



A Literature Review of Test-taking Strategies in English Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

This literature review examines the role and effectiveness of test-taking strategies in English reading comprehension assessments, synthesizing findings from a wide range of studies conducted between 2012 and 2024. The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these strategies can be optimized to help learners achieve better outcomes in English reading comprehension assessments. Through a detailed analysis of both qualitative and quantitative research, the review highlights the critical importance of various test-taking strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and affective approaches, in enhancing reading comprehension performance across diverse educational contexts. Additionally, the review emphasizes the effectiveness of direct instruction in test-taking strategies, particularly in improving test outcomes and reducing test anxiety among learners. However, the analysis reveals limitations related to the short duration of interventions, a narrow focus on specific strategies, and limited sample sizes, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The review concludes by identifying areas for future research, including the need for longitudinal studies, a broader exploration of diverse strategies, and consideration of individual learner characteristics to optimize instruction in test-taking strategies and improve reading comprehension performance.

Keywords

Literature review; English reading comprehension; Test-taking strategies

1. Research Background

In the realm of English language education, reading comprehension is a critical skill that significantly influences learners' overall language proficiency and academic success. As standardized English assessments, such as the TOEFL, IELTS, and College English Test (CET), play a pivotal role in educational and professional opportunities, understanding the strategies that can enhance performance in these tests has garnered substantial interest among English learners, educators, and researchers. The diversity of strategies employed by test-takers reflects the complex interplay of variables such as language proficiency, familiarity with the test format, and individual differences in cognitive and metacognitive abilities. The ability to comprehend and interpret complex texts under timed conditions poses considerable challenges for many learners, especially those for whom English is a foreign language (EFL).

The diversity of strategies employed by test-takers reflects the intricate interplay of various factors, including language proficiency, familiarity with the test format, and individual differences in cognitive and metacognitive abilities. For many learners, especially those for whom English is a foreign language (EFL), the challenge of comprehending and interpreting complex texts under timed conditions can be daunting. These challenges are further compounded by the pressure of high-

stakes testing environments, where even minor differences in strategy use can significantly influence outcomes.

Given the significant role that reading comprehension plays in language testing, there is a growing need to systematically review the existing literature on test-taking strategies. Such a review can provide valuable insights into the most effective approaches for different types of learners and testing scenarios. It can also highlight gaps in current research and suggest directions for future studies that aim to enhance both the teaching of reading comprehension and the design of reading assessments.

2. Research Objective

By synthesizing findings from a broad range of the existing literature on test-taking strategies in English reading comprehension assessments, this review aims to illuminate the strategies that have been proven to enhance test performance, offering a comprehensive understanding of how test-taking strategies can be optimized to support learners in achieving better outcomes in English reading comprehension assessments. Additionally, the review seeks to identify gaps in the current research and suggest pedagogical approaches that can better support educators and learners in achieving improved test-takers' performance in English reading comprehension, thereby contributing valuable insights to the fields of language testing and educational practice.

3. Methodology

The primary methodology utilized in this study is the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method. The procedure begins by doing thorough data searches on authoritative academic databases, namely Scopus, Google Scholar, and CNKI. These databases are selected for their extensive collection of publications and their commitment to maintaining high scientific standards. The review process consists of multiple stages, beginning with the thorough examination of titles and keywords to gather the initial database. Next, establish predetermined criteria for inclusion and exclusion in order to obtain a more precise database for subsequent analysis. Afterwards, the chosen articles are subjected to a meticulous evaluation, allowing for a full and in-depth investigation of their content.

To illustrate a full picture of the meticulous data selection process, a figure is presented below.

