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## English Reading Strategies Used by Secondary-Level Students

Uma Kandel

### Abstract

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Corresponding Author:

Uma Kandel

Email: [kandeluma@gmail.com](mailto:kandeluma@gmail.com)

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This paper presents an analysis of students' strategies for reading English texts. The narrative inquiry research design was used to study four secondary-level students' experiences of different reading strategies of English texts. The findings show that the students use different cognitive and metacognitive strategies to understand the texts according to their level of reading engagement. They monitor their plans and evaluate their understanding while reading. This study found that reading silently and reading aloud, using previous knowledge while reading new texts, rereading and summarizing the texts, and solving problems are the main strategies used in reading English texts. This study reports that engaged readers use diverse strategies; however, struggling readers use limited strategies. The use of multiple strategies in the reading of English texts helps students better for their achievements and engagement in reading. The study shows that teacher support is important in using strategies because teachers can help students in selecting appropriate reading strategies. This study will be important for English language learners, teachers, educators, researchers, and

motivators for future student-centered pedagogical approaches to transform teaching and learning experiences into EFL classrooms.

**Keywords:** Motivation, reading engagement, reading skills, reading strategies

### Introduction

Reading skill plays an important role for language development (Cartwright, 2023). Reading promotes language competency, knowledge acquisition, learning motivation, and support to meet the purpose of the curriculum (Pun, 2014). Reading skills influence the students' learning achievements, which are considered predictors of success or failure in language learning (Bai & Wang, 2023). Regarding this, Sadiku (2015) writes that reading is an inseparable part of the educational process since a variety of courses appear in reading form within a book or reading materials. Students should be able to use reading strategies for proper reading and comprehension of the text. Reading strategies are techniques used by students while reading a text. According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), reading strategies are students' multiple cognitive processes of comprehending, self-monitoring, and constructing their understandings and beliefs during reading. The use of appropriate reading strategies adds reading motivation to students. The role of motivation is dominant in increasing participation in

reading texts and developing reading skills that facilitate the teaching-learning process and support better achievement (Dewaele et al., 2022; Robinson, 2022).

Completion of the reading passage is a complex process which includes different cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies help the readers to act when they face difficulties in learning, whereas cognitive strategies help them to be psychologically involved in the task. Ghavamnia et al. (2013) describe cognitive strategies such as rereading, underlining, memorizing, taking notes, translating, paraphrasing, reading slowly and carefully, making inferences, and metacognitive strategies such as planning, self-monitoring, self-evaluating, self-questioning, and linking to prior knowledge. The most noticeable characteristics of engaged readers are the cognitive ability to comprehend the text and cognitive strategies for learning from texts. They can use background knowledge, form questions, search for information, summarize accurately, organize their new-found knowledge, and monitor their comprehension as they read books (Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa et al., 2004).

There are various studies in the field of reading strategies development (Almutairi, 2018; Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2021; Dawadi, 2017; Ghavamnia et al., 2013; Shahi & Timsina, 2024; Shrestha, 2018; Upadhyaya & Bhattarai, 2020). However, the strategies were constrained in overall language learning, language skills, methodologies, areas, and levels of students. This study focuses on effective metacognitive and cognitive strategies for better text understanding. The purpose of the study was to explore the reading strategies that secondary-level students use when they read English texts and to analyze the ways for better reading activities. The current literature and my experiences as a student and teacher support the idea that the selection of better strategies increases reading engagement. However, teaching English has been more challenging for the teachers because of the students' disengagement in reading. Reading is a reciprocal experience for both the student and language teachers in the classroom where they part in teaching-learning activities collaboratively (Todd, 2006). The students' role is to be familiar with the strategies and the teacher's role is to assist them to apply those strategies while reading. The teacher should be capable of implementing multiple reading strategies (Hong, 2008). Using reading strategies supports students to follow the better techniques to read the texts which engage them in reading. This study has explored students' narratives incorporating both highly motivated and disengaged readers. This study is mainly based on my long-term teaching experiences in different schools among different levels of learners. As a school teacher, I faced many troubles in teaching English each year. My students' results did not improve which added challenges to my profession. I noticed that there was a problem in the reading engagement of the students since some of them could not complete simple activities given in the texts. Therefore, I attempted to explore the ways of reading texts of the students in rural areas. This study will be significant for those who feel difficulty in teaching reading skills. Similarly, this research will help transform teaching and learning experiences into English teachers, students, educators, researchers and motivators. This research will therefore be important for individuals involved in English learning processes as well as for future student-centered pedagogical approaches.

