

Full Length Research

Pedagogic Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension: A Case Study of Three EFL Teachers

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This study explored the pedagogic strategies EFL teachers apply in teaching reading comprehension during the different stages of reading. This was an exploratory qualitative research where three teachers were studied. The study used observation and interview to collect data. The data obtained from the comprehensive themes of observation and interview revealed that EFL teachers used some common reading strategies like questioning, silent reading, read aloud, prediction, and summarization in teaching reading comprehension. All EFL teachers struggled in teaching reading comprehension on the basis of their own proposed strategies in order to help students to read and comprehend the text in their actual classrooms. These findings recommend that the three EFL teachers need to increase their knowledge and experiences in order to understand the concepts, implementations and the reasons in using the strategies in teaching reading comprehension in order to make their lessons more effective. EFL teachers should also redesign and adapt more relevant strategies that help them teaching reading comprehension in their actual classrooms properly. In addition, there should be training on appropriate reading comprehension strategy use for the EFL teachers to make the reading lessons interactive.

Key words: Teaching Strategy, Teaching Reading Comprehension, EFL, Reading Activities

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a highly strategic process during which readers are constantly constructing meaning using a variety of strategies, such as activating background knowledge, monitoring and clarifying, making predictions, drawing inferences, asking questions and summarizing. Strategies are used in combination to solve problems, to think about text and to check understanding (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).

Reading comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. Readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text (Elif,

2009; Brain, Mohammed, & Yonas, 2017). According to Malena and Coker (1987), it is common for students to have difficulties with reading comprehension, and the need to provide students with concrete strategies for approaching reading tasks is well-documented. Other important scholars like Hedge (2003) states the importance of teaching reading in that any reading component of an English language course may include a set of learning goals for: the ability to read a wide range of texts in English. This is the long-range goal most teachers seek to develop through independent readers outside EFL/ESL classroom. It is also used to build knowledge of language which will facilitate reading ability.

One of strategies which should be managed and applied by teachers in the classroom is teaching reading

strategies. As Wallace (1992), a reading strategy is a unitary process that cannot be subdivided into parts of skills. This means as a process, a reading strategy involves ways of processing text which will vary with the nature of the text, the reader's purpose, and the context of situation. Nuttal (1996) also states that one important purpose of reading is to get meaning from text. This means about the process how the reader decodes the message from the text. In a similar vein, Nunan (1999) exposed that an enormous amount of time, money and effort is spent for teaching reading in elementary and secondary school around the world.

In getting the meaning from the text, the reader needs a comprehension strategy. It is supported by (Hillerich, 1983) that states the major goal for any reading activities is comprehension. It means that it has to do with strategy to understand a written text. Many strategies for teaching reading comprehension have developed by experts such as Hillerich (1983), Tierney (1990), and Anderson (1999). More theories about reading comprehension strategies are also proposed by Brown (2001) who delivers different strategies of teaching reading comprehension which are related to bottom-up procedures and top-down processes.

Using strategies is one major role of a teacher to reach the objectives of teaching reading comprehension. Generally, there are two fundamental responsibilities of a teacher in teaching a language in the classroom; to provide a language rich learning environment and to support students in their use of language (Lindfors, 1989). It means that an English teacher should create these two components in teaching reading especially teaching reading comprehension. Regarding the teacher's role in reading comprehension, Wallace (1992: 58) argues that the teachers with good strategy will observe readers in the course of reading as to assess outcomes in the form of answers to the comprehension questions which generally follow a reading task.

Dowhower (1999), Duffy et al (1987), and Long & Long (1987) suggest that students skilled in reading comprehension are able to interact with course material actively through paraphrasing, summarizing, and relating the material to personal experience, while students less-skilled in reading comprehension can only underline or reread passively without the use of specific strategies. Another important argument given by important scholars is that students who fail to employ reading strategies tend to experience difficulty inferring conceptual meaning, relating to what they have read, self-monitoring their learning and understanding, and evaluating texts for clarity and consistency (Duffy et al, 1987; Long & Long, 1987; Underwood, 1997). These difficulties can also lead to decreased engagement in the current reading task, as well as a lack of motivation when approaching new reading tasks (Dowhower, 1999; Honig et al, 2013; Wolf, 2005; Osewalt, 2017).

Moreover, the researcher's experience has told him that students in all levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary) are victim for comprehending various texts. Most students in university even cannot read and comprehend various texts that are given to them in their freshman courses like communicative English Skills. The background experience and the ability to comprehend various academic texts in the real classroom situation are limited. This implies that the problem of comprehending texts is most probably caused by the pedagogic strategies used by EFL teachers in teaching reading comprehension. Therefore, this area requires further investigation. These and other related things initiated the researcher to study the EFL teachers' pedagogic strategies applied in teaching reading comprehension including their philosophies in their actual classrooms at a Junior School in Debre Markos Town, Ethiopia.

Although previous research reports by Yenus (2017), Nurman (2010), and Yusuf (2009) have given a comprehensive portrait on teaching strategies of reading comprehension, the researcher think that it is important to explore more about the pedagogic strategies of EFL teachers in teaching reading comprehension. In this case, this study focused to explore the three English teachers' pedagogic strategies applied in teaching reading comprehension and their philosophies about teaching reading in the selected text at one junior school. The researcher also believes that there is a gap between what has been suggested as effective teaching reading in the literature and the current reading instructional practices, which warrants further study in the area, and this explanatory research, was therefore, designed to respond to this need. In this context, it is necessary to make a proper case study about the pedagogic strategies EFL teachers apply and their philosophies in teaching reading comprehension at Junior School during the various phases of reading.