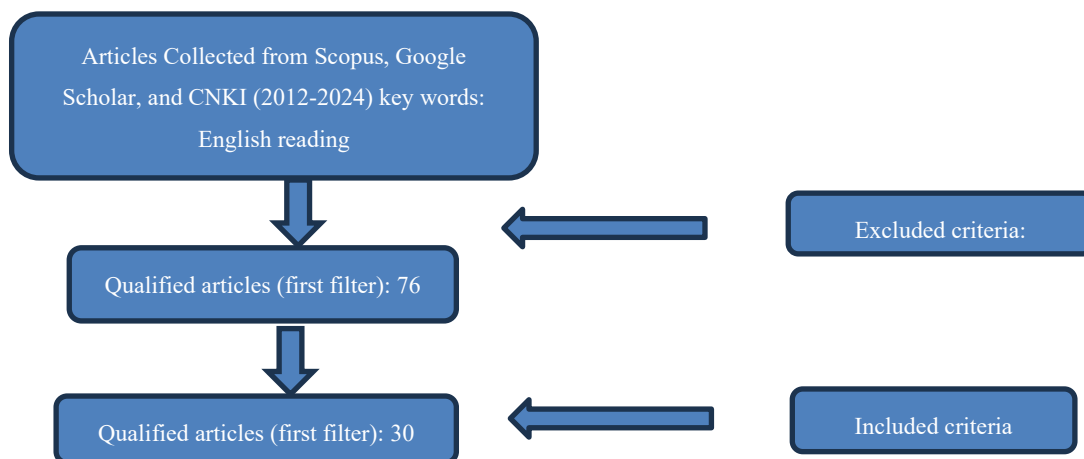


Figure 1. Review Protocol.

As illustrated in Figure 1, an exhaustive exploration conducted across databases, namely Scopus, Google Scholar, and CNKI. The data was refined to extract content pertaining to English reading comprehension and strategies for taking tests. To be more precise, the studies in the mentioned databases focus exclusively on reading abilities to address specific concerns. Initially, a search was conducted for papers published between 2012 and 2024, resulting in a total of 6590 articles. These studies were then refined by include the keyword “EFL” and only empirical research were considered, reducing the number to 1247. After reviewing the abstracts, research that were not relevant to the issue were excluded, resulting in a total of 76 studies. Thus, in order to enhance the precision, specific criteria were established to select papers that were peer-reviewed and relevant. Following the use of the second filter, a total of 30 publications were chosen for

analysis. The parameters for inclusion and exclusion are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Reading comprehension is chosen	Listening/speaking/writing/comprehension or translation is chosen
English testing is aimed	Non-English testing is aimed
Publication data from 2012-2024 is selected	Publication beyond of 2012-2024 is selected
High-relevance and peer-viewed	Non-high-relevance and non-peer-viewed

In summary, the database for this comprehensive review extends from the year 2012 to 2024, including several representative and exemplary publications beyond this period in this field, effectively encompassing a decade-long period of scholarly production. Due to space constraints, it should be mentioned that when addressing the research questions, we only cite and review representative publications, while mainly focusing on the emerging trends in the dataset.

4. The Theories of English Test-taking Strategies

In the field of language assessment, understanding the theoretical foundations behind test-taking strategies is crucial for both educators and learners. By exploring these theories, we can better understand the diverse approaches learners take to enhance their test performance, as well as the implications for educational practice and assessment design. Here will list the main eight theories of English test-taking strategies.

4.1 Cognitive Strategy Theory

Cognitive strategy theory focuses on how test-takers use specific mental processes to improve performance. Olson and Land (2007) identified cognitive strategies like inferencing, summarizing, and associating as key to processing information in language learning. The results showed that these strategies were widely used in English tests to enhance writing and reading comprehension, helping test-takers manage complex information more effectively. However, Oxford (2011) found that learners with higher language proficiency benefit more from strategies, applying them more effectively due to greater flexibility. In contrast, those with lower proficiency may struggle, often due to limited linguistic resources or lack of experience. Familiarity with the strategies also plays a crucial role, as prior exposure and practice enable test-takers to use them more confidently.