### **Literature Review**

Reading strategies are techniques of good readers use to handle different types of texts from textbooks or other reading materials. These reading skills or techniques are mental processes that readers use to read and understand texts (Pokharel, 2018). Students apply cognitive and metacognitive strategies to their level of understanding that promote reading engagement by supporting them in understanding difficult texts and fascinating simple texts. However, skilled readers employ more strategies than struggling readers. Teachers can support students with a variety of strategies according

to the engagement level of students, such as model reading (Tankersley, 2005). Students should possess different reading strategies, such as summarizing the text and the teacher should model close reading (Rosenshine, 2012). Regarding these strategies, Ahmadi (2017) reports that cognitive strategies help readers become psychologically engaged in the activity, while metacognitive strategies support them in identifying solutions when they are having reading problems. These techniques support multiple cognitive processes when reading, including understanding, self-monitoring, and making their thoughts and forming opinions to increase the reading motivation of students (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Motivated readers often keep track of plots, use prior knowledge, organize new learning, and summarize ideas (Taboada et al., 2008). However, these attributes are not developed automatically; instead, they need a lot of exposure to time and texts.

Cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies are the reading techniques that the readers use to comprehend the texts. Cognitive reading strategies help students develop their text reading behaviors by using problem-solving techniques, self-evaluation ideas, and self-control strategies while learning (Unrau & Quirk, 2014). Similarly, metacognitive reading strategies as the body of knowledge promote students' reading comprehension and support thinking, about one's thinking whereas existing knowledge is organized as schemas with new learning to construct meaning as comprehension (McTavish, 2008; Palmer, 1981; Zimmerman, 2010). Regarding this, engaged readers can generate meaning from the text they have been reading whereas struggling readers are unable to comprehend the texts well. In this regard, Sanford (2015) generalizes reading strategies as the use of background knowledge, summarizing, making notes, decoding, and monitoring. Engaged readers use metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, questioning, using prior knowledge, and evaluating while reading to prepare themselves for engagement in reading texts (Channa et al., 2014). Similarly, Ghavamnia et al. (2013) claim that readers employ cognitive strategies such as reading the text, underlining the information, memorizing the facts, taking notes, skimming, and scanning the text, thinking about the text, paraphrasing the text, reading slowly, and making inferences about the text. However, Spires and Donley (1998) contend that students' knowledge, attitudes, and experiences may interfere with the comprehension in which struggling readers read and reread the text to integrate prior knowledge.

Students use different cognitive and metacognitive strategies which increase their reading motivation and reading engagement. Planning, monitoring, and evaluating are the metacognitive strategies for reading English (Rastegar et al., 2017). Comprehension strategies like paraphrasing, making connections, integrating prior knowledge, acquiring new knowledge, making inferences, decoding, summarizing texts, and applying new knowledge in their reading can help you to be more engaged in reading (Khusniyah et al., 2017). Although there are three important stages of teaching reading; prereading, while reading, and post-reading, while reading is the most important stage in which students encounter the great ocean of new terminologies. Furthermore, reading strategies such as reading aloud support struggling readers to read the text attentively and silent reading helps motivated readers understand the text well (Reutzel & Juth, 2014). Similarly, the read-aloud teaching strategy allows for the great success of the students, and it also improves the reader's pronunciation (Lekwilai, 2014). Furthermore, students use the read-aloud strategy to engage themselves in reading, focusing, and pointing at new words and important information in the text (Ceyhan & Yldz, 2021). Regarding the read-aloud strategy, Naidu et al. (2013) analyze that it is useful to teach reading skills to struggling readers which guides them to improve pronunciation, develop knowledge, increase comprehension skills, and promote critical thinking. Contrary to the read-aloud strategy, silent reading makes children calm down and think while reading (Merga, 2018). In contrast, the read-aloud strategy

helps the readers concentrate their minds on the text develops knowledge, increases comprehension skills, and fosters critical thinking (Williams, 2006). In the same way, silent reading is mostly related to reading for pleasure, which develops higher reading proficiency and reading speed (Rasinski et al., 2010). Regarding silent reading, Saenger (1997) reported that it develops a think-aloud strategy that helps the readers recall their thinking and use it later to describe their thoughts in the course of reading and it also provides the factors to check whether the reader is engaged or not. Likewise, readers think broadly after reading the texts and reflect on their learning, and readers' plans for reading engagement as readers' thoughts or actions prepare them for engagement in reading a text (Channa et al., 2014). However, Dawadi (2017) reports that metacognitive strategies are more significantly followed by comprehension and cognitive strategies.

