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EFL Students Reading Strategy Use and Performance in Reading Comprehension: Focus on Five Public High Schools in Addis Ababa

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Abstract

This study's primary goals are to find out which reading strategies EFL students use most and least, as well as to investigate the relationship between reading comprehension performance and reading strategy use. A descriptive correlational approach was used in the study. The participants are about 267 grade 12 students from five different high schools in Addis Ababa in in 2016 E.C (2024 G.C) academic year. A five-point likert scale questionnaire that was modified from Oxford's (1990), Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL) was one of the tools used. The questionnaire data were analyzed using version 25 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The most, moderate, and least used reading strategies among the students were ascertained by utilizing the mean reading strategy. Oxford's learning strategy rating scale was used to identify the most, moderate, and least used reading strategies. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to ascertain the overall correlation between the students' performance in reading comprehension and their use of reading strategies. According to the study the majority of reading strategies were used at moderate to higher levels. The correlation is weakly negative ($r = -0.113$) between the students' reading comprehension performance and their use of reading strategies. Finally, it is recommended that if students wish to improve their reading comprehension skills, they should employ reading strategies more frequently than employing them at a moderate level. Students should also receive training sessions and awareness of reading strategies.

Keywords: Comprehension, Correlation, Language learning strategies, Reading strategies

1. Introduction

Language learning strategies were first studied in the 1960s, when the field was influenced by the emergence of cognitive psychology. Great importance has been given to the field of study to acquire both explicit linguistic knowledge (forms and functions) and implicit linguistic knowledge (necessary for the production of

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spontaneous language). Furthermore, for several years, most studies on language learning strategies focused primarily on identifying the experiences that language learners had when learning foreign or second languages (Rubin and Wenden, 1987).

Aaron (1966) carried out the first study on language learning strategies, which was published as "The Method of Inference in Foreign Language Study." The goal of the study was to determine how inference might improve listening and reading comprehension in the target foreign/second language. Rubin (1975), on the other hand, focused on the strategies of successful learners with the intension of passing these strategies on to slow learners so that they can be effective in language learning. He further categorized strategies in terms of the process that support language learning either directly or indirectly.

After 1975, several scholars such as Filmore (1979), Tarone (1977), Naiman (1978), Bialystok (1979), Cohen and Aphek (1981), Wenden (1982), Politzer and McGroarty (1985), Chamot and O'Malley (1994), Conti and Kolsody (1997) and Muho (2011) conducted research on language learning strategies. These researchers examined the strategies that language learners use when learning a second/foreign language and also showed how various language learning strategies improve the effectiveness and efficiency of language learning.

Learning strategies provide numerous advantages for those who are learning a language. They allow students to take charge of their education and absorb new information at their own pace. Through the use of strategies, students can improve their language skills and use the target language in a range of contexts and goals. Strategies additionally assist students in developing their communication abilities (Fauziati *et al.*, 2023).

Andrew and Cohen (1998) contend that when language learners employ a variety of learning strategies, they are better able to utilize their language skills. Using cognitive learning strategies, for instance, can help students become more adept at processing information in-depth and applying it to better situations. On the other hand, metacognitive learning strategies help students become more proficient at time management, self-awareness, and self-evaluation. However, affective strategies assist learners in controlling their emotions, both positive and negative, and social learning strategies, like questioning teachers, classmates, and others, assist learners in overcoming new language challenges.

Andrew and Cohen (1998) further explain the use of language learning strategies on the part of language teachers. They provide language teachers with important guidance about how their students select, organize, and evaluate new information presented in class. Additionally strategies could serve as useful indicators for language teachers of how language learners approach activities or challenges they encounter during their language learning process.

In general, developing language learning strategies can help language learners become self-motivated to study second or foreign languages by giving them the opportunity and autonomy to take responsibility of their education. In addition, strategies encourage students to incorporate their experiences, backgrounds, schema, and lives into their current language learning. Furthermore, employing strategies helps students gain confidence and improve their comprehension skills overall by using their confirmation of how they feel about the content.

