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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### ASSESSING THE INCORPORATION OF READING STRATEGY INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 10 EFL TEXTBOOK FOR ETHIOPIA

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#### ABSTRACT

This study dealt with analysis of the Grade 10 EFL textbook in terms of the degree to which the reading activities accommodate reading strategy training. Direct and indirect reading strategies were criteria of analysis while items/questions in the reading activities were units of analysis. The frequencies of each criterion in the checklist were added and changed into percentage to establish their level of existence based on Yudoleksono, (1999) and Alharbi (2015) model which is 0-25% poor, 26-50 fair, 51-75 good, and 76-100 excellent. The results showed that both direct and indirect reading strategy training were fairly incorporated in the textbook. The study recommended that syllabus writers and material developers for EFL textbooks should pay considerable attention to reading strategies used by effective readers. Universities should give LLS course to candidate English teachers. Additional studies are recommended in the area of analyzing English textbooks in terms of the credit they gave to LLS in general and reading strategy training in particular.

## INTRODUCTION

**Background of the Study:** The development of students' reading skill is widely seen as beneficial in preparing students for effective reading which help them to be able to take control over their own learning to be successful not just in learning English, but also other subjects (Benson, 2001). Producing independent and effective reader can be achieved through dedicated reading strategy instruction which can be realized through compiling effective reading experiences and strategies used by successful language learners in a learnable and teachable manner. This is because the most likely context in which learners come into contact with reading strategies training in a regular basis is the English language textbook. Strategies used by successful language learners can be identified and taught to less successful students (Chamot, 2005; Zare, 2012). Once a reading strategy becomes familiar through repeated use, it may be used with some automaticity; particularly less successful readers can be taught new strategies so as to help them become better readers. If that is the case, it is logical to ask to what extent our English textbooks have incorporated reading strategy training. The major concern of this study was analyzing the reading tasks in the English for Ethiopia grade 10 students' textbook so as to see to what extent they accommodate reading strategy training.

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**Statement of the Problem:** Reading is the most important sub-skill that directs the successful means of learning a language (Edaso, 2007). In 2010, Karbalaei claims that reading is specifically the basic goal for ESL/EFL students to gain an understanding of the world and of themselves. This shows that due attention has to be given to developing our students' competence of reading skill. In Ethiopia, English is a medium of instruction in high schools which demands our students to have effective reading skill of the target language not only to be successful in learning English but also in other subjects. Thus, it is logical to say students' success or failure in academic world is highly reliant on their capability to read and understand effectively. However, our high school students' ability to comprehend written materials seems to be below their level. The researcher's and his colleagues' experience is testimony to this reality. Students achieve very low scores in reading comprehension tests. Majority of them are slow readers and some of them hardly comprehend reading materials. This can be, among many factors, due to our English textbooks' failure to incorporate reading strategies used by effective readers so that learners can imitate and adopt them which enable them to have control over their reading. Thus, this study tried to check the extent to which reading strategy training is incorporated in the grade ten EFL textbook which is currently in use. Even if different scholars like Yohannes and Mahlalela, (2015), Hailu (2008), Edaso (2007), Yohannes (2013), etc. have evaluated different grade level English textbooks from different perspectives, it seems that no research

has been done on evaluating our high school English textbooks in terms of reading strategy training incorporation. So, since reading is crucial in academic setting and reading strategy training enhances reading comprehension, it is worth to evaluate our English textbooks in terms of the extent to which reading strategy training is incorporated.

### Objectives of the Study

**Main Objective:** The general objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which the Grade 10 English for Ethiopia Students' Textbook has incorporated reading strategy training.

**Specific Objectives:** The study attempted to attain the following specific objectives.

- To identify to what extent reading strategy training has got due attention in the Grade 10 Students' English Textbook.
- To evaluate the extent to which reading skill strategy training has been incorporated in the Students' English Textbook.
- To identify Grade 10 English teachers' understanding of strategy training and the extent to which they are trying to apply it.

