

Teaching Metacognitive Reading Strategies: Evidence from Cambodian EFL High School Students

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ABSTRACT

It is widely considered that students of English as a Foreign Language get a significant advantage by employing metacognitive tactics. Research that has been conducted in the past has led to a greater knowledge of metacognitive reading methods in the English as a Foreign Language environment. Nevertheless, only a small number of studies have found statistically significant effects on students' reading abilities. As a result, this study anticipated an opportunity to clarify this topic by focusing on the proficiency of high school students in Cambodia who are learning English as a foreign language. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of metacognitive strategy instruction on students' knowledge of these strategies and on their reading performance on standardised tests. The study was attended by 55 English as a Foreign Language high school students enrolled in a public school in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The students participated for a total of eight weeks. The instruments used for the research were the SORS, the English proficiency reading test, and the lesson plans. In comparison to before the instruction, the students in the Cambodian EFL high school employed the PRS the most after the SORS instruction, followed by the GRS and then the SRS. Additionally, it demonstrated significant gains in both approach awareness ($p < 0.01$) and International English Language Testing System reading scores ($M = 6.65$ to 8.13 , $p < 0.01$). The usefulness of specific strategy training in improving the reading performance of students studying English as a foreign language is underscored by these findings. In addition, these results will guide educational methods in Cambodia in the future.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Students in Cambodia face a significant challenge in comprehending reading material in English, as English is taught there as a foreign language, despite its widespread recognition as a global language. According to prior research, metacognitive strategies,

defined as the conscious and goal-directed management of cognitive processes, are essential in helping English as a Foreign Language learners enhance their reading skills. Despite this, there have been very few studies investigating the impact of directly instructing these tactics in the Cambodian setting. By examining how metacognitive strategy training affects both reading strategy awareness and reading performance among Cambodian high school students, this study aims to fill the identified gap in the research.

1.1 Statement of Problems

It is believed that English is a universal language. English, however, is regarded as a foreign language in Cambodia. Reading in English as a foreign language (EFL) is often considered challenging for students [1]. Each student's approach to achieving learning objectives is influenced by a variety of elements, such as metacognitive knowledge —the knowledge or views they have gained about cognitive processes [2], [3]. EFL students are believed to benefit greatly from metacognitive strategies, which are defined as the deliberate, goal-directed control of cognitive processes [4], in order to attain a deeper understanding when reading [5]. The repertoire of reading strategies includes strategies such as translating from English to the local language, altering the reading speed, and setting goals before reading. These examples illustrate tactics that readers can employ to enhance their reading skills.

The understanding of metacognitive reading methods in EFL contexts has been enhanced by previous research. Several issues with the study methodology, particularly the use of instructional models, resulted in only a small number of studies producing meaningful effects on students' reading proficiency. Despite prior research, little is known about how explicit instruction in metacognitive reading strategies affects the reading proficiency of Cambodian high school students. This study, therefore, investigates both awareness of strategy use and performance on standardised reading tests.

1.2 Purposes of the Study

- a. To ascertain the effects of teaching metacognitive methods in an EFL reading course on the awareness of reading strategies among EFL high school students in Cambodia.
- b. To determine how the teaching was perceived to have impacted the reading performance of Cambodian EFL high school students on a standardised test.

1.3 Research Questions

- a. To what extent does the teaching of metacognitive strategies affect the Cambodian EFL high school students' awareness of reading strategies?
- b. What are the effects of the teaching on the Cambodian EFL high school students' reading performance?

1.4 Contributions of the Study

The study's conclusions could be used in a number of ways with regard to EFL reader instruction.

- a. EFL teachers and educators could use the data to develop lesson plans that are suitable for the students' level of reading strategy knowledge to enhance EFL students' reading comprehension and, in turn, their reading performance.
- b. Apart from the educational benefits, Cambodian EFL students can strategically handle problems that may arise while reading English literature, as they understand the effectiveness of metacognitive reading techniques.
- c. This study is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the impact of metacognitive methods in the domains of English language teaching (ELT) and EFL, helping to define learning in a world where information is continuously pouring into every aspect of life.