When it comes to reading strategies, reader has their own approach. The same reader may use multiple strategies depending on the circumstances. This may be due to the actions of the readers and the purpose of their reading. Based on their role in language learning and teaching, researchers classified reading strategies as cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, and compensatory. These strategies would correlate with either the direct or indirect learning methods, which are described as umbrellas of learning strategies (Erler and Finkbeiner, 2007).

According to Anderson (1999), teachers teach reading strategies to their students for a variety of reasons. First, strategies help readers understand the reading process. Readers can learn that reading is more than just reading words; it also requires thinking critically about the material using reading comprehension strategies, such as metacognition, questioning, making connections, and visualization. Therefore, students develop an understanding of the real reading process when teachers use different reading strategy models in their reading activities.

1.1. Research Questions

The present research has two research questions

What are the most and the least frequently used reading strategies by the students?

To what extent does the students' reading strategy correlate with their performance in reading comprehension?

1.2. Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the present study is:

H$_1$: Most students regularly employ a variety of reading strategies when involved in reading comprehension activities.

H$_0$: Most students do not regularly employ various reading strategies when involved in reading comprehension activities.

H$_1$: There is correlation between the students' reading strategy use and their performance in reading comprehension.

H$_0$: There is no correlation between the students' reading strategy use and their performance in reading comprehension.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies

Several researchers have categorized language learning strategies. However, without making any significant adjustments, the majority of their attempts to categorize language learning strategies essentially mirror the same classifications of language learning strategies. Applied linguistics scholars; such as O'Malley (1985b), Rubin (1987), Oxford (1990) and Stern (1992) are well-known for their works in the field.

Cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective are the three primary categories into which O'Malley *et al.* (1985b) separated language acquisition processes. Cognitive strategies are more focused on particular learning tasks and entail more direct modification of the reading text content. Among the most crucial cognitive methods are repetition, resourcing, translating, grouping, and note-taking, deduction, recombination, imaging, auditory representation, recognizing keywords, contextualization, transfer, and inference. Regarding meta-cognitive strategies, they include issues; such as planning the learning activity, considering the learning process, tracking production or understanding, and assessing learning at the end of an activity. O'Mally further mentions the genre of socio-affective strategy, which is defined as social mediating and engaging in transactions with other people. As per Brown's (1987) findings, language learners can primarily employ teamwork and ask for clarification in their socio-affective learning strategies.

Rubin (1987) distinguished between learning strategies that are direct and indirect, based on how much each strategy contributes to language acquisition. Three different learner strategies are employed, which either directly or indirectly support language learning, according to Rubin. These strategies encompass social, communication, and learning skills. According to Rubin's taxonomy, the two main strategies included under the direct learning strategy category are cognitive and metacognitive. This is because both strategies directly aid in the formation of the language system that learners construct.

Cognitive strategies are the procedures or methods that are utilized to solve problems that demand direct examination, modification, or synthesis of the reading text. According to Rubin six primary cognitive learning strategies directly support language learning, and these include deductive thinking, guessing and inductive inference, explanation and verification, practice, and memorizing. Conversely, meta-cognitive strategies support language learners in managing, controlling, or taking charge of their language acquisition. They entail several procedures like goal-setting, prioritizing, planning, and self-management (Rubin, 1987).

On the flip side, social strategies bring students to contact with a range of social contexts through various activities. Although they have much contribution to the target language, these strategies contribute indirectly

to language learning. The acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of the target language are not directly correlated with language learning, according to Wenden and Rubin (1987) rather, language learners acquire the target language indirectly as a result of social learning processes.

