

A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTO THE
READING STRATEGIES OF AAU
FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

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GIRMA GEZAHEGN
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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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BY
GIRMA GEZAHEGN

APPROVED BY

John Akin

ADVISOR

Girma

A BRIGHAM

EXAMINER

Girma

Hailom Banleyza (Dr)

EXAMINER

[Signature]

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ABSTRACT

This Preliminary Investigation into the Reading Strategies of AAU 1st year students is a descriptive study based on questionnaire and interviews. 251 AAU 1st year students were the target subjects of the study.

Chapter one of the study states the problem, describes the aim, importance and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 reviews relevant work on language learning strategies in general and reading strategies in particular. The study procedure is described in the 3rd chapter which is followed by reporting of the results and discussion of them in chapter 4. The last chapter deals with conclusions and recommendations.

The result of the study indicates that most of the subjects have relatively low awareness of reading strategies that may facilitate more successful reading. Consequently, a number of reading strategies believed likely by researchers to facilitate more successful reading were said to be either never used or used very rarely. Moreover, the result of the study suggests that a number of reading strategies that are deemed by researchers to be inappropriate and likely to hinder the reading process were said to be used very frequently and are valued highly by most of the subjects.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has long been recognized that reading is of paramount importance to foreign language learners especially in situations where a foreign language is used as a medium of instruction. Carrell (1988), Beaumont (1987), Gina (1987), McDonough (1984) and Eskey (1970) unanimously agree that in situations where a foreign language is used as a medium of instruction, especially in higher education, reading plays an extremely significant role because learning of almost all subjects requires reading of academic material.

Ethiopia is typical in this regard. Moreover, it is frequently asserted that the English language proficiency of our students is lower than the level required of them to function effectively at university level. This may be partly due to socio-cultural factors: Our students are using a language that most do not read or speak socially. They have limited access to written and spoken media and news in English. The social role and significance given to English in Ethiopia is therefore limited. Various other factors affect individual performance such as motivation, attitude etc. and may contribute to low language proficiency. A further factor could be the learners' lack of awareness and use of learning strategies in general and an appropriate and sufficient range of reading strategies in particular. As Willing (1989:1) has observed:

Every teacher has encountered bright learners who, although they have been amply exposed to apparently useful and meaningful material, nevertheless seem to learn very little. Such instances of non learning are attributed to a number of possible causes. One common way of stating the cause is to say that the learner uses inadequate or inappropriate learning strategies.

Many Ethiopian teachers will be able to draw on experiences that corroborate Willing's observation. In view of this, it may be hypothesized that incoming, i.e., Freshman, students in Addis Ababa University are not aware of and do not apply the optimum range of reading strategies that can function as tools to tackle difficulties in reading and facilitate effective reading comprehension.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

To date, no research has been done in AAU with the intention of bringing to light the range and variety of the reading strategies used by AAU students or of assessing their strategy awareness or analysing why they use the strategies they think they use and why they do not use other strategies. The aim of this study is, thus, to identify the reading strategies a sample of AAU 1st year students say they use frequently, less frequently and not at all. Further, it is aimed to relate those strategies that are believed by western researchers to result in more effective reading to the strategies my sample of Ethiopian students say they use and do not use, in order to see which "useful" strategies students claim they use, whether they use strategies that researchers believe may hinder the reading process, and which other "useful" strategies students could benefit from awareness of and practice in using. It is also hoped to critically relate the concept of "useful" strategies as identified by researchers in predominantly western contexts to our Ethiopian context in order to see whether certain types of strategies may be less used by Ethiopian students because of socio-cultural expectations and practices in Ethiopia rather than because of individual differences or preferences.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

All forms of language teaching could be improved if we had a better understanding of the language learner and of the language-learning process (Nelson et al., 1972:1). In view of

this, it is hoped that insights derived from the research will have some pedagogical significance by bringing to light the necessity for the development of ways of consciousness-raising and encouraging the use by Freshman students coming from a restrictive high school learning environment to a situation that requires higher reasoning skills, a more self-reliant attitude to learning, of appropriate strategies in reading in particular and learning in general. Results from the research may point to the need for the introduction of some kind of consciousness raising programme and related strategy training for 12th Grade and AAU Freshman students and may, therefore, give new insights to material writers and syllabus designers. They may also provide useful insights for teacher educators in terms of providing data for developing teacher trainees' awareness of the language learning strategies Grade twelve/Freshman students actively use. In general, insights derived from the research may guide the development of learner consciousness raising and strategy training activities so that students can become not only more efficient in their reading but also more autonomous in their learning approaches.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I believe that it would have been better to extend the number of subjects used in the study. However, owing to constraints of time and resources, the study was limited to investigating the reading strategies of a random sample of 251 students, approximately 30% of all Freshman social science students of Addis Ababa University. In addition, I had to make decisions about the data gathering instruments I would use. While ideally a broader range of instruments could have been used to obtain a wider range of data on reading strategies, I felt it necessary, because of constraints of time and money, to limit the instruments to a questionnaire administered to all and a guided interview administered to a subset of 36 of the sample to verify the results of the questionnaire.

It is not the aim of this study to assess the value of reading strategies for promoting effective reading of English as a foreign language, as opposed to the importance of other variables. This study is strictly limited to a description of the strategies that students from AAU say they use when reading and an assessment of the value of these strategies for effective reading in the light of the Ethiopian context (with its cultural, contextual, social and institutional practices, experiences and constraints) and existing (predominantly western) literature on learner strategies. An obvious problem, and one that is faced by all researchers in this field, is that the strategies respondents say they use may not of course represent what they actually do use. While I have done my best to cross-check my data by asking students in the interviews what they actually did when reading particular texts in the very recent past, there is ultimately no way of being sure that what they believe they do or did is in any way what really happens when they read.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature on and research findings related to classifications of language learning strategies, the importance of reading in a foreign language, the role of reading strategies in promoting effective reading and classifications of reading strategies:

2.1 LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Language learning strategies have been defined in different ways. Rubin (1987) reports that, following O'Malley et al (1985) and Brown et al (1983), language learning strategies can be described as what learners do to learn and to regulate their learning. She further defines strategies as any set of operations, steps, plans, or routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information. Wenden (1987:7) describes language learning strategies as specific actions or techniques which learners utilize to respond to a learning need or to facilitate the acquisition and use of information. Spolsky (1982:109) describes them as learning styles and as indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment. Oxford (1989:8) defines them as specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations.

From the definitions and explanations given above, one can conclude that language learning strategies are the tools learners employ to make their language learning more successful, self directed and enjoyable, but they differ in their focus on action, interaction and purpose.

Effective use of language learning strategies is believed by different researchers to be invaluable in the teaching of a foreign language. Learners who use a sufficient

range of learning strategies and use them appropriately - i.e., according to the demands of the task - strategies can encourage learners to actively take part in their learning, which is believed likely to result in better proficiency on the part of the learner. Oxford (1989:1) argues:

Language learning strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement which is essential for developing communicative competence. Appropriate learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence.

Foreign language learners are required to supplement the teaching they are exposed to in class. Language learning strategies make this possible. Chamot (1987:71) writes:

If learning is to take place, it usually involves the collaboration of two people: a teacher and a learner. The teacher cannot do it all alone and most learners' learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information.

It is argued that language learning strategies enable students to take command of their learning and work on their own in the absence of their teachers. Oxford (1989) has the similar notion that language learning strategies encourage greater over-all self direction, which is particularly important for language learners because they will not always have the teacher around to guide them as they use the language outside the classroom. In the same way, Rubin (1987) states that effective strategies enable learners to work outside the classroom by themselves once the teacher is not around to direct them. Ellis and Sinclair (1990), Nuttall (1982), are among the many other writers who express similar views.

It is acknowledged by many writers that these strategies are one of the variables that have a perceptible impact on the acquisition of a foreign language. Rubin (1987:15) argues that all other things being equal, some students will be more successful than others in learning a foreign language. The learning strategy literature assumes that some of this success can be attributed to particular sets of cognitive and metacognitive behaviours which students engage in. However there may be a danger here in that researchers may seem to be making universal claims, whereas, as I mentioned before, it can be argued that the use or non-use of certain strategies by AAU students may in fact be culture-bound i.e. their use or non-use may be the result of collective social, cultural, institutional and other contextual constraints.

Bearing the above arguments in mind, it is my hypothesis that one of the causes of lower proficiency of our students in English language may be their low awareness of "appropriate" language learning strategies and their overuse of inappropriate strategies. It is also my hypothesis that the unsuccessful or inappropriate strategies may have a rationale in terms of students' experience and learning within the Ethiopian socio-cultural and educational context. I believe, therefore, that it would be valuable to conduct a study in this field, particularly into the reading strategies students say they use.

2.2 CLASSIFICATION OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Applied linguists who have studied second or foreign language learners have classified the learning strategies they use in varying ways. From reviewing these studies, we can see that there is no agreement as to the identification of a uniform classification scheme that is capable of accounting for all the various types of learning strategies identified up to now by second language researchers. In this section, therefore, I intend to review the various

classification schemes that have been proposed so far by learning strategy researchers.

Stern (1983:405) observes that the term learning strategy, which has come into use to refer to ways of dealing with the difficulties that are presented by language learning, has not been employed in the same way by all researchers. He further notes that various investigations have produced different inventories of learning strategies but that these lists comprise more or less similar categories divided up in somewhat different ways.

