



THE EFFECT OF EXPLICIT STRATEGY-BASED INSTRUCTION ON MOROCCAN EFL UNIVERSITY LEARNERS' USE OF METACOGNITIVE EVALUATING STRATEGIES (RECALLING AND SUMMARIZING) IN READING ENGLISH (L3) WRITTEN TEXTS

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Abstract:

This study, derived from one of the major sections of my unpublished doctoral dissertation tackling the correlation between explicit training in cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies (CMRSs) and EFL reading achievement in tertiary education (Defended in 2015), is an endeavor to reveal the perceived effect of metacognitive evaluating strategies (MESs) instruction on Moroccan English Department learners' strategic reading behavior. Targeting 113 EFL university learners (experimental group: n=63; control group: n=50), the study explores the impact of explicit metacognitive intervention on the learners' recourse to recalling and summarizing, as metacognitive reading strategies (MRSs) tapped for assessing their understanding of the EFL textual input. To collect the relevant data, explicit reading strategy instruction (ERSI), reading comprehension texts (i.e., narrative, expository), narrative and expository reading tests, and a retrospective questionnaire (RQ) were relied upon. The results evince that, whilst the experimental group (n=63) advanced at the level of both metacognitive evaluating strategies use and text summary-related scores, its counterpart (control group) in the control condition did not reveal any marked increase in the application of the targeted metacognitive evaluating strategies (MESs) and the scores pertinent to text-based summary performance across the pre-post-test stages. Accordingly, a corpus of relevant recommendations and implications are discussed, and a few limitations are set forth.

Keywords: metacognition, metacognitive evaluating strategies, metacognitive strategy intervention, recalling, summarizing

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1. Introduction

The tacit perspective that the meta-strategic moves of recalling and summarizing the English (L3) textual input can only be effected through metacognitive control underscores the function performed by the cognitive memory system. It is obvious that the effective performance of these metacognitive evaluating strategies (MESs) (i.e., recalling, summarizing) necessitates the execution of cognitive mechanisms and mental capabilities in processing L3 written texts. In effect, granted that metacognition and text processing are inextricably correlated (Garner, 1987; Tonks & Taboada, 2011), the pivotal importance of memory processes, meta-thinking skills, and meta-comprehension heuristics in generating efficient sense out of any advanced-level L3 written discourse is to be substantiated. As stated by Flavell (1976), metacognition denotes “*one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them, e.g., the learning relevant properties of information or data*” (p.232). This shows that metacognition is perceived as the conscious knowledge of the strategic course of action that facilitates textual comprehension and meaning construction. Thus, metacognition/ metacognitive thinking constitutes the fundamental bedrock for deciphering and grasping the message intended by the writer/ author in the L3 written discourse.

Indeed, involving self-regulated behaviors as well as cognitive monitoring for the sake of understanding the presumptions and assumptions articulated by the writer/ author in any L3 written text, inferential comprehension is heavily dependent upon planning, monitoring, and evaluating (Msaddek, 2013, 2015). It is the cognitive engagement in such higher-level, metacognitive strategic moves that ensures the meaning-making procedure, especially in processing advanced-level L3 written passages. This features that knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition, which represent the robust tenets of metacognition (Baker & Brown, 1984), are necessary conditions for metacognitively processing and reflectively synthesizing a vast plethora of English (L3) written texts, and thus complying with the set dimensions and the rigorous requirements undergirding sophisticated university-level L3 reading.

It is true that the critical evaluation of one’s understanding of English as a foreign language (EFL) textual passages can be executed via such MESs as recalling and summarizing. That is, after the conduct of the cognitive reading process, learners are supposed to assess their overall grasp of the textual input by recalling the major ideas, presuppositions, and views, as well as composing an efficient summary of the gist of the text under critical study. This reflects that evaluating, which entails self-regulation, cognitive control, and metacognitive flexibility, is principally concerned with determining the extent to which textual comprehension is attained. More explicitly, learners can accomplish a comprehensive, accurate evaluation of the conducted reading process to ensure that the demands of the task are met, the meaning is fully understood, and the monitoring process is performed in an efficient manner.

Given that most Moroccan EFL university learners do not immerse themselves in critically assessing their textual understanding and their meta-comprehension level upon

the completion of the reading process, namely in L3, it is imperative to investigate this topical issue at length. Thus, the current research study unearths whether explicit metacognitive strategy training enables the first-semester English Department learners to resort to the metacognitive strategic acts of recalling and summing up any assigned English (L3) written discourse and whether they generate effective, coherent summaries relatable to the advanced-level L3 textual input (i.e., narrative, expository).

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Psycho-cognitive Process of Reading

Being performed through the working memory system that enables learners to think and reflect upon the textual input in a metacognitive fashion, reading is an effective medium of attaining a good command of language (Amini *et al.*, 2020; Williams, 1984). In fact, the cognitive process of reading does have a pivotal function in incrementally improving students' language learning and enriching their schematic knowledge (i.e., content, formal, and cultural schemata). Actually, reading is conceived as an interactive process requiring a great deal of participation from the reader insofar as being engaged in processing any particular text, the reader is highly expected to check the meaning of words and ask a wide range of self-regulatory questions. In this regard, reading, as a receptive skill, is deemed a typical kind of conversation between the reader and the writer (Nattall, 1996). Hence, it requires the reader to interact with the text so as to make complete sense of its meaning.

According to Goodman (1976-1982), reading is viewed as a 'psycholinguistic guessing game' that involves invoking and putting into practice a corpus of cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies (CMRSs). This working definition, representing the underlying psycholinguistic theory and manifesting the core psychological aspects relatable to foreign language (FL) text processing, shows that reading is a selective process in which the reader selects the statements, paragraphs, and words that will lead him/ her to the building up of a comprehensive understanding of the textual input (Msaddek, 2015). That is, in reading any particular written text, the reader attempts to get the intended meaning by reading the included paragraphs and focusing on the important ideas and key concepts. In fact, readers are supposed at times to read texts selectively according to their own set purposes with a view to generating an efficient sense of the articulated input (Msaddek, 2015).