Using prior knowledge is an effective component of reading comprehension for students, where classroom interaction and teacher support can increase the engagement of struggling readers (Smith et al., 2021). Similarly, Recht and Leslie (1988) noted that uninterested readers might increase their attention when teachers encourage them to use their prior knowledge. All students do not possess similar skills in using previous background knowledge. However, teachers can develop students' prereading strategies to activate or build background knowledge (Ramsa & Rawian, 2021). Furthermore, struggling readers use the rereading strategy to find the main idea and messages of the text (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Engaged readers use previous knowledge while reading, but struggling readers use the rereading strategy. As Costa and Garmston (2015) claim, the readers set the goal of applying their past knowledge to new situations before reading. Engaging in reading, the students use background knowledge to use other strategies, which is a chain of schemata in which a reader can change schemata and form new ones using old knowledge with text information (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004).

The students use different strategies at three stages of teaching reading to guide their reading with self-evaluation, self-learning, and goal-setting strategies which promote reading engagement and self-evaluation (McCombs, 2013; Smith et al., 2021). Moreover, Fredricks et al. (2016) analyze that students use strategies such as inferencing about the texts, making emotional connections, paraphrasing, and using monitoring skills and fixed-up strategies that modify their reading engagement. The students also use SQ and 3R techniques to be engaged in reading where they can survey, question, read, recall, and review the text to comprehend (Gurning & Siregar, 2017). Struggling readers need support for reading but motivated readers use cognitive strategies to develop text-reading behaviour and use problem-solving methods (Unrau & Quirk, 2014). Similarly, students make an emotional connection between the texts and their personal lives similar to emotional and affective engagement (Fredricks et al., 2016; Pietarinen et al., 2014). Moreover, the students ask their friends to read the text for them as in buddy reading or partner reading (Spires & Donley, 1998; Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

### **Methodology**

This study employs a narrative research design which focuses on studying single or very few people, gathering data through the stories, explaining experiences and discussing the meaning of the experiences (Creswell 2012, 502). It is a process of storytelling and exploring experiences through "restorying" in which people's stories are gathered analyzed and interpreted (Creswell, 2012). This research design provided me with a rich framework to learn about the use of reading strategies and to explore engagement in reading texts (Taylor & Wallace, 2007). I made my understanding, consistency, and connections by retelling participants' stories with collaboration between the participants and myself for trust and respect (Barkhuizen, 2016; Clandinin et al., 2016). Narrative inquiry as a research

design helped me to understand different features of engagement in reading English with the participants' conscious involvement through their stories. In the process of constructing narratives, I made sense of my own lived experiences of using reading strategies while teaching English in EFL classrooms. Narrative inquiry, as a meaning-making process, was very helpful in understanding the perception of participants used in studies of reading engagement and their socially lived stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Being a narrative inquirer, I interpreted the participants' stories to understand their engagement in reading skills in the rural area of Nepal. My research participants' narratives allowed me to examine their stories and analyze the simplicities and complexities they had faced in reading English.

I selected four participants purposively (two girls from grade nine and two boys from grade ten to maintain gender balance in the research namely Kushal, Sangita, Pratap and Namrata pseudonymously) from four different government schools from Dhawalagiri Rural Municipality in a remote area of Myagdi district. Following the idea of Creswell (2007), I involved only four participants in this narrative inquiry study because the small size is useful for analyzing the data properly. I emphasized the diverse background of each participant, as this could enable me to collect multiple understandings, opinions, and experiences in using strategies while reading English. During the field visit, I interviewed the participants about their reading engagement from elementary school to the present. I noted down the strategies of reading English, their challenges, frustrations, hard work, motivation, collaboration, group work, and pair work in developing reading skills inside and outside the classroom. The narratives represent the stories of the reading strategies used.