For the attainment of this objective, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What strategies do EFL teachers apply in teaching reading comprehension?
2. What are the teachers' philosophies about the teaching of EFL reading?

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Reading Comprehension

The teaching of reading comprehension in junior high school is essentially aimed at preparing the student to be able to read English text that they will understand and they will encounter in their lives. The goal of learning English language is to develop students' skill of

communication. There are several instructional practices that the teacher can use to improve the reading comprehension of struggling reader. Reading comprehension is supported by integrating variety of instructional practices in teaching reading routines including reading strategies and skills (Arif, 2002; Brain, 2017; Elif, 2009).

Grabe (2010) also delivers that reading for general comprehension refers to the ability to understand information in a text and interpret it appropriately and correctly. However, reading comprehension abilities are quite complex and difference in numerous ways depending on tasks, motivations, goals and language ability. In this, the level of reader comprehension of the text is determined well from the interactions between the reader variables and the text variables (Barnet, 1988; Seng & Hashim, 2006; Yang, 2010; Duke & Block, 2012; Mohammed, 2017).

The schema theory places heavy emphasis on the importance of the learners' background knowledge. In a sense, reading can be regarded as a psycholinguistic guessing game in which the reader reconstructs as well as he can transfer a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display (Goodman, 1971). The reader's background knowledge is the reader's previously acquired knowledge. This is supported by Hayes and Tierney (1982) who believe that presenting the background knowledge related to the topic to be learned assists readers in learning from the text.

According to schema theory, comprehending a text is an interactive process between the readers' background knowledge and the text itself (Seng & Hashim, 2006; Yang, 2010; Duke & Block, 2012). This process can be divided into two parts; bottom-up Process and top-down process. The bottom-up process refers to the previously acquired knowledge structures (Schemata) are hierarchically organized from most general at the top to most specific at the bottom. This is called "data driven." To do this a teacher can move from grammar points and vocabulary to direct the learners to focus on the message. When students are required to have general predictions and then seek for the input for the message, such process is termed as top-down process. To do this, a teacher can give some ideas to form generalizations about the topic to process the information as an initiator. Then the students are required to process information. In both modes of processing, students should develop and employ different strategies to improve their reading skills. The teachers can then contribute to the strategy training of their students in the three stages of reading instruction in classes.

Reading comprehension skills are important for English language learners, especially for students who learn English as a foreign language. Reading comprehension is a process that involves the orchestration of the readers' prior knowledge about the world and about

language (Nurman, 2010). It involves such as predicting, questioning, summarizing, determining meaning of vocabulary in context, monitoring one's own comprehension, and reflecting (Weaver, 1994). The most detailed one, Snow et al (2002:11) defines reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. They classify that comprehension entails three elements: They are the reader (considering with capacities, abilities, knowledge and experiences that a person brings to the act of reading), the text (including printer text or electronic text) and the activity (considering the purposes, process, and consequences associated with the act of reading).

2. The Strategies of Teaching Reading Comprehension

In the pre-reading stage, one very popular kind of strategy EFL teachers use is activating prior knowledge/predicting (Chanyalew, 2015; Crawford, 2005; Hood, 2005; Wallace, 1992). Students think about what they already know and use that knowledge, along with other clues, to better understand what they read or to predict what will happen next. It is assumed that students will continue to read to see if their predictions are correct. Teachers can promote this strategy by selecting a main idea from the text and asking students a question that relates the idea to their experience. Students can predict whether a similar experience might occur in the text. Another option is that when students reach the halfway point of a story, teachers can have students predict what will happen at the end of the story (Anderson, 1999; Pelinscar and Brown, 1984 as cited in Doolittle, 2006). Students can explain how they came to this prediction, which will encourage them to look at what they are reading and gain a deeper understanding of words and passages in the text (Grabe, 2010). This strategy also helps readers make personal connections with the text by using their schema (text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world).

The other strategy which can be applied by teachers while teaching reading comprehension is creating mental image or visualizing (Barnet, 1988; Gibbon, 2002; Hood et al, 2005; Wallace, 1992). It is a strategy to give a picture that related to the text and provide relevant background knowledge which set up expectation meaning (Hood et al, 2005: 75; Gibbon, 2002). It is also important for teachers to discuss new vocabulary with students in this stage because discussing new vocabulary can help them to comprehend the text. There is an old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. When it comes to comprehension, this saying might be paraphrased, "a visual display helps readers understand, organize, and remember some of those thousand words" (Duke & Pearson, 2002: 216-218). When students have

problems of unknown words, teacher can encourage them to use dictionary. It is in line with Wallace's (1992: 86) idea stated that teacher can encouraging students to use dictionary in pre-while stage.

Once the reader's mind is "warmed up," the next task for the reader is to interact with the text and to monitor (keep track of) comprehension, paying attention to points at which the material is not clear or the terms are not familiar. During this stage of the reading process students need structured means to integrate the knowledge and information they bring to the text with the 'new or unknown' within the text. They are processing the text and self-monitoring. Throughout the during-reading stage students should have the opportunity to confirm predictions, gather and organize information, and to begin making generalizations about new understandings gained from the text (Nurman, 2010).

In while-reading stage, a teacher can generate appropriate strategies to help students in comprehending the text. The common one is reading aloud which is recommended to use by Gibbons (2002); Hancock and Leaver (2006); Nuttal (1996). There are two kinds of reading aloud; reading aloud to students can used as an opportunity to bring students into a popular culture and an opportunity to challenging text and reading aloud by students is individual students to each other can develop class cohesion and encourage students about the text (Handcock and Leaver, 2006:40). Reading aloud demonstrates the relationship between the printed word and meaning – students understand that print tells a story or conveys information – and invites the listener into a conversation with the author. The read aloud strategy is also considered as one basic instrument for improving the readers' oral languages. Moreover, it makes readers to be focused on their reading by adding their engagements.