Grabe and Stoller (2001) postulate that reading is "*the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately*" (p.9). This manifests that learners are supposed to resort to their inferential and interpretive skills to understand the ideas embedded in the text. Obviously, the multifaceted process of reading, which necessitates the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Msaddek, 2015, 2023), is a purposeful activity enabling the learners to gain the insights and views declared in the written text. That implies that readers usually start the reading process to get the information that they need in the academic context, to answer the assigned

comprehension questions, to summarize the stated textual input, and to develop their awareness of cultural knowledge through reading magazines, books, novels, and articles. These set reading purposes, among other ones, serve as a real impetus for EFL learners to engage in any enquiry-driven, purposive reading activity. Thus, reading, which presupposes metacognition/ metacognitive thinking, self-regulation, and retrospection to an appreciable degree (Msaddek, 2015), provides readers with an ample opportunity to get acquainted with the vast literature and gain a broadly rich knowledge about differing subject matters.

Viewed from a metacognitive lens, reading comprehension, as a perceptual process necessitating cognitive mechanisms and heuristics, is perceived as a cognitively demanding endeavour. When EFL learners are exposed to an L3 written text, they interact with it and attempt to interpret its content according to their own general knowledge by means of a myriad of strategic actions (Msaddek, 2015). This process of interaction between the reader and the text can only take place when the reader understands the language of the target written text. In other words, the reader, in reading the text, is expected to be particularly familiar with the combinations of letters in the spelling of words (Williams, 1984). Further, in attempting to understand the text's content, learners have to relate the text input to their prior knowledge. In this sense, the aim of the readers' background knowledge is *"to provide frameworks for interpreting the world, including, in reading, the world of the text"* (Davies, 1995, p.66). In essence, in the educational context, the link between university-level learners, as potential, autonomous readers, and the text is only forged if they engage in metacognitive, flexible thinking by asking self-directive questions during text processing and assessing their understanding of the writer's/ author's views, speculations, and thoughts. This fact stresses the critical importance of the relation between the written discourse and the reader in the derivation of the included meaning.

2.2. The Importance of Metacognitive Evaluating Strategies (MESs) in EFL Reading

It is significant to note that evaluating is deemed to be a sophisticated thinking strategy (Duffy, 2009). It fundamentally occupies a crucial part of the cognitive process of reading the written discourse in a critical, evaluative mode. Putting into effect the evaluating procedure enables learners to promote the potential of improving their planning and monitoring strategies (Msaddek, 2015). For Duffy (2009), evaluating is *"a crucial comprehension strategy"* (p.169) via which learners do not only recall the main ideas and summarize the text's meaning, but also foster a wide knowledge of the efficient strategies used in dealing with the written text. In this respect, evaluating one's understanding is embodied in recalling the main ideas and writing an efficient summary of the text under study (Msaddek, 2015).

To begin with, it can be stated that recalling the main points raised in a given written text is an efficient way of assessing one's grasp of the content. This notion is highlighted by Marshall and Glock (1978-79), who maintain that *"recall is considered to be a measure of comprehension"* (p.48). It does, in effect, help EFL learners determine the basic

extent to which they can make sense of the text. It is through remembering the major ideas which are selected, underlined, and taken note of during the reading process that readers can ensure adequate achievement of comprehension. This evaluating strategy can be performed by learners with the chief purpose of reinforcing their retention of the textual thoughts and strengthening their understanding of the presented concepts and views (Msaddek, 2015). Actually, readers' recall of the necessary information serves as a potential step for checking or reviewing the textual meaning, and thus increasing their comprehension of the author's/writer's intended message.

Given the primary importance that can be ascribed to the strategy of recalling the text's core ideas, it can be claimed that this strategy allows the learner readers to evaluate the course they have undertaken in processing and synthesizing the content (Msaddek, 2015). In other words, the ideas and views included in the written discourse can be recalled only if learners have successfully predicted, inferred, paraphrased, monitored, and questioned the text's meaning under critical study (Msaddek, 2015). This suggests that recalling the content is strongly based on the implemented strategic reading moves that facilitate the attainment of effective comprehension. Thus, remembering the most crucial points of the text can be, at times, a demonstration of a more sophisticated and thorough understanding (Msaddek, 2015). Clearly, in this experimental study, an attempt is made to know whether or not the target EFL learners metacognitively evaluate their understanding of the assigned texts.

As another effectual metacognitive reading strategy, summarizing is considered as "*the creation of a brief retelling of a text*" (Duffy, 2009, p.153). It is a potent step allowing EFL learners both to monitor and evaluate their overall comprehension of the target text because the act of writing of a concise summary of the text content helps readers assimilate what is stated by the author's/writer's ideas. This view is corroborated by many researchers who state that summarizing the passage read enhances comprehension and recall of text content (e.g., Brown & Day, 1983; Marzec-Stawiarska, 2016; Rinehart *et al.*, 1986; Wittrock & Alesandrini, 1990). In actuality, to construct an exhaustive text-based summary, as an efficient means for assessing their understanding, learners are expected to identify the primary ideas of the text and disregard the less important information (Msaddek, 2015).

In this context, Hidi and Anderson (1986, in Stein & Kirby, 1992) differentiate between two kinds of summarization: 'text-absent' and 'text-present' summarization. The first type of summarization is performed by learners after reading the written text. They generate a summary by recalling what has been processed without looking back at the target text. This process assists readers in deeply analyzing and synthesizing the written discourse, thus achieving sufficient comprehension (Hidi & Anderson, 1986, in Stein & Kirby, 1992). On the contrary, 'text-present' summarization is generated by learners with heavy reliance on the text content. To provide this kind of written summary, learners have to reread the text while they are composing the summary. However, this kind of summarization "*may encourage low-level summarization strategies*" (Stein & Kirby, 1992, p. 219). It does not allow learners to think more critically about the textual content.

