Investigating Language Learning Strategies to Enhance Reading Skills among Year 5 Pupils in Sarawak Rural Schools

Belinda Michael, Marilyn Olivia Atin, Veronique Enduyan Langka, Nur Syamim Bolhan, Jasmeen Sivanganam & Harwati Hashim
Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
Corresponding Author Email: harwati@ukm.edu.my

Abstract
Reading skills are crucial in ensuring academic success and language acquisition. English serves as a means of communication and access to resources necessary for the development of Malaysia. Yet, pupils residing in rural Sarawak struggle to develop their English language proficiency, particularly their reading skills. Thus, this study intends to investigate the best language learning strategies used to enhance reading skills among Year 5 primary school pupils in ESL classrooms in rural areas of Sarawak, Malaysia. The study adapted questionnaire from the Language Strategy Use Survey and Young Learner's Language Strategy Use Survey. A total of 75 pupils from three rural primary schools in Sarawak, Malaysia answered 24 items in the questionnaire and the data was then analysed via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The findings showed that pupils prefer utilising memory, social, and affective strategies when reading. This study provided an understanding of differing language learning strategies applied by the pupils in three Sarawak rural primary schools but it may not apply to all rural primary schools in Sarawak. Future research could include a larger sample size and cover more than one language skill primarily listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
Keywords: Language Learning Strategies (LLS), Reading Skills, Rural School, English as a Second Language (ESL), Primary School

Introduction
In Malaysia, English literacy is critical for academic performance and broader socioeconomic possibilities (Azizan, 2018). English is commonly recognised as the predominant language for communication, business, and technological advancements on a global scale. Proficiency in English in a globalised society enables access to a wide range of educational resources, improves communication across different industries, and broadens employment opportunities for individuals. However, English proficiency remains a struggle in rural schools in Malaysia, where educational resources are typically scarce. Rural schools, especially in Sarawak, Malaysia present distinct hurdles in developing English language proficiency in

English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, particularly reading skills. Sarawak, Malaysia is culturally varied, with a variety of indigenous languages spoken in addition to English and Malay, including the Iban language. Many rural pupils are from indigenous communities where English is not commonly used in their households. The variety of languages spoken might create difficulties for teachers in establishing an English learning environment and for pupils in practising English after school. Besides, rural schools frequently experience resource constraints, such as out-of-date teaching materials, and limited access to technology. This shortage impedes the adoption of efficient language training methods and limits the pupils' exposure to English outside the classroom, thus affecting their reading literacies.

According to Livingston et al (2018), literacy is a vital ability to learn in today's communities. Literacy encompasses more than just reading and writing skills, but also the ability to comprehend, interpret, and engage critically with written texts. Poor literacy abilities can have serious long-term effects on emotional, psychological, mental health, economic, and societal variables. Rural pupils frequently face obstacles in acquiring reading proficiency, mainly owing to limited access to high-quality educational resources, lack of English practice outside of school environments, and cultural variables that can all impede pupils' reading development. Thus, the development of effective language learning strategies for reading skills in ESL classrooms in rural areas in Sarawak, Malaysia is essential to mastering one of the four linguistic skills. Mastering the four linguistic skills in English; listening, speaking, writing, and reading, is crucial for proficient communication in the language. Therefore, this study intends to investigate the best language learning strategies used to enhance reading skills among primary school pupils in ESL classrooms in rural schools in Sarawak, Malaysia.

Background Study

English proficiency is crucial in Malaysian education, reflecting the country's multicultural identity and global aspirations (Ismail and Abdullah, 2019). As the language of instruction in many academic settings and a key medium of communication in various professional domains, mastery of the English language opens doors to higher education, employment opportunities, and participation in the global economy (Sarjit and Yap, 2017). Measures have been taken by the Malaysian government to improve English language education, aiming to equip pupils with the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world (Abdullah and Ismail, 2020). The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 is a significant plan detailing strategy for enhancing the quality of education in Malaysia, particularly in English language education. The blueprint highlights the significance of English proficiency for national progress and sets out clear objectives and aims for improving English language education in schools. According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2015), the primary goal is to establish an internationally proficient Malaysian English-speaking education system following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). As a standard framework for teaching languages, learning, and evaluation, CEFR, which has its origins in Europe, has been embraced globally by several states and organisations. CEFR is a standard used in Malaysia for the English language to assess the language proficiency of pupils and teachers, promoting similarization between Malaysia and other countries. Proficiency and fluency in English can be achieved by proficiency in four language skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading, as outlined in the CEFR. Every skill has a distinct function in communication and language understanding, collectively establishing the basis for language

learning and application (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). Listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills play crucial roles in the overall process of language acquisition and application.

Reading skills are fundamental to language acquisition and academic success. Proficient reading enables pupils to comprehend complex texts, access knowledge across different disciplines, and develop critical thinking abilities (Shamsudin & Ahmad, 2018). Pupils with proficient reading skills can absorb and extract meaning from a variety of publications, including academic articles, textbooks, novels, and informational sources. Pupils can interact with complicated ideas and concepts conveyed in writing by properly decoding words, understanding vocabulary, and using comprehension skills. However, many pupils in primary schools, particularly those in rural areas, face challenges in developing adequate reading skills in ESL classrooms. These challenges include difficulties in decoding words, understanding vocabulary, and making inferences from the text (Yusof and Rahman, 2019). Furthermore, pupils may struggle with maintaining focus while reading, leading to comprehension difficulties (Darusalam, 2017). Limited access to reading materials, insufficient instructional support, and socioeconomic factors contribute to disparities in reading proficiency, hindering pupils' overall educational attainment (Hassan and Rahman, 2016). Research conducted by Borleffs et al. (2019) stated that pupils from diverse ethnic backgrounds or whose first language differs from the language of teaching may find learning to read especially difficult. Several investigations on various writing systems have shown that reading difficulties are present in all languages with the written language. These issues highlight the need for effective language learning strategies tailored to the specific needs of primary school pupils in rural Sarawak.