According to Oxford (1990), the goal of a language learning strategy is to enhance communicative competence. Oxford explains that there are six categories into which language learning strategies fall: cognitive, memory, compensatory, emotive, meta-cognitive, and social strategies. These categories are further classified into two primary classes: indirect and direct. Direct learning strategies include cognitive, memory, and compensatory approaches; indirect learning strategies include meta-cognitive, affective, and social approaches. Memory strategies are those that are used to store information while compensating strategies assist learners in filling in knowledge gaps so that learners can carry on with conversations. Cognitive learning strategies are the conceptual approaches that learners employ to make sense of what they are learning.

Oxford went on to explain that learners may organize, regulate, and assess their learning with the aid of metacognitive strategies, while learners' emotional needs—such as boosting self-esteem, reducing anxiety, and controlling emotional temperature—are addressed by affective strategies. Conversely, asking questions, collaborating with others, and showing empathy for others are all examples of how social learning practices help students interact more with the target language.

Stern (1992) classified language learning strategies into five categories: affective, cognitive, communicative, interpersonal, and management and planning. The goal of the learners to guide their learning is connected to management and planning strategies. With this approach, language learners can take control of their program's growth by choosing suitable approaches and setting realistic goals. Students can also assess their performance using the predetermined expectations and goals.

Cognitive strategies, in the context of Stern, are processes or approaches to learning or problem-solving that necessitates direct reading text analysis, review, modification, or synthesis. Additionally, language learners use a variety of different strategies, including practice, memorization, deductive reasoning, inductive inference and guesswork, verification, and explanation.

Stern also brings up the topic of communication strategies. Language learners use those strategies to keep up a conversation, such as paraphrasing, gesturing, circumlocution, and asking for clarification and repetition. The purpose of using such strategies is to keep the lines of communication constant. According to the theory of interpersonal strategies, communication strategies help students monitor their development and advance their language skills.

Students can be assisted in facing and overcoming emotional challenges through instruction in Affective learning competence, which includes inhibition, attitude, anxiety, and self-esteem. Ellis (1994) posits that affective traits of learners can exert a positive or negative influence on the language learning process, and are critical in determining learners' disparities in learning achievements. Similarly, these strategies have a significant impact on language learning because they help students control their emotions.

2.2. The Role of Reading in Language Learning

For language learners, reading proficiency is vitally important. Reading proficiency is necessary for both successful performances at elementary and high school as well as at more advanced academic levels of education. Reading proficiency is seen to be a prerequisite for excellent learning. It can be challenging for students learning English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to establish an effective link between the reader and the written material, and it calls for the use of a variety of reading strategies.

It is generally acknowledged that the most dependable and durable second language (L2) ability is reading (Bernhardet, 1991). Students gain more from extensive reading than they do from vocabulary development, claims Krashen (2004). He continued by saying that reading to students makes them more motivated than teaching them to memorize vocabulary or recite stories from books. According to Pani (2004), successful reading is the most crucial component of effective learning since it is necessary to succeed academically. It aids students in the development of other relevant abilities including writing, grammar, and vocabulary (Macaro, 2001). Because of this, having strong reading skills is becoming more and more necessary in the twenty-first century rather than optional. When it comes to academic environments, students learn most of what they

know through reading from the massive amounts of written and digital content. It is thus, conceivable to argue that reading serves as the cornerstone of all formal education.

Hence, second/foreign language students need to gradually improve their reading comprehension skills by using strategies; this is not something that happens on its own. It is important to provide strategies to promote language learning from the very beginning to produce independent and successful language learners (Anderson, 1984; Padron and Waxman, 1988; Chamot, 2005; Oxford, 1990; Paris and Jacobs, 1984; Pressley and Afflerbach, 2008).

2.3. Reading Strategies

The planned and deliberate acts that assist readers in converting printed text into meaning are collectively referred to as reading strategies. A reading strategy, according to Garner (1987), is an activity or set of activities used to create meaning. To put it another way, students demonstrate study abilities, problem-solving strategies, and learning habits that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of learning. To accomplish reading goals, readers can retrieve, store, regulate, elaborate, and evaluate textual information through the use of reading strategies, which are described by Erler and Finkbeiner (2007) as self-directed actions with a certain degree of awareness.