**Research Questions:** The study attempted to answer the following research question: To what extent are the reading activities in the Grade 10 English language students' textbook designed in light of direct and indirect reading strategies?

**Limitations of the Study:** The study only focused on reading strategy training. Other skills' strategy trainings are not included which cannot help the researcher to generalize the finding. Absence of models that determine the extent of reading strategies to be incorporated in English textbooks also may affect the interpretation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** It was descriptive in that the textbook was analyzed in terms of the extent to which reading tasks accommodate reading strategies used by successful language learners in which quantitative and qualitative research approaches were applied.

**Source of Data:** Source of data to the study was Grade 10 Students' English Textbook which is currently in use and EFL teachers who were currently teaching.

**Sample and Sampling Technique:** The textbook consists of 12 units and all of them were analyzed for it was manageable. In addition, 12 EFL teachers from four High Schools of Ilu Aba Bor Zone namely Hurumu, Yayo, Gore and Mettu Secondary School were purposively selected and interviewed.

### Data Collection Instruments

**Coding Form (Content Analysis):** Content analysis was applied using checklist which was adapted from taxonomies of language learning strategies by Oxford (1990). Content analysis is a research tool focused on the actual content of the material under investigation (Krippendorff, 2004). It is used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes,

phrases, characters, or sentences within texts or sets of texts and to quantify this presence in an objective manner (Palmquist, 1990). To ensure validity of the instrument, colleagues were asked to comment and they ensured it. To ensure reliability, there were two coders, the researcher and his colleague, and the percent of agreement between the two coders was 72.6 which were within the conventional stage. Direct and indirect reading strategies used by effective readers were criteria of analysis while each questions for reading activities were units of analysis.

**Interview:** Interview was also used to examine the teachers' awareness and application skills of reading strategies used by successful readers.

**Data Collection Procedure:** First, checklist was adapted, and interview guideline was designed. Then, the target textbook was made available and the amount of reading texts (reading passages), reading tasks and items were counted. Next, the numbers of items in each task that accommodate the components of both direct and indirect reading strategies were checked. Eventually, EFL teachers were interviewed.

**Methods of Data Analysis:** Frequencies of each item of the checklist that met the requirements of reading strategies were sorted and added. The addition of items/questions that accommodate direct strategies (memory, cognitive, and compensation), and indirect strategies (meta-cognitive, affective and social) were separately divided by the total items of reading items in the textbook and multiplied by 100 to get their percentages. Then, it was interpreted based on Yudoleksono (1999) and Alharbi (2015) model which is 0-25% poor, 26-50% fair, 51-75% good, and 76-100% excellent. In addition, EFL teachers' interview result was analyzed qualitatively. Finally, discussions, conclusions, comments and recommendations were given.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**General Description of the Textbook:** The grade ten students' English for Ethiopia textbook was published in 2011 and it has been used since 2012 G.C. The author is Donna Bailey and it is prepared by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Education which was printed by Pearson in China. It has 47 passages, 94 reading activities and 446 items/questions for reading tasks.

### The Extent to which the Reading Tasks in the Textbook are designed in Light of Direct Reading Strategies

**Memory Strategies:** From the above table, it is possible to infer that in the textbook the attention given for developing students' memory strategy is not adequate; it is not treated well. Out of the nine sub-strategies of memory strategies, only three strategies namely "Grouping" eight times, "Semantic Mapping" seven times, and "Employing Action" five times are treated to some extent. The rest sub-strategies are ignored. Out of 446 questions for dealing with reading tasks in the textbook under investigation, only 23 (5%) accommodate memory strategy training.