In conclusion, this study intends to examine the most effective language learning strategies for improving reading skills among Year 5 primary school pupils in rural areas in Sarawak, Malaysia. By investigating the significance of language learning strategies, particularly in ESL classrooms in rural settings, this study seeks to give insight into the difficulties. that students face on their path to reading proficiency, as well as the common obstacles encountered in rural school environments.

Research Problem

Sarawak is a state of Malaysia's Borneo island that is noted for its rich cultural heritage, and diversified ecosystems. Sarawak is well-known for its stunning natural settings, which include lush jungles, clean beaches, and majestic mountains. The traditional methods of living, low population density, and remote areas characterised Sarawak's rural districts. These regions are frequently located outside of major urban centres and may only be accessible via difficult terrain or river networks. Rural schools in Sarawak meet the educational needs of pupils living in rural communities by providing primary and secondary education in frequently difficult environments. These schools may be smaller in size, with fewer resources and amenities than metropolitan schools. Despite these limitations, rural schools play an important role in providing access to education for pupils living in remote locations, thereby bridging the rural-urban divide. Rural schools in Sarawak frequently lack access to high-quality educational resources such as textbooks, reading materials, and technology. Pupils who do not have access to a varied range of reading materials may struggle to develop a love of reading and will not be exposed to different genres and writing styles. Many pupils in Sarawak's rural schools are indigenous, and they may speak languages other than English at home. Language difficulties might make it difficult for pupils to improve their reading skills in English since they may have had little exposure to the language outside of class. According to a study by Dawi

et al (2021) that looked at pupils' reading skills in rural Sarawak schools, the majority of students in Years 5 and 6 at those schools choose to use cognitive and affective strategies. This has created a research gap, necessitating more examination into the other parts of rural schools in Sarawak to investigate the primary students' language learning strategies used for reading skills. Thus, this study examines the preferred language learning strategies to enhance reading skills among Year 5 primary pupils at three rural primary schools in three different districts in Sarawak, Malaysia; Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau. The present research focuses on one specific research question: What are the preferred language learning strategies for reading skills among Year 5 pupils in three primary rural schools in three different districts in Sarawak?

Literature Review
Acquiring a new language is not easy. Everyone must learn to communicate well, as it is not something that comes naturally. Some non-native speakers are highly skilled and articulate in the language, while others find it challenging to comprehend even a single word. and knowledge across all academic subjects. Effective reading comprehension is necessary for comprehensive learning of academic subjects and long-term retention of information. Proficient readers can extract meaning from the material, recognise main ideas, and determine significant details. Reading develops critical thinking abilities and introduces pupils to a diverse vocabulary, language structures, and writing styles. According to Ng et al (2020), strategies are often used to teach reading in a straight and organised way. Reading techniques for pupils could help them become more familiar with the purpose, vocabulary, comprehension skills, and structures of texts. Language learning strategy (LLS) for reading is a critical aspect of language acquisition, particularly in a second language learning context. Reading literacy is not only an essential ability for gaining access to information and achieving academic success, but it also serves as a gateway to greater language skills. This literature review explores key themes related to LLS for reading, including the definition of language learning strategy, characteristics of good and successful language learners, and the development of reading skills among pupils.

The definition of Language Learning Strategy
Language learning strategies encompass a variety of techniques and approaches employed by learners to facilitate the process of acquiring and comprehending a second language. These strategies are essential tools that learners use to navigate the complexities of language learning and optimise their learning experience. According to Oxford (2017), these strategies involve deliberate actions and behaviours that learners use to improve their language learning experience. Oxford differentiated strategies for learning a language into two main groups: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies require you to learn the language directly and process it in your mind. Direct strategies are when you work directly with the language itself. This could mean repeating words or phrases to remember them better, using tricks like acronyms or pictures to help remember words or rules, figuring out what a new word means based on the words around it, or making lists of words to remember. Direct strategies can be classified into three categories; memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. According to Rajasagaran et al (2022), memory strategies involve recalling and retrieving new information, while cognitive strategies involve direct manipulation of language materials and compensatory strategies are used to overcome deficiencies in language proficiency or text difficulty, such as using dictionaries or seeking help

from others. Meanwhile, indirect methods provide aid in language learning. Indirect strategies are more about how you approach learning. These are things like setting goals for yourself, checking how well you're doing, managing your time so you can study effectively, and asking for help or feedback when you need it. Indirect strategies can be classified into three categories; metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Affective strategies are concerned with the social and emotional components of language learning, whereas metacognitive strategies focus on planning, monitoring, and assessing one's learning process (Rajasagaran et al., 2022). Exploring language learning strategies necessitates a comprehensive examination of both direct and indirect approaches, as they fulfil distinct functions in the process of language acquisition. Both types of strategies have a role in learning a new language, and they're vital to consider while determining the optimal way to learn (Oxford, 2017).

