L2 Learners’ Assessment of Reading Strategies, Self-efficacy, and Identity Perception: Analysis of Strategy Portfolio Reflections

Abstract

Previous research initiatives into L2 reading strategies have employed think-aloud methods and questionnaires to investigate the characteristics of the methods applied by successful learners. Reportedly, successful L2 learners used global strategies as they predicted and analyzed a text, whereas less successful learners tended to rely on local strategies that focused on word-based decoding. These studies, however, do not sufficiently account for the active engagement of learners in reading strategies. Some classroom-based research studies were conducted, in this context, to evaluate learners’ active assessment of their strategy use through reading strategy portfolios. The author has applied reading strategy portfolios in the classroom of a Japanese university since April 2013. The learners carried out reading analyses by identifying key textual features of the assigned texts. Following this exercise, the learners were asked to write their reflections. The author analyzed their reflections through a deductive coding framework suggested by Auerbach and Paxton (1997). However, in this study, the author attempted to use the inductive thematic analysis method by Braun and Clarke (2006) to explore additional characteristics of successful learners. Three successful learners were selected out of 27 and their portfolio reflections were examined. The results indicated that the three successful learners assessed their reading strategies according to their own understanding and success, and gradually increased their sense of self-efficacy in their strategy use to develop a positive reading identity.

Keywords

Reading strategies, Portfolio reflections, Thematic analysis, Assessment, Self-efficacy, Identity
1 Introduction

Reading is defined as a constructive process through which readers actively attempt to use cognitive strategies to increase their comprehension of a text (Allen, 2003; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). During the 1990s and 2000s, researchers developed several reading strategy models through their scholarly investigations. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) suggested that the use of cognitive reading strategies might consist of a global processing based on the activation of contextual knowledge and text-level comprehension. More specifically, these methods include resourcing, grouping, note-taking, elaborating on prior knowledge, summarizing, deduction/induction, imagery, auditory representation, and the drawing of inferences. Singhal (2001) identified six cognitive reading strategies pertaining to the global L2 reading strategy: note-taking, the formal practice of reading, summarizing, paraphrasing, predicting, and using contextual cues. In contrast to the global reading strategy, the local comprehension strategy is defined as an approach that focuses more on phrase and word-level decoding in the process of reading a text.

In reviewing the extant literature on L1 and L2 reading, Allen (2003) classified the global reading strategy in terms of relating the text to the reader’s life, determining which facts are important and unimportant, summarizing information, filling in details, drawing inferences, and asking questions. Evans (2008) slightly revised Allen’s categories and evaluated them to an L2 English for academic purposes English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context at a Japanese university. These comprehension strategies, taught in EAP courses at universities, are defined as combined reading strategies: they maximize prior knowledge and draw inferences through the global approach while at the same time applying local reading strategy as necessary. Using analytical reading strategies such as note-taking and writing summaries of a text is also considered to be important for academic reading (Evans, 2008). Some studies have investigated the cognitive reading strategies of successful L2 learners through think-aloud protocols employed outside classrooms. More recently, before and after instruction evaluations have been conducted on the classroom training on reading strategies and the manners in which L2 learners use these strategies.

These studies have not, however, revealed the actual development of combined strategies by learners during the process of imbibing knowledge, particularly of academic reading (Ikeda & Takeuchi, 2006; White, Schramm & Chamot, 2007). Some researchers have suggested the need for studies to investigate the self-assessment of L2 learners and their development of cognitive reading strategies during the learning process through self-reflections (Donato & McCormick, 1994).

2 Literature Review

The use of strategy portfolios is a helpful assessment approach for the investigation of the development of language-learning methods by students. Three major studies examined the strategies of L2 learners through the application of strategy portfolios drawn from the conceptual framework of
communities of practice. First, Donato and McCormick (1994) applied the self-reflections design on an investigation into concrete evidence of learning. In a French language-learning classroom in the United States, they studied 40 portfolios submitted by 10 students who were categorized as successful according to self-assessment skills and development of strategies. They analyzed the reflections effected by learners over the course of the semester to assess their development and use of a learning strategy. The key characteristics of the students observed included their self-awareness of the use of a method, goal setting, monitoring, evaluation, and the restructuring of their language-learning strategies.