Reading strategies are crucial for students to improve their comprehension abilities and decode information. For all readers, including beginning readers, struggling readers, and English language learners, they are indispensable. Anderson (1984) states that learners use reading strategies to organize their tasks, solve reading difficulties, and select the right abilities and methods to understand a text. In an analogous vein, Carrell (1989) demonstrates how readers' employment of strategies enhances their ability to interact with written texts, as well as their efficiency and comprehension of a reading text.

When reading, readers use a variety of strategies. For instance, they draw associations by connecting the reading material to personal experiences, reading from prior reading materials, and reading from actual events. To stay focused on the content and make sure they grasp it, readers also pose questions. Additionally, they assess the text's significance to differentiate between the most and least important facts. Readers can find a wealth of information in anything they read. Readers can prioritize the information they need to better grasp the text, but they are not able to recall every detail.

Similar to investigators, skilled readers decipher a story's meaning through the use of hints. We refer to this as prediction and inference. Readers can make informed assumptions about what will probably happen at different points in the text by using educational guesses. To understand the author's emotions, readers also visualize what they read, or imagine what happens in the story. They focus more intently on sensory details through imagery. Every aspect of the story's growth is brought to life for readers through their senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and feeling.

Another crucial task that readers complete while they read is synthesizing concepts from the written word. It is required for readers to tie together the most important facts from the written material at the end. Stated differently, readers will eventually comprehend the content they read. Readers were able to comprehend the main ideas of the reading content and the lesson to be learned from it through synthesis.

2.4. Classification of Reading Strategies

Every reader has a different reading strategy and they might use them in various situations. Each reading strategy would correspond to either the direct or indirect learning methods listed as the umbrella learning strategies, and researchers categorized them as cognitive, Metacognitive, affective, social, and compensatory based on their function in language learning and teaching.

Anderson (1999), distinguishes between cognitive and meta-cognitive reading strategies. Cognitive reading strategies aid readers in deriving meaning from texts. It comprises both top-down and bottom-up methods, while metacognitive strategies support readers in keeping an eye on or controlling cognitive processes.

Analyzing the above general language learning strategies scholars such as McDonough (1995), developed a synthesized list of cognitive and meta-cognitive reading strategies. He groups the list into four major reading strategies: technical aids to reading, asking for clarification, detecting coherence, and monitoring progress.

Skimming, scanning, marking the text, creating a paper summary, utilizing a glossary, identifying cognates, looking at images, and using context to clarify a term are among the reading techniques categorized as technical aids, whereas syntactic simplification, producing synonyms, circumlocution, employing paraphrasing, rhetorical functions, identifying the grammatical category of words, interoperating the text, using inference, and adding of information are all categorized as clarification and simplification.

Coherence detection is a category that includes identifying the macro form, keeping in mind the meaning of the passage, using information about the story, using associations and general knowledge, using world knowledge, identifying key information, anticipating content, speculating, recognizing text structure, and integrating information.

McDonough (1995), concludes by mentioning meta-cognitive and affective strategies as monitoring mechanisms. They include altering reading strategies, reading at various speeds, pointing out misunderstandings, and expressing a word or a clause that was not understood. In addition, monitoring mechanisms are used for error correction, controlled skipping, self-directed discussion, and guess evaluation, and reading comprehension tasks such as coming up with questions while reading, responding to the text, and measuring comprehension as a whole are covered by the monitoring and evaluation strategy.

3. Method

3.1. Design of the Study

A descriptive correlational research design was employed to describe various reading strategies employed by the students and to investigate the correlation between the students' reading strategy use and performance in reading comprehension.

