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Metacognition in L2 reading literacy acquisition: the case of ten Chinese tertiary students learning to read EFL

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Introduction
Earlier research on language learning strategies focused on identifying successful and unsuccessful learning strategies in order to help learners increase their effective use of such successful strategies (see Oxford 1996 for a review). As a broad spectrum, language learning strategies research literature is replete with studies on general language learning strategies. However, with reference to Chinese EFL learners, only a few studies on their learning strategies have been reported (eg Gu & Johnson 1996, Wen & Johnson 1997), but serious attempts at investigating Chinese EFL readers’ metacognition in their process for meaning-construction in processing written language have been lacking. In terms of second language reading research, studies on second/foreign language learners’ reading strategies are similarly insufficient and cursory (Block 1992, Young & Oxford 1997), and with particular reference to Chinese EFL readers in a target language input-poor environment, research into these readers’ metacognition in L2 reading acquisition has been even more limited.

Even though in the literature there are a few reports which directly address Chinese EFL learners’ reading problems in one way or another, these reports are either assertions which are not validated through empirical data (eg Field 1985, Kohn 1992), or investigations into students’ vocabulary learning strategies during reading (eg Gu 1994), or reading strategies in relation to L1 literacy traditions (eg Parry 1996). Field (1985), for example, posits that Chinese EFL readers do not use conceptual strategies even though they are advanced readers in the target language. Kohn (1992) states that Chinese EFL readers’ reading strategies are greatly different from those of their American counterparts, mainly because American students tend to read rapidly while Chinese students tend to read slowly. Gu (1994) reported that his good and poor EFL readers do not use conceptual strategies even though they are advanced readers in the target language. Kohn (1992) states that Chinese EFL readers’ reading strategies are greatly different from those of their American counterparts, mainly because American students tend to read rapidly while Chinese students tend to read slowly. Gu (1994) reported that his good and poor EFL readers did not use conceptual strategies even though they are advanced readers in the target language. Kohn (1992) states that Chinese EFL readers’ reading strategies are greatly different from those of their American counterparts, mainly because American students tend to read rapidly while Chinese students tend to read slowly. Gu (1994) reported that his good and poor EFL readers different in strategy use in vocabulary learning. In Parry’s (1996) study of strategies used by Chinese EFL teacher-trainees, she reported that her subjects’ stronger tendency to use ‘bottom-up’ strategies than ‘top-down’ strategies was closely linked to their L1 literacy tradition.

Carrell’s (1989) research, though not specifically addressing Chinese EFL learners, however, suggested that there was some difference between strategy perceptions associated with good L1 readers and those associated with good L2 readers. Her questionnaire data showed a consistent difference according to proficiency level, with low-proficiency readers tending to report more text-bound, local strategies than higher-proficiency readers. This suggests that language proficiency strongly influences readers’ use of strategies in L2 reading literacy acquisition.

Recently, Wenden (1998) has suggested that further research be carried out in order to establish links between learners’ metacognitive awareness, or metacognition, and their strategy use in second/foreign language learning. Since reading is a major component in most L2 learning programmes, the relationships between EFL readers’ metacognition and their effective use of strategies in EFL reading literacy acquisition need to be further examined.

Defining metacognition and literacy
A survey of the literature shows that the concept of metacognition has evolved over the years. A definition by Flavell (1987), for example, manages to capture not only metacognitive awareness but also metacognitive experiences and strategy deployment as well. Flavell’s distinction of the three key concepts — metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences and strategy use — is also very important for understanding L2 readers’ reading processes. This is because metacognitive knowledge can guide metacognitive experiences, and metacognitive experiences can help revise the learner’s metacognitive knowledge. In other words, readers’ metacognition can induce not only the use of cognitive strategies but also revision of the learner’s metacognitive knowledge. Nevertheless, in contemporary cognitive psychology, metacognition is generally understood as ‘thinking about thinking’, or regulation and execution of cognition (Hacker 1998).

In second language learning strategies research, different writers, for example Wenden (1991, 1998) and Oxford (1996), have incorporated this concept into various frameworks for analysing language learners’ strategies. However, Wenden’s (1991) effort within Flavell’s model has been a major source of inspiration for researchers and practitioners. Therefore, for easy operationalisation, in this study metacognition is defined by following what Flavell and Wenden call ‘metacognitive knowledge’.

Also of relevance to context, the term is also used (1997:2), though its definition may vary (Kohn 1992).