Second, Ikeda and Takeuchi (2006) used reading performance tasks and reflective comments in reading strategy portfolios to assess the reading strategies used by Japanese university students. The design of the reading performance tasks required participants to inscribe their notes next to a text as they read it. Students selected the text themselves and commented on the benefits of the strategies they described. The cognitive strategies that were evaluated included the identification of topic sentences and outlines, the prediction of the topic from the title, the recognition of signal words, writing a summary, and guessing the meaning of unknown words. The study analyzed self-observation data from 80 portfolio entries of 10 successful and unsuccessful participants. In the portfolios, learners commented on each strategy they had used for the strategy tasks and described their understanding of the merits and purposes of each strategy as well as the appropriate context for its use.

Next, Akkakoson (2013) extended Ikeda and Takeuchi’s (2006) utilization of reading strategy portfolios through an experimental research project. That study applied strategy instruction by using an experimental and a control group and evaluated the strategy use of high-, middle-, and low-level learners in the experimental group through the strategy portfolios. Out of the three groups, higher proficiency learners demonstrated a clearer understanding of the strategies and gave full and detailed descriptions about their use of the strategy, the contexts, and their reactions.

The use of learning journals is another assessment approach applied to investigations of the development of strategies by students in the classroom context. Soldner (1998) employed learning journals that incorporated pre-reading, reading, and post-reading phases, in several American university courses. The pre-reading stage ascertained the students’ prior knowledge of the reading topic. At the reading stage, students monitored their own reading as they perused a text. Finally, the post-reading evaluation comprised the learners’ review of the reading and their thoughts on the reading process. Auerbach and Paxton (1997) utilized reading strategy journals and logs in an American ESL course: the entries were classified as reading strategy definition, process, and effects. Students were instructed to define the strategies they had learned. The students referred to the process of using specific reading strategies and then contemplated the effects of employing these strategies. Auerbach and Paxton argued that the journals and logs helped students learn reading strategies.

Despite the useful implications of these studies that have used the strategy reflections of students to assess their reading methodology, these previous investigations have not revealed essential evidence pertaining to learning and development in terms of the growth of self-efficacy and the
construction of a reading identity by the learners through their learning processes evidenced at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of a semester.

3 Present Study

Since 2008, the author has taught reading classes for first and second year students at Ritsumeikan University. In 2013, the author began to use reading strategy portfolios comprised of reading performance tasks and expressions of strategy use by the students. This evaluation and learning tool was ideal for the self-assessment and strategy development of the students. In his previous classroom research, the author analyzed student self-reflections articulated in reading strategy portfolios through the coding framework suggested by Auerbach and Paxton (1997): naming the strategies used, describing strategy use, and the effects of the strategies. The deductive analysis of the data obtained from student portfolios collected in 2014 and 2015 included descriptions of the reading strategies of students and their development through the planning, monitoring, and assessment of their strategy use through their reading strategy portfolio tasks (Kamijo, 2016, 2017).

In 2017, the author analyzed another student data set collected from students in the autumn semester between September 2015 and January 2016. Portfolio reflections of seven successful students were selected out of the group of 27 learners and based on self-assessment skills and understanding of the merits of strategy use. These writings were analyzed through inductive coding instead of deductive coding following the thematic analysis method suggested by Clarke and Braun (2006). The qualitative data inductively coded and analyzed included the students’ self-assessment of their strategy use. Further, it also encompassed their own definitions of strategy use, their self-efficacy in learning, and the construction of a reading identity. This active, student-led learning and identity construction is suggested by Hall (2012): “students are not expected to conform to preexisting models of identity... Instead, students are given control to define and shape their identities (p.243).”

The present study, therefore, first, analyzed the selected students’ assessment of their strategy use through their reading strategy portfolio reflections, like some previous studies did. Second, it explored the portfolio reflections to gauge the selected learners’ success in their use of strategy, their self-efficacy, and the construction of their reading identity.

As a result, this study poses the following questions:
RQ 1: What does the evidence from the selected portfolio reflections of successful learners suggest with regard to their self-assessment and development of their own use of reading strategy?
RQ 2: What does the evidence from the selected portfolio reflections of successful learners suggest with respect to their accomplishments in strategy use, self-efficacy, and identity?