**Cognitive Strategies:** The textbook has not given relatively equal credit to each of the components of cognitive strategies. Some of the strategies like reasoning, practicing naturalistically, getting the idea quickly, and analyzing

**Table 1. Memory Strategies and their Frequencies in the Textbook**

No.	Memory Strategies	Frequency
1	Activities for grouping things.	8
2	Tasks for associating/ elaborating things.	2
3	Activities for placing new words into context.	1
4	Tasks for using imagery.	0
5	Activities for semantic mapping.	7
6	Tasks for using key words.	0
7	Activities for representing sounds in memory.	0
8	Activities for structured reviewing.	0
9	Tasks for employing action like physical response	5
	Total	23

**Table 2. Cognitive Strategies and their Frequencies in the Textbook**

R/N	Cognitive Strategies	Frequency
1	Activities that encourage rereading/repeating the text.	6
2	Tasks for getting the idea quickly.	20
3	Activities for practicing reading naturalistically.	25
4	Tasks that encourage reasoning.	33
5	Activities for analyzing expressions.	12
6	Activities for analyzing contrastively.	0
7	Tasks for translating.	0
8	Activities for transferring.	0
9	Activities for making notes.	6
10	Tasks for summarizing.	0
11	Tasks for highlighting	0
	Total	102

**Table 3. Compensation Strategies and their Frequencies in the Textbook**

R/N	Compensation Strategies	Frequency
1	Activities that encourage using linguistic clues.	15
2	Tasks that encourage intelligent guessing using other clues.	0
	Total	15

**Table 4. Summary of Direct Reading Strategies in the Textbook**

No.	Criteria for direct reading Strategies	Poor (0-25 %)		Fair (26-50 %)		Good (51-75 %)		Excellent ( $\geq 76$ %)	
		Items	%	Items	%	Items	%	Items	%
1	Memory strategies	23	5						
2	Cognitive Strategies	102	23						
3	Compensation Strategies	15	3						
	Total of direct strategies			140	31				

expressions are treated well in relation to others. Rereading and note making are treated poorly which is only 6 times throughout the textbook. The rest strategies like analyzing contrastively, translating, transferring, summarizing, and highlighting haven't got any room in the textbook. Among 446 items/questions in the reading tasks, only 102 of them accommodate cognitive reading strategies which are 23 percent.

**Compensation Strategies:** As it can be seen above, the textbook hasn't explicitly presented the strategy beside its importance. Only 15 items out of 446 accommodate social strategies. No instruction in the textbook encourages students to practice guessing intelligently using different clues other than linguistic clues. To sum up, direct reading strategies for directly dealing with the target language was not addressed adequately. Considerable emphasis for strengthening students' memory competence hasn't been given in the textbook and this negatively affects their storing and retrieving capacity. Similarly, the book fails to elaborate compensation strategies used by effective readers and make available for practice. In the same way, even if it has received relatively better attention than the rest, cognitive reading strategy was not presented sufficiently which plays prominent role in developing students' understanding and producing of the given reading passages.

### The Extent to which Reading Activities in the Grade 10 Students' English Textbook Accommodate Indirect Reading Strategies Training

**Meta-cognitive Strategies:** Table 5 shows that meta-cognitive strategies have been addressed for 58 times out of 446 items of reading tasks in the textbook. It accounts only 13 % which is between 0-25 percent. So, the strategies are addressed poorly or due attention has not been given to it.

**Affective Strategies:** As it can be seen from Table 7, almost all of the affective strategies for reading comprehension are not addressed or incorporated in the textbook for practice. They share only 0.89 percent of the 446 items of reading activities. The textbook fails to highlight and create practice opportunities to the affective strategies; yet they play vital roles in enabling learners to handle their emotions and anxieties which enhance their reading comprehension.

**Social Strategies:** In the textbook, except "cooperating with others", the rest component of social strategies are not available as information as well as for practice. From this tangible data, it is logical to claim that the book has not paid due attention to social strategies. Students are not encouraged to imitate and adopt those social strategies which are helpful for improving students' reading comprehension.