The context of the study
The first stage of the study involved constructing an inventory and two thesauri to prioritise and rank preferences for global and local text-reading strategies. A regression analysis was then conducted comprising 80 specific contexts paired with two aspects of Chinese EFL readers’ reading skills: ‘detailed meanings of Chinese EFL readers’ reading comprehension’. Readers were rated for their activation of EFL reading strategies and researchers as used by Wenden (1998).

Based on part of this study, subjects were rated good L2 readers at a mean age of 22.

Subjects
The subjects who participated in this study were college science freshmen selected from two universities in China. Their Chinese reading comprehension was rated as good through the National Tertiary Education Council. Subjects were rated good L2 readers and the test results obtained were controlled at these points.

Instrument
A semistructured interview was conducted in order to ensure that more comprehensive data were gathered for the study. The interview was intended to elicit strategies used in EFL reading acquisition, i.e. their reading strategies. The interview was conducted with subjects referred to the subjec...
Also of relevance to this study is the definition of literacy. In this study’s EFL context, the term is used to refer to academic reading literacy only (see Johns 1997:2), though its definition is more complex in different social and academic contexts (Kohn 1992, Street 1993, Parry 1996).

The context of the study
The first stage of the present study involved a self-designed reading strategies inventory and two think-aloud tasks in order to elicit L2 readers’ strategies in processing L2 written input (Zhang 1999). The results showed that the subjects’ preferences for global strategies are L2 proficiency-specific. However, multiple regression analyses revealed that of the 13 clusters of reading strategies comprising 80 specific strategies, the significant clusters of strategies predictive of Chinese EFL readers’ reading and general EFL learning achievement were ‘detailing meanings of words’ and ‘guessing through inferences’, suggesting that Chinese EFL readers might prefer to use strategies of both types for meaning-construction. Readers’ low L2 proficiency was, however, an undermining factor for their activation of the global strategies usually regarded by reading researchers as used by effective L1 and L2 readers (Carrell 1989, Parry 1996). Based on part of this data set, I will make another attempt to further explore L2 readers’ metacognition in L2 reading literacy acquisition in this paper.

Subjects
The subjects who participated in this interview research were ten arts and science freshmen selected through random sampling from the participant pool of two universities in China. The data show that they began to learn English as a foreign language at around age 12 when they were in junior middle schools. Their Chinese reading abilities ranged from good to excellent, as measured by the National Tertiary Matriculation Chinese Examination. Five of the subjects were rated good L2 readers and the other five poor L2 readers on the basis of the test results obtained from the nation-wide College English Test Band-II administered at these two universities. The ages of the subjects ranged from 16 to 22.

Instrument
A semistructured interview guide, designed in Chinese, was used in order to ensure that more complete data could be collected. The interview questions were intended to elicit the subjects’ metacognition in L2 reading literacy acquisition, ie their metacognitive knowledge about L2 reading. Questions referred to the subjects’ own evaluation of themselves as readers, of the
difficulty levels of the texts, how they perceived strategy use, how they solved problems in their reading, and their reactions to the texts they had read. In sum, the questions asked were within the metacognitive knowledge framework of Flavell (1987) and Wenden (1991), as can be seen in Figure 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person Knowledge</th>
<th>Task Knowledge</th>
<th>Strategy Knowledge</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Cognitive factors that facilitate reading</td>
<td>• Task purpose or significance</td>
<td>• Effective strategies for particular tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Affective factors that facilitate reading</td>
<td>• Nature of language and communication</td>
<td>• General principles to determine strategy choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Need for deliberate effort</td>
<td>• Task demands</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge required to do the task</td>
<td>• steps and strategies</td>
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<td>• level of difficulty</td>
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Figure 1. Metacognitive knowledge types in second language reading (adapted from Wenden (1991:33-51).

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. All the transcriptions of the subjects were analysed and classified according to person, task and strategy to address the research question 'what kind of metacognition do Chinese EFL readers have in their L2 reading literacy acquisition?'

**Results**

**Person knowledge**

Results showed that good readers in this study had more metacognitive knowledge about themselves as readers than their poor counterparts when they read in Chinese and in English. The majority of the subjects reported that they used a lot of metacognitive strategies while reading, and yet they evaluated themselves as poor or ordinary EFL readers, and only occasionally did they claim that they were good readers. Their responses showed that they had the necessary metacognitive knowledge (person, task, and strategy) to judge what was involved in effective and ineffective EFL reading with reference to the reading tasks. The interview data also revealed not only their self-knowledge of the orthographic differences between the two languages but also their beliefs about reading in English and Chinese.