I used in-depth interviews to gather students' narratives on using strategies while reading English texts as suggested by Cohen et al. (2000). Based on the research questions, I conducted in-depth interviews which allowed the participants to share their experiences in an open-ended way. While collecting data, I established rapport with participants and provided them with information sheets about the research and conducted interviews two times in the Nepali language and recorded the interviews with them on a mobile recorder with their prior consent. I developed an interview guideline that consisted of twelve open-ended questions focusing on their strategy using abilities in reading English texts.

For data analysis, I had to translate the data to English from Nepali language. So, I transcribed the audio recordings on the computer. To avoid missing information from the interview, I listened to the interviews multiple times. Then, I translated the data into English. I coded the data and organized them. The coding process helped me to organize the random data to develop themes. I tabulated the data and categorized them into five different themes which helped me to analyze the data properly. I divided the students' experiences into cognitive and metacognitive strategies through different themes such as planning and monitoring, silent reading and reading aloud, using previous knowledge, rereading and summarizing, and solving problems which helped me better understand the students' reading engagement and analyzing the data.

### **Results and Discussion**

The analysis of data is presented narratively into the following themes. Also, I have discussed the findings with existing literature simultaneously.

#### **Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluating**

It was a challenging task for me to handle the class in grades nine and ten since the students hesitated to read English and I had to spend much time to make them engage in reading. One day, while I was teaching a reading text "Parents" in grade ten, I explained the text, talked about given pre-questions, and engaged them in picture discussion. Then, I asked them to read the text slowly so that I

could move around the class and assist them. I noticed that the students were not enjoying the lesson and were engaged in other tasks as drawing pictures or whispering with friends. Though there are three reading stages as Chiran (a teacher) said, the readers use more strategies in actual reading stages comparatively. It is found that discussing and guessing about the text in the pre-reading stages and evaluating and summarizing in after-reading strategies are also important. In this regard, Kushal from Prakriti Secondary School shared his experience of strategy use, "I plan how much to read before reading. I monitor my reading and go back to the text to be clear about information. Further, I evaluate it while reading. I sometimes guess difficult meanings with the context."

Kushal was a fourteen-year-old grade ten student with a favorable environment to read at home. His father was an English teacher and he studied in a private English medium school up to grade six. He was fond of reading English books. Therefore, he read the story books and other books from his stationary and school library. He shared that he insisted on reading at the primary level because he hated reading. But later, he found reading enjoyable. As he continued to find more books that met his interests, his reading motivation level increased. Sangita, another participant shared:

I did not like to read in my early days. But I like reading English books now. I read interesting books like stories. While reading texts from my textbook, I read pre-questions before reading. I guess about the text and I record it in my copy. I follow five-step techniques while reading such as surveying, questioning, reading, recalling, and reviewing. It helped me to survey the new text, ask a question about the text, read the text, recall, and review it.

The findings portrayed that the students are more engaged in reading with strategies such as planning reading, including who to read, what to read, how much to read, and when to read. However, motivated readers can make plans for reading which develops reading engagement as their thoughts or actions prepare them for engagement in reading a text (Channa et al., 2014). Moreover, the struggling readers' stories of using strategies are different from the motivated readers' stories. One day, I was teaching a text entitled "Sushila's Determination" to grade ten students. Although the text was very simple, they could not read it well. Some of them went through the text, they could not understand it. I asked them to read for their friends in pairs as Cumming-Potvin et al. (2003) say shared reading. Shared reading is a reading strategy in which a reader reads for other friends which helps them better understand the text (Kandel, 2023). Among thirty-four students, Pratap asked me to help him to read. I provided some help and moved to the office. That night I could not sleep well. The next morning, I rang up a teacher at a nearby school and asked about the reading level of the students. He answered that few of the students could read and comprehend the text, some of them just read, and most of them could not read the texts. Another teacher also shared that his students also did not entertain his teaching of reading. They felt sleepy or gossiped with their friends when he assigned the reading task. Pratap, one of my students shared about the using strategies, "I read whatever comes in the text. I do not plan while reading. I reread the text if I do not find the information. Sometimes, I ask my friends to read for me." In the same way, Namrata said, "I do not plan for reading texts. I just read the texts and do true/false and matching items at the end of the texts."