4.2 Metacognitive Strategy Theory

Metacognitive strategy theory explores how test-takers monitor and regulate their thinking during tests. Introduced by Flavell (1979), this concept emphasized self-awareness and control over cognitive processes. His research showed that using metacognitive strategies like planning, monitoring, and evaluating can significantly boost test performance by improving time management and flexibility in handling difficult questions. However, the effectiveness of these strategies varied among individuals, underscoring the need for targeted training in educational settings.

4.3 Affective Strategy Theory

Affective strategy theory focuses on how test-takers manage emotions and anxiety during exams, especially in high-pressure environments. Effective strategies like self-encouragement, relaxation techniques, and positive self-talk can help reduce test anxiety and boost confidence (Clemons-Shaw, 2021). The results proposed that cultural differences influenced the use and effectiveness of these strategies, with studies like Liu (2010) highlighting their widespread use among Chinese test-takers in CET exams. However, the impact of culture on affective strategies needs further exploration.

4.4 Social Strategy Theory

Social strategy theory focuses on how interaction with others enhances learning and test preparation. Rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, it suggested that learners improved their cognitive skills through social interaction. Social strategies like cooperative learning, discussions, and peer tutoring were commonly used in English test preparation to help students better grasp test content. However, the effectiveness of these strategies depended on group dynamics and

individual engagement, highlighting the need for careful implementation in educational settings.

4.5 Learning Strategy Theory

Learning strategy theory explores how learners use various strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and resource management, to improve outcomes. Effective combination of these strategies can significantly enhance test performance (Chamot, 2005). Research by Cohen (2007) showed that targeted training in learning strategies boosts listening, reading, and writing skills. However, strategies must be tailored to individual needs and test requirements, highlighting the importance of personalized and targeted training in education.

4.6 Information Processing Theory

Information processing theory views learning as a system where information is received, encoded, stored, and retrieved. Craik and Lockhart (1972) emphasized the importance of “deep processing” for memory and learning. In English tests, strategies like keyword identification, categorization, and mnemonic devices helped test-takers manage complex tasks. The results showed that effective use of these strategies can improve accuracy and speed in reading comprehension, but their effectiveness depends on individual cognitive abilities and task complexity, which should be considered in training.

4.7 Strategic Learning Theory

Strategic learning theory focused on the deliberate selection and adjustment of strategies to achieve specific learning goals. Strategic learners adapted their approaches to different tasks and question types, improving overall test performance (Zimmerman, 2002). They were more effective in managing resources and time, especially with complex tasks. However, developing these skills requires long-term training and feedback, which is often lacking in traditional teaching methods.

4.8 Test Anxiety Theory

Test anxiety theory examined how anxiety during exams affected performance. High test anxiety can disrupt cognitive functions, leading to distractions and difficulties in processing information, which negatively impacts test results (Putwain, Connors, & Symes, 2010). To combat this, strategies like relaxation techniques, cognitive restructuring, and positive self-talk were recommended. Recent studies also highlight how cultural factors, such as social pressure in Eastern contexts, influence test anxiety. Future research should further explore how test anxiety and coping strategies vary across different cultural backgrounds.

In summary, these eight theories provide a rich framework for understanding and analyzing test-taking strategies in English testing. Each theory reveals different aspects of how test-takers manage cognitive, affective, and social processes when handling test tasks. These theories offer a solid foundation for research on test-taking strategies and valuable guidance for educational practice.

5. The Definition of English Test-taking Strategies

Test-taking strategies refer to the specific approaches and techniques that learners use when completing language test tasks. Numerous scholars have contributed to the understanding of test-taking strategies. Cohen (1994) defined them as tactics used by learners specifically in the context of assessment. He emphasized that these strategies were integral to the test-taking process and reflected broader learning behaviors. This perspective was supported by subsequent research, which highlighted the dynamic and context-dependent nature of test-taking strategies. Green and Oxford (1995) focused on the role of self-regulation in language learning and testing, highlighting how self-regulated learning strategies can enhance test performance.