**Task knowledge**

In terms of the subjects' uniform pattern of the reading tasks they faced with, either in English or in Chinese, the analyses showed that some of the reading tasks gave rise to a specific level of difficulty, and the subjects’ reactions to these tasks varied. The subjects reported in Zhang (1998) that they read in English or Chinese, and they perceived language use, their behavioural patterns to be different from each other. English grammar was different from Chinese grammar in that they read Chinese, and they cared too much about the grammatical structure of Chinese language, compared with the English language. The Chinese language was also different from the English language because they needed a lot of practice in both the phonetic system and the writing system of the Chinese language.

What was important to them in learning English and cultural background knowledge was that they needed to know about the basic building materials of the languages and their comprehension abilities.

Self-confidence was also important in learning. The subjects believed that self-confidence depended to a large extent on their proficiency, and the higher the proficiency, the higher their self-confidence was. The subjects also reported that they felt that there was always something they needed to learn and to improve.

**Strategy knowledge**

In the case of ten Chinese tertiary students, the interviews showed that they felt that there was always something they needed to learn and to improve. The subjects also reported that they felt that there was always something they needed to learn and to improve.

During the interviews, the subjects reported that they did not involve learning English grammar, and they did not involve learning Chinese grammar. They also reported that they read English grammar, and they did not involve learning Chinese grammar. They also reported that they read English grammar, and they did not involve learning Chinese grammar.
During the interviews, five readers indicated that reading in Chinese and reading in English were qualitatively similar, despite the fact that the two languages use different orthographies. They also commented that learning to read in Chinese did not involve learning the grammatical structures of the language as learning to read in English did. This aspect of their person-knowledge seems to support their behavioral performance patterns in the comprehension of the two texts reported in Zhang (1999). Even poor readers of EFL said that they were poor in reading English only because they did not have a large vocabulary, and that English grammar was more complicated than that of Chinese. They commented that they read Chinese novels, sanwen (prose, essays, etc), and poetry without caring too much about grammar. Since they never analysed Chinese grammatical structures, it seemed to them that there was no grammar in the Chinese language, despite the fact that word order was very important in understanding the Chinese language. They believed that reading in English needed a lot of practice in the beginning in order to get acquainted with the phonetic system and the grammatical structures. As they became more familiar with the grammatical system, that is, as their proficiency level increased, they felt that there was almost no difference in reading in the two languages.

What was important to the readers was the development of a large vocabulary in English and cultural background knowledge. Both were, in their minds, the basic building materials for comprehension. They said that this was because they needed to know more about the material that they were reading and about the necessary background or the cultural knowledge embedded in it to make their comprehension a much easier task.

Self-confidence was also strongly believed by the subjects as a facilitator in EFL learning. The subjects believed that successful learning of a foreign language depended to a large extent on the confidence one had in oneself. Once again, proficiency was a strong indicator of the readers’ demonstration of confidence; the higher the proficiency levels, the more obviously the subjects could establish self-rapport, and hence exhibit more self-confidence.

**Task knowledge**

In terms of the subjects’ task knowledge, the interview data did not produce a uniform pattern of the subjects’ awareness of the reading tasks that they were faced with, either in this particular study or in their daily activities. Data analyses showed that six subjects had clear understandings of the requirements of the reading tasks given to them in that specific setting, as well as reading tasks in their daily university reading schedules. The other four subjects did not
strongly realise the importance of task knowledge, nor did they have such metacognitive awareness. However, when asked about the difficulty of the two passages they had read, all the subjects interviewed commented that the ‘social customs’ passage was more difficult than the ‘body language’ passage.

Four good readers said that English was easier to learn in the beginning by virtue of its simple orthography, but that reading in Chinese was easier than reading in English for them, because it was their mother tongue. This might be because, in their daily lives, the subjects read for pleasure in Chinese, mostly novels or stories rather than sanwen or poetry. This might also be because they found novels and stories easy and enjoyable to read. Sanwen and poetry are more taxing, requiring more concentrated effort on the part of the reader. The reader has to weigh and deliberate the meanings of words and expressions, and has to make a lot of inferences and be empowered with a rich imagination in order to understand the implied meanings. Reading prose and poetry is a higher-order mental activity which requires more concerted intellectual attribution, for example, motivation and emotional input (Perskin 1998). This might also indicate that they were sometimes comparing the two languages when they were trapped in difficulties while reading in EFL.