I tried to search for the ways of reading the individual students applied in the language classrooms. Some of the students read themselves but most of them take help from their friends. And few of them liked to avoid reading and they wanted to get rid of reading jobs. I noticed that the students lacked the motivation to read and I realized that I was following old-fashioned strategies of presenting model reading in front of the students. The task of reading was effective with meta-

cognitive strategies because the strategies helped the students pay attention while reading. Similarly, cognitive strategies like paraphrasing, making connections, questioning, making inferences, decoding, summarizing texts, and application of new knowledge in their reading can support them to be more engaged in reading (Khusniyah et al., 2017).

### **Using Previous Knowledge and Solving Problems**

With my long experience of teaching English, I have experienced that engaged readers use advanced strategies such as using previous knowledge while reading texts but struggling readers use a simple strategy such as rereading. The study exposed that engaged readers use their prior knowledge to link new reading with their old learning as schemata in which they set the goal of applying their past knowledge to new situations before reading. One of the participants, Sangita from Malika Secondary School shared:

I link new reading with my previous knowledge related to the topic which helps me to understand more and to connect new reading with the previous reading. I learned the strategy when I was in grade four. I want to read with my friends. I solve the following exercises after reading. I set a picture of the text to understand and remember what I read.

Sangita's engagement in reading is based on her high motivation to use different strategies and techniques in reading. Sangita loved solving problems while reading English where she developed strategies like reading pre-questions, guessing, underlining, summarizing, making conclusions, connecting with previous knowledge, solving problems, memorizing, reading quickly, slow reading, surveying, questioning, recalling, and reviewing. I noticed that Sangita was a strategic reader and she used various strategies in the classroom and in her self-reading processes. Further, she had the skill of using previous knowledge and using multiple strategies in reading texts which supported her to increase reading motivation. In the same way, Kushal, another participant shared:

I use my knowledge while reading the texts. I connect new ideas with my previous learning. It helps me to understand the new text easily. I solve the problem after reading the text. I sometimes support my friends when they need help. I change my thinking after the reading text.

The findings indicate that the students use multiple strategies such as questioning and using prior knowledge while reading English which helped them to comprehend the text better. Likewise, they made the connection of background knowledge with new content, formed questions, searched for information, organized new knowledge, and monitored their comprehension. The narratives indicate that using previous knowledge helps a lot to comprehend the texts and it increases the reading engagement (Harvey, 2007). As a teacher, I never force students to learn English by heart. I always focus on understanding and my teaching is based on a concept developing rather than the marks the students obtain. I ask my students to be engaged with more knowledgeable others to get support from them as Vygotsky (1978) suggests in sociocultural learning theory. Engaging in reading, the students use background knowledge to use other strategies integrating old knowledge in the form of schemata with text information forming new strategies (McTavish, 2008; Palmer, 1981).

The findings showed that the struggling readers were unable to use their previous knowledge while reading a new text and lacked proper schemata for reading. However, they could link simple reading texts with easy texts. Pratap shared, "I can connect simple stories with new reading. I connect my festival with the text like the Jitiya Festival. I feel bad reading texts like Human Trafficking."

Similarly, Namrata shared, "I link easy texts with my previous knowledge, but I could not understand the texts with difficult vocabularies."

Schemata help the readers to link a reader's background information to receive new knowledge where new knowledge is organized and connected in the brain with already known knowledge. It was found that most of the struggling readers cannot solve the problems and motivated readers use cognitive strategies to develop text-reading behavior and to use problem-solving habits of the students. The findings of the study portrayed that engaged and motivated readers apply knowledge to answer new questions, have a high degree of conceptual knowledge, and are highly motivated to solve problems (Taboada et al., 2009; Unrau & Quirk, 2014). It was also found that the students made an emotional connection between the texts and their personal lives which increased their emotional and affective engagement. In contrast, the analysis of the findings showed that the struggling readers asked their friends to read the text for them as modelling that helped them to be engaged in reading English as in buddy reading which developed their knowledge, attitudes, and experiences to scaffold their learning during the shared reading experiences (Spires & Donley, 1998; Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Namrata shared that she took the help from her friends. She said, "I ask my friends to solve the problems for me and to read the text to me. I also ask my teacher to help me in reading." The teacher's role is important to engage readers in the text by helping them to use prior knowledge. According to Dole et al. (1991), teacher-directed prereading strategies assist students in using their previous knowledge. The finding is consistent with Recht and Leslie (1988), who found that when less proficient readers are encouraged to employ their prior knowledge while reading, their performance is like that of good readers.