Rubin (1987) reports that the work of the 1970s contributed to our understanding of language learning particularly by identifying a range of strategies which contribute either directly to language learning (cognitive strategies) or indirectly (communicative and social strategies).

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have written that research efforts in the 1970s, concentrating on the qualities of good language learners (Naiman et al 1978, Rubin 1975), identified certain strategies reported by students or observed in language learning situations that appear to contribute to successful learning. These research efforts demonstrated that students do apply specific learning strategies while learning a second language and that these strategies can be described and classified. O'Malley and Chamot (1990:6) explain that Naiman et al (1978) proposed five broad categories of learning strategies and a number of secondary categories. Their primary classification of strategies includes an active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication, management of effective demands and monitoring of second language performance. However the taxonomy of Naiman et al is too broad to be usable for the purposes of my research.

O'Malley and Chamot also explain that Rubin (1981) proposed a classification scheme that subsumes learning strategies under two primary groupings and a number of subgroupings. Rubin's first primary category, consisting of strategies that directly affect learning, includes:

1. Seeking clarification/verification - This involves learners in asking for an example of how to use a word or expression to confirm understanding.
2. Monitoring - This involves correcting errors in one's own or another's language use or understanding of language.
3. Memorization - This involves taking notes of new items, writing items repeatedly.
4. Guessing/inductive inferencing - This involves guessing meanings from words, structures, pictures, context etc.
5. Deductive reasoning - This involves comparing native/other languages with words / sentences / ideas in the target language.
6. Practice - This involves repeating sentences, listening carefully.

Her second primary category classifies those strategies that contribute indirectly to language. In this category she includes:

1. Creating opportunities for practice - This involves creating situations for practice with native speakers, initiating conversation with fellow students, spending time in a language laboratory.

2. Production tricks - This involves using circumlocutions, synonyms, or cognates.

Here we see that the main problem that makes this particular taxonomy difficult to use for my research is that it is not related directly to reading and no examples are given to show exactly which strategies can be used to promote successful reading. A further problem, common to all the main taxonomies, is the over-emphasis on individual differences at the expense of socio-cultural and institutional practices.

Similarly, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) report that O'Malley et al (1985) and Chamot (1987) have identified three categories of language learning strategies - Metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. These were described as follows:

1. Metacognitive strategies - These involve planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity. Among the processes that would be included as metacognitive strategies for receptive or productive language tasks are:
 - a. paying selective attention to special aspects of a learning task, as in planning to listen for key words or phrases.
 - b. planning the organization of either written or spoken discourse.
 - c. monitoring comprehension or production.
 - d. evaluating or checking comprehension.
2. Cognitive strategies - These involve operating directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning.

the researchers described in the cognitive category for listening and reading comprehension are:

- a. rehearsing or repeating
- b. organizing or grouping and classifying words, terminology or concepts according to their semantic or syntactic attributes.
- c. inferencing
- d. summarizing
- e. deducing or applying rules to understand language.
- f. using imagery or visual images
- g. transferring - using known linguistic information to facilitate a new learning task
- h. elaborating - integrating new language with known information
- i. social/affective strategies - representing a broad grouping that involves either interaction with another person or ideational control over feelings.

While this is a strategy taxonomy that is clearer and more detailed than those of Rubin and Naiman, it is still too general to apply directly to the purpose of my research on reading strategies.

More recently, Oxford (1989) has compiled an extensive list of strategies identified in all these studies and has re-categorized them. She argues that her classification of strategies differs in two ~~ways~~ ways from the earlier ones.

Firstly, it is more comprehensive and more detailed. Secondly, unlike the other classification, it is more systematic in linking individual strategies, as well as strategy groups, with each of the four language skills. She divides her taxonomy of strategies into direct and indirect strategies. These two classes are then sub-divided into a total of six groups, memory, cognitive and compensation under the direct class; metacognitive, social and affective under the indirect class. She argues that direct strategies and indirect strategies support each other and that each strategy group is capable of connecting with and assessing every other strategy system.

Oxford shares the view of other researchers that some strategies directly involve working on the target language. They require mental processing of the language but the three groups of direct strategies do this processing differently and for different purposes. Indirect strategies work in tandem with direct strategies. They are called indirect because they support and help the learner manage language learning without (in many instances) directly involving the direct strategies.

From the discussion so far we can conclude that, although there is considerable disparity in the taxonomies researchers have used to classify language learning strategies, there is shared understanding among them regarding the invaluable role strategies play in facilitating learning a foreign language. We can also conclude that Oxford is the only researcher who has tried to classify strategies according to the role each plays in assisting the development of the four language skills. As far as reading is concerned, her taxonomy comprises what appears to be the broadest range of strategies that has been identified as valuable for developing reading and describes how each strategy facilitates in different ways the comprehension of a text and the development of reading ability. Her descriptions are detailed without being too complicated and unmanageable. Moreover, examples have been given to show the

application of the strategies. In short, I have found her taxonomy the easiest to interpret and the most suitable to utilize for my study. However this does not mean that it is necessarily ideal for our socio-cultural context and throughout my study I have borne in mind the possible conflict between research findings generated in western contexts and the possible inapplicability of these findings to our Ethiopian context.

2.3 IMPORTANCE OF READING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In situations where a foreign language is used as a medium of instruction, reading plays a very significant role, because learning of almost all subjects requires a considerable amount of reading. In such contexts, reading can be regarded as the vehicle that facilitates the process of learning.

Carrell (1988), Beaumont (1983), Gina (1987), McDonough (1984), and others agree on the influential role reading plays in foreign language learners' studies. Carrell (1988), for instance, argues that for many students reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second or foreign language. Beaumont (1983:31) further asserts that many students are required to be more competent readers in the foreign language than in their own first language:

Second language learners particularly at secondary level, are invariably not effective readers in their mother tongue, indeed they are frequently not required to be. It is often in the second language that greater reading efficiency is demanded, particularly if that language is being learnt primarily for instrumental purposes.

Effective reading ability in English is of paramount importance and has a decisive role for Ethiopian students attending colleges and universities, since in these

institutions English is a medium of instruction and unless they are able readers, their academic success will be limited. Carrell (1988:1) argues that:

In second language teaching/learning situations for academic purposes, especially in higher education in English medium universities or other programs that make extensive use of academic materials written in English, reading is paramount. Quite simply, without solid reading proficiency, second language learners cannot perform at levels they must in order to succeed.

It is generally agreed that many Ethiopian students at senior secondary schools and in higher educational institutions such as AAU have low reading efficiency. (Hailemichael 1993, Gebremedhin 1993). In view of this, I have decided to try to find out which strategies a sample of AAU Freshman students believe they use, in order to compare them with strategies perceived by researchers to promote effective reading and thereby assess whether the strategies they say they use may be said to be effective or ineffective in promoting reading proficiency. I will also try to account for the use of any strategies that may be arguably ineffective.

2.4 THE ROLE OF READING STRATEGIES IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE READING

In the first section of this paper, I attempted to show the role language learning strategies play in facilitating the acquisition of a foreign language in general. In the discussions, I argued that the degree of ability to use suitable learning strategies is one of the factors that can promote or hinder the learning of English. It is further argued that reading strategies are a subset of these strategies and that the ability to use a range of effective reading strategies is believed to be of paramount importance to foreign language students in making their reading more effective. In other words, using a range of "effective"

reading strategies will make a valuable contribution to the reader's reading comprehension and lack of the ability to use them can result in failure to comprehend.

Scholars such as Nuttall (1982), Goodman in Carrell et al (1988), Cook (1991) and Widdowson (1978) agree that reading is an active cognitive activity readers do to generate meaning. However they disagree as to how this meaning is achieved. Nuttall (1982:5) defines reading as getting out of the text as nearly as possible the message that the writer put into it. Readers can effectively extract the meaning from a written text by employing various reading strategies that help them tackle difficulties they may encounter. Foreign language readers need to possess these vital strategies to make an acceptable interpretation of what is read.

An alternative view of reading is proposed by Widdowson, who argues that reading is a process of constructing meaning as a result of what the reader brings to the text. He makes explicit that reading is a difficult task and that reading strategies are significant to accomplish this task successfully. Widdowson (1978:57) writes:

Reading as the understanding of discourse does not simply involve the recognition of what words and sentences mean but also the recognition of the value they take on in association with each other as elements in a discourse. Reading in this sense is a kind of accomplishment whereby a discourse is created in the mind by means of a process of reasoning.

Foreign language readers may fail to comprehend a text unless they can fit it into their own prior knowledge of content and formal schemata, and at the same time utilize a suitable range of appropriate reading strategies. Goodman has been quoted by Carrell et al (1988:12) as saying:

Proficient readers are both efficient and effective. They are effective in constructing a meaning that they can assimilate or accommodate and which bears some level of agreement with the original meaning of the author. To accomplish efficiency, readers maintain constant focus on constructing the meaning throughout the process always using strategies for reducing uncertainty.

This is a confirmation of the vital role reading strategies play in assisting readers in the process of reading for meaning. Grabe is another writer who has demonstrated this. In Carrell et al (1988:56), he points out that our understanding of reading in English as second language is best considered as the interaction that occurs between the reader and the text. This interaction is to a large extent, created by the strategies the reader employs. Thompson (1987:50) also argues that:

Research on the comprehension of written discourse conducted in the seventies has demonstrated that it is the result of interaction between the reader and the text. The reader brings a certain set of reading strategies to the reading task at hand while the text provides the reader with a certain kind of rhetorical organization. This ability to use efficient reading strategies is one of the factors involved in comprehending and storing the information contained in a text.