Equally significant is the fact that these readers also realised the importance of lexical, grammatical and discoursal knowledge. Nevertheless, their awareness about the role these linguistic elements play in helping them comprehend did not conflict with their metacognitive evaluation of the usefulness of readers’ schemata or background knowledge. This is because, as they reported, in reading in an L2, meaning should be the paramount concern, as is the case in L1 reading, though L2 reading was also for helping them to learn the target language.

Strategy knowledge

Though the poor readers also demonstrated varying degrees of strategy knowledge independent of specific tasks, their pre-reading behaviours and in-reading behaviours in the given tasks showed that they were not as fully aware of the reading tasks at hand as were the good readers. When they were faced with the reading tasks, they did not as easily weigh the tasks as their more linguistically proficient counterparts, even though their L1 proficiency was as good as that of the better readers. This suggests that strategy knowledge also appeared to vary between good and poor readers.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal that reading literacy acquired in one language could also be transferred to help their understanding of L2 reading. Firstly, they reported having related reading tasks at hand as were the good readers. When they were faced with the reading tasks, they did not as easily weigh the tasks as their more linguistically proficient counterparts, even though their L1 proficiency was as good as that of the better readers. This suggests that strategy knowledge also appeared to vary between good and poor readers.
The poor readers did not realise as strongly as the good L2 readers that the reading tasks at hand required them to adopt different reading strategies in order to solve the problems they encountered. They often handled the tasks by paying attention to every linguistic element in the print. In addition, they did not accept any ambiguity of meaning and thus resorted to the frequent use of dictionaries, greatly affecting their reading efficiency. However, almost all the readers in the interviews answered that they knew how to reasonably divide their time on different reading tasks and this metacognition has close links with their deployment of strategies for meaning construction.

A very strong tendency reported by the good L2 readers was that they were always prepared to solve their vocabulary problems by weighing the contexts and find their way out either by guessing or using dictionaries. They also reported analysing grammatical structures of sentences and word morphologies to help their understanding. The poor readers reported using dictionaries more often to solve their language problems, as they reported their vocabulary size was too small for them to use guessing as a strategy to help them arrive at comprehension. The good and the poor readers had different perspectives on when to activate their schema knowledge. The good readers responded that they knew, when they were able to understand at least 70% of a text, they could immediately resort to that knowledge base; the poor readers were not able to activate their schema knowledge as, if they couldn’t understand what the text said, the schema knowledge simply could not find its use anywhere.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that Chinese EFL readers’ metacognition in L2 reading literacy acquisition was particular in at least two ways. First, they reported having relatively sufficient metacognitive knowledge, which seems to have been transferred from their first language learning and reading experiences. They commented that they had quite clear awareness about themselves, as readers, of task requirements and effective strategies for meaning-construction. Secondly, they reported that they had to be very careful in order to understand every phrase of the passage in their reading, which to a great extent slowed down their reading speed. Insofar as their metacognitive knowledge about L2 reading is concerned, it seems that there was a knowledge transfer from L1 to L2. The subjects’ metacognitive knowledge about L2 reading and their reading behaviour could also be attributed to the traditional literacy practices that they had gone through in the Chinese classroom, further complicated by their relatively low L2 proficiency. In learning to read in Chinese as L1, Chinese teachers tend to emphasise articulation of the Chinese characters and usually reading aloud takes

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priority in the language classroom. This is also reported by the good readers, who said that in learning to read they also need to pay attention to pronunciation.

The results suggest that poor readers and good readers are different, that is, good readers know relatively more clearly than poor readers which metacognitive aspects must be given due attention in order for comprehension to occur. However, the data from this study also seem to indicate that poor readers are blocked by the lack of declarative knowledge. So they find it difficult to activate their strategies. In addition, they did not consider much whether their deployment of a strategy such as guessing was effective in helping them to arrive at a better comprehension because of their relatively low L2 proficiency, lending support to Clark’s (1980) view that their low EFL proficiency level ‘short-circuits’ their deployment of effective strategies.

