finding appears to contradict the finding in that of Huang (2006) due to the Taiwanese L2 learners' interdependence on facilitation from EFL teachers, texts and reading requirements as the motivation to read academic text books.

I would further argue that these Malaysian undergraduates come to study in a British university with the epistemological beliefs that reading is prescribed, passive, involves rote learning and memorisation. Their previous reading instruction was hence inclined towards the mechanics of language, as well as the ability to answer comprehension questions (Nambiar, 2005; Musa, Lie and Azman, 2012; Mohd Sidek, 2014). However, these beliefs gradually shifted following the emergence of new reading strategies in Year Two (see Section 5.4.1). These shifts are thought to be based on the influence of their developing metacognition on academic reading texts and them as 'better' readers.

ii) The Impact of Reading Purposes on Reading Strategy Dynamism

Reading strategy dynamism may be seen to be based on these Malaysian undergraduates' reading goals and purposes in Year One. Their extrinsic motivation to academic reading consisted of (1) the need to pass the examination and get a good grade, and (2) to achieve others' expectations (e.g. parents, sponsors, course instructors and university). In Hsu's (2012) investigation into university students' English reading motivation in China, the

findings showed that 'class requirement and grades were important elements in stimulating students' extrinsic motivation' (p.107).

Likewise, the findings revealed that the reading strategy usage in Year One were influenced by the need for academic survival and passing the courses. Although grades remained their priority, 'the secondary goal like passing the courses provided something like a real-world motivation for reading' (Dubin, Eskey and Grabe, 1986, pp.3–4). Previous studies on L2 reading motivation indicated that the impact of grades on reading was a very important factor (eg. Dhanapala, 2008; Jafari and Shokrpour, 2012; Dhanapala and Hirakawa, 2015). Thus, it can be deduced that grades and passing the courses are, undeniably, strong indicators for extrinsic motivation in academic reading.

Another important finding here points to its similarities with studies conducted on the need to achieve others' expectation in learning such as parents among Asian ESL or EFL students (e.g. Gao, 2006, 2008a). Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) put this situation in the following way: 'imported self-image was particularly salient in some Asian countries where students were often motivated to perform well to fulfil some family obligation or to bring honour to the family's name' (p.14). Surprisingly, the finding also revealed that not only were these Malaysian undergraduates read to fulfil family obligations, but they also read to accomplish their lecturers' and university's expectations.

Later in Year Two, the finding demonstrated that they shifted the focus of reading to that of 'intellectual profit' (Dubin, Eskey and Grabe, 1986). This has been interpreted as being based on the influence of intrinsic motivation for academic reading. For example, the finding of a case study conducted by Ro (2013) on unmotivated L2 readers proposed that usefulness was 'the most frequently found component among the factors contributing to motivation' (p.227).

Similarly, Malcolm's (2011) findings of a study on C*hange of Awareness in Academic Reading* noted that when the Arabic-speaking learners were 'faced with the real life needs of studying for professional aims through the medium of English, they gradually adapt to the changing demands of their academic readings' (p.26). Likewise, it is postulated here that reading purposes might change when the benefits of academic reading are recognised for future employment and real-life situations. Therefore, the changing reading goals and purposes in Year Two are surmised as being based on the utility value for reading, curiosity and involvement (Dhanapala and Hirakawa, 2015).

The re-construction of reading goals and purposes for these participants, such as AF, HZ, RS and SL, was influenced through their lived experience in a British university. Their intrinsic motivation was framed by their current community of practice through the role of acculturation (Jia et al., 2014) in academic reading. For example, Sade (2011) asserted that '[w]henever one cedes to the appeal of a new discourse and affiliates to a new community of practice, we can say that there is a bifurcation in the identity system of that person; new identities emerge and with them, new discursive attractors' (p.46). The role of acculturation in academic reading is further discussed in Section 5.6.1.

To sum up, this section emphasises the impact of motivation on academic reading in terms of changes to (1) reading strategy usage (see Section 5.4), and (2) epistemological beliefs (see Section 5.6.1). However, these changes, as interpreted here, lack support from the university. Wingate and London (2007) argue that 'supports are needed for these students to adapt to independent learning during the transition into tertiary institution' (p.395). In view of this, novice ESL or EFL undergraduates should be given extra guidance for independent learning. In line with Hong-Nam, Leavell and Maher's (2014) assertion, I would suggest that reading instructors should allow ESL/EFL readers to (1) actively engage in practicing the appropriate strategies for specific types of texts, (2) model

the reading strategy usage, (3) offer alternative strategies to be practised, and (4) encourage readers to select and use strategies appropriate for their needs and the type of reading that will promote academic reading autonomy.

5.5.2.2 The Impact of Background Knowledge on Reading Strategy Dynamism

As mentioned previously in Section 2.7.2.2 and 5.3.2, it may be posited that background knowledge influenced the dynamism of reading strategies. These Malaysian undergraduates struggled with academic reading in Year One, but gradually adapted to the challenges in Year Two. Thus, it may be deduced that their established background knowledge (e.g. domain-knowledge and textual knowledge) could enhance reading performance (Usó-Juan, 2006; Ozuru, Dempsey and McNamara, 2009; Mokhtari, 2012; Rokhsari, 2012).

They reverted to support strategies when reading new subjects/courses due to genre incompetence and lack of specialised knowledge. As observed here, cognitive and metacognitive strategies were employed when they became more familiar with academic texts orientation, specialised course-content and discipline-specific terms. Similarly, in a study conducted by Ozuru, Dempsey and McNamara (2009), the findings demonstrated that:

> 'the challenge in reading a social studies or history text was to understand the relations between unfamiliar attributes (specific location, person) of a historic event (e.g., Russian revolution) using general event knowledge (e.g., about revolution), while reading a science text, required such readily available knowledge about general events related to the topic (e.g., heat distribution in animals) unless the reader is a domain expert (e.g., biology teachers)' (p.239).

The significant role of background knowledge on reading strategy dynamism here appears to be in line with Mokhtari's (2012, p.2) suppositions of the four important types of knowledge in reading comprehension. This knowledge consisted of (1) general knowledge of the world that readers acquire through reading of books, magazines,

newspapers and other interactions with their environments, (2) specific knowledge about the topics or content of what one reads, (3) knowledge of language in terms of its forms and functions, and (4) knowledge of how information is organised or structured in texts across different disciplines.

Similarly, Rokhsari (2012) stated that background knowledge is an important part of reading comprehension, with a specific focus on cultural knowledge and text nativization. In view of this, I would propose that background knowledge is a strong contributor to academic reading comprehension, which is observed through reading strategy dynamism in Year Two. This therefore re-affirms the previous assertions whereby reading strategy dynamism was noted following the development of background knowledge (e.g. Ozuru, Dempsey and McNamara, 2009; Mokhtari, 2012; Rokhsari, 2012).

Although important, background knowledge activation and patterns of reading strategy usage are not mutually exclusive (Mokhtari, 2012). A study conducted by McNeil (2011) highlighted the fact that background knowledge was not necessarily important in reading comprehension. The studies conducted by Ozuru, Dempsey and McNamara (2009) and Usó-Juan (2006), on the other hand, affirmed that background knowledge could be important. However, the other aspects in L2 reading development such as L2 proficiency and texts cohesion were more dominant.