The use of reading strategies is not restricted only to studying the language. Once acquired by the learner, they can enhance reading and understanding other subjects that are taught by the target language. Gina (1987:45) has written that many of the reading skills taught in English classes are applicable to the study of other subjects and enable all students to use their textbooks more efficiently. An English teacher can enhance the student's motivation to acquire these skills by pointing out how valuable and useful they are to the study of other academic subjects.

It is obvious that the eventual goal of foreign language learners is to achieve independence. This independence is particularly realized when the learner becomes able to read and tackle difficulties on his own. This is to say that foreign language learners cannot remain dependent on the teacher all their lives as their reading in the target language cannot be confined only to the classroom. They need to extend their reading to outside class. This is what makes independence in reading very significant. Clay (1982:244) argues that independence in reading means that the learner has learned how to work out words and understand meanings for himself. Nuttall (1982:21) also underlines that we can seldom expect help with the reading tasks we undertake in real life outside the classroom. The teacher does not remain at our side. Therefore, students have to develop the ability to read on their own. An independent reader must be able to tackle texts he has never seen before.

Foreign language readers can attain this independence and work out words and understand meanings for themselves if they are aware of and able to use adequate and appropriate reading strategies. Without these strategies, it is more likely that the readers end up without efficiently understanding what they read or are forced to seek help from others. Nuttall (1982:22) observes that:

We have emphasized that reading involves skills that the student must learn for himself, and that the measure of the teacher's success in how far the student learns to do without help.

To sum up, what has been stated earlier implies that appropriately used reading strategies can, to a large extent, promote reading comprehension and help learners tackle difficulties on their own.

2.5 CLASSIFICATION OF READING STRATEGIES

It has already been mentioned that Oxford's (1989) taxonomy of language learning strategies has been selected

for use in this study. This section, therefore, presents her classification and definitions of the reading strategies that were found suitable for the study.

2.5.1 DIRECT READING STRATEGIES

These strategies have a direct effect on success in reading. They include:

2.5.1.1 COGNITIVE READING STRATEGIES

These involve students in:

- a. Repeating:- This involves reading a passage more than once to understand it more completely each time for different purposes - to get the main idea, to read for detail etc.
- b. Practising naturalistically:- This involves using the target language in an authentic way for reading comprehension (eg. by reading newspapers, magazines, etc. in the target language).
- c. Skimming:- This involves going through reading material in order to get the gist of it.
- d. Scanning:- This involves going through reading material quickly to locate specific information.
- e. Using resources:- This involves using resources additional to the text to find out the meaning of what is read in the target language (eg. dictionaries, etc.)

word lists grammar books,
phrase books, etc.)

- f. Reasoning deductively:- This involves deriving hypotheses about the meaning of what is read by applying general rules the learner already knows. This is a top-down strategy leading from general to specific
- g. Analyzing expressions:- This involves finding the meaning of a new expression, word phrase, complex sentence or even paragraph by breaking it down into its component parts.
- h. Translation:- This involves using the learner's own language as the basis for understanding what is read in the target language.
- i. Taking notes:- This involves writing down the main idea or specific points.
- j. Summarizing:- This involves making a condensed, shorter version of the original passage.
- k. Highlighting:- This involves using a variety of emphasis techniques (such as underlining, starring or colour coding) to focus on important information in a passage.

2.5.1.2 COMPENSATION READING STRATEGIES

These involve students in:

- a. Using linguistic clues:- guessing meanings using previously gained knowledge of the target language (prefixes, suffixes, word order, etc.)
- b. Using other clues:- seeking and using clues that are language based (e.g. title, table of contents, preface)
- not

2.5.2 INDIRECT READING STRATEGIES

These strategies contribute indirectly to success in reading.

They include:

2.5.2.1 METACOGNITIVE READING STRATEGIES

These involve students in:

- a. Finding out about language learning:- uncovering what is involved in language learning - talking about their language learning problems, reading books about language learning.
- b. Organizing:- keeping a language learning notebook for writing down new target language expressions, structures.
- c. Setting goals:- setting goals in order to become proficient enough to read professional materials, to read magazines or newspapers for pleasure or in general or reach a superior reading proficiency level.
- d. Identifying the purpose of a language task:- finding a purpose for reading

something in the light of the situation and the type of the material, eg. searching quickly through the piece to get the main idea or specific information. Reading a longer text for pleasure (extensive reading) or in detail (intensive reading).

- e. Planning for a language task:- identifying the general nature of the task, figuring out whether or not a reading task requires the reader to recognize and understand a variety of words, considering whether the reader has the needed vocabulary.
- f. Seeking practice opportunities:- seeking out or creating opportunities for practice, reading materials other than those required for study in class.
- g. Self-monitoring:- making guesses about what will come next and correcting any misinterpretation as the reader moves ahead. Checking whether or not the meaning of a text is correctly understood, correcting inaccurate guesses.
- h. Self-evaluating:- involves learners in assessing their reading proficiency in a variety of ways. Considering whether or not their comprehension is acceptable at a given point, estimating

whether their reading speed has improved.

2.5.2.2. SOCIAL READING STRATEGIES

These involve students in:

- a. Asking for clarification/verification
- b. Cooperating with peers:- involving making an effort to work together with other learners on an activity with a common goal eg. sharing parts of a story to read and then figuring out the entire story through a process of negotiating and cooperating.
- c. Cooperating with more proficient users of the new language:- working with more proficient users of the target language, usually outside of the language classroom.

2.5.2.3. AFFECTIVE READING STRATEGIES

These strategies involve student in:

- a. Using progressive relaxation deep breathing or meditation:- This involves alternately tensing and relaxing all the major muscle groups. Meditation means focusing on a mental image or sound to centre one's thought.

- b. Using music:- This involves listening to music before any stressful language task. It can calm learners and put them in a more positive mood for reading.
- c. Using laughter:- this involves seeking opportunities to joke, chat with friends etc. to reduce anxiety and bring pleasure.
- d. Making positive statements:- involves making positive statements about oneself and one's ability especially before a potentially difficult task.
- e. Taking risks wisely:- This involves making a conscious decision to take reasonable risks regardless of both the possibility of making mistakes and fear of failure.
- f. Rewarding yourself:- This involves readers in rewarding themselves for their achievements.
- g. Listening to your body:- This involves emotional self-assessment, paying attention to one's emotional state, and trying to control fear, anxiety etc.
- h. Discussing your feelings:- This involves discussing the language learning process with other people.

To sum up, in this chapter I have attempted to review related literature including related findings of previous studies. The review discusses the role of reading strategies in particular and that of language learning strategies in general. The review shows the importance of reading in a

foreign language and the various taxonomies researchers have used to classify these strategies. Every effort has also been made to relate the areas to be investigated in the study to what is reviewed in the chapter. Thus, the fourth chapter of the study is dedicated to the findings of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

3.1 METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study. The target population was a sample of A.A.U. 1st year students. 251 (30%) first year students assigned to the Social Science Faculty of A.A.U. were selected using random sampling techniques. A questionnaire and a guided interview were then used to gather the data. The researcher preferred these two instruments to others because they have been proven by researchers such as Chamot (1987), Cohen (1987) and O'Malley (1990) to be more productive in generating information on students' use of language learning strategies than other instruments. O'Malley and Chamot (1990:88), for instance, stress that the broadest range of coverage of strategy use can be obtained with questionnaires and guided interviews. Furthermore they also affirm that questionnaires have the advantage of determining the responses to information that are relevant and of simplifying data manipulation while interviews also help a researcher obtain in-depth information about the use of particular strategies and help to clarify areas where misunderstanding may have occurred in interpreting the questionnaire.

3.2 THE SUBJECTS

3.2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECTS

The target population of the study was a sample from A.A.U. 1st year students. According to the information obtained from the office of the Registrar of AAU, 838 first year students were registered in the Social Science Faculty for the academic year 1993/94. Of the total number of the students, 218 (26%) were female students. Distribution of the target population according to their place of birth, sex, age, first language and secondary schools attended is indicated in Tables 6-8.

3.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

3.3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

One questionnaire prepared in English was used. In designing the questionnaire, care was taken to fit the language to the subjects' level. The questionnaire had a covering letter to introduce the purpose of the study to the respondents.

3.3.1.1 DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire had two sections. Section one dealt with the respondents' personal data. It had 5 questions aimed at eliciting information on the respondents' place of birth, sex, age, first language and secondary schools attended. (see Appendix A, page ⁶⁰--- for the details of the information). Section two of the questionnaire comprised 39 questions intended to draw out information on the respondents' claimed use and awareness of cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social and affective reading strategies. (see Appendix B, page ⁶¹---). Each question had three possible answers, "Never", "Sometimes", and "Always". Students were told that in this context, "Always" was intended to refer to "always when appropriate". The strategies indicated in Oxford's taxonomy were not used word for word in the questionnaire in most cases, but rather examples were given. It was hoped these would make more sense to the students and would thus elicit more accurately whether the strategy was used.