The next strategy that teacher can generate in the while-reading stage is silent reading. Anderson (2003) in Nunan (2003:69) said that the majority of reading that we do will be done silently. Anderson explained that silent reading is primarily in reading comprehension because it focuses on getting meaning from print. The ability to sit and silently read a text is a skill that all students will need as they move through secondary education and into higher education. As students develop proficiency in comprehending what they read silently, the amount of silent reading they do in class and at home should increase.

In the post-reading stage, the teachers use questioning and clarifying strategies. By Questioning, (both generating and answering) the reader answers questions posed by the teacher and is given feedback on the correctness of their responses. The reader also asks himself/herself and his/her peers a range of what, when, where, why, how, who and predictive questions (Davis, 2015; Hedge, 2010; Kern, 2000). Learning and

comprehension levels will develop when students are instructed to raise effective questions. However, the type of and way in which we use questions needs to be carefully considered if we are to maximize the potential of our students. EFL teachers also use a clarifying strategy when working with students who have comprehension difficulty (Brown et al, 1984). When students are asked to clarify, they realize that there may be many reasons why a text is to understand. For example, new vocabulary, unfamiliar or difficult concepts are the difficult parts that require clarification. In order to minimize such difficulties, teachers should write and ask questions like who is this; why did this happen; and so on. This would initially be modeled by the teacher before students try it for themselves, working individually or as a group. This can help teachers to help their students to be engaged with the text.

In addition, summarization is a strategy in which the teacher helps his/her reader attempts to identify and write or express the main or most important ideas that unite or integrate the other ideas contained in the text (Davis & Wangsgard, 2010; King, 2008; Nabi, 2013; Osewalt, 2017). The teacher uses the Summarizing technique when he/she wants his/her students work in cooperative groups and read sections of text silently. After each section the members of the group work collaboratively to generate one sentence that summarizes the "gist" of the passage. Each member writes the sentence down so that by the end each member of the group has a summary of the text. Summarizing can also occur after reading an entire text. Students can retell a story in a beginning, middle, and end chart or dramatize it.

The other strategy EFL teachers use while teaching reading comprehension in discussing and clarifying ideas on reading lessons is translation. The benefit of translation includes practice of all language skills, i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening. In terms of communicative competence, accuracy, clarity and flexibility can be developed. Translation is a real-life, natural activity which many learners use on a daily basis either formally or informally. Translation is a common strategy used by many learners and teachers. Developing skills in translation is a natural and logical part of improving language proficiency. According to Cook (2007), for the last two decades teachers and students have started to use translation to teach /learn English language. Translation is sometimes referred to as the fifth language skill alongside the other four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing since it promotes communication and understanding (Ross, 2000). If students are aware of the differences, language interference, or transfer, and intervention from their own language are likely to be reduced.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study was qualitative and used exploratory approach. This was because this study intended to explore the pedagogic strategies EFL teachers apply on teaching reading comprehension in actual classrooms.

Participants

The participants of this study were three EFL teachers at Abema Junior School, in Debre Markos, Ethiopia. The sample teachers were selected on the following criteria. One major reason was that these teachers are the best experienced ones in teaching English for more than 15 years. The other reason for choosing those teachers they were taking different kinds of trainings like ELIP, CPD and other short trainings on how to teach English that helped them to teach reading comprehension and other language items in Grade 8. In addition, the selected teachers (2 males and 1 female) were qualified in Diploma and they will receive their BED (Bachelor Degree in Education) in various governmental universities in Ethiopia in the coming years.

Research Setting

This study was conducted in the first semester of 2018/19 academic year at Abema Junior School, Debre Markos, Ethiopia. A general English course that incorporates the four language skills, speaking, listening, writing, and reading is offered every day (from Monday to Friday). Vocabulary and grammar are also integrated in the lessons. In each of all the lessons there are at least two sections for reading in each unit. Each reading lesson takes 40 minutes a day and lasts for two semesters a year. It is also important to note that English is considered a compulsory subject for various entrances (e.g. regional and national exams).

Research Procedures

The teachers who participated in the study were asked to participate in a range of observation and interviews aimed at documenting and understanding their teaching of reading comprehension. In conversations with participants the researcher explained that the purpose of the study was to explore the pedagogic strategies EFL teachers apply while teaching reading comprehension in their actual classroom situations. Participants in the study were asked to suggest some lessons that they considered representative of their teaching of reading comprehension, and they were asked their willingness to have their comprehension classes observed. Participants in the study agreed to nominate the three lessons that

they considered representative of their teaching of reading comprehension. Teachers were observed three times, in three-day chunks over a 4-week period from January 02/2019-February 02/2019 using three reading passages for in class tasks out of a total of 9 reading passages and a number of reading tasks provided throughout the semester. After each observation, teachers were interviewed about the lesson in an attempt to understand the strategies they applied in teaching reading comprehension and their preparation during their actual classroom contexts.

Data Collection

Two research tools were used to collect data necessary for this study: classroom observation and interview. The classroom observation was conducted in order to identify the strategies used by EFL teachers and their philosophies while teaching reading comprehension in their actual classrooms. The in-depth interview was also carried out before and after the classroom observation. Therefore, the data of this case study were collected from the observations of some lessons that the teachers considered representative of their best teaching practices of reading comprehension, and teachers' interviews with the three most experienced EFL teachers who had an average of 15 years of teaching experience in the school.