I would, however, propose that background knowledge contributes to enriching the reading strategies repertoire, which is crucial for successful reading comprehension. It may be deduced that this finding offers more insights into the influence of background knowledge on academic reading development. Thus, I would echo Bernhardt's (2011, p.31) presupposition that 'background knowledge does not follow levels of proficiency but is, rather, a variable linked to personal idiosyncrasy'.

On another note, considering that the data are derived mostly from self-reported data, one limitation would be in terms of direct access to the actual reading process. Thus, little is known about how background knowledge is activated during the reading process. This has therefore necessitated further exploration, in order to understand the mutual relationship between background knowledge, reading strategy usage and reading comprehension.

5.6 Other Issues Emerging

5.6.1 The Impact of Acculturation on L2/Academic Reading Beliefs and Practice

Another emerging theme that was not anticipated at the beginning of this study was that of the impact of acculturation, not only on academic reading but, generally, on reading beliefs. I would re-affirm that these participants acknowledged their new learning context as a significant contributor to reading strategy dynamism. My findings postulated that the impact of studying abroad has further shifted their epistemological beliefs in terms of reading habits and culture.

As mentioned previously in Section 5.3.2.1, the lack of metacognitive strategies use in Year One may be linked to the reading habits (and culture) in their home country. In Malaysia, research on the ability to read and practice in children ranging from 10 years and above was conducted by the National Library of Malaysia in 1996. The findings showed that '93% can read but only 87% have reading habit' (Mohd Yusof, 2010, p.1161). In addition, 'the older they (Malaysians) were, the less they read, for example almost 50% of children ages 10-14 years old were not interested in reading' (ibid).

To reiterate, the participants here come from an environment where they just read to pass the examination and get good results. Therefore, it can be surmised that the reading culture in Malaysia lacks emphasis on reading as a habit, because too much focus is given to passing the examination. When they lived in a new learning context where

reading was perceived as a part of culture, they (e.g. AF, HZ, RS and SL) tend to change their reading preferences. Their reconstruction of beliefs about reading are associated with their own observation on their (1) native English lecturers' reading practice, (2) native English students' reading practice, and (3) non-native English speaking students' reading practice through their lived experience in a British university.

In view of this, it might be posited that changing reading habits resulting from their immersion into the British reading culture. Additionally, previous studies noted that adaptation to the foreign culture, in the form of acculturation, facilitated students' motives and goals. For example, Jia et al., (2014) found 'a strong relationship between acculturation toward the dominant society and English literacy skills, suggesting that English literacy skills are related to immersion in Canadian culture. More importantly, 'acculturation explained unique variance in reading comprehension and should be considered in other models of reading comprehension' (p.259).

Similarly, Kim and Omizo's (2010) psychological study of behavioural enculturation and acculturation of Asian American high school in Hawaii yielded a remarkable finding. They revealed that the students' high engagement with the European American norms had made them perceive themselves as 'having increased capacity to cope with novel situations, had the competence to effectively deal with the demands of these situations, and felt that others viewed the Asian American group in a positive light' (Kim and Omizo, 2006, p.255).

From the perspective of L2 learning, new learning contexts influence the changes to L2 Asian learners' learning strategy usage, learning beliefs, less exposure to exam-oriented learning, motivation and learning practice (e.g. Gao, 2006, 2008b; 2010). Gao (2008b) found that the current community of practice was a powerful force in pushing the students to reconstruct their language learning beliefs. Similarly, Amuzie and Winke

(2009, p.376) highlighted the fact that 'learners who moved from studying English in their home country to abroad changed their beliefs…regardless of their length of study abroad'.

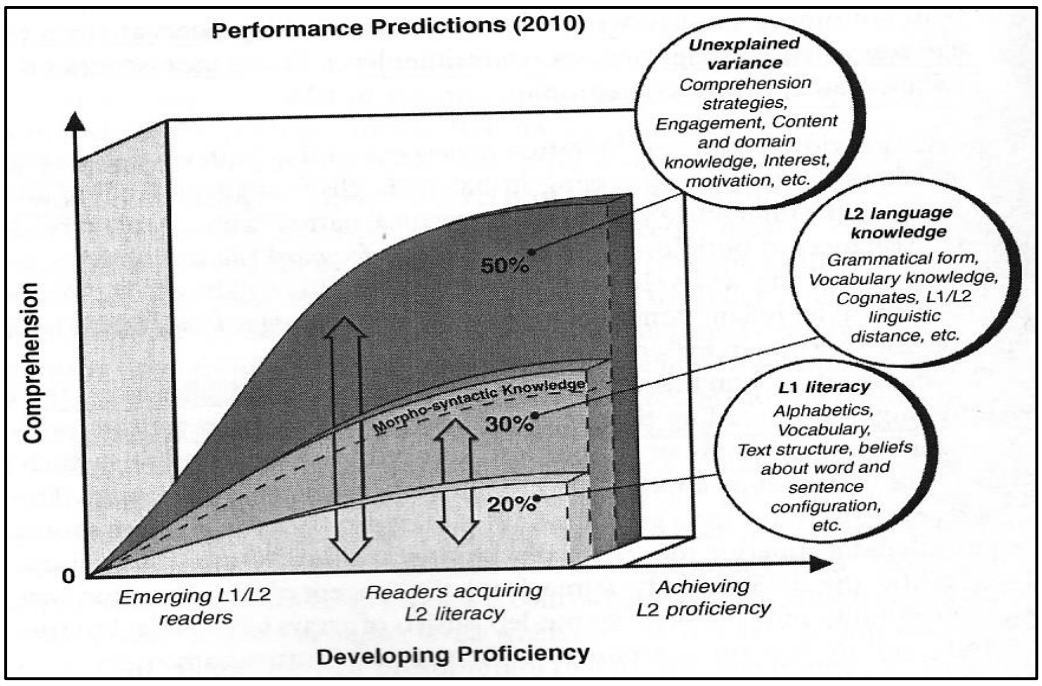
It can thus be posited that these Malaysian undergraduates have gradually embraced the reading culture in their new community of practice. I would argue that when positive feelings are associated with new learning contexts and their culture, they might immerse themselves in that culture. Not only will they read for specialised courses but their reading repertoire is expanded to various genres such as philosophy, history and literature. This finding appears to be in line with Amuzie and Winke's (2009) assertion that 'beliefs are dynamic, socially constructed, relational and responsive to the length of exposure to the context' (p.376) as a result of studying abroad.

5.6.2 L1 Literacy and its Contribution to L2/Academic Reading Development

I started writing this thesis with the presupposition that L2 grammatical ability was more important than L1 literacy knowledge. However, my data suggest that L1 knowledge is just as important as L2 grammatical ability for successful academic reading development. This finding might put forward Bernhardt's (2011) assertion that '[r]eaders who struggle in their first language will probably also struggle in their second' (p.38).