3.3.1.2 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The initial version of the questionnaire was first administered as part of a pilot study to 30 science students attending the first semester of the year at AAU. The replies obtained from this mini-sample were analyzed and interpreted. The results obtained suggested the need for a certain amount of revision of the questionnaire in order to iron out

inconsistencies, correct vague instructions, eliminate questions that did not produce appropriate data etc. Thus, the final version of the questionnaire was designed in a such a way that it would best meet the purpose of the study.

The administration of the final version of the questionnaire took place from February 12th to 19th 1994. The questionnaire was administered to students from six sections through three instructors. The subjects filled in the questionnaire at home so that it would not affect their studies during lesson hours and so that it could be given thorough attention.

The questionnaire was administered to 251 subjects sampled from six sections. The sample was thus 30% of the target population. Out of the sample, 198 (78.9%) were male and 53 (21.1%) were female. Of the total 251 subjects, 27 students (all male) did not return the questionnaire. The instructors told the researcher that those students had not shown up during the last few periods prior to the termination of the first semester. Consequently, the number of the respondents was limited to 224 of whom 171 were male and 53 were female.

3.3.2. INTERVIEW

A set of follow up interviews was used for confirmation of some replies obtained through the questionnaire. It was employed to seek clarification as to whether the data on certain strategies was accurate and to make sure that the students had understood the questions. Thirty six students, six from each of the six sections, were selected randomly and interviewed. The strategies I asked about in the interview were : repeating, skimming and scanning, using resources, reasoning deductively, taking notes, guessing, a range of metacognitive strategies, cooperating with peers and affective strategies. See page 67 for details of the interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 COGNITIVE READING STRATEGIES

One of the subdivisions of direct strategies in Oxford's classification of language learning strategies is cognitive strategies, which she describes as those strategies that require mental processing of the language. Such strategies are essential in learning a new language in that they help the learner to manipulate or transform the target language. Oxford asserts that cognitive strategies are typically the strategies most frequently used by language learners. She argues that they enable learners to understand and produce the new language in many ways.

Questions 1 - 4 in the questionnaire were devised in order to investigate the subjects' awareness and use of cognitive strategies. The questions were intended to draw information from the respondents on eleven strategies. Questions 3 and 5 were included to see whether or not the subjects would say they use inappropriate cognitive reading strategies. Table 1 below shows the results obtained through these questions.

Items	Strategies	R e s p o n s e					
		Never		Sometimes		Always	
1	Repeating	18	8%	60	26.8%	146	65.2%
2	Practising naturalistically	139	62%	50	22.3%	35	15.7%
3	Reading slowly	44	19.6%	40	17.9%	140	62.5%
4	Skimming by reading quickly	126	56.3%	47	21%	51	22.7%
5	Scanning by reading slowly	24	10.7%	60	26.8%	140	62.5%
6	Scanning by reading quickly	121	54%	70	31.3%	33	14.7%
7	Using resources	13	5.8%	77	34.3%	134	59.9%
8	Reasoning deductively	112	50%	89	39.7%	23	10.3%
9	Analyzing expressions	162	72.3%	21	9.4%	41	18.3%
10	Translating	29	13%	52	23.2%	143	63.8%
11	Taking notes by copying main sections	15	6.7%	32	14.3%	177	79%
12	Taking notes by reducing texts into phrases	107	47.8%	91	40.6%	26	11.6%
13	Highlighting	12	5.4%	25	11.1%	187	83.5%
14	Summarizing	119	53%	67	30%	38	17%

Item 1 was intended to see if the students would say they read materials in English more than once, varying their purpose for reading. Table 1 indicates that 146 (65.2%) students claimed to read materials more than once very frequently while 60 (26.8%) said they did read materials more than once but less than frequently. Follow up interview questions were used with a small sample of 36 students to seek clarification as to whether or not those students really did read texts more than once for different purposes and vary their speed according to each purpose. Thirty two students said that they had recently read textbooks and other related materials assigned to them by their teachers. These thirty two interviewees affirmed that they usually read such materials more than once to help them understand more, to remember what they read and to enable them to copy some important sections that felt they needed to remember. Four students said that they had recently read newspapers but that they had read these only once and with slow speed. This, therefore, made it clear that the vast majority of students read more than once on only limited occasions and that they never or seldom vary their speed.

Item 2 asked the students if they ever practised reading in English by reading authentic materials such as magazines and newspapers. Table 1 reveals that most of the subjects said they did not engage themselves in such activities. 139 (62%) said they never read such materials. 50 (22.3%) of the subjects said they read authentic materials in English very seldom, while only 15.7% said they did so frequently. This could be explained partly in terms of constraints within the socio-cultural context i.e., lack of easy availability of such materials in schools and at the university has meant there is a lack of a habit or tradition of reading for pleasure or any purposes other than academic study.

Research in reading indicates that there is a direct relationship between comprehension and speed. Nuttall (1982:32) argues that there is no doubt that reading speed and comprehension are closely linked and a very slow reader is

likely to read with poor understanding. Seliger (1972:55) also argues that reading comprehension and reading speed are closely interrelated. Faster readers are said to comprehend more than slower readers because they can focus on the message and not on the mechanics of reading.

Items 3 - 6 in the questionnaire were therefore concerned with finding out the reading speeds the subjects would say they used. Items 3 and 5 asked the respondents if they read slowly and carefully while Items 4 and 6 asked them if they ever read quickly when the aim was to set the gist of a text or to locate specific information. 140 (62.5%) respondents replied that in these circumstances they only read slowly and carefully. To support this a very high proportion of the subjects said that they never or very rarely read any text very quickly: 173 (77.3%) responding in this way to Item 4 and 191 (8.3%) to Item 6. In order to confirm this response, a follow up interview was used. The responses were consistent with those obtained through the questionnaire. Twenty seven students said that they preferred to read slowly because they believed that they could not otherwise comprehend efficiently. During the interview these students said they used the same speed irrespective of the materials they read or their purpose. The findings of this study regarding the reading speed used by the subjects thus support those of a study made by Molla Jemere (1987) who arrived at the conclusion that most of his Freshman level subjects failed to readjust their speed according to their understanding needs or reading purposes and thus handicapped themselves in terms of meeting their reading needs effectively. The fact that both findings attest that students always tend to read slowly and perceive this as very appropriate can be partly explained by reference to traditional educational expectations and institutional practices in Ethiopia. Thus, it is generally believed that faster reading cannot result in better comprehension.

In Item 7, the subjects were asked if they used reference material such as dictionaries, grammar books, etc.

lists and phrase books to help them understand what they read. Table 1 shows that such materials were said to be used very frequently by 134 (59.9%) and infrequently by 77 (34.3%). Only 13 (5.8%) students said they never used any of such materials. Further enquiry was made through follow up interview questions to identify which of these materials students actually use. All the 36 interviewed students replied that they actually used only dictionaries as language reference materials. The dictionary was said to be used by the interviewees citing as their reason that other materials are non-existent. In fact other materials are available but using them implies a more inquiring self-motivated and independent approach to learning a language than most students have.

Item 8 was intended to draw information from the subjects on whether or not they ever tried to use their knowledge of general rules of English to get meaning from what they read. 112 (50%) of the subjects responded that they never tried to apply their knowledge for such purposes while 89 (39.7%) said that they tried to do so but very rarely. Only 23 (10.3) students said they very frequently applied this strategy. High school students spend years studying mainly English grammar and in light of this the data was suspected to be inaccurate. To verify the replies to Items 8 and 9, thirty six interviewees were given four sentences each containing one underlined word. Their task was to analyse and interpret each sentence, to identify the word class of each of the underlined words and to describe how they worked this out. Twenty six of the 36 students identified the word classes of the underlined words correctly and explained how they used their knowledge of sentence patterns to work out the word classes of the items. This made it clear that the previous data from the questionnaire was inaccurate.

In response to Item 9, 162 (72.3%) respondents said that they never tried to analyze expressions, i.e. complex sentences, while 21 (9.3%) said they did so infrequently

and only 41 (18.3%) said they used the strategy very frequently. The result suggests that this is another of the strategies that students believe they do not use, though in fact it may be that they do use it though they are not aware of using it. For example, in carrying out the task referred to in the previous paragraph, the sample of students interviewed actually had to analyze and interpret several short sentences and as mentioned above 26 out of 36 were able eventually to explain that they actually did this by using their knowledge of sentence patterns. This presumably would be a strategy that would facilitate the understanding of more complex sentences too.

The table indicates that 143 (63.8%) students responded that they tried very frequently to understand what they read by translating (Item 10) to their mother tongue. Only 52 (23.2%) said they used translation infrequently while a mere 15 (6.7%) said they never used it. While it is difficult to be sure, the result suggests that translation is used very frequently by a large number of students. Here it should be noted that most writers on learning strategies underline that translation should be use with care i.e., it should not be overused or used to translate everything.

Items 11 and 12 were aimed at gathering data on whether or not the subjects would say they employed different techniques to take notes. The replies show that a high percentage of the subjects (79%) said they took notes simply by copying important sections without changing the sentences. Further, a majority of the respondents said that they either never or very seldom took notes by reducing what they read to short phrases. In an attempt to verify the replies, follow-up interview questions were used. The thirty six interviewed students all affirmed that they had taken notes recently by as usual, copying important points as they believed that accurate copying of whole chunks would help them best to remember them later.