Data Analysis

Having reviewed the literature pertaining to strategies of EFL teachers apply in their actual classroom contexts, the researcher organized the observation data about the lessons on the basis of EFL teachers' proposed strategies in teaching reading comprehension. The pedagogic strategies of EFL teachers were selected to help evaluate the corpus of 9 teacher-nominated lessons that were illustrative of the 3 teaching practices identified. The interview data from these participants was used to add some insight into this study and provide further analysis.

Since the unstructured interview questions were based on the teachers' observed classroom instructions, they were used to prompt teachers for further discussion about their strategies while teaching reading comprehension in their actual classrooms and to analyze for the reasons they chose some strategies when they were being observed, and hence were used to build the data obtained from the observations. Accordingly, the observation results obtained from the corpus of 9 teacher-nominated lessons were organized, categorized and analyzed into three major themes that emerged in this study. The results of transcription of the unstructured interviews were subsequently triangulated and interpreted to draw conclusions.

On the whole, the data obtained from observations of

the reading classrooms and the results of teachers' interviews were analyzed to understand and accurately represent teacher experiences as well as their interpretations of those experiences in a particular setting. For this, the researcher used the evaluative interpretation paradigm to analyze the data obtained through observation and interview. This is because of those interpretive uses everyday practices of EFL teachers in applying strategies while teaching reading comprehension as its subject matter (Cohen et al, 2000).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The main purpose of this study was to explore the pedagogic strategies EFL teachers apply in teaching reading comprehension during the three stages of reading in their actual classrooms. In order to achieve this objective, the three EFL teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension were observed in their actual classrooms for four weeks from January 02/2019-February 02/2019 at Abema Junior School, in Debre Markos Town, Ethiopia. All observations took place in the

working days of the school (Monday-Friday in the morning session). The length of one observation session took 40 minutes. The selected three EFL teachers were observed three times individually in their working times (in the morning session) on separated days. In addition, the observed EFL teachers were also interviewed on their strategies and their success in relation their actual reading comprehension teaching. The result of the interview aimed at providing additional insight on what, why, and how they do things while teaching reading comprehension in the various stages of reading.

There are two or more reading lessons in each unit of the student's text book. The researcher's concern in relation to the plan of the school was the **5th, 6th and 7th** reading contents on the topic "A Scientist Discovers" (on pages 66-74) entitled as "Bilharzia- a Deadly Disease", "History and Evolution of Computers" and "Albert Einstein" respectively. The results of the three-round terminated observations on 3 EFL teachers' strategies applied in teaching reading comprehensions who are currently teaching in Junior School is divided into three themes on the basis of these reading lessons. The reading lessons to EFL teachers at Abema Junior School were assigned on the basis of their nomination in order to observe and to have interview on the strategies they apply while teaching reading comprehension in their actual classrooms as follows:

1. Bilharzia- a Deadly Disease (p. 66) to **Y's** Reading Comprehension Classroom
2. History and Evolution of Computers (p. 72) to **T's** Reading Comprehension Classroom, and
3. Albert Einstein (p.73-74) to **D's** Reading Comprehension Classroom

The result of the observation and in-depth interviews is discussed individually and thematically in comprehensive manner by considering their theoretical frameworks as shown below:

Table 1: A General Framework of EFL Teacher's Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension

Strategies Used in Teaching Reading Comprehension			
Teachers	Pre-reading Stage	While-reading Stage	Post-reading Stage
Y	1. Activating students to create connection to the reading topic 2. Asking questions to students to increase their familiarity on the topic 3. Asking questions about the reading topic 4. Discussing the meanings of new words to the topic	1. Asking students to read the passage silently 2. Asking students to read the passage aloud 3. Asking further questions for more reading 4. Setting activities for specific information	1. Asking students to do passage reading works 2. Asking students to talk each other about the text 3. Asking students to write a summary 4. Reviewing the lesson by giving main points

Table 1: Continues

T	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing the reading lesson on the chalkboard 2. Introducing the lesson 3. Picking out new words from the reading lesson 4. Asking students to give meanings for new words 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussing the meanings of new words 2. Asking students to relate ideas with a picture 3. Asking students to read the passage silently 4. Asking the students to read orally 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asking students to retell or summarize the main points 2. Discussing questions with clarifications 3. Asking students to retell the story 4. Translating difficult ideas
D	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introducing the lesson by writing the topic 2. Asking students to identify new words from the text 3. Activating students to create connection 4. Asking further question for better understanding 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussing the meanings of new words in detail 2. Asking students to read the passage silently to do tasks 3. Telling students to find the meanings of new words 4. Discussing the main idea of the reading lesson 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussing the answer of questions in detail 2. Asking students to write a summary 3. Translating questions for better understanding 4. Asking students to retell the story

Note: Y, T, and D are EFL teachers at Abema Junior School

EFL Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension (Description of Lesson Presentation and Setting Activities) are summarized in in the following table, and the results are already discussed individually and thematically against the review literature in the next session.