While most researchers suggest that successful L2 readers can correctly guess the meanings of unknown words while reading (eg Carrell 1989; Block 1992), others question the significance of doing so, as guessing in its own right rarely helps comprehension in a constrained context (eg Laufer 1997). This might account for why the poor EFL readers regarded detailing vocabulary meaning as very important, as they could be suspicious of the effectiveness of contextual guessing when their comprehension was blocked by new vocabulary items. Their stronger reliance on linguistic knowledge rather than on strategies in processing written input might also be related to the way Chinese is taught in schools, where teachers allocate a lot of classroom time to read the texts carefully in order to completely understand the texts. This traditional practice of L1 learning might have been brought into their L2 reading, as, in the Chinese literacy tradition, reading for accuracy is regarded as very important.

The subjects’ interview protocols also seemed to show that even if they had metacognitive awareness of how to approach their reading tasks, the specific problems in reading did not seem to have been solved by this metacognitive knowledge. This means that even if a reader has good metacognitive strategies she or he uses in L1, these will not be of much help in L2 before a solid language base has been reached (Alderson 1984). It seems that metacognitive knowledge might help the good Chinese EFL readers in the regulation and monitoring of their comprehension or cognitive strategy use, ie the executive control process, but cannot directly help the poor readers out of linguistic problems (see Perkins et al 1989).
Many researchers argue that metacognition consists of knowledge and regulatory skills that are used to control one’s cognition (e.g., Flavell 1987, Hacker 1998). Results of this study seem to lend further support to this view in that the subjects’ knowledge of grammatical and discoursal relationships is of clear value for them to arrive at an accurate understanding of the text. Another explanation might be that cognition and metacognition differ in that cognitive skills are necessary to perform a task, while metacognition is necessary to understand how the task is performed (Hacker 1998). Metacognitive knowledge is important, but understanding the necessary linguistic elements is equally necessary and decoding factors are crucial for L2 reading comprehension to occur. In other words, the ‘induced schema’ can not override the role that a linguistic threshold might play in the comprehension process at the very beginning, or even at the intermediate levels (Hudson 1982, Alderson 1984; see also Bernhardt & Kamil 1995, Gu & Johnson 1996).

Also important in understanding metacognition in L2 reading literacy acquisition of a particular group of EFL readers is the role that the L1 literacy tradition might play in influencing the readers to prefer certain strategies to others. While research shows that even in their day-to-day English language learning activities, Chinese EFL learners’ learning strategies are reflected in different language learning activities (e.g., Gu & Johnson 1996, Wen & Johnson 1997), their preference for certain strategies can be interpreted from different perspectives (e.g., Field 1985, Kohn 1992). Zhang’s (1999) first stage study shows that Chinese EFL readers prefer using strategies which are more metacognitive in nature, in other words, they know which are good and effective reading strategies for meaning-construction. However, when it comes to actual reading tasks, they are obliged to use the lower-level reading strategies due to their lack of proficiency in the target language. Gu & Johnson (1996) reported that EFL learners’ vocabulary size played a crucial role in comprehension. Nevertheless, writers such as Field (1985) and Kohn (1992) hold the view that the reading strategies used by Chinese EFL readers are mainly influenced by their L1 reading habits, particularly by the logographic writing system of the Chinese language. They also posit that Chinese EFL reading teachers encourage their students to read slowly, coming to the conclusion that these readers do not use conceptual strategies; hence, their reading strategies are more decoding strategies. They seem to have ignored that reading in whatever way is for meaning-construction and conceptual strategies are basic to reading comprehension, especially with reference to Chinese which is a topic-prominent language, the processing of which requires conceptual strategies.
Parry (1996) argues that reading in a second culture is different from reading in L1 in several fundamental ways, one of which is the obvious difference in oral and literate cultures. She found that, while it might be the case that reading strategies used by Chinese EFL readers are closely related to their L1 literacy tradition, and that the writing system in which Chinese characters are recorded and the way in which Chinese characters are taught and learned impinge and impact on the way Chinese EFL readers read in English, the discussion of other issues, such as the ever-changing nature of society, is missing in the discussion of the reading strategies of Chinese EFL readers by other writers. This might suggest that individuals and cultures are changing with the change of the larger social milieu in which learning takes place, particularly in institutions where newly trained EFL teachers fill the posts. This change is further evidenced by the newly published EFL textbooks (for middle and tertiary levels) and Chinese language textbooks (for primary and middle levels), where the students are consciously instructed on how to read strategically (e.g., Cui et al., 1996). Here cautions are also in order. The above patterns are only a reflection of the group tendencies rather than stringent features of each individual; that is, these readers’ metacognition and their reading behaviors are group characteristics in general and their perceived reading strategy use might vary across individuals in its very social and cultural contexts (Block, 1992, Parry, 1996, Young & Oxford, 1997).

