

Developing students reading competence through cognitive strategy

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Abstract: In modern education, developing reading competence is critical for language learning. This article examines how cognitive strategies—such as prediction, summarizing, questioning, and clarifying—enhance students’ reading comprehension and analytical skills. It emphasizes metacognitive awareness and active reading techniques to foster deeper text engagement. A review of pedagogical approaches and classroom practices underscores the importance of strategic instruction in cultivating autonomous, confident readers. Findings indicate that systematic integration of cognitive strategies in reading lessons improves academic performance and promotes long-term language proficiency.

Keywords: reading competence, cognitive strategies, metacognitive awareness, reading comprehension, active reading, language learning, educational strategies, classroom practices

Introduction: Reading competence is a cornerstone of academic success and lifelong learning. In an era of information overload, the ability to read critically, comprehend deeply, and evaluate texts thoughtfully is more vital than ever. However, many students struggle with reading due to passive habits and limited strategic engagement with texts.

Recent studies in educational psychology and pedagogy highlight the value of cognitive strategies in improving reading skills. Strategies such as predicting, visualizing, summarizing, questioning, and inferencing enable students to monitor their thinking processes, fostering active interaction with texts and enhancing comprehension, retention, and critical thinking.

This article explores how cognitive strategies can be systematically integrated into classroom reading instruction to develop students’ reading competence. It also examines the teacher’s role in modeling these strategies and creating environments that encourage reflective, strategic reading.

Reading is not merely a skill but a gateway to knowledge, academic achievement, and critical literacy. Developing reading competence is essential across all disciplines, as it underpins students' ability to understand, analyze, and engage with complex texts. Traditional reading instruction often overlooks the cognitive processes underlying effective reading, leading to superficial comprehension and limited retention.

Cognitive strategies address this gap by equipping students with mental tools to approach texts thoughtfully and systematically. These strategies promote self-regulated learning, enabling learners to monitor comprehension, adapt their reading approach, and construct meaning actively. As a result, students become independent, confident readers.

The focus on cognitive strategies aligns with modern educational priorities, including learner autonomy, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. In multicultural and multilingual classrooms, where language proficiency varies, cognitive strategies offer flexible, adaptable methods to support comprehension and engagement. This topic is significant for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers striving to enhance reading instruction's quality and effectiveness.

The relevance of cognitive strategies lies in the growing demand for critical information processing in academic and real-world contexts. As education shifts toward competency-based models, reading with understanding and purpose requires intentional strategy use, moving beyond passive engagement to dynamic cognitive processing.

Cognitive strategies significantly enhance reading comprehension by engaging learners in deeper thinking. They are particularly effective in language education, where students often struggle with nuanced meanings, key ideas, or inferences. By promoting these strategies, educators bridge the gap between decoding and true understanding.

Additionally, cognitive strategies support inclusive education, empowering diverse learners—including those with learning difficulties or language barriers—to approach texts confidently. Given the global emphasis on 21st-century skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and autonomous learning, this topic is pedagogically and practically essential for fostering literate, competent individuals in a knowledge-driven society.



Relevance of Work: This research contributes to the literature on cognitive strategies in language education, particularly reading instruction. By advocating practical, strategy-based approaches, it aligns with pedagogical trends emphasizing learner-centered methods and cognitive development. The findings are adaptable across educational settings and proficiency levels, offering evidence-based techniques for educators.

The study is relevant for language teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers aiming to improve literacy outcomes. By demonstrating how cognitive strategies can be integrated into classroom practice, it addresses the critical need to enhance reading comprehension and critical literacy, advancing reading pedagogy theoretically and practically.

Purpose: The primary purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of cognitive strategies in developing students' reading competence. It aims to identify the most impactful strategies—predicting, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying—for improving reading comprehension. Additionally, the study explores how these strategies can be implemented in classrooms to foster independent, strategic readers.

By analyzing classroom practices, learner outcomes, and teacher roles, the research provides practical recommendations for embedding cognitive strategies into daily reading instruction, ultimately enhancing students' ability to engage meaningfully with texts and promoting long-term reading proficiency.

Materials and Methods of Research: This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data to assess the impact of cognitive strategies on reading competence. It involved two groups of intermediate-level students in a non-philological university setting: a control group receiving standard reading instruction and an experimental group taught using cognitive strategies (prediction, summarizing, questioning, clarifying).

Data Collection:

- **Pre- and Post-Reading Comprehension Tests:** To measure progress in comprehension and analytical skills.
- **Classroom Observations:** To evaluate student engagement and strategy application.



- **Teacher Feedback:** To assess instructional effectiveness.
- **Student Self-Assessment Surveys:** To gauge metacognitive awareness and confidence.

The instructional period spanned eight weeks, with teachers incorporating cognitive strategies into reading tasks across various genres and text complexities. Descriptive statistics analyzed comprehension score improvements, while thematic analysis interpreted observation notes and student reflections.

Results and Discussion: The findings revealed significant improvements in the experimental group’s reading comprehension compared to the control group. Students trained in cognitive strategies demonstrated greater text engagement, improved inferencing, and enhanced recall of key ideas. Classroom observations noted increased participation, deeper questioning, and frequent metacognitive statements (e.g., “I didn’t understand this part, so I re-read it”).

Students reported greater confidence in tackling complex texts and heightened awareness of their reading processes. Teachers observed that strategy-based instruction fostered independence and critical thinking.

These results align with prior research on cognitive strategies, reinforcing that reading is an active, meaning-making process. The findings advocate for structured, strategy-based reading programs in both language and content-area instruction.

Conclusion: This study confirms that cognitive strategies are highly effective for developing students’ reading competence. By teaching students to predict, summarize, question, and clarify, educators enable deeper text engagement and higher comprehension levels. These strategies enhance academic performance while fostering autonomy, confidence, and critical thinking.

The research underscores that reading is an active, strategic process, requiring instruction that goes beyond traditional methods to include mental tools for metacognitive awareness. Integrating cognitive strategies into reading lessons should be a priority for educators aiming to enhance literacy in diverse learning environments.



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