Characteristics of Good and Successful Language Learners
Research on good and successful language learners identified several characteristics and behaviours associated with their proficiency. According to Green and Oxford (1995), successful language learners employ a variety of ways to improve their skills. According to Al-Hoorie (2018), good language learners are often motivated, persistent, and resourceful in their approach to language learning. They demonstrate a willingness to take risks, make mistakes, and actively seek opportunities for language practice and interaction (Dörnyei, 2019). Additionally, successful language learners possess effective learning strategies and self-regulation skills, allowing them to adapt their learning methods to different contexts and tasks (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2018). They are also able to maintain positive attitudes and motivation towards language learning, which contributes to their overall success.

Development of Reading Skills Among Students
Reading skills are essential for language learners as they provide access to a wealth of linguistic input and cultural knowledge. The act of reading is a cognitive procedure that does a significant amount of work in the development of an individual's intellectual capacity. According to Rohaizat and Aziz (2021), reading improves cognitive skills and understanding across disciplines. Reading requires difficult cognitive processes such as decoding symbols, forming inferences, and connecting ideas as well. Regular reading strengthens these cognitive skills, resulting in better concentration, memory, and problem-solving ability. Effective reading instruction should focus on developing both bottom-up skills, such as decoding and word recognition, and top-down skills, such as comprehension and critical thinking (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). Research suggests that explicit instruction in reading strategies, such as predicting, summarising, and questioning, can significantly improve pupils' reading comprehension abilities (Cohen, 2018). According to research by Baba and Affendi (2020), people who read well have a better chance of expanding their minds and being more successful. This is especially true in this century when everyone should be able to read more easily to keep up with the world's fast growth. Several studies have already been conducted to investigate the language learning strategies used by primary school students to improve their reading skills. Dawi et al.'s (2021) findings indicated that the pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 from the four rural schools in Sarawak show a preference for two different language learning strategies when it comes to reading skills. Affective and cognitive strategies are two types of techniques that are required for language learning for reading. Meanwhile, research performed by Rojalai et al (2021) stated that the majority of pupils in primary school in

Selangor preferred to use memory strategies as they needed to read with the assistance of some graphics. To summarise, language learning strategies play an important role in the development of reading skills among pupils. By understanding and employing effective learning strategies, learners can enhance their comprehension, retention, and overall proficiency in a second or foreign language.

Methodology
Research Design
This investigation is carried out utilising a survey research design. Survey studies outline trends within the data (Creswell, 2012). Hence, a survey is the most appropriate way to collect data based on the research question presented in this study.

Research Population and Sample
Convenience sampling is used as the sampling method of this study. This method of sampling allows the researchers to select samples that are available at any given time (Golzar et al. 2022). 75 respondents from Year 5 in three rural primary schools from three districts in Sarawak were selected at random. The only factor was their availability.

Data Collection and Analysis
Questionnaire forms (Appendix A) were distributed to the pupils to gather their Language Learning Strategies (LLS) specifically for reading. The questionnaires were developed from an academic journal titled Identifying Language Learning Strategies for Reading among Malaysian TESL Postgraduates in a Public University by (Rajasagaran et al., 2022). The questionnaire used in the article was adapted from the Language Strategy Use Survey Cohen et al (2005) and Young Learner's Language Strategy Use Survey (Cohen & Oxford, 2002). It was utilised in this study to accommodate pupils' varying proficiency levels as Young Learner's Language Strategy Use Survey offers straightforward questions which are easier for Year 5 pupils to understand. The questionnaire consists of three parts which are "*How do I understand what I read?*", *"What if I don't understand what I read?"* and *"How to improve my reading skills?".* All three parts consist of 24 items that look into direct and indirect strategies applied by pupils when reading as illustrated in LLS. The three categories included a variety of questions showing LLS in reading, in both direct strategies and indirect strategies, with a concentration on reading skills, totaling 24 items. The questions gathered through direct and indirect strategies were matched and combined within the three parts of questions indicated previously to avoid respondents' biases towards the items when filling out the questionnaire form. Pupils answer the items in each part according to a 5-point Likert scale provided in the questionnaire which is "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Neutral", "Agree" and "Strongly Agree." The data collected was analysed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse data focusing on mean, frequency, and percentage. The data was then tabulated in the findings section.

Finding
Demographic Background
In this study, the researchers gathered data from a total of 75 respondents from Year 5 pupils in three different schools across three different districts in rural areas in Sarawak namely; Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau districts. The distribution of respondents based on gender of all the participating pupils is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Distribution of respondents' gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	38	50.7	50.7	50.7
	Female	37	49.3	49.3	100.0
	Total	75	100.0	100.0	

The pie chart in Figure 1 visually represents the gender distribution of the respondents in this study. From the pie chart, there is a slight difference between the number of males (49.33%) and female respondents (50.67%), with males slightly outnumbering females by just one respondent.
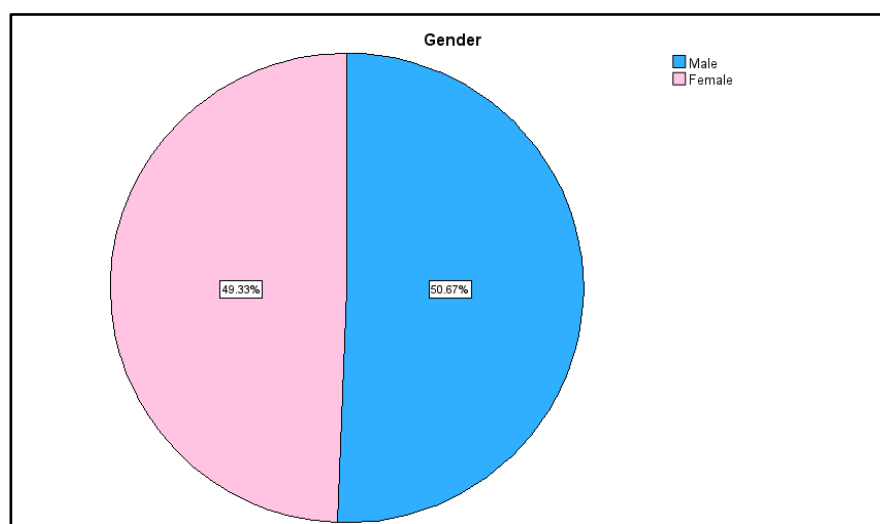
Figure 1: Pie chart showing the gender distribution