**Conclusion**

In summary, the results of this study suggest that metacognition in L2 reading literacy acquisition could also be culturally and socially constructed, but the nature of social construction is dynamic. When Chinese society is influenced by multifarious factors, both internal and external, their impact on the EFL teaching scene is obvious. Metacognition has an important role to play in the readers’ development of reading strategies and reading efficacy in L2 reading literacy acquisition. This interaction between L2 readers’ proficiency level and readers’ deployment of strategies for meaning-construction can be better understood from this metacognitive perspective. Chinese EFL readers’ metacognition in L2 reading literacy acquisition might help us detect their real problems given that societies are different from one another in the amount of the target language input and in literacy traditions that move readers towards excellence, particularly when these readers are in severe impairment of language contact, as in China. It means that readers’ metacognition in L2 literacy acquisition in these societies should be viewed in relation to what the readers in these societies perceive as important for their reading improvement. It might be suggested that because of the language learning environment, the cultures and the literacy traditions, the readers’ metacognition and reading behaviors need to be studied.

If any pedagogical practice might be that the readers are to give more attention to their students’ cultural awareness, teacher knowledge is important in L2 reading acquisition. Empirical research shows that increasing reading efficacy is a process of interaction between teachers and students.

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If any pedagogic implications are to be drawn from this study, one of them
might be that the Chinese EFL learning scene is much more complicated than
what one study of this kind can show. Therefore, in instruction, teachers should
give more attention to understanding their students’ real problems by eliciting
their students’ own metacognitive knowledge and, if their metacognitive
knowledge is wrong, help them reflect by correcting their misconceptions about
L2 reading and then help them develop into independent readers. Further
empirical research is needed to address the relationship between consciously
increasing readers’ metacognitive knowledge and strategy use in the very
process of intervention in reading instruction.

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Appendix

Semistructured Interview Guide (English translation)

1. Are there any differences or similarities between reading in Chinese and in English? If so, in what way, as you perceive? Do you see these differences or similarities as deep-rooted or as superficial?

2. If you have already realised the problems we have just talked about, do they have any influence on your EFL learning? Under such circumstances, do you or do you not think that reading in English and reading in Chinese are intrinsically different?

3. Do you read a lot of English books, for example, storybooks, newspapers, and magazines? Do you read other English books which are outside your academic specialisation? If so, what kind of books?

4. What do you think is the most important objective in reading in EFL, for example, learning English grammar, vocabulary, phonetics, grasping main idea of text, or something else? Based on your perception you have just mentioned, what do you think is the biggest obstacle that makes your EFL reading difficult?

5. Do you have a dictionary? If so, is it an English-English or an English-Chinese dictionary? Do you like using a dictionary during reading? Can you tell me when you think you should use a dictionary and when not?

6. You have just read two texts. Do you think they are of the same difficulty level? Why do you think so?

7. Did you feel anxious just now when you were reading the two texts? Do you have this feeling in your daily language learning schedule? What do you do when you read a sad or a happy scenario? Do you usually have any special way of relieving your emotional tension, eg drinking something or listening to music? What do you think of the role played by self-confidence in EFL learning?
8. When you were given the two texts, what did you do first? Did you have a lot of new words? How did you deal with them generally? Frankly, how many percent have you understood of the texts? What are the most difficult aspects?

9. Did you have enough time reading the two texts? How did you distribute your time for the two passages? Are you happy with your recall performance? Did you pay attention to main ideas or details? Did you see how the texts were arranged, or their logical relations?

10. What did you do when you met such a long sentence?: ‘Exercising my faculties of observations this way, I soon became able to estimate the station in life of a fair number of Englishmen, although my ability in this area was nowhere near the native’s.’

11. In addition, in Passage 2 you had a long sentence: ‘We draw messages from body language, whether it is the ‘no’ that the shake of head conveys, or the ‘Hey, I’m bad’ statement Richard Pryor and Gene Wilder expected their swaggers to make in Stir Crazy?’ Tell us how you approached the sentence?

12. How do you evaluate your EFL reading ability? And your Chinese reading ability?

13. Did your teacher teach you any reading strategies, skills or things like these? Do you think these strategies apply to EFL reading only or any other languages?

14. Do you believe reading strategies can help you improve your reading efficacy? Do you have any good reading strategies that you can share with us?