This evinces that 'text-absent' summarization can be an efficient way of assessing comprehension. This type of summary writing was clearly emphasized to the experimental subjects by the researcher throughout the training sessions by encouraging them to produce an effective précis of each studied text without looking back at the text.

Briefly, as an effective process of evaluating textual understanding, summary writing depends on the application of some general rules. The latter provide readers with greater assistance in coming up with an efficient, precise summary. These rules, as noted by Brown and Day (1983), are manifested in (a) deletion of unnecessary material, (b) deletion of redundancy, (c) substitution of a subordinate term for a list of items, (d) use of a subordinate term for a list of actions, (e) selection of a topic sentence provided in the text and (f) invention of a topic sentence if none appears explicitly in the text. These rules constitute the basic variables that contribute to constructing the core content of the studied text.

Therefore, it can be assumed that recalling the main ideas and writing a summary are the most promising metacognitive evaluating strategies (MESs) in L3 textual processing (Msaddek, 2015). By means of these strategic steps, learners can assess their comprehension of the L3 text and make sure that the other strategies used during the course of reading (e.g., goal-setting, background knowledge activation, predicting, inferring, main ideas selection, visualizing, underlining, note taking, paraphrasing, self-monitoring, self-questioning, rereading) have suitably contributed to the construction of targeted textual meaning.

2.3. The Role of Strategy Instruction in Reading

The core significance of reading strategy instruction (RSI) manifests itself in the development of the learners' potential ability to critically process and metacognitively analyze the textual input. As it equips EFL learners with a blueprint for engaging in metacognitive control and cognitive flexibility to understand the written texts more efficiently and accurately, instruction in reading strategies (RSs) substantially improves the student-readers' way of handling the text content, and thus increasing their level in reading comprehension to differential degrees. Many researchers advocate the perceived potentiality of RSI in improved reading practices (e.g., Boulware-Gooden *et al.*, 2007; Kern, 1989; Li *et al.*, 2022). In this respect, Swanson (1989) declares that:

"[E]ffective strategy instruction must entail: information about a number of strategies; how to control and implement those procedures; and how to gain recognition of the importance of effort and personal causality in producing successful performance." (p.7)

The above-stated quotation plainly unravels the robust potential held by the efficiency-driven strategy training that furnishes university-level learners with richly viable metacognitive knowledge relevant to RSs. Clearly, the key value of any delivered strategy instruction is embodied in the consolidation of the learners' declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge. In other terms, conceived meta-awareness of

what, how, when, where, and why to call upon and deploy the deep-level strategic processes formulates the essential precondition to the immersion in an enquiry-oriented reading and the achievement of thorough, effective comprehension of the text input.

Actually, strategy training purports to instruct learners in the use of cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies (CMRSs), which are applicable to any college-level L3 written discourse. It is deemed a fundamental procedure which is intended to enable the student-readers to conduct an effective strategic reading that is firmly predicated on metacognitive thinking, self-control, and retrospection (Msaddek, 2015). Hence, the learners' reading techniques, comprehension capabilities as well as comprehension-checking skills can advance incrementally. In this vein, the present study tended to explicitly instruct the learners not only in recalling the textual input, but also in the rules that govern summarizing, such as (a) deletion of unnecessary material, (b) deletion of redundancy, (c) substitution of a subordinate term for a list of items, (d) use of a subordinate term for a list of actions, (e) selection of a topic sentence provided in text and (f) invention of a topic sentence if none appears explicitly in text (Brown & Day, 1983).

3. The Current Study

3.1. Participants

The respondents in this study were 113 students (experimental group: n=63; control group: n=50) of the English Department at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences-Mohamed V University in Rabat. They were conducting their English Studies in the first-semester during the Autumn Semester (2012-2013). Obviously, the overwhelming majority of them had been studying English (L3) for four years and their ages ranged between 18 and 23 years old. However, it is worth mentioning that a very small number of the participants were aged over 23.

3.2. Research Objectives & Research Questions

The study was directed toward revealing the effect of explicit training in metacognitive evaluating strategies (MESs) on Moroccan English Department learners' strategic reading behaviour. It is an endeavour to manifest the potential held by reading strategy instruction in boosting the EFL college-level learners' recourse to MESs (i.e., recalling and summarizing) and revamping their summary writing performance. Hence, two primary research questions were established:

- 1) Does explicit metacognitive instruction improve the use of recalling and summarizing in L3 text processing among Moroccan English Department first-semester students?
- 2) Is there any correlation between recalling and summarizing in constructing university-level L3 textual comprehension?

3.3. Procedure

The current study is premised on experimental research design. It addressed 113 university-level learners (experimental group: $n=63$; control group: $n=50$). The experimental group received explicit training in recalling and summarizing for a semester-long period (Autumn Session: 2012-2013), whilst the control group was instructed in reading comprehension without any exposure to MESs (i.e., recalling, summarizing). In explicit terms, for the sake of enabling the self-assessment act, the experimental group was trained in memorizing and recalling the major ideas stated in the paragraphs encompassed in the written discourse (i.e., narrative, expository) through exposure to a range of text-related, higher-order questions asked by the researcher after reading the textual content and answering the set comprehension questions (i.e., wh-question task, meaning-inferring task, paraphrasing task). Following this, the researcher acquainted the target EFL participants with the six major rules governing summary writing in its entirety through modelling and practice. These six rules, which were devised by Brown and Day (1983), are incarnated in (a) deletion of unnecessary material, (b) deletion of redundancy, (c) substitution of a subordinate term for a list of items, (d) use of a subordinate term for a list of actions, (e) selection of a topic sentence provided in the text and (f) invention of a topic sentence if none appears explicitly in the text. Indeed, they did serve as a roadmap for the experimental group with a view to crafting effective, accurate summaries of the L3 texts under study.