4 Methods

4.1 The setting

The investigation was conducted in the autumn semester in an intermediate level reading class at
Ritsumeikan University from September in 2015 to the end of January in 2016. The learners were assessed through 1) two reading tests consisting of scanning and reading analysis exercises, 2) four reading strategy portfolio assignments, 3) TOEFL ITP® Test or TOEIC® IP Test, and 4) attendance and participation throughout the semester. In particular, reading strategy portfolios were deemed important in examining the students’ analytical and critical reading ability as required in English for academic purposes. In their reading performance tasks in the portfolios, the students were initially required to analyze assigned texts by identifying the thesis statement, topic sentences, key words, and transitions as they examined the introduction, body, and conclusion. This process of text analysis was termed ‘passage check.’ After the analysis, students wrote summaries of the texts they had read. Throughout the course, the students were encouraged to apply the strategies and to think about their own use of a reading strategy.

4.2 Participants

In the reading classroom, 32 learners were engaged in the reading strategy portfolio assignment. The learners submitted their reading strategy portfolios as classroom assignments in weeks 3, 7, 11, and 14. Among the 32 learners, four students failed to submit the portfolios consistently throughout the semester because of absence, and one learner refused to participate in the classroom research. Consequently, 27 learners agreed to participate in the research. First, the portfolio reflections of 27 students were analyzed; next, the portfolio reflections of 7 successful learners were selected for further analysis through inductive coding analysis. Due to constrictions of space, data from weeks 3, 7, and 14 in the portfolio reflections of three of the seven selected learners were chosen for presentation in the present study.

4.3 Reading strategy portfolios

The reading strategy portfolios, comprising reading performance tasks and self-reflections, employed for the current investigation were a modified version of those used by Ikeda and Takeuchi (2006). Students received the following instructions:

1. Select a text of your choice. The text can be any kind of reading material on any topic.
2. Note that there are four primary cognitive strategies for the reading strategy portfolio: (1) reading paragraph by paragraph, (2) understanding key words, (3) identifying transitions, and (4) understanding important specific information. (A fifth strategy, guessing the meaning of unknown words, was applied in weeks 11 and 14.)
3. Read your text and highlight the thesis statement, topic sentences, key words, transitions, and important examples within the passage.
4. On the paper provided, write comments about the merits and purposes of these cognitive reading strategies.
5. After reading the text and writing comments about the use of the strategies, write a summary of the text. Please note: writing a summary requires careful analysis of the text.
6. After you finish writing your summary, reflect upon your portfolio task and the whole process of reading the text. What did you learn and which strategies were the most helpful?

The comments and summary in the portfolios were written in Japanese, the L1 of the learners.

4.4 Data collection and analysis

In their reading strategy portfolios, students wrote their self-appraisals immediately after they performed the reading analysis task on the assigned text. The author assessed the reading performance tasks and reflections recorded in the portfolios of the 27 learners after the end of the semester and found that 7 learners did well on the reading tasks and self-reflections. These seven students were categorized as successful learners and data analysis was performed on their portfolio reflections based on the thematic analysis method suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach encompasses the following steps: (a) familiarizing oneself with the data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing the themes, and (e) defining and naming themes. Coding analysis was conducted through an inductive approach defined as open coding. Researchers labeled each line of text data, creating a category for the code. The categories produced were then compared, subsequently reviewed, and analyzed further to yield higher-level themes. The subsequent section will present the evidence of the analysis affected through the stated coding and thematic framework on the reflections recorded in weeks 3, 7, and 14 from the portfolio of three successful learners.

5 Results and Discussion

Extracts of reflections recorded by the three selected successful learners are presented in this section with the coding categories and the themes that emerged for each portfolio. The thoughts recorded by the three learners in the reading strategy portfolios were written in their L1 and were translated into English by the author. Learner 1’s reflections indicated that she used strategies flexibly to deal with difficulties as she actively applied reading strategies in her own ways. Learner 2 increased her awareness about the strategies and developed self-efficacy in using the strategies, gradually advancing her reading identity. Learner 3 also showed a growth of self-efficacy as she elaborated her reading strategy use in the portfolio task.