This near-equal distribution suggests that our sample is fairly representative in terms of gender diversity of this research. It is important to consider gender balance in the data collection to ensure that the findings are applicable across different demographic groups. This also enhances the validity and generalizability of the result, allowing researchers to draw more robust conclusions and insights from this study. In this sample, data was collected from a total of 75 respondents across three different schools in three different districts. The distribution of the respondents according to the districts is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Distribution of respondents from three different school districts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Song	16	21.3	21.3	21.3
	Selangau	15	20.0	20.0	41.3
	Sebuyau	44	58.7	58.7	100.0
	Total	75	100.0	100.0	

Table header: School district

Meanwhile, Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the distribution of respondents across three school districts, namely Song, Selangau and Sebuyau. As depicted in the bar chart, the Sebuyau district has the highest number of respondents, with 44 respondents. The Song district then follows with 16 responses, followed by the Selangau district with 15.
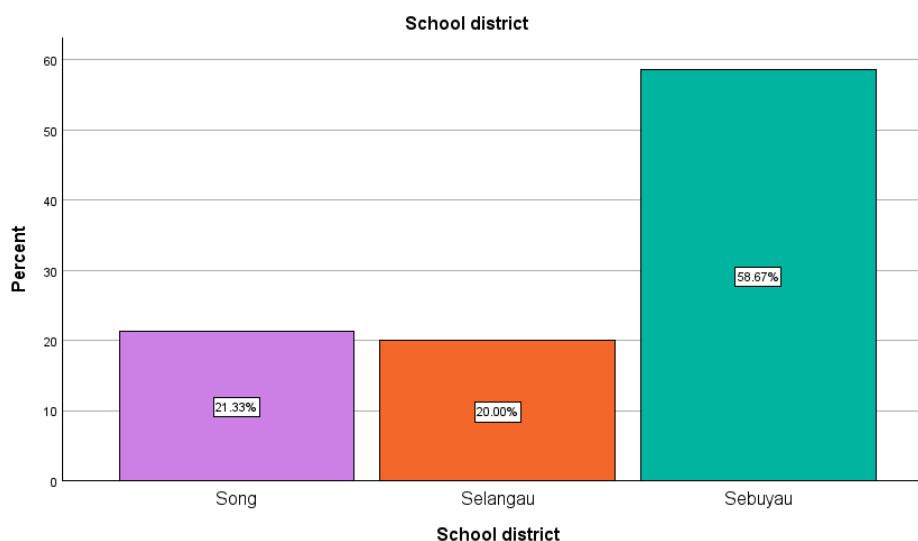

Figure 2: Bar chart showing the distribution of respondents' school districts

The distribution of participants across different districts is essential for understanding the geographic representation of the sample. This enables the researchers to assess the diversity of the respondents' backgrounds and experiences, which can influence the generalizability of the findings. By including respondents from multiple districts in rural schools, the researchers aim to capture a broader range of perspectives and insights, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness and the validity of the study results.

Language Learning Strategy for Reading Questionnaire
Tables 3 below shows the results from each item in the questionnaire, which included the distribution, frequency, and mean of reading strategies used for language learning among Year 5 pupils in three different schools.

Table 3

Distribution of frequency, percentage and mean for each item in Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3

No.	Strategies	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
Part 1: How do I understand what I read?							
1.	I use my background knowledge to understand the text.	0 (0%)	4 (5%)	26 (35%)	25 (33%)	20 (27%)	3.81
2.	I read the materials multiple times to understand what I read.	5 (7%)	6 (8%)	23 (31%)	25 (33%)	16 (21%)	3.55
3.	I examine the title of my reading to understand what I read.	2 (3%)	3 (4%)	13 (17%)	33 (44%)	24 (32%)	3.99
4.	If there's a picture, I look at the picture first to understand what I read.	0 (0%)	10 (13%)	13 (17%)	29 (39%)	23 (31%)	3.87
5.	I mark the important points with different colours to help me understand what I read.	20 (27%)	15 (20%)	20 (27%)	12 (16%)	8 (11%)	2.64
6.	I underline the important points to understand what I read.	6 (8%)	7 (9%)	18 (24%)	21 (28%)	23 (31%)	3.64
7.	I skim the text first to get the main idea to understand what I read.	6 (8%)	2 (3%)	29 (39%)	29 (39%)	9 (12%)	3.44
8.	I use a dictionary to find meaning for unfamiliar words to understand what I read.	18 (24%)	13 (17%)	10 (13%)	10 (13%)	24 (32%)	3.12
9.	I pay attention to the text organisation, from the beginning until the end to understand what I read.	3 (4%)	13 (17%)	24 (32%)	24 (32%)	11 (15%)	3.36
10.	I make predictions as to what will happen next in my reading.	4 (5%)	8 (11%)	28 (37%)	23 (31%)	12 (16%)	3.41
Part 2: What if I don't understand what I read?							
11.	If I don't understand what I read, I stop in the middle of my reading to reflect on the content.	2 (3%)	5 (7%)	29 (39%)	27 (36%)	12 (16%	3.56
12.	If I don't understand what I read, I read it several times until I understand it.	9 (12%)	9 (12%)	13 (17%)	20 (27%)	24 (32%)	3.55