It is worth mentioning that, to ensure that the target groups did resort to recalling and summarizing, as evaluating procedures in English (L3) reading comprehension, a retrospective questionnaire (RQ) was administered to both groups (i.e., control, experimental) before and after the instructional intervention. Prior to conducting the metacognitive strategy training, the two groups were assigned two L3 reading comprehension tests (i.e., narrative, expository) coupled with a retrospective questionnaire (RQ) to uncover whether the MESs (i.e., recalling, summarizing) focused upon in this experiment were tapped by the target subjects after processing and analysing the content. Then, the same procedure was implemented at the conclusion of the strategy training to unveil the extent to which the strategy-instructed group evoked and made use of the two metacognitive reading heuristics targeted.

In effect, each reading comprehension test (e.g., narrative, expository) comprises four tasks: (a) the wh-questions task (b) the meaning-inferring task (c) the paraphrasing task and (d) the summarizing task. Each one of these cited reading tasks was accurately measured in accordance with a set scoring rubric. The first task is given seven and a half points (7.50). For instance, if correct answers are provided to the five comprehension questions, the learner can get a total of seven and a half points (7.50). So, each question is attributed one and a half points (1.50), but a zero point (0.00) is assigned when the learner fails to supply an accurate, complete response. As for the second task, a score of four points (4.00) is assigned. It contains four lexical items. The selection of the correct equivalent of each stated concept is given a score of one point (1.00), but a zero point (0.00) when the choice of the equivalent terminology is erroneous. The third task, which

targets the paraphrasing process, is scored three points (3.00). One point is attributed to each precise, correct paraphrase of the presented statements. As concerns the last task, it is assigned a score of five and a half points (5.50). The sentences included in the summary should convey the right meaning and be pertinent and concise in terms of the content.

Since the prime focus of the conducted study was restricted to recalling and summary writing performance among the EFL university-level learners, the score gained by each EFL participant on the summarizing task included in the expository reading test was added up to the one obtained on the narrative reading test. Then, the two scores were divided by two so as to get the global summary-related grade of the pre-test (i.e., narrative, expository). Afterwards, the same procedure was meticulously followed to calculate the overall score assigned to the two summary tasks of the post-test (narrative and expository reading tests).

The gathered data were computed via the Excel Software Program to reveal the extent to which the explicit metacognitive strategy instruction can boost/ improve the targeted experimental group learners' methodical use of recalling and summarizing upon completing the multidimensional L3 reading process. Hence, the two retrospectively reported MESs (recalling and summarizing) among the control and treatment groups at both pre-testing and post-testing levels were numerically counted and presented in percentages through illustrative figures. Further, descriptive as well as inferential statistical analyses were carried out through the SPSS Software Program (Version 16.0) to evince whether the scores attained by the experimental group on the summary tasks of both reading comprehension tests (i.e., narrative, expository) increased after the delivery of explicit instruction in MESs used in L3 textual processing.

4. Results

4.1. The Implementation of Metacognitive Evaluating Strategies at Pre-testing Level

It is evident that, at the pre-testing stage, almost all the participating EFL subjects stated that they did not engage in recalling and summarizing as the generic metacognitive evaluating strategies (MESs) tapped in textual processing. In other terms, the targeted EFL student-readers read the assigned written texts (e.g., narrative, expository) without measuring the extent to which they had comprehended the included input. The results foregrounded below attest to the deficiency in dependence on evaluating heuristics among the sampled EFL learners in L3 textual analysis.