3.2. Participants

The target population of the study was grade 12 students in Addis Ababa high schools who attended their education in the academic year 2016/2024. Grade 12 students were chosen on the belief that they were about to graduate from high school and had acquired enough amount of strategy skills during their stay at primary, junior, and high schools. Thus, 267 students were chosen randomly from the five high schools.

3.3. Instrument

The questionnaire was used to collect data and information about the participants' use of reading strategies. Thus, to gather valuable information from data sources, mainly Oxford's (1990) 7.0 version of the ESL/EFL Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL) was adopted. Therefore, the SILL was modified as it was convenient to explore the students' reading strategy use. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were tested. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and had an alpha value of 0.757. This modified reading strategy use questionnaire consisted of three parts; the first part contained questions related to cognitive reading strategy use such as remembering, predicting, questioning, and visualizing. The second part contains questions used to elicit information related to meta-cognitive reading strategy use, mainly concerned with planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Finally, the third part of the questionnaire contained items related to affective learning strategies. The participants were required to respond on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1(never almost) to 5 (always). The participants took about 1 hour to complete the questionnaire. Moreover, the questionnaire had a 100% response rate since it was given to the students in all high schools during class with the help of the English teachers as well as the presence of the researcher.

4. Data Analysis

Mean or average was used to examine the reading strategies that students used. The mean analysis was conducted using Oxford's (1990) language learning strategy rating scale as a standard. The students' reading strategies were categorized as follows: high (3.5-5), average (2.5-3.49), and low (1.0-2.49). Additionally, a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was performed to look at the relationship between the students' achievement in reading comprehension and their overall usage of reading strategies.

Table 1 displays the result of analysis of the overall reading strategies used by the students in which the average score is 3.3352. This result indicates that students are moderate users of reading strategies in reading activities. Furthermore, the most frequently used reading strategy categories used by the students was Meta cognitive (M = 3.4812, SD = 1.1410425) which is followed by cognitive and Affective reading strategies with the mean and standard deviation values (3.3317, 1.116498125) and (3.1335, 1.17085875) respectively. The related data is presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Overall Reading Strategy Use
N = 267
Mean = 3.33
Std. Deviation = 1.13654325

Table 2: Mean Scores of Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Affective Reading Strategies					
Strategies	Samples	Mean Scores	Rank	Std. Deviation	Strategy Use
Cognitive	267	3.3317	2	1.116498125	Moderate
Meta cognitive	267	3.4812	1	1.1410425	Moderate
Affective	267	3.1335	3	1.17085875	Moderate

Table 2 depicts the rank of the reading strategy categories which is the most frequently employed by the students in the study. It is obviously presented that Metacognitive is the most frequently used reading strategy categories employed by the students to plan, monitor and evaluate their reading activities. Besides, cognitive is the second favorite reading strategy category used by the students in processing the meaning of the texts. The least favorite reading strategies is affective due to its lowest mean score that is 3.1335.

According to the above table, reading strategies are used by students at all three levels: high (mean score range: 3.5281-4.4682), moderate (mean score range: 2.5169-3.475), and low (mean score range: 1.7191-2.1948). Of all the reading strategy items, students utilized 19 (52.778%) of them very frequently, and 14 (38.889%) of them moderately. Additionally, students used the least amount of reading strategies, with 3 strategy items taking up 8.233% of the total. Overall, the data demonstrates that most reading strategies are used by students at a moderate to higher level.