This model as shown in Figure 5.3, grounded by Stanovich's (1980) notion of compensatory processing, can be used as a framework to illustrate the underlying mechanism of L1 literacy underpinning the dynamic nature of reading strategy usage in the present study. As noted in the aforementioned paragraph, my findings may align with Bernhardt's (2011) assertion, which can further extend the model to explain the L2/academic reading development and process across languages. Although the model is less developed and referenced in L2 reading literature, I would acknowledge it as being the closest model to illustrate the academic reading development here.

Figure 5.3: Bernhardt's Compensatory Model of L2 reading (Adopted from Bernhardt, 2011, p. 38)



I will now raise issues related to L1 reading ability and the compensatory model of L2 reading in tandem. My findings indicate that both L1 literacy and L2 language knowledge are significant predictors for L2 reading development. It can be speculated here that these Malaysian undergraduates' compensatory behaviour is demonstrated by (1) their reliance on L1 resources, and (2) the significant role of L2 grammatical ability. For example, their use of support strategies (e.g. reading using a ruler, pencil and finger to point at the words or sentences and translation) is similar to early literacy development in both L1 and L2 reading. Therefore, this finding may suggest that L1 resources were invoked in the first few months in the UK, and when reading difficult texts. Meanwhile, their reliance on L2 grammatical ability was demonstrated when they became more familiar with academic reading.

It has been discussed previously by Bernhardt and Kamil (1995) based on the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, that L1 and L2 reading are intertwined and

transferable, because they are interdependent, or are in actuality the same. Likewise, Grabe and Stoller (2011) argue that L1 knowledge is invoked at the beginning of L2 levels, and when reading difficult texts. In addition, my findings would further reinforce the speculation concerning the role and contributions of L1 literacy knowledge to L2/academic reading development, regardless of the L2 readers' L2 proficiency.

Previous studies on the influence of L1 reading ability and proficiency revealed similar results. For example, McNeil (2012) reported that 'L1 reading ability is a stronger predictor of L2 reading than L2 language knowledge for learners with high L2 proficiency' (p.67). Previous studies on various L2 learners (e.g. South Korean, Bosnians and Africans) suggested that (1) the L1 and L2 language proficiency were strongly correlated (Song, 2001), (2) the significant predictor of L2 reading ability was the L1 reading ability (Pichette, Segalowitz and Connors, 2003), and (3) L2 language proficiency and L1 reading comprehension were the two significant predictors of L2 reading comprehension (Asfaha, Beckman, Kurvers and Kroon, 2009).

The strategy of translation was also reported to be used here. In view of this, it might set forth the fact that L1 knowledge appears to reinforce and provide positive transfer to L2 reading development, especially when L2 readers (1) were yet to develop their metacognitive sense to improve comprehension, due to lack of experience and exposure to reading academic texts (e.g. Kern, 1994), and (2) were confronted with complex and difficult academic texts when they were reading for specialised courses (e.g. Malcolm, 2009; 2012).

A similar finding arose from Kim's (2015) study concerning the role of L1 in L2 reading. The findings suggested that a highly proficient student used a little amount of L1 when reading an easy text. However, when they read a difficult text, the amount of L1 use increased as students' L2 proficiency level increased, which implied that text difficulty

would play an important role in students' L1 use during L2 reading' (Kim, 2015, pp.208–209). This is aligned with the presupposition here in which a group of Malaysian undergraduates reverted to their L1 (i.e. Malay), despite their advanced L2 proficiency, when they were reading difficult and challenging texts for specialised courses.

To quote Grabe (2015, personal communication): 'going all the way back to Alderson (1984), arguments and evidence have accumulated for a relationship between L1 and L2 reading abilities'. It is clear that in most ESL (perhaps in EFL and EAP environments), L2 knowledge is a stronger factor. However, what my research seems to be demonstrating is how L1 knowledge can play a role in supporting L2/academic reading comprehension and development.

Similarly, Kern demonstrated the significant role of L1 knowledge in L2 reading development in his *Studies on Second Language Acquisition* article in 1994 and followed it up in his book *Language and Literacy Teaching* in 2000. There are differences between L1 and L2 in terms of phonological, lexical and syntactic. However, 'some reliance on one's L1 in the form of mental translation is probably inevitable' (Kern, 1994, p.442) in L2 reading. The reliance on L1 knowledge, in the way in which it has emerged here is greater in the early stages of reading for specialised courses.

This study affirms that this finding is significant, and might indeed contribute to our understanding of reading strategy development and use across languages. This argument, however, provided a fertile ground for hypothesis testing. Therefore, exploring more deeply how L1 factors might influence L2/academic reading development is important, because future research can begin to identify contexts, strategies, and enabling environments that can maximise the L1 resources that can be employed.

5.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the findings of this research and discuss its possible meanings and compared with those derived from previous literature. A group of Malaysian undergraduates' academic reading perceptions and experiences were discussed. The reading strategy usage was then presented in sequence prior describing the dynamic nature of academic reading strategies as these participants read in a British university.

Text and reader factors were then framed by sociocultural perspectives, to explore the impact of new learning contexts on dynamic patterns of reading strategy usage. Text factors are set forth in terms of (1) generic differences in academic texts, (2) differences in use of the cohesive devices, (3) the impact of discipline-specific genre, and (4) the impact of technology-mediated texts on reading strategy dynamism. In addition, the impact of reader's motivation and background knowledge were emphasised in relation to academic reading activities and interactions. Finally, other emerging issues such as (1) the impact of acculturation on L2 reading beliefs and practice, and (2) L1 literacy and its contribution to academic reading through the medium of English were also discussed in terms of their implications in supporting academic/L2 reading comprehension and development.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This research has sought to explore the perceptions, patterns of reading strategy usage and dynamism of a group of Malaysian undergraduates when they came to study in a British university. The research aspires to interpret academic reading strategy usage and dynamism, based on a sociocultural framework. This chapter now provides a summary of the key research findings of the study. In addition, the implications of the study for theory and practice are further elaborated. Finally, the chapter acknowledges the limitations of this study, and suggests several recommendations for future research.

6.2 Summary of Thesis

The literature confirms that the existing research on L2 reading, in general, was conceptualised based on the linguistic and cognitive views to describe academic reading development. More focus has been given to ESL academic reading following the influx of international students in global university contexts. However, studies on this area were less developed, given the absence of an agreed-upon criteria that could generally describe L2 readers. This could be explained by their varied L1 background, prior L2 reading instructions, reading experiences, cultural and social background.

I would claim that there was a need for a study that underpinned sociocultural views to explore the perspectives of L2 readers in a more pragmatic way to describe ESL academic reading development and processes. In addition, previous studies lacked the focus on specific groups of students, such as Malaysian undergraduates studying in a predominantly English-speaking country. Because of the lack of studies on this specific group of L2 readers, their problems and challenges in ESL academic reading were not

fully understood yet. Thus, this study raised the need to consider the sociocultural views of academic reading in a predominantly English speaking institution (e.g. British university), reading strategy usage, and the dynamism of a group of Malaysian undergraduates when they came to read in a new learning context.

This thesis adopted a longitudinal approach to explore the perceptions, patterns of reading strategy usage and dynamism of a group of Malaysian undergraduates over a period of two academic years. The purpose of this was to attain rich data within their new learning environment. Academic reading activities were explored within the scope of current and on-the-spot academic reading experiences/activities to allow (1) for unexpected reading paths to occur, and (2) for students to choose their own reading materials.