13.	If I don't understand what I read, I use my mother tongue (L1) to understand the text.	6 (8%)	8 (11%)	16 (21%)	25 (33%)	20 (27%)	3.60
14.	If I don't understand what I read, I guess the meaning of the words by looking at the context of my reading material.	3 (4%)	11 (15%)	18 (24%)	29 (39%)	14 (19%)	3.53
15.	If I don't understand what I read, I seek assistance from my friends to help me understand the text.	4 (5%)	5 (7%)	11 (15%)	26 (35%)	29 (39%)	3.95
16.	If I don't understand what I read, I discuss my feelings about the text that I read.	2 (3%)	3 (4%)	2 (29%)	33 (44%)	15 (20%)	3.75
17.	If I don't understand what I read, I continue my reading.	4 (5%)	6 (8%)	13 (17%)	36 (48%)	16 (21%)	3.72
Part 3: How to improve my reading skills?							
18.	I plan on how I'm going to read the text, monitor, and check my understanding along the process.	4 (5%)	6 (8%)	20 (27%)	35 (47%)	10 (13%)	3.55
19.	I find reading materials that interest me to improve my reading skills.	2 (3%)	6 (8%)	15 (20%)	25 (33%)	27 (36%)	3.92
20.	I play music while reading to improve my reading skills.	4 (5%)	6 (8%)	6 (8%)	28 (37%)	31 (41%)	4.01
21.	I look for simple text to read to improve my reading skills.	0 (0%)	7 (9%)	15 (20%)	29 (39%)	24 (32%)	3.93
22.	I read fun materials on the internet to improve my reading skills.	1 (1%)	5 (7%)	11 (15%)	28 (37%)	30 (40%)	4.08
23.	I try to learn the culture of the context of the reading material to improve my reading skills.	2 (3%)	11 (15%)	32 (43%)	17 (23%)	13 (17%)	3.37
24.	I make summaries after finishing my reading session.	9 (12%)	10 (13%)	30 (40%)	23 (31%)	3 (4%)	3.01

The questionnaire was divided into three parts, as shown in the tables, to explore the reading skills and language learning strategies used by Year 5 primary pupils in a rural Sarawak school. The questions for each part were a combination of direct and indirect learning strategies to determine the language strategies they used the most when answering the questions regarding their preferred reading skills. Tables 4, 5, and 6 displayed the mean of every question according to Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3. The questions for each section were specifically split based on direct and indirect language learning strategies.

Table 4
Distribution of mean based on direct and indirect strategies (Part 1)

PART 1: HOW DO I UNDERSTAND WHAT I READ?		
Direct Strategies		
A.	**Memory Strategies**	**Mean**
2.	I read the materials multiple times to understand what I read.	3.55
3.	I examine the title of my reading to understand what I read.	3.99
4.	If there's a picture, I look at the picture first to understand what I read.	3.87
B.	**Cognitive Strategies**	**Mean**
5.	I mark the important points with different colours to help me understand what I read.	2.64
6.	I underline the important points to understand what I read.	3.64
7.	I skim the text first to get the main idea to understand what I read.	3.44
C.	**Compensation Strategies**	**Mean**
8.	I use a dictionary to find meaning for unfamiliar words to understand what I read.	3.12
Indirect Strategies		
A.	**Metacognitive Strategies**	**Mean**
1.	I use my background knowledge to understand the text.	3.81
9.	I pay attention to the text organisation, from the beginning until the end to understand what I read.	3.36
10.	I make predictions as to what will happen next in my reading.	3.41

According to the data shown in Table 4, with a mean of 3.99, the majority of pupils in Song, Selangau, and Song believed that memory strategies are beneficial in understanding their comprehension of reading material. The pupils in Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau districts preferred to examine the title of the text before they read the text. Before reading, it is a frequent practice for pupils to analyse the title of the work as a pre-reading approach to obtain a better understanding of the content and text objectives. Overall, analysing the title of an article before reading serves as a beneficial pre-reading method that helps pupils approach the text with purpose and knowledge. It sets the framework for efficient reading comprehension by giving context, setting expectations, and facilitating active engagement with the material. This indicates that the pupils in Year 5 in three different districts in Sarawak used these memory strategies to improve their understanding of the text.