5.1 Strategy portfolio reflections by Learner 1

In her week-3 entry in the reading strategy portfolio, learner 1 indicated her understanding with regard to the usefulness of identifying topic sentences, anticipating texts, and grasping the main theme. She recognized her difficulty in understanding some vocabulary but she was still able to grasp the overall meaning of the text. Additionally, she became more aware of the helpfulness of conjunctions and transitions for better comprehension.
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Extract 1: Reflections on the strategy task from the week 3-portfolio

Through this portfolio assignment, I felt that **identifying and understanding topic sentences** helped me to anticipate subsequent sentences and to read more easily. In addition, although I faced some **difficulties in understanding the meaning of a few words and phrases**, I was able to **grasp the overall meaning** of the text. Moreover, I would like to **pay more attention to important clauses** after conjunctions like ‘Although’ and ‘However’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Coding Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 1) Usefulness of recognizing topic sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 2) Difficulty with vocabulary / Comprehension of the main theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 3) Willingness to identify conjunctions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In her week-7 reading strategy portfolio reflection, learner 1 understood the main theme of the text, but faced difficulties with vocabulary, which prevented her from grasping the details of the text. However, she found that checking the chronological structure of the text enabled her to increase her comprehension of the text. In addition, she augmented her awareness of the usefulness of scrutinizing conjunctions and transitions, and this tactic assisted her in appreciating the chronological text.

Extract 2: Reflections on the strategy task from the week 7-portfolio

**The theme of the passage** was Native American art, and I **understood it** quickly, but due to **difficulties with vocabulary** I did not fully understand the content. However, **the text’s chronological structure and its sequence of sentences** allowed me to understand the art work discussed in the text. Since I studied important clauses after conjunctions in the last week’s portfolio task, I was able to **understand the chronological descriptions** of the art work more accurately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Coding Category</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 1) Comprehension of the main theme / Difficulty with vocabulary and grasp of content</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 2) Effectiveness in examining the text structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 3) Awareness about the need to check conjunctions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In her reading strategy portfolio reflections in week 14, learner 1 demonstrated comprehensive understanding about her use of strategy and with regard to solving in the difficulties she faced in reading the text. She found the theme of the assigned text of this assignment difficult, but she applied her contextual knowledge to enhance her comprehension. Moreover, she showed more awareness with regard to the use of transitions in understanding both the text structure and the content. Hence, she
dealt effectively with her vocabulary difficulties.

Extract 3: Reflections on the strategy task from the week 14-portfolio

In this assignment, the theme of energy was difficult for me and I did not know a lot about science, so I had a hard time forming a mental image about the text. However, since I knew ‘potential energy’ and ‘kinetic energy,’ I grasped the overall theme. More attention to transitions made it easier for me to understand the flow of the text and to guess the context despite the complicated vocabulary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Coding Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 1) Complexity of the main theme</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Sentence 2) Effectiveness of contextual knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 3) Increased review of transitions / Understanding the flow of the text despite the difficulty of vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Commentary about the strategy portfolio reflections by Learner 1

Through her portfolio reflections, learner 1 increased her awareness about her strategy use, and thus enhanced her self-efficacy. In week 3, she found herself reviewing topic sentences and conjunctions to better comprehend the text, as she recognized that the vocabulary was demanding. In week 7, she again verified her understanding of the overview and the details of the text, identified the complexity of the vocabulary, and became aware of the text structure and the conjunctions. In week 14, she felt that the text’s theme was complicated, but she applied her contextual knowledge, her grasp of the transitions, and the text structure to augment her reading comprehension, thus minimizing the difficulty of the vocabulary. She has increased her self-efficacy in strategy use over the semester.

Three key themes emerged from the data culled from her strategy portfolios: 1) the attempt to understand the overviews and the details of text, 2) the application of transitions, structures, and background knowledge to increase comprehension and to deal with the complexity of the vocabulary, and 3) the increase of self-efficacy in her strategy use. Learner 1 gradually developed self-efficacy through her incremental success in the use of reading strategy, and developed a positive reading identity.