2. METHOD

To examine the influence of metacognitive strategy instruction on the English reading skills of Cambodian high school students, the researchers employed a quantitative research design that combined both survey and experimental techniques. Throughout the 2023–2024 school year, fifty-five students in grade 12 at a public school in Phnom Penh participated. The data were gathered over the course of eight weeks through the use of lesson plans, IELTS reading tests, the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), and semi-structured interviews. To measure changes in students' awareness and reading proficiency, statistical analyses were conducted, which included descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and t-tests. Throughout the entire process, ethical norms were scrupulously respected.

2.1 Research Design

In this study, quantitative research methods were employed. The current study employed both survey and experimental methods.

2.2 Research Participants

Fifty-five Cambodian EFL high school students enrolled in grade 12 at a public school in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, participated in this study during the 2023-2024 academic year. Students were enrolled in programs in Khmer and science. The students took two EFL classes every semester. One course focused on English grammar, while another was designed to introduce participants to EFL reading at a level suitable for their studies.

2.3 Research Instruments and Design Procedures

An 8-week timeframe was used for both teaching and data collection. Data was gathered using a variety of research instruments, including training sessions, semi-structured interviews, the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), and the results of the IELTS reading competence test. Lesson plans for the instruction sessions were created using the Oxford [6] and Grenfell and Harris [7] approach teaching frameworks. The suggested hybrid model for teaching metacognitive reading strategies is shown below.

- a. It was necessary to consider the overall number of strategies and clusters when designing the model. Mokhtari and Reichard [8] categorise reading strategies into three groups: Support Reading Strategies (SRSs), Global Reading Strategies (GRSs), and Problem-solving Reading Strategies (PRSs). To help students learn more about reading methods,
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the first few sessions should be devoted to awareness-raising activities. Students' previous implementations of reading strategies are provided during those sessions to gauge their level of involvement. Students discuss their thoughts on the reading strategies used on this particular occasion. To enable people who have never used a particular learning gadget to learn how to use it, a strategy application can be necessary. A reading assignment is given during the stage so that the classroom has supporting material for the discussion. To facilitate future use, a list of the reading strategies presented is also established. The target reading strategies (SRSs, GRSs, and PRSs) are the focus of group discussions after the first session, which were designed to raise awareness of implementing reading strategies, with a reliability of 0.95. It is crucial to keep in mind that the instructor has the authority to alter the order of the strategy group discussion based on particular circumstances that may arise.

- b. Raising awareness, speculating on which strategies belong to the cluster, or sharing prior experiences with strategies considered to be part of the group are the first steps in any strategy cluster debate. Students are given a learning task to complete in groups or attempt to finish on their own after a lengthy discussion. Through the group assignment, students can collaborate with peers who can model and encourage the implementation of the planned techniques, and even link the application combinations. Instead of restricting a single approach to a single task, this could promote creativity in how tactics are applied. An individual task can foster students' independence. Without assistance from their peers, students can individually exercise their creative usage. The class will subsequently hear a presentation highlighting the key points of the conversation or the individual's experiences working independently on a task. It is advised to provide student with the checklist of reading strategies regularly so they may track their development. Attempting to involve students as much as possible is the main goal of this section.
- c. Students can organise a reading strategy seminar, which is the model's final section, by trying out a range of readings, such as poetry, comic strips, lyrics, excerpts from documentaries, literary passages, and other materials. Students are free to utilise as many inventive strategies as they choose. Visual aids are permitted during lecture sessions to enhance listening comprehension. The class as a whole can follow or contribute ideas during their turns through lively discussions and comments.

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

The data gathering procedures used in this study were divided into three phases. The IELTS reading test and SORS must be completed by students in the first segment. The section was completed in the first two hours of class. The second part of the study was the sessions. Teaching was conducted in accordance with the suggestions outlined in each lesson plan. There were eighteen sessions. A new set of IELTS reading tests and SORS was required of the students in the last stage.

2.5 Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures

To analyse the collected data, SPSS software was used. Data from pre- and post-teaching questionnaires were examined using frequency analysis and descriptive statistics.