**Table 5. Meta-cognitive Strategies and their Frequencies in the Textbook**

No	Meta-Cognitive Strategies	Frequency
1	Activities that encourage over viewing and linking with already known mental.	2
2	Tasks that demand students to pay due attention.	20
3	Activities that help learners to uncover about learning reading.	0
4	Tasks that enable students to be organized for learning.	1
5	Tasks for setting goals and objectives for reading.	0
6	Activities for identifying the purpose of reading task.	33
7	Tasks for planning for reading.	1
8	Activities for seeking practice opportunities.	1
9	Activities for self-monitoring.	0
10	Activities for self-evaluating.	0
	Total	58

**Table 6. Affective Strategies and their Frequencies**

R/N	Affective Strategies	Frequency
1	There are different techniques for lowering anxiety.	0
2	Making positive statements about one’s own achievement.	0
3	Learners are encouraged to take risk wisely.	4
4	Students are invited to reward oneself for good deed.	0
5	Listening own body is promoted.	0
6	Using a checklist to assess ones feeling is encouraged.	0
7	Students are persuaded to write a language learning diary.	0
8	Discussing own feelings with someone else.	0
	Total	4

**Table 7. Social Strategies and their Frequencies**

No	Social Strategies	Frequency
1	Activities that encourage asking for clarification/ verification.	0
2	Learners are asked to cooperate with others.	105
3	Tasks for developing cultural understanding.	0
4	Activities that enable students become aware of others` thoughts and feelings.	0
5	Activities for cooperating with proficient readers of the new language.	0
	Total	105

**Table 8. Summary of Indirect Reading Strategies in Grade Ten English Textbook**

No.	Criteria for indirect reading Strategies	Poor (0-25 %)		Fair (26-50 %)		Good (51-75 %)		Excellent (≥76 %)	
		Items	%	Items	%	Items	%	Items	%
1	Meta-cognitive strategies	58	13						
2	Affective Strategies	4	0.89						
3	Social Strategies	105	24						
	Total of indirect strategies			167	37				

**Table 9. The Summary of Reading Strategies in Grade Ten English Textbook**

N	Reading Strategies	Poor (0-25 %)		Fair (26-50 %)		Good (51-75 %)		Excellent (≥76 %)	
		Items	%	Items	%	Items	%	Items	%
	1. Direct strategies								
1	Memory strategies	23	5						
2	Cognitive Strategies	102	23						
3	Compensation Strategies	15	3						
	Total of direct strategies			140	31				
	1. Indirect strategies								
4	Meta-cognitive strategies	58	13						
5	Affective Strategies	4	0.89						
6	Social Strategies	105	24						
	Total of indirect strategies			167	37				

To sum up, indirect reading strategies have received different attention. Each of them falls under poor treatment in the textbook which is 13, 0.89, and 24 percents respectively. Nevertheless, the same to direct reading strategies, the indirect reading strategies in general have been addressed fairly which accounts for 37 percent out of the 446 items of reading activities in the textbook. As it can be seen in Table 9, direct and indirect reading strategies are treated fairly, 140 and 167 times or 31 and 37 percent respectively. However, as we can infer from the above discussion, some crucial strategies under both direct and indirect strategies are either poorly or not totally treated in the textbook.

For instance, the components of memory strategies like using imagery, using key words, representing sounds in memory, and structured reviewing are not made available to be practiced by students. Similarly, some components of cognitive strategies like analyzing contrastively, translating, transferring, summarizing, and highlighting are not incorporated in the textbook; yet they are crucial in improving students` reading comprehension. In compensation strategies too, tasks that encourage intelligent guessing using other clues are not made available. Similarly, some components of meta-cognitive strategies like uncovering about learning reading, setting goals

and objectives for reading, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating are not introduced and made available for practice; while over viewing, being organized for learning reading, planning for reading, and seeking practice opportunities are treated poorly. On the other hand, almost all components of affective strategies are ignored; yet these strategies are vital in enabling students to gain control over their emotion and become successful readers. Similarly, except one strategy, all the rest components of social strategies are not introduced and made available for practice. However, this strategy enables students to work together having common goal for reading which enhances their comprehension.