#### **Silent Reading and Reading Aloud**

Engaged struggling readers like Kushal developed their reading engagement through the silent reading strategy that develop their capacity to comprehend the text. They noted down the important information and connected new learning with previous contents and contexts while reading silently. The readers used the think-aloud strategy in reading which helped to describe the readers' thoughts in the course of reading. Further, a silent reading strategy developed skills such as guessing about the text before reading, evaluating the text while reading, and summarizing the text after reading. Such strategies supported the students to be independent readers and develop skills to solve exercises without looking back at the text which strengthen reading comprehension. Kushal shared, "I like reading silently. I have learned to think while reading silently and I note down it." Similarly, the engaged readers use a silent reading strategy to grasp meaning as Sangita shared, "I read the difficult texts silently. I grasp the meaning in context."

The study found that the students use the read-aloud strategy to engage themselves in reading focusing and pointing at new words and important information in the text. Reading-aloud strategy is useful for teaching reading skills to struggling readers which guides them to improve pronunciation, develop knowledge, increase comprehension skills, and promote critical thinking (Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2021; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Naidu et al., 2013). However, these findings are opposite to the findings of Merga (2018) that students like to read silently because the silent reading strategy makes the children calm down and think while reading which develops reading engagement and comprehension skills. They can reread the text to find the information. Moreover, the struggling readers take help from their teachers and friends as Pratap shared, "I read loudly to develop my pronunciation and to understand the text. If I have any confusion, I read again and take the help of my teachers and friends." Namrata also said, "I read loudly to engage myself in reading." However, students needed some support from the teachers to read the texts and solve the problems. It was found that using the silent



reading strategy allowed the use of different reading strategies such as controlling, planning, monitoring, evaluating, remediating, making inferences, synthesizing, evaluating, writing summaries, and making emotional connections to the text.

The study showed that readers like Pratap and Namrata use more limited strategies than motivated readers like Kushal and Sangita. It also showed that struggling readers are unable to find the answers to the questions and are weak at using prior knowledge which distracts them from the text and causes disengagement. Further, struggling students are poor at paraphrasing and getting meaning from the texts and they rarely use strategic knowledge and take the help of their friends. Moreover, the students use the reading-aloud strategy to improve their pronunciation and comprehension of the texts. Similarly, they asked their friends to read the difficult text for them as modelling that helped them to be engaged in reading English. Further, the findings explored that the motivated readers use the silent reading strategy that develops the think-aloud skill to help the readers recall their thinking and use it later. Thinking aloud strategy helps the readers to describe their thoughts in the course of reading and it also provides the factors to check whether the reader is engaged or not. Moreover, the results from this study support previous research conducted by Almutairi (2018) that thinking aloud is an evaluative instrument that examines students' reading understanding.

The most important strategy of reading which I found is to retell it in front of the class. I tried it in my class and found that some engaged readers only could do this. Further, I found that one of my friends made use of writing immediately after he finished the teaching of reading. However, he shared that it was not effective for all kinds of students. He shared that this kind of responsive writing is very productive for reading engagement. In my class, I found that the students used rereading strategies to find the information. The students read the texts many times for the right information, making their reading fun. Yet, I also observed that it did not work for knowledge development and just works for solving problems. Sustained silent reading- for students' pleasure and information contributes to the proficiency and efficiency of the students (Siah & Kwok, 2010). I gathered the ideas of my friend by writing the words or sentences on the board that the students produce in the class which helps to motivate students and to maintain silence in the classroom.

### **Rereading and Summarizing**

Rereading and summarizing are the strategies that help the students to comprehend the text. The evidence from the narratives showed that the students at the secondary level used a rereading strategy to get the central idea from the text. One day, while I was teaching "Memoir to France..." I engaged them in the group work. Kumar, from group B, asked me why the writer connected the context of Lain Singh Bangdel in the text. I observed that motivated students enjoyed questioning the texts at the post-reading stages. I moved to another group, Kabita from group C was writing the summary of the paragraph. This made me engage students by summarizing the text. Then, I moved to Group D and found that Bina and Gopal were checking their guesses about the text. Next, I moved to group A where they were checking their idea of grasping the gist of the text. They took the help and used strategies such as rereading, reviewing, taking notes, and reading silently. Similarly, some of the students made emotional connections to the texts they read.