Cohen and Upton (2007) defined test-taking strategies as conscious processes chosen by respondents during tests, emphasizing the role of awareness in adapting strategies to optimize performance. Teng, F. (2020) emphasized the role of metacognitive strategies in language learning and assessment, highlighting how planning, monitoring, and evaluating one’s performance can enhance test outcomes. Similarly, Nguyen and Gu (2020) described these strategies as the methods test-takers used to effectively answer questions, highlighting the importance of adaptability and skill in navigating different test formats and question types. Most of the above definitions stressed the strategic and dynamic nature of test-taking, requiring preparation and real-time decision-making.

6. The Classification of English Test-taking Strategies

Test-taking strategies are crucial for understanding how English learners approach and manage various types of assessments. The classification of these strategies provides insights into the specific techniques employed by test-takers to enhance their performance. This literature review examines the primary classifications of test-taking strategies as discussed by key scholars in the field, offering a comprehensive understanding of how these strategies are categorized and utilized.

Cohen (1998) categorized test-taking strategies into two types: language use strategies and test-wiseness (TW) strategies. Lee and Lee (2004) further divided these into three subcategories: reasoning (using background knowledge), time management (skipping and prioritizing tasks), and illogical guessing (relying on intuition). Cohen and Upton (2007) revised this classification to include language learner strategies, test management techniques, and TW strategies. Test management involves effectively navigating test tasks, while test-wiseness focuses on using cues from the test format to improve scores. Rezaee (2006) also categorized test-taking methods into general strategies, applicable across various tests, and specific strategies tailored to particular test formats, such as multiple-choice or essays.

Griffiths (2008) provides a comprehensive overview of language learning strategies, including test-taking strategies, and emphasizes the need for personalized strategy training to meet individual learner needs. In 2009, Hirano classified test-taking tactics into three primary categories: 1) language learner strategies, which encompass the utilization of fundamental abilities in listening, reading, speaking, and writing, as well as related skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and translation; 2) test management strategies, which are methods for efficiently addressing test items and tasks; and 3) test-wiseness strategies, which exploit knowledge of test formats and peripheral information to answer questions without fully engaging in the expected linguistic and cognitive processes.

In conclusion, the classification of test-taking strategies is a complex and multi-dimensional topic that has been explored extensively by scholars such as Cohen (1998), Lee and Lee (2004), Cohen and Upton (2007), Houston and Elizabeth (2005), Rezaee (2006), Griffiths (2008), and Hirano (2009). These classifications offered valuable frameworks for understanding how learners can optimize their test performance through a combination of language use, logical reasoning, strategic guessing, test management, and test-wiseness. By integrating these diverse strategies, test-takers can enhance their ability to perform well across various types of assessments, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

7. Research Results

Test-taking methods are crucial in the context of reading and are employed by individuals taking tests throughout the testing process. This section outlines the most noteworthy findings of the investigations. The results are categorized based on the specific research viewpoints into four perspectives.

7.1 Qualitative Research

From a qualitative research perspective, these studies employed qualitative methods to deeply explore test-taking strategies in English reading comprehension. Setiawan (2020) used a case study approach, conducting in-depth interviews to understand how university students, particularly those who had taken the Test of English Proficiency (TEP) multiple times, integrated learning and test-taking strategies into their daily lives. The results showed that all participants employed various strategies to enhance their English skills and successfully pass the TEP.

Singh et al. (2021) examined reading test-taking strategies among 44 ESL learners in Malaysia, who had weak English proficiency as indicated by their low scores on the Malaysian University English Test (MUET). Through think-aloud protocols and focus group interviews, the study found that learners used cognitive, metacognitive, and compensatory strategies, but they struggled with understanding certain keywords, which hindered their comprehension of the reading text.

Zulmaini (2021) analyzed the reading comprehension performance of three students preparing for the TOEFL exam. The findings indicated that the students used a variety of strategies, including planning, monitoring, and comprehension, to address different levels of difficulty.