**Grade 10 English Teachers Awareness of Reading Strategies Used by Successful Readers:** Data had been gathered via interview from English teachers who were teaching grade ten students. They were 12 who were selected from four High Schools. All the 12 teachers were interviewed. There were 8 items and the followings are the results of the interview. The first question was designed to see the teachers' reaction towards why some students succeed in reading while others fail. Nine of them answered that it is due to the students' difference in terms of reading experience, background knowledge of the topic, family background, the way they were taught at elementary level, and the like. No one of the nine mentioned about differences in reading strategy use as a factor. Only 3 of the 12 teachers, who had MA in TEFL, tried to state as reading strategies that students apply can be one cause among others to the difference in students' reading comprehension. This shows that the first degree English teachers lack clear awareness about reading strategy use influences reading comprehension. The second question was to realize the teachers' awareness of LLS in general and reading strategies in particular. Except the 3 teachers who tried to touch some points about LLS, the rest were trying to answer it from the teachers' perspective or from teaching methodology aspect. They were saying it is the way teachers teach reading, like activating previous knowledge, using different techniques and so on. The third item demands the interviewee whether they can mention some strategies that their successful students use to enhance storing and retrieving capacity of what is read. Similarly, most of them tried to answer it from the teachers teaching methodology perspective or what teachers should do to promote remembering ability. The interviewer tried to lead them towards the intended spirit of the question. However, they remained the same and attempted to answer it from their own responsibilities perspective. Only 2 respondents tried to touch some points of memory strategies even if they were mixed with other strategies. From this, we can deduce that the teachers are not helping their students to imitate and adopt memory strategies used by successful readers for they do have limited knowledge on that area.

The fourth question was to probe the teachers' awareness on the cognitive strategies used by successful readers. Here, they have tried to point out some points like rereading, making notes, translating into mother tongue, and summarizing. However, they have mixed strategies from meta-cognitive and compensation strategies. They were also asked to what extent does the grade ten English textbook incorporated these strategies. They responded that the textbook has included these strategies to some extent. The fifth item demands them to highlight some strategies that successful readers apply to enhance their reading comprehension despite lack of knowledge of the particular language. Their answers can be

summarized as identifying the theme, working in group, skimming and scanning, having purpose for reading, following stages of reading (pre, while and post), and the like. Here again we can infer that the teachers have no clear knowledge about compensation strategies applied by good readers that they are not attempting to empower their students with this strategy.

The respondents were also asked whether they know meta-cognitive strategies which successful readers use to coordinate their reading comprehension. They couldn't answer it from the students perspective and the interviewer attempted to put them on the right track. However, their answers can be summarized as motivation, interest, guessing, organizing, changing reading strategies etc. which shows their knowledge gap about the strategies effective readers use to manage their reading comprehension. They were also inquired to say something on what they know about the strategies used by successful readers to gain over their emotions which will negatively affect reading comprehension. Encouragement, following their teachers properly, being organized, asking questions, working with others, being planned are the summary of their answers. They have tried to touch some points indirectly about affective strategies; yet, they failed to elaborate specific strategies that effective readers use to control their emotions. Finally, the interviewees were also asked if grade 10 EFL textbook encourages students to practice and adopt those reading strategies used by effective readers. They said that the textbook creates practice opportunity to some extent but not enough.

In general, based on the above elaboration, it seems that the grade 10 English teachers lacks the what, why, and how aspect of reading strategies. It looks like they have deficiency on detailed and clear awareness of the components of both direct and indirect reading strategies. Hence, it is logical to infer from this reality that those teachers are not helping their students to imitate, adopt, and adapt the strategies satisfactorily. The teachers' inability to let their learners practice the components of direct and indirect reading strategies used by effective readers hurts the students' reading skills development.

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

**Summary :** This study tried to evaluate the grade 10 English textbook in terms of its inclusion of reading strategies using checklist. The teachers' awareness of reading strategies used by effective readers was also assessed through interview. The starting point or research problem of the study was high school students' failure to comprehend written materials to their level which was identified based on the researchers' and his colleagues' experience as well as some researchers' findings like Chanyalew & Abiy, (2015). The researcher believes that, among many factors, the extent to which English textbooks make available the reading strategies used by effective readers to be practiced and adopted by less effective readers can contribute a lot. Having this in mind, the following research questions were addressed. 1. To what extent reading activities in the textbook accommodate direct reading strategies? 2. To what extent reading activities in the textbook accommodate indirect reading strategies? 3. To what extent grade 10 English teachers are aware of reading strategies used by effective readers?

