**Students’ Perception of Using Efficient Reading Strategies in English Reading Classrooms at Hinde High School: Grade Nine in Focus**

***Abstract***

*The purpose of this study was to explore students’ perception on using efficient reading strategies. Descriptive case study was used and 152 students were selected using simple random sampling technique to fill the questionnaire whereas five students and five teachers were selected to respond to interview. Questionnaire was adapted from SILL and SORS, and administered to all selected students. In addition, interview was conducted with five students and five teachers. The data obtained through the questionnaire were triangulated with the data obtained through interviews. Results of the study showed that students perceived reading strategies inappropriately, and metacognitive and affective/social reading strategies were used moderately whereas cognitive reading strategies were used most frequently. Besides, there was strong and significant correlation between students’ perception and using reading strategies. To enhance the use of these strategies, students should be* *provided with rigorous practice of reading strategies.*

***Keywords:****perception, reading strategies, use, efficient, cognitive, affective, metacognitive, effective, rigorous*

# Background

Students believe that it is merely important to go through the text by reading word-to- word to understand each specific ideas rather than using the varied reading strategies. Some students are reluctant to move on from a text until they have understood every detail (Edge, 1993). This means, students only prefer to read by getting specific ideas without applying varied reading strategies. Jing (2018) also put that students’ perception of the effectiveness of reading strategies was closely tied to assessment rather than for overall understanding.

When learners use variety of appropriate reading strategies, reading becomes meaningful. Effective learners use greater variety of reading strategies (metacognitive, cognitive and affective/social reading strategies) in appropriate way to the language learning task. Using effective reading strategies develops readers’ awareness and their use of appropriate reading strategies (British Council, 2015 & Gruyter, 2006). Edge (1993) added that using reading strategies can encourage students who want to continue the total comprehension outside the classroom in their own time. Aarnoutse & Shelling (as cited in Poole, 2009) also added that reading strategies facilitate reading comprehension and overcome comprehension problems at both word and sentence level. This means using reading strategies can minimize the problems students face during reading.

Students are expected to use efficient and effective reading strategies. Gruyter (2006) identified that effective readers are aware of varied reading strategies and apply them on reading to understand what they read.

However, there are evidences that show learners do not use reading strategies. Nuttal (as cited in Chen and Chen, 2015) put that most students have reading problems because of lack of understanding of specific reading strategies. Therefore, they do not understand what they read. Schiff and Calif (as cited in Chen and Chen, 2015) also put that students are not aware of reading strategies and how to apply them and the situation results in poor reading.

Reading strategies are conscious procedures carried out in order to solve perceived problems that students face in reading or they are effective techniques or operations that learners use to read effectively (Barnett, 2002 & Johnson & Johnson, 2001 and Anderson, 2008).

The role of teachers in promoting the use of reading strategies is to train them how to read quickly (Snow, 2007). So, training students how to read quickly and effectively has important role to develop students’ reading skills.

In this context, Hinde high school students are expected to use efficient reading strategies to be effective reader of English.

1. **Statement of the Problem**

Effective reading takes place when learners use efficient, effective and appropriate reading strategies. Using effective reading strategies results in improved comprehension and the readers’ self-confidence because it is woven into the very fabric of ‘reading for meaning’ and the development of this cognitive ability (Gruyter, 2006).

Some scholars showed that students have problem of using varied and efficient reading strategies. Students focus on reading comprehension products rather than practicing reading through reading strategies (Noor, 2016) & Oakley,2011).This means students have problem of using different efficient reading strategies effectively since their objective is to get the product of what they read without applying reading strategies.

In similar way, the practical status of Hinde High school students seemed not out of this situation. Students seemed that they are strange for using efficient reading strategies in appropriate way either in school or outside school.