4.1. Frequently Used Reading Strategies

According to the data from Table 3 reading strategies; such as, translating ideas to native language, focusing on the opening line of each paragraph, inferring the text's main content, employing text features, visualizing information, focusing on important words and phrases, and paying attention to challenging concepts, are highly used cognitive reading strategies with the mean value (4.4682, 3.7940, 3.7566, 3.7341, 3.7341, 3.7116, 3.6779) respectively. Similarly metacognitive reading strategies like reading attentively and slowly to get the main idea, changing reading pace based on the nature of the reading text, going back and forth, taking an overview of a text, using background knowledge, pausing and reflecting opinion regarding the text, verifying assumptions about the accuracy of the text, and trying to get back when losing concentration are the most prevalent strategies employed by the students with the mean value (4.0524, 3.8801, 3.7828, 3.7228, 3.6629, 3.5618, 3.5281, 3.5094) respectively. The students also showed the tendency of using affective reading strategies at a higher level. Reading strategies such as, reducing anxiety during exam sessions, self-encouragement to avoid anxiety, taking risks to answer difficult questions, and getting immersed while reading a text are strategies with a high mean score of reading (3.9588, 3.7154, 3.6367, 3.5805).

4.2. Least Used Reading Strategies

Very few reading strategies were used infrequently among the students. Reading strategies such as, using checklist to remember challenges and discussing thoughts with peers from affective reading strategies, and

Table 3: Distribution of Strategy Use				
	Highly Used Reading Strategies	**Strategy Type**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
1.	Translating ideas to native language	Cognitive	4.4682	0.57018
2.	Reading attentively and slowly to get the main idea	Metacognitive	4.0524	1.00238
3.	Reducing anxiety during exam sessions	Affective	3.9588	1.15451
4.	Changing reading pace based on the nature of the reading text	Metacognitive	3.8801	1.11410
5.	Focusing on the opening line of each paragraph	Cognitive	3.7940	1.02903
6.	Going back and forth	Metacognitive	3.7828	1.12290
7.	Inferring the text's main content	Cognitive	3.7566	1.07111
8.	Employing text features	Cognitive	3.7341	1.13409
9.	Visualizing information	Cognitive	3.7341	1.11065
10.	Taking an overview of a text	Metacognitive	3.7228	1.31717
11.	Self-encouragement to avoid anxiety	Affective	3.7154	1.21142
12.	Focusing on important words, phrases, and sentences	Cognitive	3.7116	1.04916
13.	Paying attention to challenging concepts	Cognitive	3.6779	1.14757
14.	Using background knowledge	Metacognitive	3.6629	1.07547
15.	Taking a risks to answer difficult questions	Affective	3.6367	1.22284
16.	Getting immersed while reading a reading text	Affective	3.5805	1.16822
17.	Pausing and reflecting opinion regarding the text	Metacognitive	3.5618	1.12679
18.	Verifying assumptions about the accuracy of the text	Metacognitive	3.5281	1.10457
19.	Trying to get back when losing concentration	Metacognitive	3.5094	1.20576
	Moderately Used Reading Strategies			
20.	Developing assumptions based on previous paragraph	Cognitive	3.4757	1.22719
21.	Highlighting or circling key terms and phrases	Cognitive	3.4607	1.24806
22.	Making double-check whenever across new information	Cognitive	3.4532	1.11072
23.	Inferring meanings of unknown words and phrases	Cognitive	3.4382	1.02914
24.	Choosing what to read carefully and what to overlook	Metacognitive	3.4007	1.25375
25.	Pay attention to the positive and negative physical responses	Affective	3.1835	1.22629

Table 3 (Cont.)				
26.	Practicing progressive relaxation strategies before reading	Affective	3.0824	1.41977
27.	Interpreting each word while reading	Cognitive	3.0112	1.11545
28.	Making summary of a text	Metacognitive	2.9326	1.25774
29.	Omitting any unfamiliar word	cognitive	2.7940	1.26502
30.	Determining purpose of the reading text	Metacognitive	2.7041	1.18516
31.	Generating questions	cognitive	2.5843	1.24884
32.	Making notes and rephrasing concepts	cognitive	2.5393	1.32406
33.	Making critical analysis of the given data in the text.	Metacognitive	2.5169	1.07374
Least Used Reading Strategies				
34.	Categorizing words based on parts of speech	Cognitive	2.1948	1.03668
35.	Discussing thoughts with peers regarding the usage of reading strategies	Affective	2.1948	1.19817
36.	Using checklist to remember challenges	Affective	1.7191	0.76565

classifying words in their grammatical categories from cognitive are the least employed reading strategies with the mean (1.7191, 2.1948, 2.1948) respectively. Particularly, using checklist to remember challenges is almost ignored reading strategy among the learners. Besides, the most and the least used reading strategies, 14 strategies (38.889%) of the total strategy items were employed moderately by the students.