5.3 Strategy portfolio reflections by Learner 2

In her entry of the week-3 strategy portfolio reflections, learner 2 referred to the value of general reading strategies such as reviewing a text. She also mentioned that the identification of topic sentences and key words enabled her to increase her comprehension of the text as she found them helpful in dealing with difficulties with regard to meanings. While she thought the reading task assigned to her in the portfolio was unfamiliar to her, she demonstrated a willingness to learn as much
as she could from future portfolio assignments.

Extract 4: Reflections on the strategy task from the week 3 portfolio

I did not check the text structures and key words frequently before, but using strategies to review the passage enabled me to understand the text in more depth. Identifying topic sentences and key words was useful for me when I reread the text to clarify difficult meanings in the text; I found tactics useful for speed reading as well. It may take a while for me to get used to this task, but I would like to make the most of this activity.

Table 4 Coding categories for the portfolio reflections by Learner 2 (Week 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Coding Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 1) Practicality of general strategies in understanding of content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 2) Value of identifying topic sentences and key words/Understanding difficult content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 3) Unfamiliarity with the task / Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In her week-7 reading strategy portfolio reflections, she found it difficult to identify topic sentences and to grasp the main theme. Still, she attempted to check examples, transitions, and key words through the use of word-based decoding, which is a term that can be defined as a local strategy. Thus, she managed to better her comprehension of the text.

Like in her first portfolio entry, she indicated that she was not used to the strategies in the reading portfolio task, but showed further willingness to apply strategies not only in her assignments but also to her reading outside the classroom.

Extract 5: Reflections on the strategy task from the week 7 portfolio

Since the text was complex, I could not find the thesis statement and the topic sentences at first. However, I checked the examples and the transitions and grasped the key words in the text and I finally managed to understand the text better than I did at the beginning. I am still not very used to the strategies and I only use them because of the portfolio assignment; thus, I would like to apply the strategies outside the classroom.

Table 5 Coding categories for the portfolio reflections by Learner 2 (Week 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Coding Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 1) Difficulty in recognizing thesis and topic sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 2) Value of checking examples, transitions, and key words to the understanding of the content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 3) Unfamiliarity with the task and awareness of the applicability of strategies outside the classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In her reading strategy portfolio reflections for week 14, she described the use of outlining to read the text analytically and efficiently. She explicitly referred to her ability to identify key words.
Moreover, she stated that she had clearly become aware about the usefulness of the reading strategies, which had not been so apparent to her at the beginning of the semester. Her comments suggest self-efficacy in the use of strategy.

Finally, she noted that she would like to discover further strategies that would be her own orchestration of the strategy use. This statement demonstrated her positive reading identity with regard to the use of strategy.

Extract 6: Reflections on the strategy task from the week 14-portfolio

For this assignment, I referred to the text outline, which enabled me to analyze the text efficiently and accurately. I felt that finding key words in the text was not difficult. Until I worked on the portfolio assignments, I was not aware of the strategies used in reading, but now I am clearly aware of them. When I read a long passage in future, I would like to discover more strategies to enable me to interpret the text more smoothly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Coding Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 1) Positive impact of outlining for text analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 2) Self-efficacy in checking key words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 3) Self-efficacy in reviewing reading strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 4) Motivation to employ other reading strategies in future</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Commentary about the strategy portfolio reflections by Learner 2

Learner 2 developed her understanding about the usefulness of reading strategies at both the global and the local levels through the portfolio assignments and reflections. Further, she developed her self-efficacy in using the strategies for the assigned reading tasks. In week 3, she mentioned the effectiveness of global strategies in identifying topic sentences and key words to grasp the primary theme. In week 7, however, she utilized local level strategies such as checking examples and transitions instead of reading topic sentences, to increase her comprehension of the text. In week 14, she extended her approach to analytical reading, as she referred to the outline of the text. With regard to her self-efficacy in strategy use, she felt unfamiliar with the reading strategy task in the week-3 portfolio, but she felt later that she had developed the capability of using strategies. Moreover, she was motivated to use the strategies she had learned to reading outside the classroom context. In week 14, she asserted that she had become very aware of the strategies and that she felt more independent and active about reading texts.