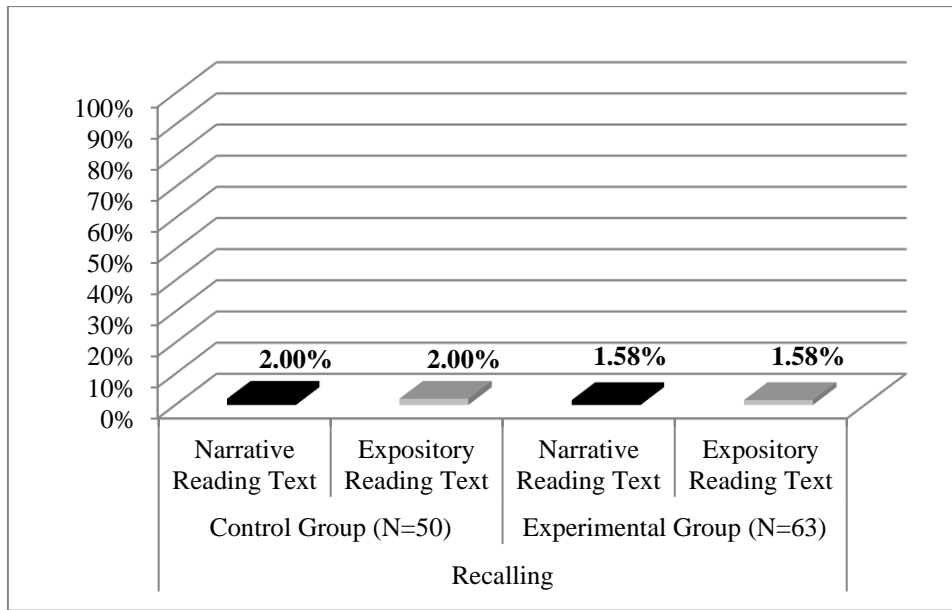


Figure 1: Frequency of Recalling Technique Use among EFL Learners at Pre-testing

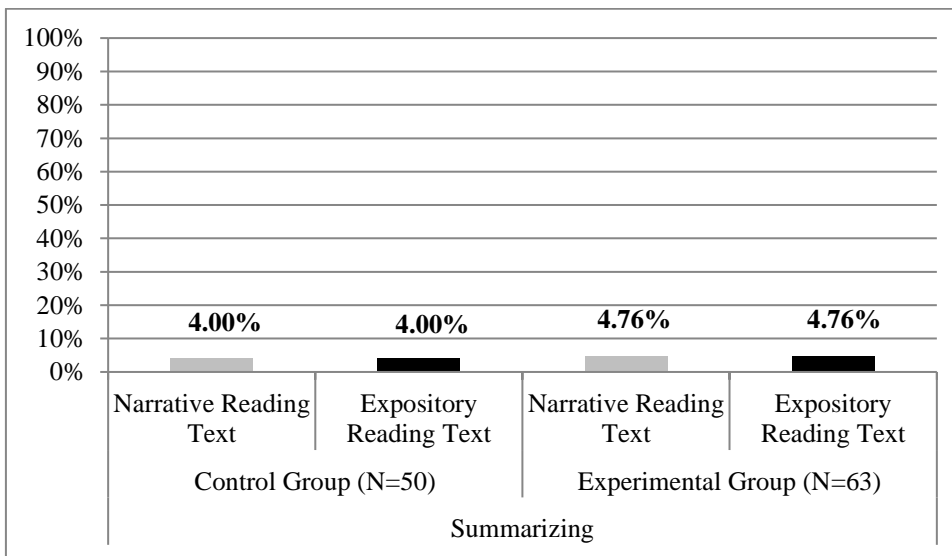


Figure 2: Frequency of Summarizing Technique Use among EFL Learners at Pre-testing

Plausibly, 98% of the subjects belonging to the controls stated that they did not involve themselves in recalling the main ideas and views stated in the written discourse (i.e., narrative, expository). Likewise, almost all the student readers in the experimental group, 98.42%, declared that they did not resort to recalling with a view to assessing their comprehension. Further, summarizing was effected only by 4% of the controls and 4.76% of the treatment subjects in dealing with both written texts (i.e., narrative, expository). This evinces that the assessment strategies such as recalling the major ideational statements and summarizing what is contained in both texts in precise terminologies were not performed by the sampled EFL learners in an extensive way at pre-testing. This

particular finding is strongly supported by the outcomes of the reading comprehension pre-tests, in which only a minority of the participants took the initiative to sum up the texts (narrative and expository) under consideration in an accurate manner. In effect, the overwhelming majority tended to replicate the given texts' content without paraphrasing the conceptualizations and ideas stated by the writer/author.

4.2. The Implementation of Metacognitive Evaluating Strategies at Post-testing Level

According to the results gained through the RQ, the strategy-trained group receiving the semester-long instructional intervention did have recourse to the metacognitive evaluating heuristics (i.e., recalling, summarizing) under focus. The reached findings manifesting the increased application of these two metacognitive reading strategies (MRSs) are illustrated below.

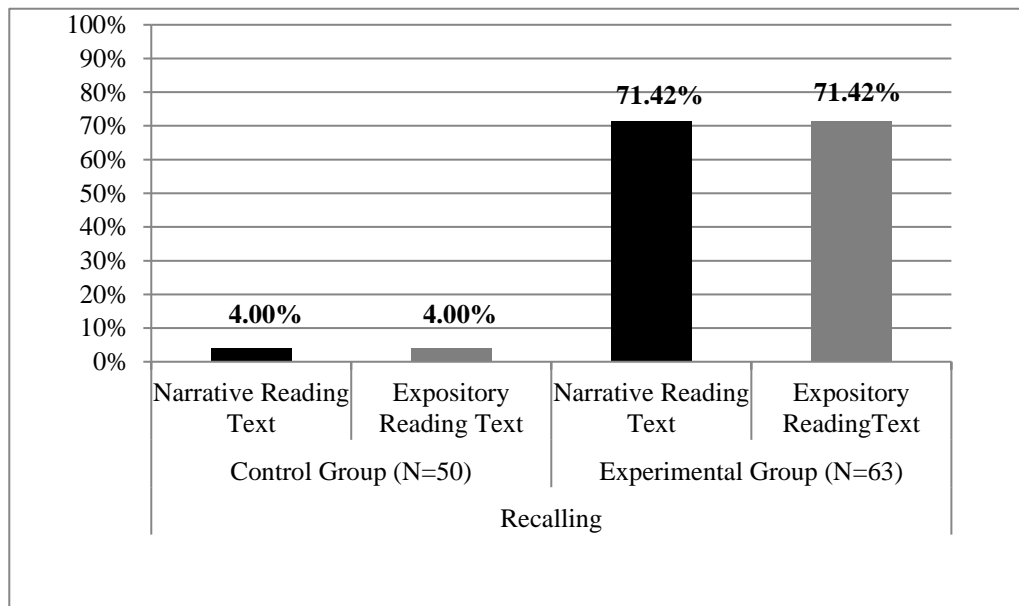


Figure 3: Frequency of Recalling Technique Use among EFL Learners at Post-testing

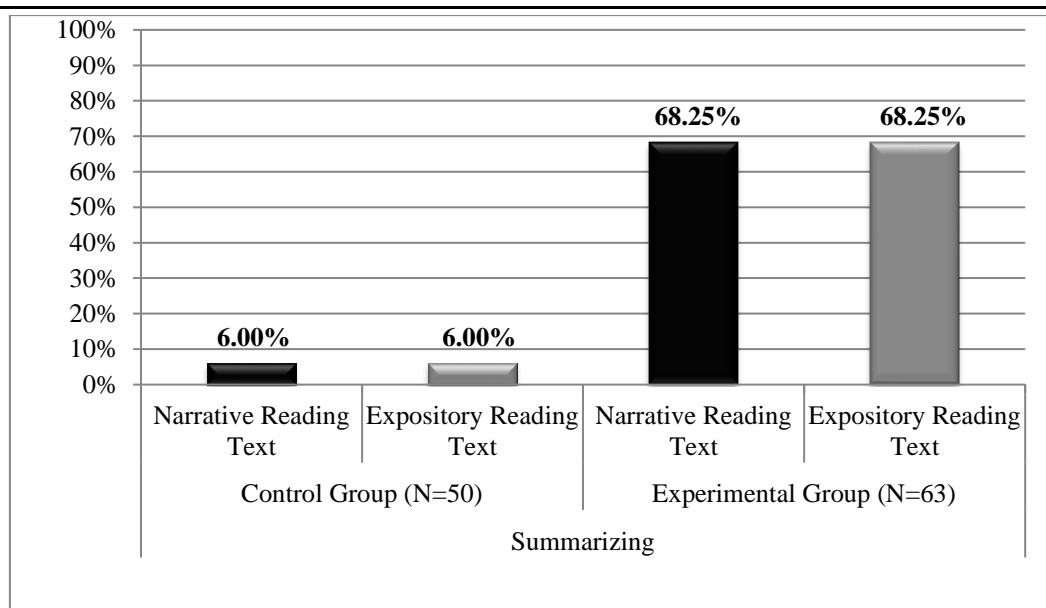


Figure 4: Frequency of Summarizing Technique Use among EFL Learners at Post-testing