The overall research question that has guided this case study was: what are the perceptions and experiences of L2 academic reading of a group of Malaysian undergraduates studying in a British university?

This question was then further operationalised into the following sub-questions:

1) How do these participants perceive academic reading in a British university?
2) What reading strategies are utilised by the participants in their new learning context?
3) What are the changes in the participants' use of reading strategies over a period of two academic years as they read in a British university?
4) What influences the participants' changes in their reading strategies in their British university?

6.3 Overview of Research Findings

Research Question 1: How did the Participants Perceive Academic Reading in a British University?

This study summarised the perceptions, patterns of reading strategy usage and dynamism of a group of Malaysian undergraduates when they came to study in a British university. Their perceptions and experiences of academic reading were twofold. Firstly, their experience was positive when the challenges in academic reading were approached with (1) motivation, (2) passion and (3) interest. Secondly, their experience was negative due to the overwhelming demands of academic reading. The findings also suggest that their perceptions of English language had changed in the UK. For example, they perceived that the role of English language in their specialised courses was more advanced than their prior English language instructions in Malaysia.

Initially, these Malaysian undergraduates blamed their inability to cope on the English language in the first few months in the UK. This perception resulted in their reliance on L1 knowledge to cope with the academic reading demands. However, they later realised that it was not so much the English language they were having problems with. They found that the problem was linked to reading academic texts for specialised courses.

The findings also suggested that the problems of academic reading were associated with the mismatch between the academic reading expectations of these participants and their situated contextual realities. At first, they expected that there were no academic texts differences in both Malaysia and the UK. However, the texts they were reading for their specialised courses consisted of very large differences in terms of texts types, linguistic characteristics and texts organisation. Given these differences, they addressed the need to establish academic language proficiency, background knowledge,

and effective reading strategies to cope with academic reading in the first few months in the UK.

Research Question 2: What Reading Strategies Were Utilised by the Participants in their New Learning Context?

The students' reading strategies encompassed support, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In Year One, their use of support strategies such as using a ruler/pencil/finger to guide reading and translation seemed to be similar to those of children and beginning readers in both L1 and L2. They started to modify their use of reading strategies as they became more familiar with academic reading. These strategies consisted of 8 support strategies and, 6 cognitive strategies, with only 3 metacognitive strategies towards the end of Year One.

A slightly different composition of reading strategy usage was reported in Year Two. A significant reading strategies transformation consisted of 7 support strategies, 5 cognitive strategies and 5 metacognitive strategies. There were 11 emerging and modified reading strategies, as reported by the participants, which comprised 4 support strategies, 3 cognitive strategies and 4 metacognitive strategies. These changes were further interpreted in Research Question 3.

Research Question 3: What Were the Changes in the Participants' Use of Reading Strategies Over a Period of Two Academic Years as They Read in a British University?

The dynamic nature of their academic reading strategies went through two stages, namely (1) reading strategies reinvention, and (2) reading strategies adjustments. The participants' reading strategy usage started off with the reinvention of reading strategies. Then, they appeared to be testing and modifying a myriad of the support strategies, the cognitive strategies and the metacognitive strategies by the end of Year One and in Year Two.

Their use of support strategies gradually diminished to accelerate reading pace, cope with the reading volumes and develop academic reading efficiency. In addition, some of the support strategies were still utilised in Year Two (see Section 4.3.3.2) with 4 emerging strategies consisting of (1) further and intensive reading (e.g. using other support system like other reading materials to aid comprehension), (2) searching the keywords (e.g. new technical terms/concepts), (3) checking the index for new terms, and (4) using technological tools (e.g. *Investopedia* and *Look-up*). These strategies were modified based on their changing reading goals and purposes. Some cognitive strategies were retained, because they seemed appropriate for short-sighted reading goals. These strategies comprised (1) guessing the meaning of words, (2) speed reading and reading distance, and (3) reading interval.

New metacognitive strategies emerged in Year Two, such as (1) segmented, selective and structured reading, (2) skipping unfamiliar words, terms, sentences and paragraphs, (3) guided reading, and (4) set reading objectives and purposes. This study speculated that the emergence of these strategies was due to their growing awareness of reading various types of discipline-specific texts, and themselves as 'able and better' readers. In addition, the dynamic nature of their reading strategies could be explained by the length of time spent on academic reading activities.

The students' metacognitive awareness appeared to be less developed in Year One, because of different reading purposes and goals. This study also found that even the same participants used different academic reading strategies, depending on their prior L2 reading instructions, growing metacognitive awareness, changing reading purposes and motivation. Therefore, it was deduced that the patterns of academic reading strategy usage over a period of two academic years as they read in the UK were dynamic.

Research Question 4: What Influenced the Participants' Changes in their Reading Strategies in their British University?

The dynamic nature of academic reading strategies found in this study can be interpreted based on the sociocultural elements such as text and reader factors. The participants' preferences and patterns of academic reading strategy usage resulted from their transaction with a certain specialised text. In view of this, text factors were identified as one of the sociocultural elements relevant to describe academic reading process and reading strategies development.

The factors related to texts pointed out the issues in terms of text complexity, such as lack of exposure on academic texts features and organisation. In addition, this study found that the participants' reading strategy dynamism was influenced by these linguistic features in discipline-specific texts, for example: (1) confusing, long and complex sentences, and (2) unfamiliar discipline-specific vocabulary and genre. Apart from the linguistic and textual features, the finding also highlighted that the integration of technology posed another challenge in academic reading, because these participants had to cope with the shift in the text medium.

Another identified factor was linked to the participants as L2 readers and the complex elements embedded within them. These complex elements were further interpreted as reader factors. This study suggested that factors such as motivation and background knowledge appeared to influence the dynamic nature of academic reading strategies. The aspects related to motivation consisted of (1) the impact of competency, self-efficacy and autonomy on academic reading, and (2) the impact of reading purposes and goals on motivation for L2 reading. The findings further emphasised the impact of motivation on academic reading, not only related to dynamic use of reading strategies (see

Section 4.5.2) but it also changed these participants' epistemological beliefs on L2/academic reading practice (see Section 4.5.3).

The finding also posited the fact that background knowledge influenced the dynamic nature of academic reading strategy usage. For example, these participants struggled with academic reading in Year One but gradually adapted with the challenges in Year Two following their established background knowledge on domain and textual knowledge to enhance academic reading performance and comprehension.

The Changing Epistemological Beliefs on Academic Reading and L2 Reading

Other issues emerging such as the impact of acculturation on academic reading, or generally on L2 reading beliefs and practice were highlighted as important findings. The participants' notable assimilation to the British reading culture and practice was in contrast with their initial perceptions of academic reading practice in the first few months in the UK. Their readings became more varied, and were not only confined to the areas related to their field of studies. This finding suggested that these participants gradually started to approach academic reading in the UK with a more positive attitude.

This study concluded that the shifting learning contexts influenced a group of Malaysian undergraduates' academic reading perceptions, experiences and epistemological beliefs on L2/academic reading. It was found that these perceptions and experiences were later manifested in the participants' patterns of academic reading usage. Thus, it was being acknowledged here that the interaction between text and reader factors were linked to Wray and Janan's (2013a) assertion concerning the changing 'views about the nature of the reading process over the past 20 years towards a more interpretive definition which emphasised that making meaning through reading comes from a process in which the readers interact with texts' (p.73) within their specific contextual realities.