The result of the interview questions made it clear that students are not aware of or confident in using or convinced of the value of other techniques of taking notes and study skills and consequently rely on the limited approach of copying. The reason for this is almost certainly institutional practices - in other words in high schools notes are prepared by teachers and students simply copy them. They hardly ever read books and write their own notes. As a result, they are not aware of nor are they able to use alternative note-taking techniques requiring or enabling them to make use of higher thinking.

In Item 13, the subjects were asked if they ever underlined words, phrases and sentences they thought as very important in what they read. As could be predicted from my own experience, this was said to be a strategy used very frequently by most of the subjects (83.5%).

Item 14 asked the respondents if they ever summarized what they read by making a condensed, shorter version of the original text using their own words in sentences. Table 1 shows that this strategy was said to be never used by 119 (53.1%) and rarely used by 67 (30%) subjects. The table indicates that the replies obtained in items 12 and 14 support each other. Students simply copy what they perceive to be important sections as they appear in texts and seldom if ever attempt to use other methods.

To sum up, it has already been stated that the purpose of this study was to identify reading strategies the subjects of the study believe they use frequently, less frequently and not at all and thereby to assess the subjects' awareness and use of a wide range of reading strategies. In line with this, analysis of the data gathered through the questionnaire and the follow up interview implies that a majority of the subjects are not aware of using, nor do they seem to employ, a number of cognitive strategies which are believed by researchers likely to lead to

more successful reading, and are generally believed to be the strategies most frequently required. These include:

1. Reading a text more than once each time for different purposes and varying reading speed according to the perceived purpose.
2. Practising reading in English by reading authentic materials outside normal study texts.
3. Skimming and scanning - varying the style of reading.
4. Using a range of techniques for taking notes.
5. Summarizing.

Furthermore, the study aimed at identifying if the subjects would say they used strategies that are considered by researchers to be likely to hinder the reading process. In this connection, the result demonstrates that a high proportion of the subjects said they used the following strategies very frequently and that these strategies are valued very highly by them.

1. Reading slowly irrespective of the materials being read or their purpose.
2. Translation.

The result also confirms the hypothesis that students are not always aware of all of the strategies they use and find it very difficult to analyze and describe what they do actually. It also suggests that certain strategies perceived by researchers as important for developing effective reading strategies are under used or not used at all by the respondents. Their underuse of these strategies may be because of individual variables or because of collective socio-cultural and institutional practices and constraints.

High school teachers do not teach students to use cognitive reading strategies nor do they raise conscious awareness of these strategies for reading on a metacognitive level. Students in fact are not encouraged to go beyond a limited subset of practices handed down as accepted norms in classrooms from year to year. It can be argued that students could have benefited by using a broader range of strategies, had they been made aware of them and exposed to practice in using them.

4.2. COMPENSATION READING STRATEGIES

Oxford (1989) describes compensation strategies as tools that help learners make up for an inadequate repertoire of grammar, and especially of vocabulary. The strategies are described as helpful for learners to use in order to overcome knowledge limitations in all four skills. The compensation strategies that assist learners most in reading in a foreign language are termed as guessing strategies. These strategies, also called 'inferencing' involve using a wide variety of clues to guess meanings when the learner does not know all the words. In this way, they save readers time they otherwise have to spend to look the unknown words up in a dictionary and are also believed likely to assist in improved comprehension.

Items 15 - 20 in the questionnaire were meant to draw information from the respondents on the strategies they use when they encounter unknown words. Table 2 below shows the results:

Table 2

Items	Strategies	Response					
		Never		Sometimes		Always	
15	Turning to a dictionary <u>during</u> reading a text	122	54.5%	72	32%	30	13.4%
16	Turning to a dictionary <u>after</u> reading text	33	14.7%	65	29%	126	56.3%
17	Guessing	123	55%	51	22.7%		
18	Using contextual clues	17	16.8%	30	29.7%	50	22.3%
19	Using background knowledge	59	58.4%	37	36.6%	5	5%
20	Using linguistic clues	61	60.4%	22	21.8%	18	17.8%

Items 15 - 17 asked the respondents whether or not they turned to a dictionary or tried to guess meanings of words they do not know. The result indicates that most students who said they turned to a dictionary very frequently said they did so after reading a text (126 = 56.3%), while another 65 (29%) said they used a a dictionary after reading but not frequently. In response to Item 17, 123 (55%) said they never tried to guess meanings of new words and 51 (22.7%) said they tried to guess meanings only very seldom. Guessing was said to be used very frequently only by 50 (22.3%) students. This means only 101 (45%) of the total population of the study said that they ever tried to guess meaning of new words from texts frequently or infrequently. In Items 18 - 20, these 101 students were then asked about the clues they used to help them guess meanings. 54 (53.5%) of the 101

subjects said that they very frequently used the word(s) before or/and after the new words or the whole context to help them guess. 30 (29%) said they used such a technique less than frequently. A significantly high proportion of the subjects also believed that they never or very rarely used their background knowledge or their knowledge of grammar.

These replies were so difficult to believe that they suggested follow up interview questions were needed to seek clarification as to whether or not the data on Items 16, 19 and 20 was accurate, since it was felt that either the questions had been misunderstood or students were not aware of what they actually did. The 36 interviewees were, therefore, asked if they had used a dictionary, if they had worked out meanings by guessing, or if they had ignored any new words they had come across during their recent reading. Of the 36, 24 students explained clearly that they had looked up words in a dictionary when it was available. They pointed out that they had tried to work out word meanings only when they did not have access to a dictionary. Thus, using a dictionary was apparently valued much more than guessing. The 24 students and the remaining 12 students who said they worked out meanings by themselves were asked how they did so. All of them were able to say that they used contextual clues. They, however, were unable to describe the use of their background knowledge or their use of knowledge of grammar. In a further attempt to elicit more accurate data, the 36 students were given two texts with underlined words and asked to work out what these words meant. Out of those interviewed, 25 students guessed the meanings of all the underlined words correctly and it was possible to interpret, from the ways they said they applied, that they not only used contextual clues but they were also using their background knowledge of the topic and their knowledge of grammar, although they were unable to describe their use of the two strategies adequately.

Overall, the results obtained through the questionnaire

~~and the follow up interviews suggest that the students~~

awareness of whether or not they were using guessing strategies and of the various techniques that promote them, is very low. This does not mean that they were definitely not using guessing strategies, but they do not seem to be confident to attempting to attack and work out meanings of new words in texts. They rather prefer to rely on a dictionary, or at least value it more highly than their own guessing strategies, which they seem to suspect as less trustworthy. Some of their difficulties in reading may thus be partly attributed to this lack of apparent use of guessing strategies, while this may itself be due to lack of awareness of

guessing strategies and/or lack of confidence in their value and reliability.

Possible explanations for this could include influences of broad socio-cultural and educational beliefs as to what constitutes effective teaching and learning of reading and vocabulary; accepted institutional practices - what happens in the typical classroom in regard to learning new words and reading - and also the textbooks students are exposed to in high schools. First and foremost the series of ENE textbooks that is in use in high schools appears to be unlikely to help students acquire such inferencing strategies. Students are not either shown how to work out meanings of new words in reading passages or told the value of doing this. The books simply provide definitions and examples of new words after the passages. This discourages students from having confidence in their own efforts to work out the meanings of the words which they read. Moreover, teachers apply the same methods in teaching vocabulary as in testing, i.e., matching words to definitions. Students, therefore, come to the university with very little or no awareness of alternative ways that can help them successfully overcome difficulties they face when they come across unknown words or expressions in texts. Moreover, the expectations of both teachers and learners are that teachers will explain and define. Their

focus is on memorizing new word meanings

out of context therefore, have a rationale in terms of their experience and the views of language and learning they are exposed to within society. Language learning is not regarded as a risk taking operation as this emphasizes the individual at the expense of the group. Inferencing, which is also asserting the autonomy of the individuals inquiring mind may also be seen as a threat to traditional socio-cultural practices.

4.3 METACOGNITIVE READING STRATEGIES

Metacognitive strategies are described by Oxford and others as indirect strategies. They are described as actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to co-ordinate their own learning processes. Metacognitive strategies are thus considered as essential for successful language learning. Rubin (1987) says that overall metacognitive strategies are useful to foreign language learners in that they enable them to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning.

The study attempted (a) to investigate how frequently the subjects would say they used the eight types of metacognitive strategies reflected in this study and (b) to identify those metacognitive strategies the respondents seemed to be aware of and those they were not aware of.

Items 21 - 28 were therefore, designed to gather information on the respondents' claimed use or non-use and by implication their awareness or non-awareness of metacognitive strategies. The replies to these questions are indicated in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Items	Strategies	R e s p o n s e					
		Never		Sometimes		Always	
21	Finding out about language learning	121	54%	68	54%	35	15.6%
22	Organizing	148	66%	39	17.4%	37	16.6%
23	Setting goals	118	52.7%	72	32.1%	34	15.2%
24	Identifying the purpose of a language task	29	12.9%	51	22.8%	144	64.3%
25	Planning for a language task	34	15.2%	74	33%	116	51.8%
26	Self monitoring	38	17%	53	23.7%	133	59.3%
27	Self evaluating	118	52.7%	83	37%	23	10.3%
28	Seeking practice opportunities	110	49.1%	77	34.4%	37	16.5%

Item 21 asked the subjects if they ever tried to know about language learning by talking to others or reading books. The result, as expected, shows that 121 (54%) of the subjects said that they never tried to do so, while 68 (30.4%) said that they applied the strategy less than frequently.