Table 5

Distribution of mean based on direct and indirect strategies (Part 2)

PART 2: WHAT IF I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I READ?		
Direct Strategies		
A.	**Cognitive Strategies**	**Mean**
11.	If I don't understand what I read, I stop in the middle of my reading to reflect on the content.	3.56
12.	If I don't understand what I read, I read it several times until I understand it.	3.55
B.	**Compensation Strategies**	**Mean**
13.	If I don't understand what I read, I use my mother tongue (L1) to understand the text.	3.60
14.	If I don't understand what I read, I guess the meaning of the words by looking at the context of my reading material.	3.53
Indirect Strategies		
A.	**Social Strategies**	**Mean**
15.	If I don't understand what I read, I seek assistance from my friends to help me understand the text.	3.95
16.	If I don't understand what I read, I discuss my feelings about the text that I read.	3.75
B.	**Affective Strategies**	**Mean**
17.	If I don't understand what I read, I continue my reading.	3.72

Based on the figures supplied in Table 5, it is clear that the average score of 3.95 indicates that pupils from the Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau districts prefer utilising social strategies if they do not grasp the content they are reading. Pupils rely on their peers for help in comprehending the content. Seeking help from friends can bring essential ideas, viewpoints, and explanations that may clarify perplexing or challenging portions. Collaborative learning and conversation can boost comprehension and build a deeper knowledge of the text's content and meaning. Social strategies and their definitions pertain to the act of querying for clarity. Seeking further clarification, rephrasing, examples, or verification from a teacher or peer (Thao and Long, 2021). Social strategies in reading pertain to the methods and tactics that individuals employ to understand written content in a social setting. These tactics encompass comprehending not just the explicit significance of the words, but also the social and cultural cues interwoven within the text. Thus, the pupils in the Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau districts liked the social strategies that helped them understand the material better. They seek aid from their pals to better understand the text. Readers participate in collaborative reading activities, such as book clubs or debates, where they contribute interpretations, ideas, and questions regarding the text. This social connection promotes understanding and stimulates critical thinking.

Table 6
Distribution of mean based on direct and indirect strategies (Part 3)

PART 3: HOW TO IMPROVE MY READING SKILLS?		
Direct Strategies		
A.	**Cognitive Strategies**	**Mean**
24.	I make summaries after finishing my reading session.	3.01
Indirect Strategies		
A.	**Metacognitive Strategies**	**Mean**
18.	I plan on how I'm going to read the text, monitor it, and check my understanding along the process.	3.55
B.	**Affective Strategies**	**Mean**
19.	I find reading materials that interest me to improve my reading skills.	3.92
20.	I play music while reading to improve my reading skills.	4.01
21.	I look for simple text to read to improve my reading skills.	3.93
22.	I read fun materials on the internet to improve my reading skills.	4.08
C.	**Social Strategies**	**Mean**
23.	I try to learn the culture of the context of the reading material to improve my reading skills.	3.37

Motivational factors influenced the usage of EFL/ESL techniques, including learning aim and interest, sex, and self-confidence (Lin, 2019). Table 6 reveals that the pupils in the three schools in the Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau districts pick affective strategies, which are indirect strategies, to assist them in enhancing their reading skills. Students in the three districts choose affective strategies to develop their reading skills, as seen by the mean score of 4.08. They opt to read entertaining materials on the internet to develop their reading skills. Reading internet articles, blogs, or even forums can be a good approach to practise reading literacy and broadening knowledge. In addition, with a large amount of information readily available on the internet, pupils have the opportunity to investigate an array of areas that captivate them.

Discussions
The discussion will centre on addressing the main question of this research. The research question is as follows

What are the preferred language learning strategies for reading skills among Year 5 pupils in three primary rural schools in three different districts in Sarawak?
According to the overall findings, pupils in three rural primary schools in three districts of Sarawak used three different language learning strategies to understand and improve their reading skills. According to research by Sani and Ismail (2021), young Malaysians who are learning a language employ a combination of direct and indirect approaches. This indicates that primary pupils can be taught to employ a range of strategies for both general and specific language skills. According to this research findings, the students utilised memory strategies to increase their understanding of the material, such as reading the title ahead of time to get a sense of what they were about to read. When the pupils are unable to comprehend the text that they are reading, they seek assistance from their friends who have a more comprehensive understanding of the text; in this way, they utilise the social strategies that

are utilised in language learning. In the meantime, the pupils of Year 5 in three different schools located in three different districts in Sarawak utilised effective strategies to improve their reading abilities. They opt to read entertaining materials on the internet to develop their reading skills. Even though they are confronted with difficulties in establishing internet connectivity in their areas, they nonetheless manage to find a way to use the internet in order to obtain something to read.

According to the data presented in Table 4 regarding Part 1: *"How do I understand what I read?"* which reflects the understanding of reading among pupils in Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau districts in Sarawak, there is a strong belief in the efficacy of memory strategies in enhancing comprehension of reading material. Memory strategies are crucial for achieving efficient understanding of material and aim to improve memory retention. These approaches and exercises are specifically designed to enhance the ability to store and retrieve knowledge. Memory strategies refer to certain procedures and approaches that are employed to improve the process of encoding, storing, and retrieving information in memory. These tactics are applicable in diverse circumstances, including exam preparation, acquiring new abilities, and retaining crucial information in daily life. Utilising effective memory strategies can greatly enhance the ability to retain and retrieve information, resulting in more efficient and enjoyable learning experiences.

The data presented in Table 5 for Part 2: *"What if I don't understand what I read?"* highlights pupils' preference for employing social strategies, such as seeking help from peers, to enhance their understanding of textual material. Social strategies and their definitions pertain to the act of querying for clarity. Seeking further clarification, rephrasing, examples, or verification from a teacher or peer (Thao and Long, 2021). Social strategies in reading pertain to the methods and tactics that individuals employ to understand written content in a social setting. These tactics encompass comprehending not just the explicit significance of the words, but also the social and cultural cues interwoven within the text.