Academic reading practice is a complex process, because the interactions between text and reader factors are always context-specific. The context as it appeared here pointed to these Malaysian undergraduates' current lived experiences in a specific community of practice that had different environment, cultural and social practice of reading in general. This study has underlined the significance role of context on reading acculturation. For example, the shifting learning context not only influenced the dynamic nature of academic reading strategies, but also influenced L2/academic reading beliefs and practices.

6.4 The Research Contribution

This study, despite its limitation, has filled a number of gaps in previous research on academic reading in a second language. The main parts of this section cover the theoretical and methodological contribution.

6.4.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study has contributed to the understanding of academic reading development in an L2 using the sociocultural perspectives. Grounded by Bernhardt's (1996, p. 16) assertion that previous studies have 'generically lumped L2 readers and collect 'cognitive' data without considering L2 social background', this study highlighted the significance of social background to define and understand specific L2 readers, such as these Malaysian undergraduates. For example, their social background encompassed distinctive education background, school and government policy. This study would add that apart from social, they should also be culturally defined in terms of ethnic background and L1 background.

The social turn in this study has added to our understanding of how the underlying sociocultural factors appeared to influence (1) the perceptions and experiences of academic reading among these Malaysian undergraduates when there was a shift in

their learning contexts, (2) ESL academic reading development and process, and (3) the dynamic nature of reading strategies.

This study has further reinforced the significance role of L1 knowledge on L2 reading and suggested that strategy literature in L2 is a replication of strategies used in L1 reading (e.g. Upton Lee-Thompson, 2001; Goh and Hashim; 2006). The only unique L2 strategy could be translation which had been clearly documented in this study. That being said, this study has provided some suggestions to answer Bernhardt's (2011) hypothesis concerning L2 readers' compensatory behaviour during the L2 reading process and extended her Compensatory Model of L2 reading that was grounded by Stanovich's (1980) notion of compensatory processing (see Section 5.6.2).

These Malaysian undergraduates' compensatory behaviours were demonstrated by their reliance on L1 literacy knowledge when they were reading difficult academic texts. Meanwhile, their L2 grammatical ability contributed to the reading process once they became more familiar with academic reading. In view of this, these findings further extended the literature on ESL academic reading by demonstrating how L1 literacy can play a role in supporting ESL (and perhaps EFL and EAP) academic reading comprehension and development regardless of L2 proficiency.

Although this study adopted a sociocultural stance to describing ESL academic reading development, I would claim that one of the findings could be significant to cognitive psychological research on reading. The reinvention of 'child-like' reading experiences among advanced and adult ESL readers highlighted the role of working memory to understand (1) how reading strategies were reinvented, selected, modified and discovered as well as (2) how these strategies might interfere with each other.

6.4.2 Methodological Contribution

Although there are some limitations in terms of the methodological approach, this study has provided a number of substantial contributions to the area of inquiry. As noted in the literature review, studies of L2 reading have generally been conducted quantitatively using the positivist paradigm. However, as also noted in the literature review several qualitative studies on academic reading have adopted the interpretivist paradigm. The existing literature appeared to be either context specific or 'top down' in nature, and lacking in attention to learner voices.

This study adopted a qualitative approach using the guiding principles of phenomenography to position the participants under different cognitive and affective stances, based on their reading purposes at any given time. This study offered flexibility in terms of text selection, to avoid 'the risk of disadvantaging the participants due to a particular topic or style' (Bernhardt, 2011, p.121). This might be the first longitudinal study in ESL academic reading field to explore and understand the perceptions and experiences of ESL academic reading among a group of Malaysian undergraduates studying in a predominantly English-speaking institution. Data were gathered by means of individual interview as the primary method of data collection.

It was hoped, at first, that this study would utilise think-aloud protocols to sought empirical and contextual academic reading strategy usage. However, the protocols did not generate much data during the piloting stage, due to factors such as conflict of culture and my role as a novice researcher. The outcome of the pilot think-aloud protocol suggested that L2 readers' distinct cultural and social background could inevitably influence the efficiency of this protocol to explore reading activities. In addition, it failed to provide the reflection on the reading process itself in a more open-ended sense.

Therefore, a reflection on the failure of think-aloud protocol as discussed in Section 3.8.1.2 contributed to the methodological knowledge in its own right.

Being a bilingual researcher, who spoke both Malay and English, added a dimension to the language issues in L2 reading research. In this instance, the issue related to language here pointed to my advantage of using their stronger language (i.e. Malay) rather than the L2 (i.e. English) to elicit responses related to perceptions and experiences of ESL academic reading. Considering that both the participants and I came from similar language and cultural background, our interactions throughout the data collection phases seemed to be much significant in an attempt to provide solid and trustworthy data. This was also achieved through the nature of longitudinal data collection and the time spent with the participants.

6.5 Implications for Practice

This thesis has outlined several potential implications for practice to the community in terms of (1) research and (2) education.

6.5.1 Community of Research

- The results of this study invited researchers to further explore the areas related to ESL (or perhaps EFL) academic reading, due to the absence of agreed upon criteria to describe ESL/EFL readers in L2/FL reading literature. The changes in ESL academic reading landscape and reading comprehension research are closely related to, and affected by sociocultural factors.
- Hypotheses were created regarding the issues related to text complexity, which have emerged as major contributor to academic reading challenges at tertiary level. This draws attention to the need for future research, and explores ways to overcome the hindrance to academic reading caused by text complexity. Issues

related to text complexity have been widely explored in the USA educational contexts but lack the exploration in Europe and Asia.

6.5.2 Community of Education

1) L2 Learners

- The process of being a participant could develop or raise metacognitive awareness of academic reading strategies in terms of preferences. In addition, problems related to academic reading could be identified. This, in essence, incorporates a reflective endeavour in learning to practise their autonomy in learning.
- Being a participant provided an opportunity to project their voices in this study on their behalf to the 'ears' of the other L2 learners. Although I do not claim that these findings could be generalised to various contexts of L2/academic reading and L2 readers, there seem to be some common features that suggest areas of concern that would repay wider attention, such as to other Asian L2 students studying in predominantly English-speaking university and, perhaps, in other universities that using English as the medium of instruction.

2) Policymakers

- From the study, we have seen that L2 readers need wider exposure to various types of academic genres and the need to consider the rigour of text complexity in reading curriculum. The challenges are for the policymakers to (1) incorporate various reading genres in ESL/EFL textbooks, (2) ensure that reading instructions are not just assessment focused, and (3) provide scaffolding to support learners for academic reading preparation at the tertiary level.
- It has been demonstrated that ESL (or perhaps EFL) readers need to be equipped with the skills to read both print-based and screen-based texts. Although Malaysia is still grappling with the use of e-books and its use in school is a relatively new

paradigm (Embong et al., 2012) there is a necessity to deliver updated reading instructions to cope with the rapid growth of technology.