Three key themes emerged from the data gleaned from learner 2’s strategy portfolios: 1) the identification of local and global strategies for comprehension, 2) the gradual increase of self-efficacy regarding reading strategies, and 3) the development of a positive reading identity. Learner 2 also steadily developed self-efficacy through her success in using flexible strategies and thus, she
progressively constructed her motivation and her reading identity.

5.5 Reading strategy portfolio reflections by Learner 3

In her week-3 reading strategy portfolio reflection, learner 3 recorded her lack of familiarity with the reading task and her difficulty in understanding the assigned text. Finding the key words was difficult for her. Still, she added that checking sentences and reviewing helped her to better interpret the text. Since this was the beginning of the semester and it was her first entry, she was unsure about the portfolio task and her reflections explicitly expressed her uncertainty.

Extract 7: Reflections on the strategy task from the week 3-portfolio

I was not sure about how to perform the reading task, and I could not understand the text's content, so it was difficult. Specifically, I could not find where the key words were. But underlining sentences and checking key words helped me read the text better and aided me in grasping the flow of the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7 Coding categories for the portfolio reflections by Learner 3 (Week 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Sentence 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Sentence 3)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In her reading strategy portfolio reflections in week 7, learner 3 indicated that she engaged more carefully with the reading of the text and felt that she could perform the reading task better than before. She grasped the main idea for each paragraph and noticed the usefulness of transitions to understand the text's logical sequence.

She reiterated her self-efficacy in accomplishing the portfolio task and added her interest in further learning to increase her reading comprehension.

Extract 8: Reflections on the strategy task from the week 7-portfolio

I think I performed the portfolio reading task better than before, as I read the text carefully, understood its content and described the use of strategies. While I read the text paragraph by paragraph and grasped the main idea, I was also able to identify the transitions used to clarify the text flow. Compared to the first entry, I feel I understand how to do the task better. To increase my comprehension of the text, I would like to learn more about grammar and vocabulary.
In her reading strategy portfolio reflections of week 14, learner 3 self-assessed her performance and felt that she had gradually increased her self-efficacy in the portfolio reading task. She found the second paragraph of the text difficult, but she was able to organize the content into an outline, which helped her summarize the text. She recorded that she used the assigned text to increase her knowledge about energy, a subject that she had not known in any depth before the assignment.

This entry was the final portfolio assignment of the semester and her comment suggested that she had developed an ability to analyze the text using strategies and was able even to use an outline to summarize the text. Overall, she indicated a positive reading identity in the use of strategy and she recognized that her reading was helpful in the accrual of knowledge.

Extract 9: Reflections on the strategy task from the week 14-portfolio

This is the final portfolio for the semester and I feel that I have gradually increased my understanding about how to do the task. However, I found it difficult to understand the second paragraph of the text assigned in this portfolio. As this is the fourth assignment, I was able to find the key phrases for the summary, and I felt the task easy to accomplish as I reviewed the outline and used it for the summary. I did not know about hydrogen fuel cells, so I developed my awareness about energy as I read the text.

Table 9 Coding categories for the portfolio reflections by Learner 3 (Week 14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Coding Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 1)</td>
<td>Increase in self-efficacy toward the portfolio reading task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 2)</td>
<td>Difficulty of the second paragraph of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 3)</td>
<td>Effectiveness of outlining in writing a text summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sentence 4)</td>
<td>Reading to increase her knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6 Commentary about the strategy portfolio reflections by Learner 3

Initially, as her portfolio reflections reveal, learner 3 felt unfamiliar with the reading task and found it difficult. She noticed that general strategies were helpful. In week 7, she began to read the text carefully and became more involved in her analytical reading by using the strategies. Subsequently, she realized how effective strategies such as paragraph reading and checking transitions were for her reading abilities. She explicitly indicated the increase of her self-efficacy in the week-7 portfolio
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In week 14, she referred to the stages of while-reading and post-reading, as she read the text content and created an outline to summarize the text. She indicated her self-efficacy and commented about using the text to increase her knowledge of the subject.