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was employed to assess the reliability of the questionnaires (SORS). To examine the values before and after teaching, a paired t-test was used. Pairwise tests were used to assess the mean. The analysis of the post-teaching scores was done using an independent t-test.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Before initiating participant recruitment and data collection, the researcher obtained consent from both the recruiting students and the researcher's own university. Informed consent forms had to be signed, and students could withdraw from the study at any time. Through the agreement with the recruiting student, the researcher protected the student's anonymity and data security.

3. RESULTS

The results of the study about the two research topics are discussed in this section. The findings are divided into two sections: the first explores the influence of metacognitive strategy instruction on students' knowledge of reading methods, and the second examines the impact of metacognitive strategy instruction on students' reading performance as measured by the IELTS reading test.

3.1 Results for the Research Question One

The first research question was asked: *“To what extent does the metacognitive strategy teaching affect the Cambodian EFL high school students’ awareness toward reading strategies?”*

Table 1. Results of Comparing the SORS Pre- and Post-Teaching (N=55)

Item	Supporting Reading Strategies (SRS)	Pre-Teaching M (SD)	Post-Teaching M (SD)	Sig.
1	In order to better grasp what I read, I take notes while I read.	1.85 (0.96)	3.10 (0.96)	< 0.01
2	I read aloud to myself to make sense of texts that are hard for me to understand.	2.57 (0.56)	3.43 (0.99)	< 0.01
3	Information in the text is highlighted or circled to aid my memory.	3.36 (0.41)	4.13 (0.97)	< 0.01
4	To assist me recall things, I consult reference tools like dictionaries.	3.50 (0.76)	2.94 (0.95)	< 0.01
5	To make sense of what I read, I paraphrase or put concepts in my own words.	3.75 (0.82)	4.06 (0.93)	0.09
6	I read the material back and forth to look for connections between the concepts.	3.80 (0.68)	4.00 (0.90)	0.02
7	In the text, I ask myself questions that I would like to have answered.	2.85 (0.96)	3.60 (0.75)	< 0.01
8	I translate what I read from English into Khmer.	3.49 (0.67)	3.59 (0.77)	0.67
9	I consider both Khmer and English information when I read.	3.51 (0.56)	3.75 (0.84)	0.23
	Total	3.18 (0.70)	3.62 (0.89)	< 0.01

As revealed in Table 1 above, the statistical significance of the methods categorised as SRS was reported at $p < 0.01$. The average scores obtained from the SORS administrations conducted pre- and post-teaching provided support for this. In other words, the subcategory's pre-teaching survey average and standard deviation were 3.18 and 0.70, respectively. In the meantime, the post-teaching SORS had an average of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 0.89. This demonstrated that the teaching may have impacted the research participants' perceptions of strategy application. However, five strategies (1, 2, 3, 4, and 7) were reported with statistical significance. Nos. 5, 6, 8, and 9 were the techniques that were deemed to be statistically insignificant. Notably, the phenomenon of this subcategory differed from that of the previous groupings. That is, during both SORS administration phases, there were two strategies whose average scores were high enough to be considered for use: SRS-5 and SRS-6 were those tactics. The strategies designated as SRS-4 and SRS-9 were seen to have a minor increase in the meantime. The SORS provided before the intervention was used to classify the mean values of these procedures ($M = 3.50$ and 3.51 , respectively) as medium use levels [22]. The average values for these two methods independently increased to 4.09 and 4.14. These values were grouped under high-usage tactics. In addition, considering each item, the SRS-5 "*To make sense of what I read, I paraphrase, or put concepts in my own words*" was reported to have the highest frequency of utilisation among the methods reported in the post-teaching phase ($M = 4.06$). The technique that was most frequently utilised in pre-teaching was SRS-6: "*I read the material back and forth to look for connections between the concepts*" ($M = 3.80$).