4.3. Correlation between the Students' Overall Reading Strategy Use and Performance in Reading Comprehension

Table 4 displayed the Pearson Product Moment correlation ratings between students' achievement in reading and their use of reading strategies. The correlation value ($r = -0.113$) between the two variables is shown to be a weak negative correlation. In other words, students' reading achievement tends to decline when the mean of all reading strategies rises.

Table 4: The Scores of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation			
		Reading Achievement	**Overall Mean of Strategies**
Reading Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.113
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.066
	N	267	267
Overall Mean of Strategies	Pearson Correlation	-0.113	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.066	
	N	267	267

The data in this table displays the relationship that each type of reading strategy has with students' reading achievement. The usage of reading strategies by the students and their reading comprehension scores in the cognitive, meta-cognitive, and affective strategy types all reveal a weak negative relationship, with

Table 5: The Value of the Cognitive, Meta Cognitive, and Affective Reading Strategies Towards Reading Achievement Correlations

Types of Strategy	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Cognitive reading strategy vs. students 'reading achievement	267	-0.074	0.229
Metacognitive reading strategy vs. students' reading achievement	267	-0.177**	0.004
Affective reading strategy vs. students' reading achievement	267	-0.009	0.883

respective Pearson correlation values of -0.074, -0.177**, and -0.009. All cases exhibit an adverse correlation, indicating that students' reading scores decline with an increase in the mean of cognitive, meta-cognitive, and affective reading strategies. However, the usage of metacognitive reading strategies and students' reading achievement were shown to be statistically significant; this is because the sig. value at 0.004 is less than 0.05, which is generally accepted as the threshold in correlation study designs. Additionally, the apparent relationship is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level, where ($p < 0.01$).

5. Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into how students used reading strategies and whether there was any relationship between their usage of strategies and their reading comprehension ability. The study's findings showed that students used reading strategies more frequently. Ninety-six percent (33 out of the 36 questionnaire items) were answered at a moderate to higher level by the students. This result corresponds with studies by Zhang and Wu (2009) and Nguyen and Trinh (2011) in the ESL/EFL circumstance, which indicates that second/foreign language learners actively employ reading strategies.

The majority of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies for reading were exhibited by the students as being regularly used. The students made extensive use of cognitive reading strategies such as translating concepts into their native language, paying attention to each paragraph's beginning line, determining the text's core point, utilizing text elements, visualizing information, and paying close attention to keywords. In a similar vein, the students demonstrated a propensity to employ numerous meta-cognitive reading strategies at an advanced level, including overviewing a text, varying the reading speed, drawing on prior knowledge, returning to the text, and cross-checking assumptions regarding the accuracy of the reading comprehension.

This suggests that students were employing direct learning strategies with an elevated level of engagement; and this outcome coincides with other researchers' findings like (Chen and Chen, 2015), which show that EFL students most commonly employed the cognitive reading approach, followed by meta-cognitive and affective reading strategies. The findings of this research are also supported by other researchers like Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) that using cognitive and meta-cognitive reading strategies for EFL learners is almost part of their language acquisition process.

Oxford (1990) also noted that mental processing and monitoring the activities of the target language are more closely associated with direct learning strategies: cognitive and meta-cognitive. Learners can build deep processing connections, evaluate and categorize fresh understanding and link new information with preexisting schemata by putting cognitive and meta-cognitive learning strategies into practice. Students also generate messages in the target language and create and modify internal mental models.