Wicaksono and Jatmiko (2024) studied the reading comprehension strategies of five high-achieving TOEFL students, identifying eight key strategies, including scanning the text and using elimination techniques for answering multiple-choice questions. Finally, Al Fraidan (2024) conducted a longitudinal study using think-aloud protocols and retrospective interviews to explore the test-taking strategies of 40 Saudi EFL students majoring in English. The study revealed that students employed various strategies across cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social functions.

In summary, these studies all employed qualitative methods to investigate the use of strategies by different learners in

English reading comprehension tests. While each study offers valuable insights, the small sample sizes and lack of consideration for external factors may limit the generalizability of the findings. These studies highlight the importance of qualitative analysis in understanding the complexities of learning and testing behaviors, while also pointing to areas for improvement in future research.

7.2 Quantitative Research

From a quantitative research perspective, these studies systematically explored the relationship between test-taking strategies and English reading comprehension performance using various quantitative methods. The findings from these studies collectively highlight the significance of test-taking strategies in influencing reading comprehension outcomes across different proficiency levels and testing contexts. For instance, Pourdana (2012) found that evaluation strategies were more frequently used by proficient and intermediate students, while low-ability students relied more on test-wiseness strategies. Similarly, Kashkouli and Brarati (2013), and Kashkouli et al. (2015) observed that proficient learners employed monitoring and evaluation strategies more extensively, whereas beginners and low-ability students used different strategies, such as planning and test-wiseness. Pour-Mohammadi and Abidin (2012) demonstrated the effectiveness of direct instruction in test-taking strategies, with students showing improved performance and positive attitudes toward the training.

Other studies, such as Fu Chunxia (2020), emphasized the role of cohesive devices in enhancing comprehension during high-stakes tests like the CET-4. In contrast, Al-Khasawneh (2020) found no significant correlation between test-taking strategies and reading comprehension achievement, indicating that the effectiveness of these strategies may vary depending on the context. Afrianti (2020), Nguyen and Kim (2022) identified positive correlations between effective strategy use and improved reading scores, though the duration of interventions and sample sizes were noted as potential limitations. Furthermore, studies like Gustanti and Ayu (2021), Ahmadi Safa and Karbakhsh Ravari (2022) underscored the importance of cognitive and psychological factors in test performance, with mastery and performance goal orientations emerging as strong predictors. Almalki (2023) highlighted the complex interplay between multiple-choice test-taking strategies, test anxiety, and language achievement, revealing gender differences in outcomes. Finally, Jusoh & Kassim (2023) focused on the varying difficulty of reading subskills across different text types, suggesting a need for further research in this area.

In summary, these studies systematically explored the relationship between test-taking strategies and English reading comprehension performance using various quantitative methods. The research highlighted that test-taking strategies, such as evaluation, monitoring, and test-wiseness, play a significant role in influencing reading comprehension outcomes. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of incorporating tailored test-taking strategies into educational practices to enhance reading comprehension performance, though further research is needed to explore the long-term effects and the influence of external factors.

7.3 Test-taking Strategies and Test Performance

These studies collectively explore the relationship between test-taking strategies and test performance, particularly in the context of English reading comprehension. Majid Pour-Mohammadi and Mohamad Jafre Zainol Abidin (2012) demonstrated that direct instruction in test-taking strategies significantly improved the reading comprehension performance of Iranian EFL undergraduates, with students also showing positive attitudes towards the instruction. Pourdana (2012) found that while evaluation strategies were more frequently used by proficient and intermediate students for inference tasks, low-ability students relied more on test-wiseness strategies. Similarly, Kashkouli and Brarati (2013), Kashkouli et al. (2015) identified varying use of test-taking strategies across different proficiency levels, with proficient students using more sophisticated strategies like monitoring and evaluation, while beginners focused more on planning. Jia-Ying, Lee (2018) and Nava et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of metacognitive strategies in enhancing reading performance, with successful test-takers employing these strategies more effectively. On the other hand, Fadi, Maher, Al-Khasawneh (2020), and Afrianti (2020) found no significant correlation between the use of test-taking strategies and reading comprehension achievement, though they acknowledged that effective strategy use could still positively influence performance. Nguyen & Kim (2022) reported significant improvements in reading comprehension scores following strategy training, although the short duration of the intervention was a limitation. Gustanti and Ayu (2021), Par (2020) focused on cognitive strategies, identifying problem-solving strategies as key predictors of reading success. Finally, Ahmadi Safa and Karbakhsh Ravari (2022) emphasized the strong predictive power of test-taking strategies and goal orientations in determining EFL learners' test performance.