Different related literatures such as the role of English textbooks in constructing students' reading skill, reading strategies, the goal of reading strategy training, the relationship between reading strategies and reading comprehension, some strategies of effective readers, reasons for evaluating

textbooks, principles of material development for English textbooks, and ways of incorporating reading strategies instruction in English textbooks were reviewed to strengthen the issue under investigation. The study was descriptive-evaluative content analysis in which both quantitative and qualitative research design were applied. Sources of data were grade 10 English textbook and English teachers of the same grade level in some selected Secondary Schools of Ilu Aba Bor Zone. All the twelve units were analyzed using checklist adapted from Oxford's (1990) taxonomies of language learning strategies useful for reading. Structured interview which was designed by the researcher was also applied to assess the teachers' knowledge about the reading strategies. Direct and indirect reading strategies were criteria of analysis while each item/question in the reading activities were used as units of analysis for the study. The frequencies of each item in the checklist were counted and added. Then items in both direct and indirect reading strategies were added and changed into percentage so as to determine whether their inclusion is poor, fair, good, or excellent. The result of the teachers' interview was analyzed qualitatively. Based on the analysis, it was possible to claim that direct and indirect reading strategies used by effective readers were fairly incorporated in the textbook. In addition, it was identified that most of the grade 10 English teachers lack clear awareness of the what, why, how, and when of reading strategies applied by effective readers so as to let their students practice and personalize them.

### Conclusions

Based on the result of the discussion above, it is possible to claim that although research findings endorse the benefits of helping students practice reading strategies, there is evidence that training learners to use each of them efficiently with the ultimate goal of improving their reading comprehension has not got adequate emphasis. However, as to Schmitt (1997), learners are willing to try new strategies if they are introduced and instructed. Nation (2001) also asserts that since students vary significantly in the skill with which they exploit strategies, it is vital to make training in strategy use as planned part of a reading development program. In brief, the following conclusions can be drawn based on the findings of the study.

- Direct strategies for dealing with reading comprehension have not been treated adequately in the textbook; or they are made available only fairly for practice.
- Indirect strategies for general management of reading achievement have not got considerable attention; they are treated fairly, too.
- Some components of both direct and indirect strategies useful for improving reading comprehension have been excluded totally and some are addressed poorly.
- The book fails to give explicit instruction on the reading strategies available for practice. Almost no explanation of what, why, how, and when of the direct and indirect reading strategies are available in the textbook.
- Teachers have limited awareness of reading strategies used by effective readers.

### Recommendations

The development of learner autonomy is widely seen as beneficial in preparing students for lifelong learning which help them to be able to take control over their own learning to

be successful not just in class, but also to learn independently without a teacher outside the class (Benson, 2001). Producing independent learner can be achieved through dedicated strategy instruction. This is because, once a learning strategy becomes familiar through repeated use, it may be used with some automaticity; particularly less successful readers can be taught new strategies so as to help them become better readers (Chamot, 2005; Grenfell & Harris, 1999).

The most likely context in which learners come into contact with these strategies training in a regular basis is the English language textbook. If that is the case:

- Adequate and balanced attention has to be given to each and every component of both direct and indirect strategies for reading comprehension.
- English textbooks ought to provide explicit information about the importance and applying procedures of reading strategies used by successful readers.
- Besides making those strategies available for practice, textbooks ought to help students uncover and aware of their own reading strategies.
- Presenting reading strategies should be the prime concern for English textbook writers, materials developers, syllabus designers, decision-makers and finally teachers.
- Colleges and universities should give explicit training to candidate teachers about the strategies used by successful readers, how to pinpoint them and transfer them to less effective readers.
- In brief, English language textbook developers should pay considerable attention to specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques employed by effective readers in pre, whilst and post-reading stages. In other words, English textbooks should incorporate those strategies used by successful readers through building on the notion that less skilled students should learn strategies that mimic those exhibited by skilled students.

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