In Item 22, the respondents were asked if they ever kept a language learning notebook in which they could write new English expressions, words and structures they found while reading. The result reveals that a high proportion of the subjects replied that they either never (66%) or very rarely (17.4%) do so. This data was verified in the follow-up interview questions. Of the 36 interviewed students, 29 affirmed that their only concern was copying sections they thought worth worthwhile for examinations and tests. The remaining seven interviewees replied that they infrequently wrote such elements but not in a separate notebook set for this purpose. The replies made explicit that this is a strategy students may be aware of, but few students use.

Item 23 was intended to see whether or not students read materials in English outside class with the goal to improve their reading. Of the entire sample, 118 (52%) said they never applied the strategy and 72(32.1%) said they did so less than frequently. This data supported that obtained through Item 2.

Item 24 was aimed at gathering data on whether or not the respondents ever tried in advance to identify the purpose for reading something in English. The result reveals that 144 (64.3%) of the respondents claimed to do so very frequently and 51 (22.8%) said they did so, but infrequently. The result therefore suggests that a high proportion of the subjects claimed to use the strategy either very frequently or less frequently. An attempt was made through follow up interview questions to verify the data. Of the 36 interviewed students, 29 said that they usually read

materials related to their studies and used the same approach irrespective of the materials they read.

Item 25 asked the subjects if they predicted in advance what they might find in a reading text before they started reading. The result reveals that 116 (51.8%) of the subjects said that they very frequently tried to predict what they might find in a text and 74 (33%) said they did so, but infrequently. To verify the data, the 36 students were asked in the follow up interview questions if and how they used the strategy. 31 of the interviewed students claimed that they made predictions about what they would find in a text by reading titles and tables of contents.

In Item 26, the subjects were asked if they ever tried to check back and correct themselves when they made mistakes, guessed wrongly or misunderstood a text. The result indicates that 133 (59.3%) of the respondents replied that they did so very frequently while 53 (23.7%) said that they did so, but less than frequently. In the follow up interview questions, 31 of the interviewees responded that they re-read their texts when they doubted their understanding or failed to understand.

Item 27 was aimed at eliciting data on the respondents' awareness and use of the strategy of self-evaluating. As expected, 118 (52.7%) of the subjects responded that they never tried to assess their reading proficiency and 83 (37%) said they did so less than frequently.

In Item 28, the respondents were asked if they ever sought additional opportunities to practise reading outside the classroom. Of the entire sample, 110 (49.1%) said that they never used such strategy and 77 (34.4%) said they did so, though very rarely.

The study suggests that the subjects are not aware of the strategies of finding out about language learning (Item 21), organizing (Item 22), setting goals (Item 23),

identifying the purpose of a language task (Item 24), self-evaluating (Item 27) and seeking practice opportunities (Item 28). It also suggests that the subjects seemed to be relatively better aware of and used ways of planning for a language task (Item 25) and self-monitoring (Item 26).

Here, it should be re-emphasized that the labels used above are those used by Oxford but the questions in the questionnaire were formed in language that was easier to understand and which asked about possible applications that illustrated the strategies. However, the study still reveals that most of the metacognitive strategies are not used by the majority of the subjects.

This apparent lack of use of certain metacognitive strategies may possibly be accounted for by saying that critical reflection on learning and learner autonomy of any kind is not typical of the learning situation in Ethiopia. Almost all students tend to rely on their teachers and avoid taking charge of their own learning. Consequently, active and conscious participation on the part of students is very low. This, coupled with other factors such as the absence of a range of alternative, challenging educational materials, teaching methods and facilities has limited the stimuli given to students. As a result, students, particularly those in high schools, are passive recipients of content and depend on their teachers to direct and manage their learning in class. Hence, awareness and use of metacognitive strategies by individual students for managing their own learning is likely to be very low.

4.4 SOCIAL READING STRATEGIES

Research has pointed out that learning a language involves other people and that appropriate social strategies are of paramount importance in the process. Rubin (1987:72) reports that the study made by McDonald et al (1979) found that students trained to use cooperative learning strategies

for reading comprehension outperformed those who worked individually.

Items 29-31 in the questionnaire were meant to draw information from the respondents on their awareness and use of three types of social strategies. The replies made to these questions are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Items	Strategies	R e s p o n s e					
		Never		Sometimes		Always	
29	Asking for clarification	122	54.5%	66	29.5%	36	16%
30	Cooperating with proficient users of the language	110	49.1%	87	38.8%	27	12.1%
31	Cooperating with peers	33	14.7%	53	23.7%	134	61.6%

As I could have predicted from my own experience, the strategies of asking for clarification/verification (Item 29) and cooperating with proficient users of the language (Item 30) were said by most of the respondents to be either never or very seldom used. Item 31 asked the subjects if they ever cooperated with peers and worked with them on the same text for the same goal. 138 (61.6%) of the respondents said that they worked with their peers very frequently, while 53 (23.7%) and 33 (14.7%) students said that they worked with their peers rarely and never respectively. In order to verify the students' replies, more enquiries were made through follow-up interview questions. The thirty six students were first asked if they had read texts together recently. Twenty four of the students replied that they had not read any text

with any one else recently. All of the interviewees were further asked if they ever cooperated with other students for reading. Twenty five students responded that they usually read individually and preferred to do so. They also made clear that some students sought help for themselves particularly during periods of preparation for examinations by reading with others. This shows that students do not read normally together for mutual benefit.

The findings of the study on social strategies suggest that students seem to hardly use these strategies at all. Different reasons could be given for this. It is traditional that in Ethiopia there is always a distance between teachers and students and this discourages and makes students scared to approach their teachers and discuss matters related to their studies. This would for most students and teachers be culturally unacceptable and would contradict norms of behavior institutionalized within educational practices in Ethiopian Schools. The same practices exist even in the university. For the same reason most, if not all, of our students do not have the habit of asking their teachers for explanation on things they cannot understand or vaguely understand even when they are encouraged to do so.

In the following up interview, it was observed that the students are not aware of or convinced of the value of working together in their academic endeavour. In their responses it became clear that they perceive their education as a highly serious, painful and competitive pursuit in which one has always to try to outperform the others. Since the chance and fear of failure are high, education is perceived as an individualistic and competitive activity rather than as cooperative and mutually supportive endeavour. On the basis of the results, one can infer that the concept of education held within society - as a serious, painful struggle for each individual - in conjunction with an unwillingness to cooperate with more proficient users of the target language, because it goes against traditional educational expectations,

help to explain the limited use of social strategies by the respondents.

4.5 AFFECTIVE READING STRATEGIES

Stern (1983:411) states that affective strategies are strategies which help learners cope effectively with the emotional and motivational problems of language learning. O'Malley (1990) and Oxford (1989) share this view. Oxford (1989:140) says that the term 'affective' refers to emotions, attitudes, motivations and values and that language learners can gain control over these factors through affective strategies. She adds that the affective side of the learner is probably one of the very biggest influences on language learning success or failure. According to her, good language learners are often those who know how to control their emotions and attitudes about learning.

In her taxonomy of strategies, Oxford has thus identified and described a number of affective strategies that are said to be useful for successful learning. I, therefore, tried to find out whether or not my subjects would say they used different affective strategies to ease their tensions and to overcome other affective problems. Items 32-39 in the questionnaire were thus aimed at achieving this purpose. Table 5 presents the information obtained through these questions.

Items	Strategies	R e s p o n s e		
		Never	Sometimes	Always
32	Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing	147 65.6%	48 21.0%	29 13%
33	Listening to music	113 50.4%	70 31.3%	41 18.3%
34	Using laughter	128 57.1%	76 33.9%	20 9%
35	Making positive statements	28 12.5%	50 22.3%	146 65.2%
36	Taking risks wisely	21 9.4%	44 19.6%	159 71%
37	Rewarding yourself	46 20.5%	47 21%	131 58.5%
	Listening to yourself	38 16.9%	54 24.1%	132 59%
38	Discussing your emotions	98 43.8%	85 37.9%	41 18.3%

The result reveals that most of the students claimed that they never or very rarely relaxed themselves by relaxing their muscles or breathing deeply (Item 32), listening to music (Item 33), chatting to friends (Item 34) or discussing their feelings with their peers or teachers (Item 39). On the other hand, a high proportion of the subjects claimed that they very often tried to ease their tensions by making positive statements about themselves (Item 35), by telling themselves that they should not worry if they made mistakes (Item 36), by rewarding themselves (Item 37) and listening to their emotions by discussing their feelings and frustrations about reading with others (Item 38).

In an attempt to further investigate this and in order to verify the students' replies, a number of follow up interview questions were employed with 36 interviewees. In the interview it was attempted to confirm whether or not the students had understood the questions. All of the thirty six interviewed students confirmed that they were quite unaware

of the value of the strategy of using progressive relaxation and deep breathing (Item 32) and did not use it at all. Contrary to the replies made to Items 36-37, 29 said that they were usually too worried about their study to make positive statements about themselves, in order to encourage themselves and they even doubted that they could succeed. Regarding the strategy of taking risks wisely (Item 36) and contrary to the responses given to this item in the questionnaire, most of the students interviewed confirmed that the thought of the possible failure always disturbed them and that they never tolerated making mistakes. They also made clear that they usually rewarded themselves only after tests or examinations. Most of them also disclosed that they read their study materials or tried to read them regardless of whether they felt relaxed or frustrated and tense at the time.