Based on the data presented in Table 6 for Part 3: *"How to improve my reading skills?"*, it is evident that pupils in the Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau districts predominantly employ effective strategies to enhance their reading skills. These strategies, including finding reading materials that interest them, playing music while reading, seeking out simple texts, and reading for fun on the internet, reflect a strong inclination towards engaging with reading materials in a personally meaningful and enjoyable manner. This emphasis on affective strategies underscores the importance of intrinsic motivation and personal interest in fostering reading proficiency among pupils. The highest mean scores for affective strategies among all the strategies mentioned in this research also indicate that pupils prioritise enjoyment and personal relevance in their reading practice. Moreover, the use of affective strategies such as playing music while reading or seeking out entertaining internet content demonstrates a creative approach in making their reading process enjoyable and engaging. The finding on this study fits in with research conducted by Dawi et al (2021) in selected rural schools in Sarawak as the finding also indicated that the pupils employed effective strategies to enhance their reading skills. Dawi et al (2021) also stated that pupils use multiple learning strategies to enhance their reading skill finding and not limited to only one strategy of language learning. The current study's finding is consistent with the prior research by Rojalai et al (2021) as the researcher found out that depending on one strategy does not necessarily result in a superior knowledge or comprehension for the pupils. When reading, pupils need to employ a variety of reading strategies in order to absorb the content they are reading.

Proper guidance, practice, and a teacher's understanding of language learning strategies can help pupils achieve faster and better results. (Jaikrishnan and Ismail, 2021).

Implications
According to the findings, the favoured language learning strategies among Year 5 pupils in three different rural primary schools in three districts in Sarawak are prone to use a variety of different types of language learning strategies. The most popular strategies are memory strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies. It is undoubtedly that Year 5 students in the districts of Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau are eager to use both direct and indirect strategies to enhance their reading skills. Teachers must therefore take these things into account when creating lesson plans. For memory strategies, teachers may employ techniques such as vocabulary word viewing regularly to provide support for memory retention. Flashcards and vocabulary journals are effective tools for systematic review. For social strategies, teachers may let the pupils engage in active learning in the classroom to promote communication and collaboration among their peers. According to Rajasagaran et al (2022), social strategies demand pupils to engage in activities with other people, like asking questions, talking, and working with their peers to understand other cultures and how people think and feel. Participating in collaborative reading activities, such as book clubs or debates can foster dynamic exchanges of ideas and perspectives, contributing to a more meaningful and enjoyable reading experience. Reading passages that visually entice students to read more could be prepared by teachers for pupils who tend towards affective strategies. Pupils' interests should be carefully considered by teachers. Pupils would be more motivated to read with purpose and experience less worry if their interests were integrated into the reading material. By incorporating these strategies into their lesson plans, teachers may create interesting and successful language learning experiences that cater to the different needs and preferences of Year 5 pupils in rural Sarawak primary schools. These strategies can create a positive learning atmosphere in which pupils feel motivated and supported throughout their language-learning journey.

Conclusion
The research conducted gave insight into different LLS employed in reading among pupils in three different rural primary schools in three districts of Sarawak namely; Song, Selangau, and Sebuyau. The most popular strategies for learning a language in the three districts are memory strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies. Therefore, this specific research results may not apply to all Malaysian primary schools in rural areas in all districts in Sarawak. To investigate how Malaysian primary school pupils in rural Sarawak utilise LLS in the future, researchers might employ a larger sample size to ensure that the data is further valid. Furthermore, future research should cover more than one language skill, like speaking, reading, writing, and listening. This would paint a clearer picture for teachers to use in their school lessons.

Acknowledgement

References

Abdullah, S. Y. M., & Ismail, Z. (2020). Malaysia: English as a second language in education and globalisation. In A. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes* (pp. 137-150). Routledge.

Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2018). Individual differences in second language acquisition. *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes* (pp. 123-136). Routledge.

Azizan, N. A. (2018). The English language curriculum in Malaysia: A historical perspective. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(2), 43-55.

Borleffs, E., Maassen, B. A. M., Lyytinen, H., and Zwartz, F. (2019). Cracking the code: the impact of orthographic transparency and morphological-syllabic complexity on reading and developmental dyslexia. *Front. Psychol.* 9:2543.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (4th ed., pp. 1-673). Pearson.

Darusalam, G. (2017). Factors contributing to students' speaking skill problems: A case study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 7(3), 212-221.

Dawi, D. A., Hilary, H. B., David, M., Jospa, M. E. A. W., Igai, W. K. A., & Hashim, H. (2021). Language Learning Strategies Used for Reading Skill by Pupils in Selected Rural Schools in Sarawak. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences,* 11(6), 1379–1390.

Dörnyei, Z. (2019). *Motivation in second language learning* (pp. 1-350). John Wiley & Sons.

Duke, N. K., & Bennett-Armistead, V. S. (2003). Reading and writing informational text in the primary grades: Research-based practices. The Reading Teacher, 57(7), 632-643.

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2019). *Teaching and researching reading* (3rd ed., pp. 1-500). Routledge.

Green, J., & Oxford, R. L. (1995): A closer look at learning strategies, L2 proficiency, and gender. TESOL Quarterly, 29, 261-297.

Hassan, M. F., & Rahman, N. (2016). Reading habits among rural and urban Malaysian secondary school students. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(7), 1400-1408.

Ismail, Z., & Abdullah, S. Y. M. (2019). English in education policy and planning in Malaysia. In A. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes* (pp. 123-136). Routledge.

Jaikrishnan, S., & Ismail, H. H. (2021). A Review on Vocabulary Learning Strategies Used in Learning English as a Second Language. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11, 297-309.