Overall, these studies underscored the critical role of test-taking strategies in influencing test performance across different proficiency levels and testing contexts. While some studies found significant correlations between effective strategy

use and improved test outcomes, others highlighted the variability in strategy effectiveness depending on factors like test format and student ability.

7.4 Effectiveness of Test-Taking Strategy Instruction

Some related studies explore the effectiveness of test-taking strategy instruction in improving reading comprehension and test performance across various educational contexts. Majid Pour-Mohammadi and Mohamad Jafre Zainol Abidin (2012) demonstrated that Iranian EFL undergraduates who received direct instruction in test-taking strategies significantly outperformed a control group in reading comprehension tests, with students also showing positive attitudes toward the instruction. Similarly, Nguyen and Kim (2022) found that after seven weeks of test-taking strategy instruction, Vietnamese high school students exhibited marked improvements in reading comprehension scores and expressed favorable attitudes toward the testing practices, although the short intervention period may limit long-term assessments. Rochmawati and Kusumayati (2023) further confirmed the benefits of strategy instruction, showing that participants who underwent a brief, focused training outperformed those who did not, with the added benefit of reduced test anxiety, though the study's scope was somewhat limited by its short duration and singular focus. Lastly, Kurniatillah (2024) highlighted that the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy effectively enhanced reading comprehension for students with low reading anxiety, although it had a limited impact on those with high anxiety, underscoring the nuanced effectiveness of different strategies depending on learner characteristics.

These studies underscored the positive impact of test-taking strategy instruction on reading comprehension and overall test performance. Effective strategy instruction not only improved students' academic outcomes but also enhanced their confidence and reduces anxiety in test situations. However, the studies also highlighted limitations such as short intervention durations, narrowed focus on specific strategies, and limited sample sizes, which may affect the generalizability of the results.

8. Conclusion

This review highlights the significant impact that test-taking strategies can have on English reading comprehension performance, as evidenced by numerous studies conducted over the past decade. Effective use of strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive, and affective approaches has been shown to enhance test performance, improve learners' confidence, and reduce anxiety in testing situations. Moreover, direct instruction in test-taking strategies has proven to be a valuable tool in helping students achieve better performance, particularly in high-stakes assessments. This suggests that test-taking strategies are not merely intuitive but can be systematically taught and learned, making them a powerful tool in English teaching and learning. It tells that educators should consider tailoring strategy instruction to the specific needs and characteristics of their students. Despite these positive findings, the review also identifies a variability in the effectiveness of these strategies, which depends on factors such as the specific strategy employed, the test format, and individual learner characteristics. For instance, while some strategies may be highly effective in certain test formats, they may offer limited benefits in others. Similarly, a strategy that works well for one learner might be less effective for another, depending on their unique cognitive and emotional profile. This variability highlights the necessity for a more nuanced understanding of how these strategies can be tailored to meet the diverse needs of learners.

In conclusion, while test-taking strategies have proven to be highly effective in improving English reading comprehension performance, their successful implementation requires careful consideration of the unique needs and contexts of learners. The findings of this review advocate for a more personalized and context-sensitive approach to strategy instruction, one that recognizes the diverse ways in which students engage with and benefit from these strategies. By doing so, educators can maximize the potential of test-taking strategies to support all learners in achieving their academic goals, ultimately leading to more equitable and effective educational outcomes.