Some local researchers tried conduct study in relation to students’ perception and their efficient use of reading strategies. Belilew (2015) studied on the relationship between reading strategy use and comprehension among Ethiopian EFL learners and found that learners can be seen as medium reading strategy users. Dagne & Gemechis (2014) also studied on EFL teachers’ use of reading strategies to develop their students’ reading skills and found that teachers have no problem in case of using reading strategies. Moreover, Yohannes (2013) studied about students’ reading strategy use, teachers’ perceptions and practice and found that great majority of students need a rigorous training concerning metacognitive and cognitive reading strategy use.

However, none of the mentioned studies studied on present study. Therefore, the present study attempted to fill the gap by investigating students’ perception regarding efficient reading strategies use.

### Objective

The main purpose of this study was to explore students’ perception on using efficient reading strategies in Hinde High school grade nine in focus.

More specifically, the purpose of the study is to:

* Explore how students perceive efficient reading strategies.
* Identify the reading strategies students use.
* Find out whether there is relationship between students’ perception and their reading strategy use.

1. **Methods** 
   1. **Study Area**

The study was conducted in Hinde High School, Ebantu Woreda, East Wollega Zone, Oromia Regional state. Its main aim was to investigate grade nine students’ perception on using efficient reading strategies.

## Design

In order to address the intended research objective, the descriptive case study research design with mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) approach was employed.

## Participants

The participants of the study were academic year grade nine students and teachers of Hinde High School.

## Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

### Sample Size

From a total number of 508 (253 male and 255 female) grade nine Hinde high school students, 30% were selected as sample based on Neuman (2007). Five teachers were selected comprehensively to answer interview questions. Therefore, 152 (75 male and 77 female) students were selected to fill the questionnaire. Five students were taken from the sampled students using simple random technique whereas five teachers were taken comprehensively to respond to the questions identified for interview.

### Sampling Techniques

The student respondents were selected using simple random probability sampling technique because it gives each individual in the population equal chances of being selected (Creswell, 2012). In order to select the sample respondents, first all elements of the population (students) were listed and each member was assigned a number. Then, random selection of the sample was applied using lottery method until the required population was included. Concerning teacher respondents they were selected purposively to answer interview questions.

## Instruments

Questionnaire and interview were used as data gathering instruments. Questionnaire is used to obtain numerical or quantitative data from the Hinde high school students whereas teachers’ and students’’ interview was used to support the data obtained through questionnaire.

### Questionnaire

Closed-ended questions are practical because all individuals will answer the question using the response options provided (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, based on the review of related literature and stated research objectives, 37 (six and thirty-one closed ended questions) were adapted from Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990) and the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) developed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) for the first and the second objectives respectively. For the third objective, there was no need of collecting another data because the correlation between students’ perception and efficient reading strategies use was based on the data collected on objective number one and two. The questions were administrated to fifteen sampled students and some modifications were made. The questions were translated into students’ mother tongue. For perception related questions, five point Likert-scale ranging from 1 to 5 “Strongly Disagree(1), Disagree(2), Undecided(3), Agree(4) and Strongly Agree(5)” was used whereas five point scale “I Never or almost never do this(1), I do this only Occasionally(2),I Sometimes do this (3), I Usually do this(4) and I Always or almost always do this(5)” (Mokhtari & Sheory, 2002) was used for questions related to reading strategies use indicating the reading strategies students use.

### Interview

Semi-structured interview was used to gather qualitative data from both students and teachers or to answer research questions one and two. It was designed on the basis of questionnaire so as to keep its validity. Besides, before conducting interview it was given to trained person (language teachers) for comment. Accordingly, they suggested some translation parts and the researcher made some modifications. Interview was also translated into students’ mother tongue.

## Data Collection Procedures

To collect the data, first respondents were informed about the study and assigned and administered questions to them. After they filled the questions, the researcher collected the questions. Following, the data obtained from questionnaire was entered into computer to be analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version-20. Concerning interview, the researcher contacted respondents on the occasion they would be available and interviewed them individually and notes were taken.