The follow up interview, thus, enabled me to realize that most of the students know very little of strategies that may help them lessen their tension or overcome their affective problems; most of them are unwilling to give themselves time to relax in any way, for example, by listening to music or even by going for a walk after reading for long hours.

The result that was obtained through the questionnaire and the follow up interview questions is not surprising to one who is informed of or has experienced Freshman life. Students always come to the university with the expectation that university education is unmanageable and therefore, the likelihood of failure is stronger than the likelihood of succeeding. The result is that students always feel under pressure and expect to feel so. This suggests that these strategies may be largely culture-bound and thus draws into questions the validity of this part of Oxford's taxonomy.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

This study was not intended to assess the value of language learning strategies in the light of other variables. Neither was it to determine which strategies are most effective or would help the students adopt more productive learning procedures.

The purpose of the present study was:

- i. to investigate the reading strategies AAU 1st year students say they use frequently, less frequently and not at all and thereby.
- ii. to try to assess the students' awareness of a wide range of reading strategies that are believed by researchers to facilitate effective reading.
- iii. to identify if there were any reading strategies believed by researchers to be inappropriate that the subjects of the study would say they used and to try to account for their use.

A questionnaire was used as a primary source of data collection for the study. Follow up interview questions were carried out with a subset of the target population to verify and validate the replies obtained through the questionnaire.

Analysis of the replies obtained from both sources suggested that the subjects are not aware of, nor do they employ a number of strategies classified by researchers as "useful" cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social and affective strategies. Especially during the interviews, I became more convinced that students do not use or very

rarely use these strategies. Furthermore, the interview brought me to conclude that the students also lack awareness of most of them. These include the following cognitive reading strategies:

- a. reading a text more than once each time for different purposes and varying the speed.
- b. Practising reading in English by reading authentic materials outside normal study texts.
- c. Skimming and scanning
- d. Using a range of techniques for taking notes
- e. Summarizing

Similarly, the students seem to be unaware of and lack confidence in using guessing strategies to attack and work out meanings of new words in texts.

The reading strategies classified as metacognitive strategies and that the students are neither aware of nor frequently use include:

- a. Finding out about language learning by talking to people or reading books about language learning
- b. Keeping a language learning notebook for writing down new target language expressions, structures etc.
- c. Setting goals in order to become proficient enough to read professional materials, magazines, newspapers etc.
- d. Identifying the purpose of a language task
- e. Self evaluating
- f. Seeking practice opportunities.

The study also suggested that the students are unaware of and unwilling to use social readings strategies termed as:

- a. Asking for clarification/verification
- b. cooperating with proficient users of the language and
- c. cooperating with peers.

It was also observed from the study that the students' awareness and use of effective strategies to ease their tension is almost next to nothing. Affective strategies not apparently used include:

- a. using progressive relaxation deep breathing.
- b. listening to music,
- c. using laughter
- d. making positive statements
- e. taking risks wisely
- f. rewarding oneself
- g. listening to oneself
- h. discussing one's emotions.

The data yielded by the study, particularly during the interview, also suggested that the students make conscious decisions about using certain strategies that researchers consider to be less effective. In other words, they deliberately prefer using them to other strategies. Thus, during the interview I found that the subjects argued that strategies such as reading slowly, frequently translating and using dictionaries to get word meanings rather than guessing them were appropriate as basic strategies and were helping them to be more effective readers. Moreover, I found that

the students could not easily describe the strategies they actually use. On the basis of the results of the study it can, therefore, be argued that AAU 1st year students have limited "strategic knowledge" (Wenden 1991:38).

The low awareness and non-use of certain reading strategies considered to be likely to facilitate effective reading and the tendency to use other less effective strategies can be partly explained in terms of the influence of socio-cultural/educational and institutional practices on students. In Ethiopia, the awareness students have about how learning takes place is very limited and their beliefs about their own part in the learning process are similarly very uninformed. Students regard teachers as solely responsible for the success or failure of their learning. Moreover, teachers themselves have insufficient awareness and relevant training to encourage more autonomous learning. They also lack willingness to devolve responsibility to students as a result of their own culturally determined beliefs about their roles in the teaching - learning process. Consequently, most students show very little enthusiasm for taking charge of their own learning. This lack of awareness in students of their crucial role in developing their own learning, teachers' insufficient awareness and relevant training to encourage more autonomous learning and lack of any willingness to devolve responsibility to students are, I believe, major causes of the non-use of a number of strategies widely believed to be likely to lead to more successful reading. As Horwitz (1987:120) argues, erroneous beliefs about language learning strategies lead to less effective language learning strategies.

In the preceding sections of this paper it has been pointed out that Oxford's taxonomy was used for the purpose of the study as it was felt to be the most suitable one available. Although the strategies in the taxonomy were not used word for word, the result of the study, however, indicates that some of the strategies in her taxonomy appear to be culture-bound and therefore not all of them can be

applicable to all situations. In particular it appears that a number of the strategies classified as affective strategies that relate to ways of coping with stress are likely to be alien to our students. This is because of the cultural and educational expectations our students have assimilated.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

1. Efforts should be made to raise our students' awareness of what language is and how people learn languages and to modify their beliefs about and attitudes towards English language learning in particular. Many students in Ethiopia, particularly those in high schools, believe that their teachers are more responsible for their learning than they are. This is natural in a culture and an educational system where respect for authority and status are regarded so much more highly than willingness to depart from the norm, be independent etc. As a result, students are unwilling to take on responsibility for their learning. They accept the current tendency and learning process in which learning English is typically seen as learning sentence grammar and vocabulary with emphasis on manipulation and memorization and where learning of skills in interpreting and making use of language is assumed to be something the students will develop naturally if they are clever. The influence of ingrained teaching habits uninformed by recent teachers' training, of textbooks which embody a very limited view of language learning, of socio-cultural beliefs about learning and what should happen in classrooms, all tend to encourage students to accept a passive, unquestioning approach to the learning process. This can account for students' use of certain less-effective reading strategies.

Students in the final years of high school should be encouraged to be more aware of and more active participants in the learning process. They should, if possible, be convinced that they can be more effective learners if they take greater responsibility for the success of their learning. In particular, they should be encouraged to believe that the attempts they make to try out alternative reading strategies can decide their success or failure in improving their reading skills.

2. O'Malley, in Wenden (1987:133), argues that less competent learners should be able to improve their skills in a second language through training on strategies evidenced among more successful language learners. This points to the need not only to modify our students' beliefs about language and language learning and to raise their awareness of a range reading strategies, but also to provide specific training in using a range of strategies, thereby helping them to learn how to learn for themselves. In this way they may become more autonomous learners who, according to Wenden (1991:53), will be more willing to take on some responsibility for their learning and see themselves as having a crucial role in their language learning.

This does not mean that all those strategies identified by Oxford and other researchers may be acceptable or applicable to our students. It would appear, for example, that an emphasis on certain affective strategies concerned with ways of coping with stress by relaxing might be unsuccessful, because the influence of socio-cultural beliefs means there is a much higher tolerance for and expectation of stress as a part of the learning process. Put simply Freshman students expect to struggle, even expect to fail as 'Christmas Graduates', and this is not something that strategy training is likely to have much impact on.

3. O'Malley (1987:135) argues that teachers can play an important role in strategy training by conveying strategy applications to students and thereby supporting students' efforts to learn the new language. Indeed, it has been argued by Ayeneabeba (1993) that teachers are much more of a barrier to change than students. Efforts should, therefore, be made by teacher trainers both in pre-service and in-service programs to raise teachers' awareness of what language is, how people learn languages and to make them aware of the importance of students' using a range of strategies in order to learn to read successfully. The reason for this is that teacher trainees can later in the classroom help their students become aware of language learning strategies as important agents and help them to acquire and apply these strategies.

4. Textbooks can help students become more successful readers if they are designed in such a way that they involve the students in various activities that raise awareness of strategies and encourage the use of a range of strategies. Our current ENE textbooks are entirely inadequate in this regard. To improve this situation syllabus designers and textbook writer should make efforts to produce materials that encourage students to reflect more on their own learning and give them the opportunity to practise using a range of strategies for developing reading skills.

5. It is apparent that reading for purposes other than academic ones has not become part of our culture. Many people hardly, if ever, read for pleasure in their first language let alone in English. This lack of the habit of reading for pleasure can also be seen in terms of the students' lack of confidence in reading.

To change these conditions and to involve students at least in some extensive reading in English, schools,

libraries and restaurants should endeavour to encourage all

learners to read in English outside class on a regular basis. School libraries ought to make available to students a range of interesting, appropriately graded and authentic materials and teachers should or even assign their students to read such materials. This could include graded readers or newspapers from school libraries.

To lessen the problem of shortage of such materials, teachers and schools should collect together a variety of material in English such as tourism brochures, timetables, magazines, newspapers, ELT books and make these easily available. Libraries should be open access and every effort should be exerted to sell the idea of extensive reading to students and help them to develop confidence and interest in reading.

Schools should be encouraged to join a government or British Council Library and if possible to become part of the British Council bulk book loans scheme.