Table 2: EFL Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension in Presenting Lessons and Activities

Teachers	Stages of Reading	Strategies	Reading Comprehension Activities and Examples	
			Presenting a Lesson	Setting Activities
Y	Pre-reading	Asking general questions	e.g. 1.You are going to read a passage about "bilharzia". 2. You are going to read about what Bilharzia is. Take out your textbook on page...	e.g. 1. How is bilharzias caused by? 2. How can we prevent bilharzia?
		Identifying key words	e.g. Take out your text on page... and look the following words...	e.g. Make your own sentences on words disease, discover, infected , ...
	While-reading	Silent reading	e.g. Read the passage on page..., and ...	
		Read aloud	e.g. Read the first paragraph orally, and...	e.g. Tell me one true sentence about bilharzia orally.
	Post-reading	Summarizing	e.g. Now, it is time to summarize the reading text...	e.g. Write a summary of the passage in two sentences.
		Clarifying	e.g. I think there are words that you did not define.	e.g. Let me give you the contextual meanings of new words on the text...
Translation		e.g. This area requires more understanding I that...	e.g. The question on page 66 that asked you to ...mean in Amharic...	
T	Pre-reading	Identifying key words	e.g Take out your text on page 72, and look the words those are in bold.	e.g. Define those words in bold.
		Visualizing	e.g. Look the picture on page 72, and...	e.g. Can you tell me the parts of the computer? This shows...
		Asking general question	e.g. What history have you heard about computers?	e.g. Write three things that are related to the history of computer.

Table 2: continues

	While-reading	Read aloud	e.g. Read paragraph 1 on page 72, and understand its concept. Then, ...	e.g. Who can tell me the first sentence in paragraph 1 orally?
		Silent reading	e.g. You are going to read a passage about "computer". Read it silently, and...	e.g. Can you tell me one thing that is true about the history of computer?
	Post-reading	Translation	e.g. I think there are some ideas that are not clear to you.	e.g. In the first reading, the author tries to tell the readers on emphasizing ...
		Summarizing	e.g. Today, we have read about the evolution of computers.	e.g. Write the summary about you understood from the passage.
		Clarifying		e.g. What do we mean by these ideas?
D	Pre-reading	Identifying key words	e.g. Take out your text on page 73, and look the words those are in bold.	e.g. Define each word that is in bold in each paragraph, and write your own sentence...
		Visualizing	e.g. Look the picture on page 73, and...	e.g. tell me two true sentences about the man on page 73.
		Asking question	e.g. What things have you heard about Albert Einstein before?	e.g. Tell me three things that describe the man in the picture.
	While-reading	Silent reading	e.g. Read the passage on page 73 silently, and...	e.g. What points do you have after your silent reading?
		Read aloud	e.g. Take out your text on page ..., and read it aloud to your classmates.	e.g. Read aloud the next paragraph. The teacher calls one student...
		Discussing meanings	e.g. Look the words in the passage those are in bold, and...	e.g. What does discover mean?
	Post-reading	Summarizing	e.g. You have read a passage about Albert Einstein on page...	e.g. Tell me the story orally.
		Clarifying	e.g. Is there a word, phrase, concept or idea which is not clear to you?...	e.g. This idea is to mean that...
		Translation	e.g. Let me translate this question into Amharic, and...	e.g. In Amharic it is equivalent to...

As shown in table 2, the first part of the discussion focuses on the strategies applied by Y in teaching reading comprehension in his actual classrooms. His reading lesson was entitled as "Bilharzia- a Deadly Disease" in grade 8 student's textbook on page 66. The observation on Y's classroom showed that he began his lesson by introducing the lesson and by asking students what they recall about the causes and prevention of bilharzia. After giving some time to students to answer the three questions above, Y also guides students to set a purpose for their reading by asking questions, and he wrote questions on the blackboard. Then, he gave students some additional time to answer the following further questions.

1. What is bilharzia?
2. What causes the disease?
3. What are its symptoms?
4. Who discovered the cure for bilharzia? (p. 66-68)

As some students answer the above questions, they are unconsciously relating what they already know (background knowledge) to what they are going to read in the passage. Some students from the observed classes answered the above questions as follows:

S1: Bilharzia is a snail.

S2: Professor Akililu Lemma was a scientist.

S3: Bilharzia is a disease...

Note: S1= the first student; S2=the second student; S3=the third student

Y's major concern in teaching reading comprehension was relying on questioning and prediction. For this, he began the daily reading lesson by guiding his students to have expectations in his reading lesson. However, Y did not give much attention on checking the answers given by students whether they were right or not. He was not giving any of opportunities to the students to ask questions. He immediately went to the reading lesson without emphasizing on correcting the questions he posed at the beginning. I asked him why he posed those questions and moved to another stage without emphasizing the students' answers. He explained:

I ask questions based on the reading passage before moving to the daily reading lesson. This helps me to awaken students by generating ideas that is related to their background knowledge. In my opinion, it is better to correct the responses of students in the evaluation time.

Based on the observation, it can be said that he did something on teaching reading comprehension using appropriate strategies like questioning and prediction. Even if the general questions posed before the main reading time had values in that it helped to arouse interests and new ideas and any of background knowledge with the one they did not know (making connections), he spent too much time on asking and answering questions and prediction. Therefore, the teacher should activate his students' knowledge by asking questions of related words within text or to the title given. Hood's (2005) argumentation that questioning, which associates as a leading strategy (Davis, 2010; Osewalt, 2011), might occur around the topic title or picture. Furthermore, Crawford et al (2005), Wallace (1992) and Barnett (1988) declared that questioning, as one of very popular tasks in the first stage of reading, can help to elicit background knowledge and to activate necessary schemata.

In his while-reading lesson, Y asked his students to read the passage silently on the topic entitled as "Bilharzia- a Deadly Disease" on student's textbook on page 66. Let us see the first paragraph on the stated page as a sample.