However, students have additionally demonstrated a limited tendency to utilize some affective reading strategies, such as utilizing a checklist to help them remember difficulties during reading comprehension activities and talking with classmates about how they felt about using reading strategies. Specifically, the least popular reading strategy among students is utilizing a checklist to help them remember difficulties, which has a mean result (1.719). This suggests that the study's participants may not have understood the significance of indirect learning strategies that involve emotions, process coordination, and social connection to successfully support the acquisition of reading skills. The learners' cultural background and the learning environment may be contributing factors to their inadequate inclination to adopt affective learning strategies.

Furthermore, poor application of affective learning strategies is caused by a lack of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making. Self-awareness is the capacity to identify one's feelings and ideas. Students who possess greater emotional intelligence are more successful in language learning, particularly in the face of setbacks. Being able to relate to others with different backgrounds and traits is what it means to be socially aware. It is widely accepted that participation in language classes is necessary to become proficient in the target language. Students are advised to collaborate with their companions in foreign language classes to advance their language proficiency.

Regarding the overall relationship between students' usage of reading strategies and their reading comprehension skills, the study finds a negative relationship between the two variables. That is to say, when the average of all reading strategies increases, students' reading achievement tends to decline. The inverse relationship suggests that the students' usage of reading strategies was not the only factor in their reading achievement. The students' reading achievement is likely influenced by a number of other factors, including language proficiency (Huang and Nisbet, 2014), linguistic knowledge (including vocabulary and grammar) (Zhang, 2012; Aryadoust and Baghaei, 2016), and other variables like educational background, language proficiency, effective use of strategies, individual differences, and learning styles.

Based on the findings of the study the null hypothesis is approved, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This is because that the overall correlation ($r = -0.113$) is a weak correlation and the sig. value (0.066) is greater than 0.05, which means the apparent relationship between the students' reading strategy use and reading performance is not statistically significant at the 99% confidence level. When it comes to the frequency of the students' reading strategy use, the students employ most strategies from moderate level to higher. So it is possible to reject the null hypothesis and approve the alternative hypothesis.

6. Conclusion

The study's findings showed that students used reading strategies more frequently from a moderate to higher level. They made extensive use of cognitive and Meta-cognitive reading strategies. Translating concepts into native language, focusing on paragraphs, identifying core points, and visualizing information are consistently utilized cognitive reading strategies by the students. They also employed advanced meta-cognitive strategies like reviewing, varying reading speed, drawing on prior knowledge, and cross-checking comprehension accuracy. However, they show limited use of affective reading strategies, such as using a checklist to remember difficulties and working together with peers, which play a significant role in performing well in the target language. Regarding the overall relationship between students' usage of reading strategies and their reading comprehension skills, the study finds a negative relationship between the two variables ($r = -0.113$). That is to say, when the average of all reading strategies increases, students' reading achievement tends to decline. And this inverse relationship suggests that the students' usage of reading strategies was not the only factor in their reading achievement. It is likely influenced by several other factors, including language proficiency, linguistic knowledge (including vocabulary and grammar), and other variables like educational background, language proficiency, effective use of strategies, individual differences, and learning styles.

7. Recommendation

The findings show that students employ the majority of reading strategies at moderate to higher levels. Nonetheless, very few reading strategies—especially emotive ones—are used at a lower level, thus it would be preferable to raise students' awareness of and provide them with training in affective reading strategies. Even students who have demonstrated a moderate usage of reading strategies should receive training in those areas because moderate utilization does not ensure that learners will be proficient in language use.

It would be preferable to assess the students' efficient use of reading strategies because there is a negative correlation between their reading comprehension performance and the use of reading strategies. There is a chance that students will use strategies inappropriately and that their use of reading strategies will vary.

As strategy use alone is not the main predictor of greater reading comprehension accomplishment, it would be appropriate to focus on and enhance students' language proficiency in linguistic competency, especially in vocabulary and grammar.

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