As shown in Table 2, the GRS group's mean score for pre-teaching was 3.67 ($SD = 0.78$). Post-teaching, the mean score was 4.00 ($SD=0.83$). The statistical significance ($p < 0.01$) is influenced by the difference between the results of the two SORS administrations. The results indicated that the teaching of metacognitive methods may have impacted the perceived application of GRS. Nevertheless, there was disagreement over the paired t-test results for each strategy in the group. In other words, eight strategies (1, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, and 13) achieved statistical significance at the $p < 0.05$ level. In contrast to these tactics, the remaining five (2, 4, 7, 8, and 9) were not found to be statistically significant. The mean values of the pre- and post-responses for these techniques were considered to understand the phenomenon. The means can be divided into three categories: low usage, which has a mean score below 2.50, medium usage, which has a mean score between 2.50 and 3.49, and high usage, which has an average value of 3.50 or above [9]. Both pre-and post-teaching, the five techniques' average values were found to be higher than 3.50. The frequent employment of the tactics by the research participants was thus explained. However, considering each item, the GRS-1 "*When I read, I have a specific goal in mind*" was reported to have the highest frequency of utilisation among the methods reported in the post-teaching phase ($M = 4.45$). At the same time, the technique that was most frequently utilised in pre-teaching was GRS-9 "*I highlight important information with typographic elements like bold and italics*" ($M = 4.18$).

Table 2. Results of Comparing the SORS Pre- and Post-Teaching (N=55)

Item	Global Reading Strategies (GRS)	Pre-Teaching M (SD)	Post-Teaching M (SD)	Sig.
1	When I read, I have a specific goal in mind.	4.10 (0.80)	4.45 (0.75)	0.02
2	To assist me understand what I read, I consider what I already know.	4.10 (0.88)	4.25 (0.79)	0.27
3	Before reading a text, I try to get a general idea of what it is about.	3.45 (0.70)	4.10 (0.88)	< 0.01
4	I consider whether the text's substance aligns with why I am reading it.	3.95 (0.68)	4.05 (0.98)	0.70
5	I start by going over the text and noting its features, such as its structure and length.	3.90 (0.80)	4.38 (0.75)	0.03
6	I choose what to pay special attention to and what to disregard while I read.	3.25 (0.79)	3.98 (0.80)	< 0.01
7	To improve my comprehension, I utilise text with tables, figures, and images.	3.68 (0.86)	3.40 (0.75)	0.27
8	To better comprehend what I am reading, I make use of context cues.	4.15 (0.77)	4.22 (0.95)	0.65
9	I highlight important information with typographic elements like bold and italics.	4.18 (0.96)	4.35 (0.97)	0.32
10	I assess and critically examine the data that is provided in the text.	3.46 (0.68)	3.88 (0.87)	0.03
11	When I learn something new, I make sure I understand it.	3.44 (0.83)	3.86 (0.85)	0.03
12	When I read, I make an effort to infer the text's context.	3.10 (0.72)	3.74 (0.61)	< 0.01
13	I examine to see if my assumptions about the text are accurate.	2.99 (0.78)	3.46 (0.88)	0.02
	Total	3.67 (0.78)	4.00 (0.83)	< 0.01

As presented in Table 3, the paired t-test results for the Problem-Solving Reading Strategies (PRS) revealed that the post-teaching PRS mean score ($M = 4.11$) was higher than the pre-teaching mean score ($M = 3.73$), indicating significant improvement ($p < 0.01$). Considering by each item, the PRS-6 “*To assist me recall what I read, I make an effort to envision or picture the content*” was reported to have the highest frequency of utilization among the methods reported in post-teaching ($M=4.30$), while the technique that was most frequently utilized in pre-teaching was PRS-2 “*I make an effort to regain focus when I lose it*” ($M = 4.11$).

The PRS cluster was found to be statistically significant. The improvement in the sub-dimensions mean score between the two SORS administrations was the cause of this. Stated differently, the results of the initial SORS administration indicated that the PRS sub-dimension's average value was 3.73 ($SD=0.80$). Meanwhile, an average score of 4.11 ($SD = 0.75$) was found in the post-teaching SORS. The study's results showed that the participants' application of the approach was positively impacted by the training. In specifics, four of the eight tactics used in the subcategory (1, 4, 5, and 6) were reported with statistical significance. Additionally, four techniques (2, 3, 7, and 8) were not deemed statistically

significant. [22] found that both before and after receiving instruction in metacognitive reading strategies, the average replies of the latter method group were at a high usage level.