Bilharzia is **spread** by schistosoma (river fluke) which live inside snails along rivers and streams. Humans contract the **disease** when they come in contact with water inhabited by the snails. More than 200 million people worldwide are **affected** by the diseases... (English for Ethiopia: Grade 8, p.66)

Some students were busy while-reading the passage silently. Some others were not in a position to read the passage silently. After some time, he also asked some students to read the passage aloud. I asked him why and how he emphasized on silent-reading and read-aloud strategies in his reading class. He explained as:

I use silent reading and read aloud strategies so that each student starts his/her reading according to his/her pace. Then, I try to identify those readers who are still in

their reading. In this way, I try to help the slow readers become relaxed and gain confidence. In addition, if my students read aloud roughly in the first reading, then they reread again and again for understanding the text aloud but would not comprehend well. So, I teach them to read again and again till they understand difficult and complex sentences with full concentration as they would comprehend properly and accurately the context of the text.

This idea is related with Anderson (2003) in Nunan (2003: 69) said that the majority of reading that we do will be done silently. Anderson explained that silent reading is primarily in reading comprehension because it focuses on getting meaning from print. In addition, reading aloud to students is used as an opportunity to bring students into a popular culture and an opportunity to challenging text and reading aloud by students is individual students to each other can develop class cohesion and encourage students about the text (Handcock and Leaver, 2006).

After some time, Y writes the new words that are taken from the reading text (p.66) spread, inhabited, infected, discover, and disease on the blackboard. Then, he guided students to understand the meaning of the difficult or new words in the context in which such words appear in the passage. The teacher did that by referring the students to the paragraph where such words appear and asking them to use the sentences surrounding such words to guess their meaning. I asked him why he did so, and he said:

To me, it is better to help readers in guessing meanings of new words after they have got some kinds of information about the topic. When I do this, it helps me to identify the areas that are difficult to them to comprehend the reading on a limited time. In such a case, I believe that getting meanings of new words can minimize the students' difficulty.

In addition, Y also provided another activity whose focus was on grammar in using the relative pronouns (who and which) taken from the same passage (p.66). For example, "Snails **which** carry bilharzia are found in lakes". "Aklilu Lemma **who** discovered a cure for bilharzia established the Institute of Pathobiology". Even if the reading passage cannot escape from grammar, it should have its own room by him considering it as additional skill like to that of reading. I asked Y why he did so in his reading lesson class. He explained:

The students assumed that all English teachers must teach grammar in all periods. According to them, unless he/she teaches grammar in each lesson, he/she is not a right teacher to them to teach other aspects of the language items. That is why I try to include such items at the last lesson of my reading class.

Finally, he summarizes his lesson by telling the main points of that reading lesson as they are in the teacher's guide. For example, today's lesson focuses on bilharzia, its causes and symptoms. However, as an EFL reading

comprehension teacher, instead of telling the main points of the reading lesson as they are put in the teacher's guide by him, it is better to ask students to tell the main ideas of the story/passage using their own words ideas after getting their own understanding and meaning from the text they read . In addition, it is also possible to tell students to talk each other on the different ideas they have got from the daily reading lesson. More tasks should also be designed that invite students for more works. During the post-reading stage students should be encouraged to articulate and process their understanding of what they have read and think critically about the validity of the text (Wallace, 1992; Barnet; 1988; Grabe, 2011).

The results of the observation in the second column also illustrating the strategies of the second teacher (**T**) began her reading comprehension lesson by picking out the difficult or new words from the passage on the text entitled as "History and Evolution of Computers" (p.72). She writes the words **computer**, **device**, **brain**, **technology**, and **generation** on the blackboard. Then, she guided students to understand the meaning of the difficult or new words in the context in which such words appear in the passage. The teacher did that by referring the students to the paragraph where such words appear and asking them to use the sentences surrounding such words to guess their meaning.

Then, **T** went further to guide the students in understanding the meaning of the difficult words by using them in meaningful sentences. She then guided her students to use such words in their own sentences. Next, she tried to understand the meaning of the difficult or new words in the context in which such words appear in the passage. She did that by referring the students to the paragraph where such words appear and asking the students to use the sentences surrounding such words to guess their meaning. Next, she ensures that he/she is giving the meaning of difficult or new words right away quickly. She then encouraged the students to use the context of the passage to determine the meaning of such words. She did that by asking the students to say what they think the word means in the context of the sentence it appeared.

Moreover, **T** guided her students to set a purpose for their reading by asking them the following questions on her reading lesson:

1. What is computer?
2. Why we need computer? (p.72)

As students answer the above questions they knew, they are unconsciously relating what they already know (background knowledge) to what they are going to read in the passage. After doing this, **T** engaged students in a discussion in line with their answers to the guided

questions above, for instance, what is computer. There could be several responses ranging from the shortest one to the medium long ones.

T also guided her students to have expectations for their reading by highlighting the following:

1. You are going to read a passage about "computer".
2. What history have you heard about computers?
3. What is the use of computer? (p.72)

On the next phase (while-reading), students are allowed to read the passage silently for some few minutes. She went round the class as students read to correct bad reading habit such as pointing to words with fingers, vocalization, unnecessary head movement, etc. Let us see the sample paragraph below:

Have you heard anyone say that a **computer** is a machine with a human brain? Well, a computer is able to do all sorts of things that would make one think that it is a magical **device**. Actually, a computer is so fascinating it is frightening to think of what it is capable of doing... (English for Ethiopia: Grade 8, p.72)

Then, she led students in activities that help them to think about what they already know and use that knowledge, along with other clues, to better understand what they read or to predict what will happen next (Osewalt, 2017). It is assumed that students will continue to read to see if their predictions are correct. However, the actual classroom observation showed that most students were unable to do the given activities and discussions following her strategies. Therefore, the teacher in her real reading classroom can promote this strategy by selecting a main idea from the text and asking students a question that relates the idea to their experience. Students can then get chances to predict whether a similar experience might occur in the text. Another option is that when students reach the halfway point of a story, she can have students predict what will happen at the end of the story. Students can explain how they came to this prediction, which will encourage them to look at what they are reading and gain a deeper understanding of words and passages in the text (Wolf, 2005; Davis, 2015).