Three key themes emerged from the data gathered from learner 3’s strategy portfolios: 1) the employment of paragraph reading techniques and local level reading strategies, 2) the effectiveness of an outline in summarizing a text, 3) the explicit indication of self-efficacy regarding the use of a reading strategy. Like learners 1 and 2, learner 3 also developed self-efficacy through the successful use of various strategies, which led to the cultivation of her reading identity.

6 Summary, Implications, and Conclusions

Numerous research studies have been conducted concerning the use of reading strategies. Most of these have utilized think-aloud methods and questionnaires. However, some researchers have suggested the limitations of these studies and have asserted that they might not fully investigate the process of students’ assessments of their own use of reading strategies in real-life learning contexts. Up to now, there have been some research inquiries that have utilized self-reflections by students via strategy portfolios and learning logs to ascertain their development of a learning strategy. These studies, however, have not explored the manners in which learners assess their strategy use, increase their sense of self-efficacy, and construct their reading identity.

The author has utilized reading strategy portfolios in his reading classes, and in his previous classroom-based studies, he analyzed the portfolio reflections of students to investigate the manner in which learners assessed their strategy use. Further, he advanced his understanding by using a deductive coding analysis. The reflections of successful students indicated certain similar characteristics as they described their use of strategies and detailed the effects of the strategies on their reading comprehension. However, the author realized that he had not sufficiently explored the characteristics of the learners and he thus decided to apply an inductive coding based on the thematic analysis method suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The present study is a result of that examination.

The results obtained from the three successful learners showed similarity in the fact the learners assessed their use of strategies and developed more elaborate applications of the strategies, encompassing both global and local level techniques. As they employed the strategies in their own ways with success, they mentioned the increase in their self-efficacy in utilizing strategies and constructed a positive reading identity for themselves. Although the three learners demonstrated their strategy development and self-efficacy in varying ways, the themes of self-assessment, flexible strategy use, self-assessment, and identity construction were observed among all three learners.

The present study admits to some limitations. First, the number of participants is small and the results may not be generalized to other contexts. Second, the student data is based only on self-reflections, and therefore follow-up interviews and think-aloud tasks could have been added to
strengthen the validity of the results. Future research should utilize a larger number of participants and should analyze the students’ strategy portfolio reflections through additional follow-up interviews and think-aloud exercises.

Despite the limitations, however, the present study presents significant implications for classroom teachers and researchers with regard to the use of reading strategy portfolios and student reflections. Through inductive coding and thematic analysis, teachers and researchers can apply these methods to effectively measure their students’ self-assessment of their reading strategy use, their self-efficacy, and their identity development.

References
L2 Learners’ Assessment of Reading Strategies, Self-efficacy, and Identity Perception


※TOEFL®, TOEIC® is a registered trademark of Educational Testing Service (ETS).
L2学習者の読解ストラテジー使用の自己評価、自己効力感、アイデンティティ認識
一ストラテジーポートフォリオ振り返り記述の分析—

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要旨

多くのリーディングストラテジー先行研究では、質問紙およびプロトコール分析により行われてきた。しかし近年は学習者自身によるストラテジー使用評価と学習というマタ認知については、十分に調査できないとして批判されている。この調査に関して、クラスルームにおけるself-reflections（振り返りの記述）から学習者の自己評価とストラテジー使用を調べていく研究者もいる。しかし、振り返りの記述を使った先行研究では学習者のストラテジー使用の評価、自己効力感、アイデンティティといったメタ認知の発展まで調査しているものはきわめて少ない。この実践研究では、これらの重要な要素についての探索的な調査を行った。研究が行われたコンテクストは、大学1回生後期中級レベルリーディングクラスである。15週間の授業で分析的な読解力を伸ばすために、4回分のストラテジー・ポートフォリオが課題として実施された。研究参加者27名の振り返り記述について、inductive coding（帰納法的コーディング）とthematic analysisが分析に使われた。27名のうち7名が成功した学習者として選別され、振り返りの記述にストラテジー使用の評価、自己効力感、アイデンティティという共通な特徴がみられた。本実践研究では、このうち3名の成功した学生の振り返り記述それぞれ3回分を抜粋して、記述のデータ分析と評価を提示する。

キーワード
読解ストラテジー、ポートフォリオによる振り返り、テーマ分析、評価、自己効力感、アイデンティティ