Jawad Golzar, Shagofah Noor & Omid Tajik. 2022. Convenience Sampling. *International Journal of Education and Language Studies*. 1(2): 72-77

Leu, D. J., Forzani, E., Rhoads, C., Maykel, C., Kennedy, C., & Timbrell, N. (2015). The new literacies of online research and comprehension: Rethinking the reading achievement gap. Reading Research Quarterly, 50(1), 37-59.

Lin, J. (2019). Factors Related to EFL/ESL Readers' Reading Strategy Use. *International Journal of Translation, Interpretation, and Applied Linguistics*, 1(1).

Livingston, E. M., Siegel, L. S., and Ribary, U. (2018). Developmental dyslexia: emotional impact and consequences. Aust. J. Learn. Diffic. 23, 107–135.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gregersen, T. (2018). *The Oxford handbook of language learning motivation* (pp. 1-600). Oxford University Press.

McNamara, D. S., & Magliano, J. (2009). *Toward a comprehensive model of comprehension. In B. Ross (Ed.), The psychology of learning and motivation: Cognition in education* (Vol. 51, pp. 297-384). Academic Press.

MOE (Ministry of Education Malaysia). (2015). English Language Reform in Malaysia: The Roadmap 2015–2025.

Ng, S. H., Lin, S. E., Lee, C., & Amini, M. (2020). ESL reading assessment tool for pre-schoolers in Malaysia. *Berjaya Journal of Services and Management,* 14, 3-16.

Oxford, R. L. (2017). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies* (pp. 1-400). Routledge.

Pressley, M., & Afflerbach, P. (1995). *Verbal protocols of reading: The nature of constructively responsive reading*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rajasagaran, S., Wui, J. W. J., Chun, T. W., & Hashim, H. (2022). Identifying Language Learning Strategies for Reading among Malaysian TESL Postgraduates in a Public University. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(6), 273 – 287.

Rohaizat, N., & Aziz, A. A. (2021). Systematic literature review of language learning strategies for reading skills in English for specific purposes among business students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business & Social Sciences*, 11(12), 139-159.

Rojalai, A., Susaie, J. S., Balaraman, L., Manoharan, S. R., Mustafa, Z., & Hashim, H. (2021). Language Learning Strategies Used for Enhancing Reading Skills Among Year 6 Pupils of A Primary School in Selangor. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(6), 1186–1195.

Sani, S., & Ismail, H. H. (2021). Assessing the Use of Learning Strategies among Young Malaysian English as Second Language Learners. Creative Education, 12, 2124-2145.

Sarjit, K., & Yap, N. T. (2017). Policy and planning for English language education in Malaysia: The journey so far. In A. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes* (pp. 112-122). Routledge.

Shamsudin, S., & Ahmad, K. (2018). Reading strategies used by Malaysian ESL students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,* 9(5), 1023-1032.

Thao, T. Q., & Long, N. H. C. (2021). English-majored students' motivation in English Language Learning and their use of reading strategies: Research Perspectives. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 37(1).

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Harvard University Press.

Yusof, N. M., & Rahman, N. A. (2019). The use of reading strategies among ESL students in a Malaysian secondary school. *KnE Social Sciences*, 3*(22), 92-101.

A Language Learning Strategy for Reading Questionnaire
Adapted from: Young Learner's Language Strategy Use Survey (Cohen & Oxford, 2002) &
Language Strategy Use Survey (Cohen et al., 2005)

Section A: Demographic Background
Instruction: Please tick (/) appropriate responses that best describe each aspect in Section A.

1. Gender:
        (   ) Male
        (   ) Female

2. School district:
        (   ) Song
        (   ) Selangau
        (   ) Sebuyau

3. Age:
        (   ) 10 years old
        (   ) 11 years old
        (   ) 12 years old

Section B: Language Learning Strategy for Reading Questionnaire
Instruction: This questionnaire is divided into 3 parts of questions. For each statement, please
circle whether you:
(1) strongly disagree = SD
(2) disagree = D
(3) neutral = N
(4) agree = A
(5) strongly agree = SA

Part 1: How do I understand what I read?		SD	D	N	A	SA
1.	I use my background knowledge to understand the text.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I read the materials multiple times to understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I examine the title of my reading to understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	If there's a picture, I look at the picture first to understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I mark the important points with different colours to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5

6.	I underline the important points to understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I skim the text first to get the main idea to understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I use a dictionary to find meaning for unfamiliar words to understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I pay attention to the text organization, from beginning until the end to understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I make predictions as to what will happen next in my reading.	1	2	3	4	5
Part 2: What if I don't understand what I read?		SD	D	N	A	SA
11.	If I don't understand what I read, I stop in the middle of my reading to reflect on the content.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	If I don't understand what I read, I read several times until I understand it.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	If I don't understand what I read, I use my mother tongue (L1) to understand the text.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	If I don't understand what I read, I guess the meaning of the words by looking at the context of my reading material.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	If I don't understand what I read, I seek assistance from my friends to help me understand the text.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	If I don't understand what I read, I discuss my feelings about the text that I read.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	If I don't understand what I read, I continue my reading.	1	2	3	4	5
Part 3: How to improve my reading skill?		SD	D	N	A	SA
18.	I plan ahead on how I'm going to read the text, monitor and check my understanding along the process.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I find reading materials that interest me to improve my reading skill.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I play music while reading to improve my reading skill.	1	2	3	4	5

21.	I look for simple text to read to improve my reading skill.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I read for fun materials on the internet to improve my reading skill.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I try to learn the culture of the context of the reading material to improve my reading skill.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I make summaries after finishing my reading session.	1	2	3	4	5