At the post-test stage, it was clear that the treatment group performed the multifaceted reading process significantly better than the controls. The process of self-assessing their understanding of the textual content via recalling and summarizing upon finishing the performance of the reading act was enacted due to exposure to the delivered explicit training. Indeed, coping with both types of texts (i.e., narrative, expository), the experimental group and the control group resorted to the strategic heuristic of summarizing with percentages of 71.42% and 4%, respectively. In addition, whilst 68.25% of the experimental group had recourse to summarizing the narrative and expository written texts, only 6% of the participants in the control condition implemented the summary procedure for the sake of strengthening their full grasp of the textual content. This manifests that the metacognitive strategy intervention, which exposed the EFL learners belonging to the experimental group to the meta-strategic moves of comprehension assessment, enabled them to execute the evaluation process in an attempt to consolidate their overall mastery of the narrative as well as the expository text's content in an efficient manner.

4.3. Performance of the Summary Task among the Control & Experimental Groups at Pre-testing

In calculating the overall grade assigned to the summary tasks contained in the two reading comprehension tests (e.g., narrative, expository) at the pre-testing level, and executing an Independent Samples *t*-test, it is obvious that there is no significance between the scores attained by both EFL groups on summary writing. The following two tables reveal the resultant *t*-test output.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Summary Performance Scores on Pre-testing

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Summary Task	Control	50	1.3300	.63575	.08991
	Experimental	63	1.5635	.66897	.08428

Table 2: The Independent Samples *t*-test
 for the Target Groups' Summary Performance at Pre-testing

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Summary Task	Equal variances assumed	.266	.607	-1.884	111	.062	-.23349	.12397	-.47914	.01215
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.895	107.406	.061	-.23349	.12324	-.47778	.01080

$P < .05$

Based on the reached findings put forward above, it is of particular relevance to maintain that the observed difference between the experimental group and the controls at the level of text-related summary writing is typically imbued with clear-cut non-significance. The mean scores achieved by both EFL groups (control group: Mean= 1.33, SD= 0.635; treatment group: Mean=1.56, SD= 0.668) on summarizing yielded a *t*-value of (-1.884). Indeed, the apparent mean difference between the two targeted EFL groups in terms of the overall achievement in the two summary writing tasks embedded in the two assigned written texts (i.e., narrative, expository) is not statistically significant (0.062) as it is slightly higher than the probability value set (.05).

4.4. Performance of the Summary Task among the Control & Experimental Groups at Post-testing

As shown in Table 3, the mean of (1.46) was deemed a global score of the two summary tasks embedded in the reading post-test (i.e., narrative, expository) among the controls, whereas the mean of (2.94) was considered as a global grade of the two summary tasks of the reading post-test (i.e., narrative, expository) among the treatment group. Thus, it is manifest that upon exposure to the instructional intervention on metacognitive evaluating heuristics (i.e., recalling, summarizing) used in L3 textual reading, the treatment group exhibited positive, tangible advance at the level of scores related to the summary writing performance. The attained results are illustratively tabulated below.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Summary Performance Scores on Post-testing

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Summary Task	Control	50	1.4600	.88548	.12523
	Experimental	63	2.9444	.78858	.09935

Table 4: The Independent Samples *t*-test for the Target EFL Groups' Summary Performance at Post-testing

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Summary Task	Equal variances assumed	.990	.322	-9.412	111	.000	-1.48444	.15772	-1.79699	1.17190
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.286	99.076	.000	-1.48444	.15985	-1.80162	1.16727

P<.05

The output generated by means of the independent samples *t*-test undertaken showcases that the learners belonging to the experimental group achieved a higher mean ($M=2.94$, $SD=0.788$) on summary writing than the control group did ($M=1.46$, $SD=0.885$). Whilst the mean score attained by the control group on text summarization is (1.46), the one reached by the experimental group is (2.94). This manifest difference at the level of means appears to be of substantial primacy. Thus, the discrepancy noticed between the two groups under focus reflected a *t*-value of (-9.412), which is statistically significant at (.000). Indeed, drawing a distinction between the two groups in both conditions (i.e., control, experimental), it is deducible that the EFL group trained on recalling and summarizing exhibited unparalleled, positive progress in composing a coherent, well-thought-out text-based summary.

5. Discussion

Being part and parcel of my unpublished doctoral thesis that was defended in 2015, the present study was intended to measure the impact of explicit training in metacognitive evaluating strategies (MESs) on the EFL university learners' strategic behavior after performing the perceptual process of reading in L3. The results unveiled that the instructional intervention did initiate the treatment participants into the performance of metacognitive strategic acts of recalling and summarizing after processing the assigned L3 written texts (i.e., narrative, expository), and thus composing effectual text-bound summaries.

The targeted subjects' insufficient use of recalling and summarizing at the pre-intervention level was attributable to the lack of awareness of these metacognitive strategic moves. In fact, the construction of an efficient understanding of the textual content is fundamentally contingent upon the extent to which EFL learners engage in recalling the main ideas/ perspectives and crafting a comprehensive, detailed summary. In examining the summaries written by the target EFL learners after reading the assigned texts (i.e., narrative, expository) at the pre-intervention stage, it was deduced that the input included in the generated summaries was an exact replication of the views and conceptualizations articulated in the two typologies of L3 texts. Thus, the summaries constructed by the EFL learners on the pre-test in this study reflected the same terms and sentences embedded in both assigned EFL texts (i.e., narrative, expository).