A display board in a prominent place with items changed regularly and with interesting things in English to be read by all is a powerful way to get students to read. Schools, therefore, should adopt such techniques to attract their students' attention and involve them in extensive reading. All these could encourage students to read more and to gain confidence in the application of various and more appropriate reading strategies.

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Appendix A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SAMPLE

Table 6

Place of Birth	No. of Respondents		Sex	No. of Respondents	
Addis Ababa	53	23.7%	M	171	76.3%
Urban	90	40.2%	F	53	23.6%
Rural	81	36.1%			

Table 7

Age and First Language

Age	No. of Respondents		First Language	No. of Respondents	
17 - 19	108	48.2%	Amharic	116	51.7%
20 - 22	86	38.4%	Oromigna	64	28.8%
23 - 25	12	8%	Tigrigna	14	6.3%
26 and above	18	8.4%	Others	30	13.4%

Table 8

Secondary Schools Attended

School Type	No. of Respondents	
Government	163	72.7%
Non-government	61	27.3%

Appendix B
Questionnaire Covering Letter

Dear Students:

Firstly, I would like to thank you for participating in this study.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data for a study leading to an MA degree in TEFL-Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

The study is conducted to explore the things you do in order to help you read and understand reading materials in English. The researcher hopes that the result of this study will enable the University and other to take necessary steps to help students develop their reading strategies.

The questionnaire has 39 questions. Every question has the following three options.

Never _____ Sometimes _____ Always _____
--

You are asked to tick () your answer after considering the three options provided.

This questionnaire is not looking for 'right' answers, but is searching for your answers about your reading strategies when reading in English. The information you will provide is CONFIDENTIAL. So, I request you to be honest and frank. Your name is not required but it will be appreciated if you could give some information about yourself.

Thank you very much

Girma Gezahegn
School of Graduate Studies
Addis Ababa University.

1. Do you read reading materials in English (e.g. Passages, Sentences, Words, etc...) more than once for different purposes or to understand more each time?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

2. Do you practise reading in English by reading a variety of magazines, newspapers, Journals and other materials written in English but not related to your academic studies?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

(3-4)

To determine whether reading material is relevant or not to your purpose or to get the main idea:

3. Do you read it slowly and carefully and try to understand everything?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

4. Do you read it quickly ignoring difficult words and sentences and try to understand the main idea?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

5. (5-6)

If you want a particular piece of information (date, name of a person or place etc):

5. Do you read the text slowly and carefully until you get what you are looking for?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

6. Do you read the text very quickly until you get what you are looking for?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

7. Do you use dictionaries, grammar books, word lists, and phrase books to help you understand what you read?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

.../

8. When you read a text in English, do you ever try to use general rules of English language (e.g. knowledge of sentence patterns—subject +verb + object etc or other rules e.g. it ends in -ed so it must be a past tense verb) or other knowledge of English to get the meaning of what you read?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

9. When you find it difficult to understand a word, phrase, sentence or part of a passage, do you ever divide it into parts to help you understand the text better?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

10. How often do you try to understand what you read by translating it into your mother tongue?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

11. (11-15)

In order to help you understand or remember what you read in English, which of the following do you do?

11. Take notes by copying important sections (i.e. without changing the sentences).

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

12. Take notes by writing out main points and details or examples very briefly (i.e. reducing what you read to short phrases)

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

13. Underline information (words, phrases, sentences) you think is very important either in your own notes or in books.

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

14. Summarize what you read (i.e. make a condensed, shorter version of the original text using your own words in sentences).

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

.../

(15-17)

If you do not understand what you read (words, phrases, sentences):

15. Do you turn to a dictionary and look up all the unknown words in the text during your reading?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

16. Do you turn to a dictionary and look up all the unknown words in the text after you read it?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

17. Do you try to guess the meaning?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

(18-20)

If your answer for '18' is 'Sometimes' or 'Always' what clues do you use?

18. Using the word (s) before or/and after the new word or your understanding of the whole context in the text?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

19. Using your previous knowledge of the subject you are reading, your knowledge of the world, etc

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

20. Using your knowledge of grammar (e.g. it ends in -ed so it must be a verb in past tense)

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

21. Do you ever try to know more about how people learn languages by talking to others about your language learning problems or by reading books about how people learn languages?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

22. Do you keep a language learning notebook in which you can write new English expressions, words, structures you find while reading?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

23. Do you ever read materials in English outside class with the goal to improve your reading?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

24. Do you try to identify in advance the purpose for reading something in English (i.e. reading for pleasure, reading for detail etc in order to consciously vary your approach according to your purpose)?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

25. Do you think about what you may find in a reading text (predict in advance) before you start reading?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

26. If you make a mistake, guess wrongly, misunderstand the meaning of all or part of a text, do you check back and try to correct yourself?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

27. Do you try to assess your reading proficiency to see whether or not your speed or comprehension or overall reading skills have improved?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

28. Do you ever seek additional opportunities to practise reading outside the classroom (e.g). by reading newspapers, magazines or corresponding with a pen-pal)?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

29. When you are not sure whether you have understood correctly or not what you have read, do you ask your teacher or other people who are better than you in English for clarification?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

30. When you cannot understand what you are reading in English, do you ask your teacher or another person who is better than you in English for help?

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

31. When you and your friends (class-mates) have to read the same text for the same goal, do you work with them (e.g. do you read the text together and figure out the overall meaning or

Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

32. Do you try to relax your muscles (e.g. by breathing deeply) to reduce your tension if you have to read something difficult or if you are worried about something you have got to read?
- Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___
33. Do you listen to music to relax yourself before you start reading something if you think it may be difficult or if you are anxious?
- Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___
34. Do you chat to friends to relax yourself before you start reading a text, if you think it will be difficult or if you are anxious?
- Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___
35. Do you make positive statements to yourself such as:
- I am a good reader,
I enjoy reading the new language,
I can understand what I read etc
- Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___
36. Do you tell yourself that it is ok if you make mistakes or if you fail to understand adequately and that you should not fear failure or making mistakes?
- Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___
37. Do you reward yourself for your achievement in your reading? (e.g. tell yourself that you have done well, tell yourself that you deserve rest and a cup of tea/ coffee?)
- Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___
38. Do you try to understand your emotions (e.g. whether you feel tension, anxiety, fear, happiness) during or before reading?
- Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___
39. Do you discuss with your peers or teachers your feelings and attitudes towards reading?
- Never ___ Sometimes ___ Always ___

End of questionnaire

Thank you very much

Appendix C

FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW

1. Think about the things you have read for study at the university recently and any other materials you have in English outside your studies can you tell me about them?
2. How many times do you usually read something in english? Once? Twice? or more?
 - a. Do you remember whether you have read anything recently in English more than once? Why did you do that?
 - b. Did you ever feel you were reading a piece of writing two or three times but for different purposes?
3. Did you read everything slowly and carefully? What value did you find in this?
4. Have you eve read anything in English very quickly recently? What? Why?
5. What kinds of reference materials in English have you used recently to help you understand what you read? What kinds of help have you got from them recently?
6. I'd like you to look at these sentences. Can you tell me what word classes the following underlined words belong to? (verbs, adjectives, nouns ---)?

He are cooked meat.

He cooked the meat.

He bought used cars.

How did you work this out?

7. Have you ever taken notes recently? How did you do it? Why did you do it like that?
8. Again I want you to think about what you have done recently. Whenever you came across a new word whose meaning you did not know, what did you do? Did you use a dictionary, try to work it out for yourself, ignore it?
9. Look at this short texts. Can you work out what the underlined words mean? can you describe to me how you worked out the meanings? What clues did you use?

1. Some of the green plants we have mentioned live on the land and others dwel in the waters of the earth, but usually live close to the surface where they are in contact with all the important sunlight.

a. live b. fight c. breathe

2. The purple sulphur bacteria and the chemosynthetic bacteria, on the other had, are inhabitants of swampy and marshy areas.

a. live in b. cannot be found in c. do not live in

3. All other organisms are directly or indirectly dependent upon them for their sustenance.

a. home b. food c. air

- II. Read the text and try to understand the general meaning of the story. All the underlined words are nonsense words.

A country girl was walking along the snerd with roggle of milk on her head. She began saying to

make me enough money to increase my trund of eggs to three hundred. These eggs will produce the same number of chickens and I'll be able to sell the chickens for a large wunk of money. Before long, I'll have enough money to live a rich and fallentious life. All the young men will want to marry me. But I'll refuse them all with a ribble of the head like this ----'.

And as she ribbled her head, the roggle fell to the ground and all the milk ran in a white stream along the snerd, carrying her plans with it.

Taken from Doff (pp).

10. Have you ever written down new English expressions, words, structures you find while reading in order to remember them or to use them in speaking or/and writing?
11. Think about the things you have read for study and other materials in English recently? Did you try to identify in advance the purpose for reading these materials - reading for pleasure, reading for detail? Do you remember and varying your approach according to your purpose?
12. Again think about the things you have **read** for study recently and any other materials you have read in English. Do you remember thinking in advance what you might find in these materials before you start reading them?

What helped you to make the predictions?

13. Whenever you feel you guess wrongly, or make a mistake or fail to understand what do you do to correct yourself?

14. Think about reading in your other subjects over the past two weeks. How often have you read texts together with your friends? Why/why not? Do you often cooperate with other students for reading? At any particular time?

15. When you are going to read something, are you ever aware of relaxing yourself before you start reading? How do you do it?