On the next reading session, the following questions were framed in line with the post-reading stage. Below are some examples:

1. Tell me the story orally.
2. Write the summary about you understood from the passage.

From this, it is possible to conclude that **T**'s strategies on teaching reading comprehension relied on identifying key

vocabulary words, silent reading and summarizing in her three stages of reading class. I asked her why she followed such strategies in her reading comprehension class. She explained:

I guide reading because I deal with students who still need guidance. One focus area before making my students to start reading is identifying the key words that activate students. I also believe that this is a basic means in which I help students to comprehend the reading lesson well. I also provide independent reading so as to know each learner better so that I provide assistance where necessary. In addition, I make my students to reread the text until they comprehend properly; because, one time reading cannot be enough for students to understand the whole lesson. If they only read one time and start practicing, they would make many mistakes in perceiving the meaning incorrectly. Setting a reading activity to me is very important and a prerequisite to effective understanding of the text in which students are asked to reread until they apprehend following my reading or read to each other. Therefore, I suggest my students to read the text using various strategies.

Here, it is possible to understand that one of the purposes of before-reading is to acknowledge the different experiences and background knowledge that students bring to a text, influencing how they will read and learn from a particular text. By knowing what students bring to a text the teacher can provide students with appropriate scaffolds to make links between what is already known and new information presented in a text. One way to apply this stage is getting the key words of the passage/story (Brain, 2017; Chang, 2010). Then, it is possible to bring students to be ready to do various works according to their levels.

Like to that of **T**, the third teacher (**D**) began his lesson by allowing the students to pick out the difficult or new words from the passage entitled as “Albert Einstein” (p.73-74). The teacher wrote the words scientist, gravity, discovery, laureate, and influential on the board. The teacher then guided students to understand the meaning of the difficult or new words in the context in which such words appear in the passage. The teacher did that by referring the students to the paragraph where such words appear and asking the students to use the sentences surrounding such words to guess their meaning.

In addition, **D** guided his students to have expectations for their reading by highlighting the following:

1. You are going to read a passage about “Albert Einstein”.
2. You are going to read about who Albert Einstein is. (p. 73-74)

Then, he instructed his students to read the story silently

for some few minutes. The teacher went round the class as students read to correct bad reading habit such as pointing to words with fingers, vocalization, vigorous head movement, and etc. like to that of **T**'s reading classroom. After some time, students were requested to set a purpose for their reading by asking them the following questions:

1. Do you know the man in the picture?
2. What did he discover? (p. 73-74)

D then asked his students more questions similar to the above after showing the picture of Albert Einstein and let them describe the man in the picture. After doing this, **D** engaged students in a discussion in line with their answers to the guided questions above, for instance, who is the man in the picture. There could be several responses ranging from the simplest to the complex ones. Then, the teacher gave them some minutes to read the story. He also encouraged students to describe the picture using their own words and understandings (visualizing). Let us see the sample paragraph below:

Albert Einstein (14th March, 1879-18th April, 1955) born in Ulm, Germany was a **physicist**, philosopher and an author who is widely regarded as one of the most **influential** and best known scientists and intellectuals of all time. A German-Swiss Nobel **laureate**, he is often regarded as the father of modern physics... (English for Ethiopia: Grade 8, p.73)

After some time, he set guided questions to the students that could enhance their language proficiency. Such questions were framed in line with the last phase of his reading in that he asked his students to summarize the main points of the reading lesson. Below are some examples:

1. What are the main ideas of the passage? Write your answers on your notebook.
2. Tell me the passage orally.

D almost followed **T**'s strategies while teaching reading comprehension to his students. I also asked him why and how he used the strategies like key word identification, silent reading and summary writing in his teaching in all stages of reading respectively. He explained:

As to me it is better to pick out the key words of the story/passage before moving to the reading material directly. I believe that getting awareness about meanings of key words on the reading material is a crucial thing to EFL teachers while teaching reading comprehension especially in the first stage of reading. Learners write down the difficult words so as to search their meaning in dictionaries. I use a drilling of certain words so as to understand them. Then, I tell my students to go to the reading session and I ask them to read, one learner reads and others listen while they are looking at their

books. Moreover, I teach my students to reread the passage until they comprehend the text properly and get my students at practice in class activities and finally I give them the daily main points of the discussion and I give them certain exercises on reading. In this way, they learn how to read independently and perform reading activities independently.

From this, it is possible to conclude that **D** had struggled to teach his students reading comprehension using various strategies. As it was observed, his actual classroom did not give much attention whether students were on their reading or not. In line with this, regarding the teacher's role in reading comprehension, Wallace (1992) argues that the teachers with good strategy will observe readers in the course of reading as to assess outcomes in the form of answers to the comprehension questions which generally follow a reading task. Another important argument given by important scholars is that students who fail to employ reading strategies tend to experience difficulty inferring conceptual meaning, relating to what they have read, self-monitoring their learning and understanding, and evaluating texts for clarity and consistency. These difficulties can also lead to decreased engagement in the current reading task, as well as a lack of motivation when approaching new reading tasks (Dowhower, 1999; Honig et al, 2013; Wolf, 2005; Osewalt, 2017).