The retrospective data set forth earlier (see the Results Section) demonstrated that the sampled EFL readers did not regularly utilize the MESs to gauge their overall comprehension of the L3 texts. In fact, only a small minority of the student-readers tended to assess their progress as to content comprehension. This indicates that a large number of EFL learners, namely at the first-semester level, are not sufficiently conscious of the strategies whereby they can evaluate their assimilation of textual information. For instance, recalling the major ideas of the L3 written texts (narrative, expository), as an evaluating strategic step, was not a recurrent procedure among the target learners at the pre-intervention level. This attested view shows that the recall of the texts' content seems to be disregarded since the participating learners depended on other RSs which are of a cognitive nature (e.g., predicting, inferring, main ideas selection, visualizing, underlining, note taking, paraphrasing) in their understanding of the text.

However, at the post-intervention level, it is plausible that most of the EFL first-semester learners belonging to the experimental group did immerse themselves in recalling the text content after completing the reading process. This recall procedure is highly likely to consolidate the EFL students' mastery of the message inherent in the written texts as they can keep in mind what they have processed throughout the conducted reading act. Indeed, it is not sufficient to read and synthesize any written discourse by means of only some strategies (i.e., inferring, main ideas selection, self-monitoring, self-questioning) that contribute greatly to the comprehension of the text input, but it is essential that learners engage in recalling the prime thoughts and viewpoints raised by the writer/author. In so doing, they can attain an effectual understanding and assess their cognitive advance as to the achievement of comprehension. Clearly, provided that learners are equipped with thorough instruction in recalling the underlying ideas, it is likely that they can have recourse to this basic strategy as an effective way of ensuring that their understanding is achieved.

Most importantly, it is plausible that recalling the core content of the text can pave the way for the summarizing task. The provision of an accurate, relevant summary is robustly grounded in the extent to which the learners recall the most salient, crucial ideas that make up the gist of the textual content. Though a small number of the participating student-readers, from both groups (control, experimental) provided a summary of the

assigned texts at pre-intervention, it is obvious that they lacked certain sub-skills of paraphrasing and summarizing the text content. In essence, whereas the summaries constructed by both groups (i.e., control, experimental) on the pre-intervention stage seemed to be replicas of the assigned texts' content, the ones constructed by the experimental group following the conducted strategy intervention were characterized by efficiency, precision, and straightforwardness. This reveals that, in an attempt to sum up the whole text, the subjects evinced a heavy reliance on some concepts/ statements that are put forward by the writer/author. Thus, summary writing, as maintained by Huan *et al.* (2017), plays an instrumental role in improving reading comprehension ability and mastering the core content in an effective manner.

Granted that the working memory occupies an essential function in achieving an adequate comprehension (Carpenter & Just, 1989), it is obvious that memorizing/recalling the text content and providing a sufficient summarization can help learners robustly reinforce their assimilation of the sought meaning and retain the author's/writer's implications, views, and intentions. However, these metacognitive strategies are not regularly performed by most EFL university learners, especially at the first-semester level. Yet, it can be acclaimed that if EFL learners are explicitly instructed in the implementation of these and other metacognitively-oriented reading strategies (RSs), they will certainly approach any given L3 text content in a sophisticated, principled way by using their working-memory mechanisms/ processes.

In this vein, Horowitz and Samuels (1985), drawing a comparison between good and poor readers, postulate that good readers remember more information about the text than poor readers. This justifiably set forth finding suggests that skilled readers cope with written texts with a certain degree of efficiency in that they reflect their potential in recalling and restating the key conceptualizations and ideas presented in the text. Further, Horowitz and Samuels (1985) admit that easy textual passages are more effectively recalled than difficult passages. This stated premise reveals that the complexity of the information contained in the text can sometimes be a real obstacle for EFL learner readers to recall the entire content. Briefly, efficient recall of important ideas is highly dependent not only on the relative easiness of the text content, but also on the learners' flexible use of RSs. Actually, the explicit metacognitive instruction conducted in this study did reinforce the skilled learners' use of recalling the textual content and assisted the unskilled ones to cognitively memorize the core perceptions and assumptions set forth in the L3 written discourse (i.e., narrative, expository).

Most notably, text summarizing requires the learners to implement metacognitive processes such as awareness and control of the reading process (Rinehart *et al.*, 1986). Of course, through writing an efficient, relevant précis of the content of the printed text, readers can evaluate their developmental progress in understanding the content. In this sense, Palincsar and Brown (1983, in Garner, 1987) maintain that, "*if an adequate synopsis of what has been read cannot be produced by the reader, there is a clear sign that remedial action is called for*" (p.56). This reveals that effective summary writing can, at times, be a marked indication that the overall textual comprehension is realized. In fact, the mastery of text

meaning can be conceived of as a sturdy foundation for producing an accurate, coherent summary.

Hence, the explicit metacognitive strategy intervention reflected its potential benefit in boosting the treatment learners' recourse to recalling and summarizing as two metacognitive techniques whose main function is the reinforcement of textual comprehension. This evinces that the adequate deployment of these meta-level mechanisms is contingent upon the explicit nature of the strategy training that enhances the learners' declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge of metacognitive strategic moves in assessing overall comprehension. The stated finding that instruction can increase and revamp the learners' summary writing performance does align with prior intervention-based research studies (i.e., Bean & Steenwyk, 1984; Gómez *et al.* 2012; Ramirez-Avila & Barreiro, 2021; Szűcs, & Kövér, 2016). Additionally, the increased use of recalling among the targeted subjects in this study following the instructional intervention parallels relevant scholarly studies (i.e., Barnett & Seefeldt, 1989; del Pino *et al.*, 2013). This leads to the claim that the concerted use of metacognitive evaluating strategies (i.e., recalling and summarizing), as well as the performance of summary writing, can be improved through exposure to direct, explicit instruction.