Table 3. Results of Comparing the SORS Pre- and Post-Teaching (N=55)

Item	Problem-Solving Reading Strategies (PRS)	Pre-Teaching M	Pre-Teaching SD	Post-Teaching M	Post-Teaching SD	Sig.
1	To make sure I comprehend what I'm reading, I read slowly and attentively.	3.65	0.73	4.20	0.87	< 0.01
2	I make an effort to regain focus when I lose it.	4.11	0.88	4.23	0.89	0.43
3	Depending on what I'm reading, I modify my reading speed.	3.81	0.77	4.10	0.85	0.15
4	As the text gets challenging, I focus more intently on what I'm reading.	3.75	0.78	4.22	0.91	0.02
5	I occasionally take a moment to reflect on what I'm reading.	2.90	0.84	3.55	0.87	< 0.01
6	To assist me in recalling what I read, I make an effort to envision or picture the content.	3.68	0.75	4.30	0.86	< 0.01
7	I revisit texts that I find challenging to improve my comprehension.	4.05	0.95	4.18	0.82	0.51
8	I infer unknown words or phrases from what I read.	3.90	0.71	4.12	0.88	0.28
	Total	3.73	0.80	4.11	0.75	< 0.01

4.2 Results for the Research Question Two

The second research question was asked: “*What are the effects of the teaching on the Cambodian EFL high school students' reading performance?*”

Table 4. Results of Comparing IELTS Reading Score Performance (N=55)

Student	Pre-Teaching IRS	Post-Teaching IRS	Student	Pre-Teaching IRS	Post-Teaching IRS
S01	6.5	8	S30	6	8
S02	7	8.5	S31	6	8.5
S03	6.5	8.5	S32	7	8.5
S04	7.5	9	S33	5.5	8
S05	7	8.5	S34	6.5	7.5
S06	6.5	8	S35	6.5	8
S07	6	7.5	S36	6.5	8
S08	5	8	S37	7	8.5
S09	4.5	7.5	S38	7	8.5
S10	5.5	8.5	S39	7.5	8.5
S11	6	8	S40	7	8
S12	6.5	8.5	S41	7.5	8.5

Student	Pre-Teaching IRS	Post-Teaching IRS	Student	Pre-Teaching IRS	Post-Teaching IRS
S13	7	9	S42	7	8
S14	5.5	7.5	S43	8	9
S15	6.5	8	S44	5.5	7.5
S16	7.5	8.5	S45	5.5	8
S17	7.5	8	S46	7.5	8.5
S18	6.5	7.5	S47	6	8
S19	6	8	S48	6.5	8.5
S20	7.5	8.5	S49	6.5	8
S21	5.5	7.6	S50	7	8.5
S22	4.5	8	S51	6.5	8
S23	4.5	8	S52	6.5	8.5
S24	4.5	7.5	S53	7.5	8.5
S25	7	8.5	S54	7	8.5
S26	7	8.5	S55	5.5	7.5
S27	6.5	8	Average	6.65	8.13
S28	7.5	8.5	SD.	1.59	1.58
S29	7.5	8.5			

Note: S = Student, IRS = IELTS Reading Score

The IELTS reading test results of the 55 Cambodian students are displayed in Table 4 above. The average and standard deviation of the pre-teaching test band scores were 6.65 and 1.59, respectively. The results of the post-teaching test showed a standard deviation of 1.58 and a mean score of 8.13. Some entries scored higher than average. The average difference in band scores between the two test sessions was 1.18. The significant gap warrants further statistical investigation. Consequently, Table 5 below displays the paired t-test scores for the IELTS reading exam sessions.

Table 5. Results of Comparing the IELTS Reading Test Procedures (N=55)

IRT	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig.
	M	SD Error of Difference	95% of Confidence				
			Lower	Upper			
Procedures of Pre- and Post-Teaching	-1.15	0.15	-1.45	-0.90	8.75	52	<0.01

Note: IRT = IELTS Reading Test, M = Mean

Table 5 displays the paired t-test results for the IELTS reading test administered before and after teaching: $p < 0.01$; $t(52) = 9.48$. Thus, it can be concluded that the quantitative effects of teaching the metacognitive reading strategy had a favourable and statistically significant impact on the reading abilities of the research participants. Therefore, it can be concluded that the study’s participants contributed to an increase in the average score. These results are consistent with those of Ellis et al. [10] and Wichadee [11].