## Method of Data Analysis

Using (SPSS) mean was computed for each item respective to objectives to identify how students perceive reading strategies and the strategies they use. The significance relationship between students’ perception and reading strategy use was seen at P<001. Then, the result obtained from SPSS analysis was described in words. In addition, the result obtained from interview was analyzed qualitatively to support data obtained through students’ questionnaire. Finally, summary of major findings, conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

**5. Results and Discussions**

#### Summary of Reading Strategies Used by Students

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Reading Strategies | N | Mean  (N=152) | SD |
| 1 | Metacognitive Reading Strategies | 152 | 2.75 | 1.09738 |
| 2 | Cognitive Reading Strategies | 152 | 3.56 | .89289 |
| 3 | Affective and social Reading Strategies | 152 | 3.38 | .88565 |

As can be seen in table 5 above, cognitive reading strategies were the most frequently used reading strategies with total mean score (M=3.56) followed by affective/social (M=3.38) and meta-cognitive (M=2.75) reading strategies respectively. The latter two strategies were used moderately. Yohannes (2013) similarly found that metacognitive reading strategies are used moderately; however, he contrarily concluded that cognitive reading strategies were used in small amount. However, the present study matches with Jing’s (2018) finding who found that cognitive reading strategy is the most used strategy.

## Correlation between students’ perception about using reading strategies and their Reading Strategy Use

# Table 6: Correlation between students’ perception and reading strategy use

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Perception | Metacognitive | Cognitive | Affective/social |
| Perception | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .981\*\* | .893\*\* | .908\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| N | 152 | 152 | 152 | 152 |
| Metacognitive | Pearson Correlation | .981\*\* | 1 | .922\*\* | .932\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  | .000 | .000 |
|  | N | 152 | 152 | 152 | 152 |
| Cognitive | Pearson Correlation | .893\*\* | .922\*\* | 1 | .964\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 |  | .000 |
| N | 152 | 152 | 152 | 152 |
| Affective/  Social | Pearson Correlation | .908\*\* | .932\*\* | .964\*\* | 1 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 |  |
| N | 152 | 152 | 152 | 152 |

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As can be seen from the above table, there is strong correlation between students’ perception and metacognitive (*r* = .981, *n* = 152, *p* < .001), cognitive (*r* = .893, *n* = 152, *p* < .001) and affective/social (*r* = .908, *n* = 152, *p* < .001) reading strategy use. In sum, inappropriate perception of students about using reading strategies resulted inefficient use of reading strategies.

1. **Conclusions and Recommendations**

## Conclusions

From the results and discussions, it is possible to conclude that students and teachers viewed the concept and application of efficient reading strategies as nothing. For example, as students responded through interview they considered reading strategies as tenses and grammars. They considered reading strategies as they did not have role to read effectively. Besides, cognitive reading strategies were the most frequently used reading strategies among students; however some of the reading strategies were not used as expected. Deciding what to read and what to ignore is the most frequently used cognitive reading strategy whereas thinking about what is already known is the least frequently used cognitive reading strategies. Metacognitive and affective/social reading strategies were used moderately. Having reading plan and paraphrasing are the highest and least used metacognitive reading strategies respectively. Affective reading strategies were separately used in small amount among students. Moreover, the study revealed that there is strong and significant relationship between students’ perception and using efficient reading strategies. This means the inappropriate perception of students about using reading strategies resulted inefficient use of reading strategies.

**6.1. Recommendations**

Since students viewed the concept and application of efficient reading strategies in inappropriate way awareness should be made to bring them on the right track in relation to using reading strategies effectively. Students should also be encouraged and provided with varied reading strategies so as to increase their efficient use of reading strategies. In addition, to enhance the use of reading strategies specially, affective and metacognitive reading strategies among students, encouragement and continuous practice should be done by the teachers. Moreover, since the study revealed that there is strong and significant relationship between students’ perception about using efficient reading strategies and using efficient reading strategies teachers should play their roles by providing understanding, encouragement and rigorous practice for students regarding using efficient reading strategies.

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