3) Teachers

- The lack of exposure to the Cognitive and Metacognitive reading strategies suggests that the actual reading instruction and delivery need work in terms of equipping L2 learners with not only the strategies to focus on rote learning and memorisation but also strategies that could prepare them for academic reading at tertiary level. For example, previewing the text as to its length and organisation, using typographical aids and tables and figures. Therefore, L2 learners should be equipped with the skills/strategies for academic reading demands at tertiary level.
- Teachers should be exposed to text factors such as generic differences of academic texts, differences in use of the cohesive devices, and print-based and screen-based texts that can influence academic reading strategy usage. They must be aware of how these factors can affect L2 readers' selection of reading strategies to approach a particular text. By doing so, they can scaffold and design suitable reading lessons for their students.
- Teachers should be aware of reader factors, especially the role of motivation on academic reading. Although these factors are inaccessible to outside observers, teachers can design exciting reading lessons, pick interesting and challenging reading texts or give the autonomy to the students to choose their own reading texts to be shared during reading lessons. By doing so, the students can practise their agency to boost reading motivation.
- Teachers should listen to 'learner voices'. Most often, these unheard voices could offer insights and learning experiences. These insights could be reflective of the reading instructions in ESL classrooms.

4) Universities in the UK

- Malaysian or international students in the UK need to be informed by their tutors about the workshops available to enhance academic reading skills. In this instance, many of the participants were unaware of these workshops (except DY, RH, SL and SR). Thus, they waited for one academic year to improve their reading skills by observing their tutors and other international peers' reading practice/skills during seminars or tutorials. However, most of the time, they were unaware of the training/study skills provided for them, especially in the first few months in the UK.
- Scaffolding should be provided to support learners for academic reading preparation at the tertiary level, regardless of their level of proficiency. For example, module tutors or study skills tutors/trainers could provide text modelling workshops to point out different generic and language features of texts within a single-discipline or within-disciplines to ease academic reading challenges for novice readers.
- Not only first-year undergraduates are going through cultural transition upon their arrival to study in the UK they seemed to struggle with transitional, linguistic, academic and disciplinary shocks. Therefore, a list of courses required reading should be given during pre-departure briefings and more follow-up concerning their transition in the university should be provided by personal tutors and international office in the first few months in the UK.

5) Reading Pedagogy in L1 and L2

- Focus should be given to both L1 and L2 reading instructions. Policy makers, curriculum developers and teachers should re-assess and evaluate the similarities and differences of the teaching of reading skills in L1 and L2 classrooms. As

demonstrated by the findings of this study, the participants are influenced by their prior L2 reading instruction whereby their reading purposes are aimed at rote learning and memorisation in the first few months in the UK. Therefore, it is important to explore the teaching of reading in both L1 and L2 reading classrooms.

6.6 Limitations of the Research

Several limitations are acknowledged in terms of its methodology and distribution of participants. Although this study adopted a longitudinal approach, one of the limitations remains that the data collection phase only started in February 2014. Ideally, the data collection phase should have been conducted in September 2013 to capture a 'fresh' account of academic reading experiences and perceptions. The participants had already been in the UK for 6 months prior to participating in this study. Therefore, their recollections concerning their perceptions and experiences of academic reading in the UK might not be similar to how they perceived and experienced it in the past 6 months.

Another limitation that should be considered is related to participants' selection. The participants here do not represent the ideal ethnic population in Malaysia. Considering that Malaysia is a multi-racial country, this study does not represent the voices of students from other ethnic background such as Malaysian-Chinese, Malaysian-Indian and other indigenous students (for example, Kadazandusun, Bajau, Iban, Bidayuh and so on).

The third limitation is that of the data collection methods, which included only interview interviews and reading diaries to elicit data from the participants. This study relied heavily on the participants' recollections. At times, the methods used could be questionable in terms of their trustworthiness, although several measures have been taken to avoid risks related to validity (see Section 3.13).

As mentioned previously, failure to utilise the think-aloud protocol is partly due to my lack of research training. I personally think that think aloud protocols could better elicit an understanding of the strategies used by participants during their reading interactions. When called on to this point, I acknowledge that my research deficiencies should not be interfering with the method itself to produce a high quality research in this area.

6.7 Recommendations for Future Research

The following proposals for future research are recommended from this study:

- Ongoing need for learner voice research in ESL academic reading, or reading in general. Future researchers could conduct further bottom-up or grounded approaches to research that consider the sociocultural levels encompassing individual, national, regional and international influences on ESL (or perhaps EFL) learners.
- There is a need to explore how learner-centred research is disseminated and used to create change or impact on English curriculum, pedagogy and theory. Future research could include a variety of ESL learners' characteristics, including different social backgrounds, ethnicity and locations.
- Another proposal that springs from this study highlights the significance of the cognitive psychology view to explore academic reading development among adult and advanced ESL readers. This is an area in which researchers are able to investigate the role of working memory in reading, and how adult readers manage cognitive resources to facilitate academic reading deficiencies.
- Future research could explore issues related to text complexity and its impact on academic reading development in schools and tertiary education. This area has remained neglected by the research community in the Europe and Asia.

- Future research could explore ESL academic reading development and process using other methods, such as think-aloud protocols and miscue analysis. As mentioned previously, the think-aloud protocols could lead to a better understanding of reading strategy usage during reading interactions. In addition, a further data collection that could be used is miscue analysis, to observe the interaction between the participants and texts.
- I found very few studies on Malay linguistic features in academic texts in terms of language cohesion and coherence. While reviewing past studies on Malay academic texts, I identified that these studies were most often conducted on a survey basis that lacked comprehensive linguistic or corpus-based quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. This would explain my limited resources on Malay texts as it appear in this study. Therefore, I would suggest that more studies on Malay linguistic features in academic texts need both methodological and paradigm shifts for extensive analysis or empirical findings, to explore this speculation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Phase 1 of Data Collection

Demographic background

Name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Faculty/Centre/Department: _____

Year of study: _____

Field of study: _____

IELTS band: _____ IELTS reading component: _____

Bahasa Malaysia (SPM Grade): _____

***** Note to participants:**
The above details are strictly confidential. The details will be kept for the researcher own references and will not reveal it to anyone, including research supervisor, inter-raters and examiners.

Appendix B: Phase 1 of Data Collection

Interview Protocol: Interview 1 (STEP 1)

1) First by way of context, can you tell me what your current course is and little bit about your languages background?

2) Based on your experiences so far, what do you think of the students' life in the United Kingdom?

3) Can you please describe your experience of reading in English here?

- What do you think of reading in English here?
- How often do you read here?

(If they ask for further explanation: What sort of things do you do as a student? What are you trying to achieve?)

4) Do you have an example of the differences of reading English in Malaysia and the UK?

(Ensure that this area is raised in Q3. Probe on academic reading if they don't come up spontaneously)

5) I'd like to start rounding up now. Early on I asked you what languages do you speak and your experience of academic reading in the United Kingdom. At this stage, the question came out of the blue, and since then we've been talking about some specific examples of your recent experience as a first year undergraduate student in the UK. Now that you've had a chance to think about it, I'd just like to step back for a moment and ask you to summarise for me how do you plan to go about your academic reading and what do you hope to gain from it?