From the above analysis, it is possible to say that the three EFL teachers have used questioning as major strategy for activating the students' prior knowledge. Questioning is one of the strategies which was done in the first stage of their reading lessons. For this, the teachers activated their students' knowledge by asking questions of related words within text or to the title given. Furthermore, Crawford et al (2005), Wallace (1992) and Barnett (1988) declared that questioning, as one of very popular tasks in the first stage of reading that can help to elicit background knowledge and to activate necessary schemata. Questions are among the fundamental cornerstones of teaching practices. Questioning is therefore considered as a comprehension strategy that increases the students' engagement and comprehension.

Activating prior knowledge is a reading strategy that occurs before the student is introduced to reading material in all EFL teachers' reading classrooms. The teachers used such strategy to make connections between something they already have knowledge of and the new knowledge from the text. In line with this, the results of the interview revealed that all EFL teachers taught their students to underline all the difficult terms and all important sentences that need proper attention to describe the clear meaning for the clarity of the text. The teachers used such strategy as an athlete prepares to exercise by doing warm-up exercises, so does a reader "warm up" the mind (Davis, 2015: 51).

Based on the observation data, the three teachers also

generated vocabulary identification in the first stage of their reading lessons by identifying unknown words from the text. In doing this strategy, the teachers tried to lead the students to identify the difficult words to understand the text. In relation to this activity, Nation (1990) in Anderson (1990) stated that the most common method of vocabulary instruction is to discuss the unfamiliar vocabulary as it naturally comes up and as part of another language activity. This method is used by students to memorize words paired with a short definition or a synonym (Nurman & Davis, 2010).

To involve the students' prior knowledge with the text, the teachers also used predicting strategy. This fact is supported by Gibbons (2002) saying that writing the title is one way of to ask students to predict the kind of text and what the text is about. The starter activity of EFL teachers for their reading comprehension lessons was asking question. It implies each student has opportunities to predict before reading (Davis, 2015). Moreover, it also gives the chance to students on predicting new ideas when there is a deliberate type of help. Skilled readers learn to expect actions, events, and ideas that are coming up in the text (Davis, 2015: 51).

Although the term of read aloud is the classic strategy in teaching reading, all teachers at Abema Junior used this strategy in all classrooms. This strategy was also noted from the observations in this present study. It is in line with Gibbon's (2002) and Nuttal (1996) ideas that reading aloud plays an important role in the development of reading competence and helps students in making meaning. One way of ensuring that was to make sure students justify their answers in the passage by reading aloud specific portions of the passage to support their answers. Sometimes students were asked to retell orally the passage. This shows that teachers can generate appropriate strategies to help students in comprehending the text.

According to the observation result, the EFL teachers gave little attention in order to evaluate the students' progresses at either phase of their reading lessons. On the other hand, all teachers in this study tried to create the activity which aimed to ask the students with comprehension questions and clarified their answer to the class to make sure that they understand the text. EFL teachers use a clarifying strategy when working with students who have comprehension difficulty (Brown et al, 1984). When students are asked to clarify, they realize that there may be many reasons why a text is to understand. For example, new vocabulary, unfamiliar or difficult concepts are the difficult parts that require clarification. In order to minimize such difficulties, teachers should write and ask questions like who is this; why did this happen; and so on. This can help teachers to encourage their students to be engaged with the text. All of the teachers also concentrated on translating the questions of the text to students. For this, it was already

observed that all EFL teachers helped their students by translating the questions into Amharic before they answer them. In line with this, Nutall (1996) and Ross (2000) propose that translation is undoubtedly an activity that forces students to get to grips with the text in the active way required for full comprehension (Its use should be limited).

All EFL teachers (**Y, T, and D**) also provided questions for the students to answer in their exercise books. Some of the questions answered orally could also be included in the written exercise in their while-reading stage. They then went round the class to mark, but without much attention. Lastly, they summarize the lesson by highlighting some of the important information about the passage in that summarizing is one of important strategy in developing comprehension skills as it helps students a concise understanding of a text (Anderson, 1999; Chang, 2007; Wallace, 1992).

CONCLUSION

EFL teachers have conducted questioning, read aloud, silent reading, predicting and summarizing as major strategies for teaching reading comprehension in their actual classrooms. However, the provided strategies lack deliberate follow ups. Although EFL teachers have applied various strategies in teaching reading comprehension in some circumstances in their actual classrooms, some factors such as teachers' skills, teachers' understandings on the theories and teaching experiences have influenced them to apply the appropriate strategies of teaching reading comprehension. The results of the interview after observation revealed that EFL teachers proposed the theories of strategy-based on their own knowledge and their experiences in teaching reading comprehension. Even though they have proposed some relevant and unique theories, their understanding was not comprehensive. It was caused the lacks of knowledge and experience. All EFL teachers were assumed that they did the strategies as theory suggested but they did not how to do it. Thus, this conditions have implicated to their teaching strategies in the classroom; they did not do the strategies in the well-formed of procedures or steps.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the researcher's observations and the responses of the teachers why they were observed in their actual reading classes, the following recommendations are made:

1. The three EFL teachers did not encourage the students to use the context of the passage to determine the meaning of new words with logical connections.

Therefore, EFL teachers should do this by asking the students to say what they think the word means in the context of the sentence it appeared.

2. Although the three EFL teachers have proposed some relevant and unique theories, they did not do the strategies in the well-formed of procedures or steps. So, the three EFL teachers of the present study need to increase their ability in these two aspects, knowledge and experience, to become the skillful teachers especially in teaching reading comprehension in order to fill the gap in real application while teaching reading comprehension in EFL classrooms.

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