The data showed that readers like Pratap felt bad while reading critical and sad texts and were happy about interesting texts. "I feel very sad while reading emotional texts; however, I feel happy for interesting texts." Likewise, the reading strategies developed their engagement and text-reading behavior. In addition, the students made connections between their learning and their personal experiences. Similarly, they wrote summaries and concluded the texts after reading. They used strategies according to the difficulty level of the texts that developed their reading engagement and

content knowledge. The participant, Kushal, said "I guess and evaluate the text and write the summary. I explain the easy-reading texts in my own words and summarize the difficult ones." Similarly, highlighting important information in the text is the frequently used reading strategy. Sangita shared, "I underline important things in the text, write the summary of the paragraph, and make my conclusion while reading. I reread the text to check my guess. I read the easy text quickly and the difficult text slowly because difficult text takes more time to understand."

It was found that the choice of reading strategies depends on students' ability of reading skills. Struggling readers like Pratap make use of limited strategies such as the rereading strategy and reading-aloud strategy while reading. He shared that he was able to make connections with his experiences and feelings while reading. He would gradually improve his reading. Pratap said, "I can make the summary after reading the texts. I sometimes read and reread interesting stories. I cannot understand the texts and go back and read them again." Namrata also shared that she had to reread the text to solve the problem. She shared:

I could not get any points for my first reading. So, I had to read the text again to solve the exercise of the text. I could not understand the theme of the text and I could not use my knowledge while reading the text. But I was able to remember information from the text. It was difficult for me to find the answer from the text in my childhood."

The finding is consistent with Channa et al. (2014) that engaged readers think broadly after reading the texts and reflect on their learning. Reflecting on my experiences, rereading, reviewing, reading aloud, taking notes of important details, and finding the main idea or the gist are important strategies for reading English. In contrast, struggling readers use rereading and reading aloud strategies to find the main idea and messages of the texts which help them to enjoy the text and to be engaged in the text. In this research, the students used the rereading strategy for difficult texts as they could comprehend the simple texts in a single reading. The research found that struggling readers read and reread the text to paraphrase and integrate prior knowledge.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

The study aimed at exploring the reading strategies that secondary level students use when they read English texts and analyzing the ways for better reading activities. The stories collected from four participants in a narrative inquiry show that the readers use different strategies to comprehend the text and develop reading engagement. The findings, analyzed in different four themes, show that the students could follow the strategies of their interest and understanding level. I mainly discovered four strategies for reading English texts which are frequently used by the motivated and struggling readers. However, the struggling readers were limited to some extent in using strategies than proficient readers. I found that the motivated students use multiple reading strategies while reading a single text. It was also found that using prior knowledge helps the students guess meaning from the contexts and integrate it with new knowledge. The engaged readers use metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating in different stages of teaching reading. However, it shows that all the students cannot apply the metacognitive strategies and fail to comprehend the text. Frequent visits to the library can help develop reading habits. Additionally, solving problems also helps the readers develop reading comprehension. The study showed that motivated readers like to solve problems after reading the text however struggling readers can solve very limited exercises like true false activities. The silent reading strategy helps the students to comprehend the text well. The students read silently to

find the gist of the text or to draw a conclusion. Getting support from friends and teachers helps the students become proficient readers. Reading aloud prevents students from gossiping with friends. It also helps the students engage in the text and be active readers. These activities develop interactive reading skills which helps bring positive outcomes in students. Moreover, the students use rereading and summarizing strategies to be engaged in reading. The struggling readers read the texts many times to find the information however the motivated readers comprehend the text in a single reading and summarize the text. Collaboration is an important aspect of reading engagement. I found in the study that struggling students need more support from their teachers and peers to understand the text better. The previous studies on the use of reading strategies were either constrained in overall language learning or limited in elementary-level students. Further, very little literature was found in Nepal to address the reading strategies of secondary-level students. Therefore, this study will support to identify and use of specific reading strategies in the EFL learning environment. Additionally, it will help increase English reading engagement in EFL settings. Furthermore, this study will be important for English language learners, teachers, educators, researchers, and motivators for future student-centered pedagogical approaches to transform teaching and learning experiences into EFL classrooms.

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#### Author's Bio

**Um Kandel** earned MPhil in English Education from Nepal Open University in reading engagement of students in English. She has been teaching English for more than two decades as a secondary-level English teacher in a government school in a rural village in Myagdi district. She is also a visiting faculty at Nepal Open University.