6) Before we finish, is there anything you would like to add that you haven't already mentioned?

Generic probe: Is there anything else you'd like to say about...before we move on?

(Adapted from Akerlind, 2005, p. 105)

Appendix C: Phase 1 of Data Collection

Follow-up questions: Interview 2 (STEP 1)

Follow-up prompts for Interview 2 in Step 1
Reading of texts in Malay 1. Can you describe your experience when reading in Malay? 2. What do you think of Malay texts? *Reading of texts in Malaysia and the UK: Course reading materials in English* 1. Can you please describe the reading course materials in the UK? 2. Can you please describe the reading course materials in Malaysia? *Reading strategies for different purposes* 1) Can you give me some examples of something you do while reading the academic texts here? - How did you go about that? - Why did you do it that way? - What did you gain or hope to gain from it? 2) Could you please describe, how do you read for • assignment in the UK? • presentation/discussion/seminar in the UK? • exam in the UK? • assignment in Malaysia? • presentation/discussion/seminar in Malaysia? • exam in Malaysia? *Perceptions of L2 academic reading in the United Kingdom* 3) In Interview 1, you mentioned that the level of English language here is different; can you please explain more about that? 4) Can you please describe how different your reading experiences in the UK and Malaysia? 5) Can you please describe how similar your reading experiences in the UK and Malaysia?

Appendix D: Phase 2 of Data Collection

Models of Reading diary

Model 1

What? (Problems)	Why?	How well?	Follow-up?	Done?

Model 2

Date	Activity	Problems	Follow-up

The key question:

How do you read for: (1) assignments, (2) seminar/presentation, (3) lectures, and (4) final examination?

(Adapted from Halbach, 2000)

Appendix E: Phase 2 of Data Collection

Sample of the interview questions for the follow-up interview

1) Could you please give me some examples of difficult words you had encountered when reading academic texts?
2) Please describe how did you read it thoroughly again?
3) Please explain about the "reading aloud" strategy in your reading?
4) Why did you read aloud?
5) Could you please explain what do you mean by 'Read and understand'?
6) Could you please describe/explain what you mean by 'reading different resources'?
7) Did you use similar reading technique(s) while re-reading the same texts?
8) Were there any differences in the first reading, second reading and so on?
9) How did the sentence structures make it difficult for you to understand the article? Could you please explain more about it?
10) Why did you have some difficult times to understand short notes?
11) Do you often read one article/journal/text repeatedly? Why?
12) Please explain more about the text you read. Does reading different texts affect your use of reading techniques? If so, why?
13) How do you think your reading techniques/preference have changed since you first arrived here?
14) How do you think you have changed as a reader since you first arrived here?

Appendix F: Sample of Interview Transcript

Speaker	Speech	Line
Esther	Apakah kursus yang anda pelaajari di sini dan terangkan sedikit tentang latar belakang pengunaan Bahasa anda?	1
DY	I study the finance and accounting course here.	2
	Emm, for language background saya guna BM yang biasa tu..macam yang kita biasa guna sebab tinggal kat Kajang.	3
	Tapi mak dari Kajang, bapa saya dari Pahang.	4
	Kat Pahang ada bahasa dia yang tersendiri.	5
	But I didn't pick up Pahang accent sebab tak duduk lama kat sana.	6
	Saya memang fasih dalam BM sebab memang cakap BM kat rumah.	7
	BI rasanya bahasa kedua kot...sebab dari kecil dulu parents memang biasakan membaca buku buku BI.	8
	So bila dah kat sini, saya gunakan BI mostly masa kat campus tapi bila berjumpa dengan kawan-kawan dari Msia, saya akan cakap BM.	9
Esther	Berdasarkan pengalaman anda, apakah pendapat anda tentang kehidupan sebagai seorang pelajar di sini?	10
DY	Rasanya okay kot...cuma...emm...kena biasakan diri dengan perubahan cuaca.	11
	So far rasanya okay kat sini, life kat sini okay je kot, rasanya.	12
	Cuma kena cope dengan kuliah dan assessments kat sini.	13
	Memang berbeza dengan kat Malaysia tapi, emm, I'm trying to adapt with the situation here.	14
	Masa mula-mula sampai tu, memang susah juga nak faham English kat sini tapi so far dah okay lah kot.	15
Esther	Boleh kah anda terangkan pengalaman membaca di sini?	16
DY	Susah!!! (Laugh). Last term ada corporation in society yang tu lah yang kena banyak reading. One week dalam about like 20 pages and for that module only.	17
	Lepas tu yang tu memang susahlah (laugh). Sebab macam baca tapi tak paham pun apa yang nak disampaikan.	18
	I need to google some words yang tak faham tu.	19
	Sometimes it depends on subjects.	20
	Evertyhing has been fine macam accounting and finance tu.	21
	Tapi macam the more difficult ones are like maybe the one on global skills those. Ya, reading on those.	22

Esther	Boleh anda ceritakan Perbezaan pengalaman anda membaca di Malaysia dan UK?	23
DY	Maybe kalau sebelum ni kalau kat Msia baca benda yang light je...ah...macam story fiction and then sometimes kalau facts pun tak heavy sangat takde yang specific terms banding yang kat sini.	24
	Kat sini banyak specific terms yang susah nak faham.	25
	Perbezaan dari segi level kot dan macam the wide...macam the range of knowledge tu besar so macam you're supposed to know more than what you are reading...so macam sometimes dia include benda-benda yang kita tak tahu.	26
	So macam you have to like...okay look up...ini apa...ini apa...so it takes time lah.	27
	I think my score for reading bands in IELTS tu tak juga...emm...sebab masa IELTS reading dia tak sesusah academic reading materials yang sekarang macam research papers kan yang kita kena baca. Dulu lagi senang masa reading for IELTS.	28
Esther	Tadi saya telah bertanya tentang latarbelakang Bahasa anda dan juga pengalaman membaca teks Ilmiah di sini. Saya ingin memberi anda peluang untuk berfikir sebentar dan merumuskan sesi kita pada hari ini dengan menyatakan apa yang telah anda rancang untuk menghadapi cabaran semasa pembacaan Ilmiah di sini dan apakah yang ingin di capai?	29
DY	Saya rasa...em...untuk macam cover subjek2 yang sebab lectures tak cukup sangat kan....reading perlu lah untuk additional knowledge.	30
	Tapi yang academic reading in terms of papers tu depends on module kot. Last term, rasa dia macam quite challenging jugalah. So macam...em...I worry juga about the exam later in summer.....tapi...ah…itulah.	31
	Masa I read for this...ah...this module understanding organisational behaviour...yang tu macam dia talk about human.	32
	Banyak yang kita boleh faham...senanglah terms dia semua…better to...easier to understand…tapi macam...reading dia panjang kan so macam you easily get lost.	33
	Tapi kalau yang....yang corporation society tu dia macam globalisation....em...benda benda yang kita take exposed sangat so yang itu memang quite difficult.	34
	So…em...not quite pleasant lah. Em...cepat lost lah bila membaca...bila membaca cepat lost and then macam penat membaca sebab tak faham kena ulang ulang ulang…ah...dengan cepat mengantuk sebab tak faham (laugh).	35
Esther	Sebelum kita tamatkan sesi ini, ada apa-apa yang anda ingin tambah atau ulaskan?	36