9. The Limitations of the Study

While the existing research on test-taking strategies in English reading comprehension provides valuable insights, several limitations are evident across the studies reviewed. These limitations can be categorized into the following areas.

9.1 Sample Size and Generalizability

A major issue in many studies is the small sample size, which limits the generalizability of the findings. For instance, research by Zalha, Alfiatunnur, and Kamil (2020), as well as Wicaksono and Jatmiko (2024), involved a limited number of participants, which may not represent the broader population of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Such

small-scale studies may fail to capture the full diversity of test-takers' strategies and their impact on test performance.

9.2 Methodological Constraints

The reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires and interviews may introduce potential biases, such as social desirability bias, where participants might exaggerate their use of effective strategies. Furthermore, while quantitative methods such as ANOVA and t-tests were widely used, these approaches may not fully capture the nuanced cognitive processes involved in test-taking. The lack of mixed-methods approaches in some studies means that the qualitative depth required to understand the why and how behind strategy use is often missing.

9.3 Limited Exploration of Long-Term Effects

Most studies, such as those by Nguyen and Kim (2022), and Rochmawati and Kusumayati (2023), focus on short-term interventions to evaluate the effectiveness of test-taking strategy instruction. This raises questions about the generalizability of the research results. However, the long-term impact of these strategies on sustained academic performance remains underexplored. The short duration of interventions may not yield a thorough understanding of how test-taking strategies influence learners over time. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore how these strategies impact performance over time.

9.4 Under-Representation of Lower Proficiency Learners

While many studies explore test-taking strategies among proficient and intermediate learners, there is a lack of focus on low-proficiency learners. For example, Pourdana (2012) and Kashkouli et al. (2015) touched upon this demographic but did not provide an in-depth analysis. As a result, the unique challenges and strategy needs of lower proficiency learners remain under-explored.

In conclusion, while the current researches offer valuable insights into test-taking strategies in English reading comprehension, these limitations highlight the need for further research that addresses sample size, contextual diversity, methodological rigor, and the exploration of long-term and broader effects.

Furthermore, while some research provides a strong theoretical foundation, there is a noticeable gap between theoretical models and empirical findings in many studies. The lack of integration between theory and practice hinders the development of a cohesive understanding of how test-taking strategies influence test performance. Overall, these limitations indicate a need for future research that addresses sample diversity, methodological rigor, and the exploration of long-term effects, ensuring a more thorough and applicable understanding of test-taking strategies in various educational contexts.

10. Recommendations for Further Research

Regarding future study, there are various areas that appear to be worthy of concentration. The aforementioned inconsistencies in the findings of certain studies pertaining to similar topics deserve further investigation. There are numerous unexplored areas of investigation.

Firstly, future research should expand sample sizes and ensure diversity to improve the representativeness of findings. Including diverse samples from different cultural and educational backgrounds will enhance the generalizability and external validity of the results. Further research into the impact of gender and proficiency differences on test results will help develop fairer test methods and more targeted strategy instruction.

Secondly, longitudinal studies are necessary to assess the long-term effects of test-taking strategy instruction on reading comprehension performance. While many studies focus on short-term interventions, understanding how these strategies influence performance over time will provide more comprehensive insights into their effectiveness and sustainability.

Thirdly, future research should integrate more robust mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative data with qualitative insights. This approach would allow for a deeper exploration of the cognitive processes underlying strategy use and how these processes interact with other factors, such as test anxiety, prior knowledge, and metacognitive awareness.

Lastly, there is a need to explore the relationship between test-taking strategies and different types of reading assessments, including their impact on both lower-order and higher-order reading skills. This research should also investigate how technology-based testing environments might influence strategy use and test performance, given the increasing prevalence of digital assessments.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to the development of more effective instructional practices and assessment tools that better support learners in achieving their full potential in English reading comprehension.

Author Contributions

Author 1 conceptualized the research framework and led the project. Author 2 designed the methodology, including the systematic review protocol. Each author played a distinct, integral role in the research, ensuring a comprehensive and methodologically sound study.

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