Further, based on the reached research findings, it is obvious that there exists a robust link between recalling and summarizing. In explicit terms, the process of crafting an accurate, precise summary of a typical L3 written discourse, be it narrative or expository in type, implies memorizing the main ideas and topical perspectives that fundamentally make up the core of the whole text. This shows that the effectual recall of the major points raised in the written input as well as the conceptualizations and presumptions articulated by the author/writer, is to be executed in concert with the metacognitive procedure of summarizing for the sake of assuring coherence, relevance, and straightforwardness that prototypically characterize the provided text-based summary. As it was declared in prior research studies (e.g., Fitzgerald, 2003; Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978), the process of summarizing the textual content substantially rests upon recalling. The latter, entailing cognitive readiness, executive control, and metacognitive reflection, can only be performed if the learners did read the text, select the main ideas, monitor progress in understanding, underline/ highlight the key statements, and take note of the included topical views and perceptions. All these strategic moves enacted by the working memory facilitate the recall of the textual input among learners, and thus helping them construct a comprehensive summary.

6. Conclusions, Implications & Limitations

The study under focus plainly highlighted that the essentiality of metacognitive strategy intervention in promoting the first-semester English Department learners' usage of recalling and summarizing is to be fundamentally underscored. The findings attained stress the potential as well as the robustness of the nature of explicit metacognitive strategy instruction in enhancing text-based summary construction in particular, and

elevating EFL reading achievement in general. Hence, recalling and summarizing, which entail the heavy dependence on information processing skills (i.e., automatic processing, controlled processing) and working-memory mechanisms, remain the main strategic heuristics tapped by the learners with a view to synthesizing and retaining the content incorporated in the L3 written discourse (i.e., narrative, expository).

Thus, it is clear that most of the EFL student-readers under investigation did not recall the assigned texts' main ideas/ views, nor did they produce efficient summaries pertaining to the narrative and expository written texts assigned at the pre-intervention stage. This can be substantiated by the fact that first-semester university EFL learners are not fully accustomed to the processes of recalling and summing up the written input in an effective manner. In essence, their undertaken attempt to summarize the given texts via recalling the included conceptions, views, and epistemologies at the pre-treatment level was prototypically characterized by inefficiency and imprecision. In other terms, the replication of the assigned texts' terminologies/ sentences in the summary task relating to the pre-intervention reading tests (i.e., narrative, expository) remains a conclusive proof of the learners' incapability to reformulate what is expressly stated by the writer/author in their own words.

Yet, at the post-intervention stage, the experimental group did internalize the strategic mechanisms of recalling and summarizing after reading the assigned reading comprehension tests (i.e., narrative, expository). Indeed, being exposed to systematic training in memorizing and retaining the gist of the texts as well as the application of the rules relative to efficient summary writing, the learners belonging to the experimental group succeeded in making complete sense of the L3 textual input, and thus gaining higher scores on the summary task than its counterpart, the control group. This state of affairs underlines the premise that the recall of the major information stated in the texts and the production of precise, comprehensive summaries are predicated on explicit metacognitive strategy training. The latter proved to be of viable value in strengthening the university-level learners' recalling abilities and summarizing techniques, which contribute to the mastery of author's/ writer's declared viewpoints, formulations, and ideologies.

The implications drawn from the current study are embodied in the fact that the English Department first-semester learners should be instructed in metacognitive evaluating strategies (MESs) (i.e., recalling, summarizing) in order to ascertain that their overall comprehension of the L3 textual input is achieved. However, this does rule out the possibility of training the learners on other metacognitive reading strategies (MRSs), such as planning strategies (i.e., goal-setting, background knowledge use) and monitoring strategies (i.e., self-monitoring, self-questioning, rereading) for enabling the learners to formulate a coherent course of action that allows for the accurate assimilation of the advanced-level L3 written discourse (Msaddek, 2015). Clearly, providing EFL learners with sustained, extensive practice in the recall of text-based content and summary writing through explicit instruction can reinforce their declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge of these two MRSs that are applied at the post-reading level.

The promotion of metacognitive knowledge of these two evaluating strategic moves enabling the learners to focus on essential information and neglect the trivia is to be taken into account by the educational practitioners and professors for the sake of helping learners enhance their comprehension of the L3 text.

Despite the marked significance of the study undertaken, it is noteworthy to declare a couple of limitations. The first one is incarnated in the fact that the study squarely focused on the learners belonging to the English Department at the Faculty of Letters and Humanities in Rabat. Thus, it is imperative that other Moroccan higher education institutions be targeted for assuring global representativeness. The other limitation is correlated with the mixed-level students since both the control and experimental groups included learners of diverse reading potentialities and varying language proficiency levels. The examination of this postulate would give a plausible view of whether the deployment of recalling and summarizing, as metacognitive reading strategies (MRSs) called upon at the post-reading stage in L3 text processing, and the quality of text-based summary writing are causally linked with the variable of language proficiency.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Mohammed Msaddek is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences-Mohammedia, Hassan II University, Casablanca. He earned his PhD on the effect of explicit instruction in cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies on Moroccan EFL university learners' strategy use and reading comprehension scores from Mohamed V University, Rabat, in 2015. His current research interests include cognitive psychology, first/ second/ third language acquisition, neurolinguistics, metalinguistics, psycholinguistics, metacognition, cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies, cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies, self-regulated learning, and metacognitive writing strategies.

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THE EFFECT OF EXPLICIT STRATEGY-BASED INSTRUCTION ON MOROCCAN
EFL UNIVERSITY LEARNERS' USE OF METACOGNITIVE EVALUATING STRATEGIES
(RECALLING AND SUMMARIZING) IN READING ENGLISH (L3) WRITTEN TEXTS

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