DY	I think I need to improve lah...maybe macam faham vocabs.	37
	Lepas tu kena baca laju sikit kot...ah...and then macam...kurangkan ulang ulang tu.	38
Speaker	**Speech**	**Line**
Esther	Boleh anda terangkan pengalaman membaca dalam Bahasa Malaysia?	1
DY	Untuk membaca, dia macam...lagi prefer baca English...emm...exposure dari kecik dulu exposure diberi pada pembacaan buku BI.	2
	Saya tak berapa nak faham baca novel BM sebab saya rasa macam kaku.	3
	Fahamlah...boleh baca..bacalah...baca macam tu saja (giggles)...mungkin sebab dalam percakapan harian, kita dah guna BM sebab tu untuk pembacaan parents lebih tumpukan pada buku BI.	4
	Emm, memang selalunya kalau dah baca depends on the materials kot..dia punya content semua kan...ah...kalau...em, tapi memang biasalah kena baca banyak kali untuk faham...tapi tengok content juga kot.	5
	Kalau benda yang senang, okay senang nak faham. Rasanya kalau macam...macam mana ye...rasanya hari tu baca....em...pasal ....ah...agama tapi dia macam translation kot daripada Arabic translation jadi Malay so dia macam a bit complex.	6
	Tapi tak pernah lah saya buka dictionary untuk look up for meaning rasanya kalau baca je...senang nak faham.	7
Esther	Boleh anda terangkan tentang teks dalam Bahasa Malaysia?	8
DY	Emm...BM actually senang kan...very straightforward.	9
	Kalau membaca, baca dalam hati je kot lepas tu dia ringing balik...em...understanding tu datang macam tu je.	10
	Emm...in general, BM is okay kot...senang tapi perasaan dia...apa yang kita dah biasa atau dengan apa yang kita tak biasa.	11
	Kalau masa kat sekolah tu, baca apa yang perlu. Mostly baca blog yang guna bahasa pasar kan so takde masalah sangat.	12
	Em...rasanya dia kurang...ah…macam mana ye...BM kalau saya rasa kan...baca dia macam dia lambat untuk get to the points sikit...ah…macam dia panjang untuk cakap sesuatu tu dia panjang.	13
	Macam tu lah yang buat tak minat sangat nak baca. Em...sebab benda tu simple tapi cara explanation tu complex.	14
Esther	Boleh anda terangkan tentang teks ilmiah di UK?	15
DY	Text books and research papers.	16

	Terkejut juga dengan academic reading materials kat sini untuk that particular module lah sebab sebelum ni tak pernah baca research papers kan.	17
	A level pun tak pernah prepare untuk tu.	18
Esther	Boleh anda terangkan tentang teks ilmiah di Malaysia?	19
DY	During A level if it's like academic stuffs usually they are from our notes from our lecturers and then text books...not so much of research papers.	20
Esther	Semasa Interview 1, anda ada nyatakan yang tahap Bahasa Inggeris di sini berlainan dengan Malaysia. Boleh anda terangkan perbezaan tersebut?	21
DY	Reading here is more difficult to understand (laugh)	22
	but...em...text books are fine I think but it's more to reading papers...ya...that's more difficult.	23
	So, benda ni yang buat I worried with lecturers.	24
	Kadang kadang risau bila fikirkan yang kita ni tak up to their standard kan.	25
	So, I memang kena improvekan my reading pace to keep up with my reading.	26
	Emm..maybe takes time kot but masa pun tak banyak sangat untuk membaca sebab banyak sangat benda yang nak dibaca (laugh).	27
Esther	Boeh anda terangkan perbezaaan pengalaman membaca di UK dan Malaysia?	28
DY	Like here you need more like a prior reading for lectures and seminars.	29
	Emm....I'm generally a slow reader.	30
	I mean like I like to read word by word to understand and, like feel like the in-depth...the words.	31
	Usually research academic reading I read it many times.	32
	If it's prior reading since I don't know what gonna be taught so I will read everything for important.	33
	In terms of pace, reading in the UK is much slower...emm...and have to read it many times.	34
Esther	Mengapa anda kata begitu? Boleh anda berikan beberapa contoh?	35
DY	Emm, depending on subject matters...emm, last time during A level usually I just read lecture notes and text books and no research papers.	36
	So because of that I think…emm…reading in Malaysia is straightforward.	37
	So, I don't have to read it many times...macam kat sini…kena baca ulang..ulang sampai nak faham.	38
	Cepat lost dan mengantuk…lepas tu macam kena look up for words and terms...(pause)...for me it's prior reading especially for subjects yang baru.	39
Esther	Boleh anda terangkan persamaaan di antara pengalaman membaca di UK dan Malaysia?	40

DY	The language is still…apa tu...is still the same which is English.	41
	Cuma maybe different in terms of level...kat UK rasanya macam the English is very high.	42
	Kat Malaysia senang nak faham sebab it feels like more natural kot...maybe because of the way it is written yang senang nak faham.	43
	Em...tak perlu nak baca ulang ulang...em...apa tu...what's the word?....em....straightforward?	44
	Ya...it's still in English but very straightforward tak macam research papers...kadang kadang lepas baca pun masih tak faham. Itu je lah rasanya kot (laugh).	45

Appendix G: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Information Sheet

Purpose of the study: I have to carry out a research study for my PhD. The study is concerned with Malaysian undergraduates' perceptions and experiences of academic reading in a second language (i.e. English) when they come to study in a new learning context (e.g. in the UK).

What will the study involve: The study will involve individual interview (£2 per session) and reading diary (£1 for each entry) as the primary methods of data collection. The data collection procedure will be conducted in a span of 9 months, excluding study breaks.

Why have you been asked to take part: Participation is voluntary. You are required to sign a consent form. Ideally, you will get to keep the information sheet and a copy of the consent form. You have the option of withdrawing before the study commences or discontinuing after data collection has started. However, payment is not made should you withdraw after data collection has started. The data you provided will be deleted should you discontinue your participation.

Will your participation in this study be kept confidential: I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the thesis. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous.

What will happen to the information you gave: The data will be kept confidential for the duration of the study. On completion of thesis, they will be retained for a further six months and then destroyed.

What will happen to the results: The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis may be read for future students on the course. The study may be published in a research journal.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part: I don't envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part. It is possible that keeping a diary and attending a sequence of follow-up interviews can cause distress.

What if there is a problem: At the end of interviews/reading diary submission, I will discuss with you how you found the experience and how you are feeling. If you subsequently feel distressed or need to get ready for exams, we can take a break for a few weeks.

Who has reviewed this study: The Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me:
Esther Jawing (Email: E.B. Jawing@warwick.ac.uk)
2nd Year PhD Student, Centre for Education Studies,
University of Warwick.
If you agree to take part in this study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

CONSENT FORM

Research Project:
Academic reading experiences and reading strategy usage within sociocultural contexts: A case study of Malaysian undergraduates

	Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.	☐
3. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐
4. I agree to the interviews being recorded.	☐
5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	☐
6. I agree to the payment terms and condition.	☐

Signature:

_____ _____

( ) Date