4. DISCUSSION

It is interesting to look at the average post-teaching SORS results from a sub-dimension perspective. The mean values of the three sub-dimensions showed a notable

improvement. This demonstrates how teaching metacognitive skills affects the way these strategies are perceived. However, this outcome contradicts the findings of Pei [12] in the Chinese EFL context, which showed that there was no statistically significant increase in metacognitive strategy awareness after strategy instruction. The educational paradigm and the length of teaching are two methodological differences between this study and Pei [12]. In other words, 20 50-minute sessions were planned for the current experiment, which was supposed to be a semester-long course. To develop the teaching method employed in this study, the models of DeWaelche [13] and Flavell [14] were integrated. On the other hand, [23, 12] conducted a study in Chinese EFL contexts over eight weeks. Each training session for the metacognitive technique lasted fifteen minutes. The study also employed a novel educational paradigm known as the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach [24, 15]. The two different issues extracted had a significant impact on the statistical significance level.

According to the three subcategories, the findings of the two SORS administrations in this study showed a comparable order of use for the reading techniques. In other words, the PRSs were used the most frequently, followed by the GRSs group and the SRSs cluster, in that order. The results are consistent with earlier research [16], [17], [18]. These outcomes are similar to those reported by Pookcharoen [19] in the context of EFL online reading. The earlier studies by Pammu [20] and Jaengsaengthong [21] support the PRS cluster in particular by identifying the strategy group that is used most frequently. In support of this occurrence, Pookcharoen [19] contended that Thai EFL students use their PRSs more when they read English passages as though this were the norm for problem-solving activities.

According to the aforementioned results, the student actively interacted with the text's author during reading by making predictions, assessing, summarising, and using other reading strategies [22]. Students made an effort to think about how the readings aligned with their desired outcomes. Additionally, a study by Chumworatayee [23] examining adult EFL learners in Thailand revealed somewhat different results, showing that the global reading technique was favoured over the problem-solving and support strategies. Additionally, they were defined as the conscious monitoring and regulating mechanisms that readers employ to improve understanding.

Remarkably, this study found a statistically significant rise in the reading score on the standardised reading exam. This demonstrates the effect of the technique on the study participants. These results also align with previous suggestions that explicit strategy training be used to enhance learning of metacognitive reading strategies and English reading test scores [24], [2], [25], [26]. In addition, the length of each session was a topic of discussion in the prior study. According to the findings of the current study, time may affect students' reading proficiency. Therefore, the extended time spent teaching metacognitive reading techniques, as done in this study, can offer new perspectives on this particular problem. It is evident that at the statistical significance level, Cambodian EFL high school students' reading proficiency on the standardised reading test and their understanding of reading strategies both improved. According to this research, students are most likely to use problem-solving strategies when completing a metacognitive reading review. The majority of students

employed tactics such as rereading to improve understanding, adjusting their reading rate, and focusing on the content when reading academic texts, even though [27] noted that comprehension was the primary point of emphasis. By creating scenarios that allowed for the application of higher-order thinking, Miller [28] asserts that it is essential to integrate metacognition into reading exercises. Therefore, when assessing what has been read, metacognition proved to be more vital.

Consequently, it can be said that teaching students metacognitive strategies may enhance their knowledge of the various reading strategy subcategories. At 0.01%, the improvement was statistically significant for all three strategy clusters. It is noteworthy that nearly two-thirds of a single strategy achieved statistical significance. Hence, this highlights how well the metacognitive approach to teaching raised the students' awareness. Researchers in ELT and EFL may be more inclined to apply research findings in various contexts as a result of this new insight.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The main results of the study are summarised in this part, and the significance of these findings for teaching and learning is discussed. Additionally, recommendations are made for future research. These recommendations are based on the impacts observed as a result of metacognitive reading strategy training on the awareness of reading strategies and reading performance among Cambodian EFL high school students.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the available data, this study reached the following conclusions.

- a. The globalisation of commerce and industry has made learning a second language essential for efficient communication among global citizens. In the era of globalisation, where the flood of information reveals every facet of life on a global scale, reading is increasingly viewed as an essential learning activity. Metacognitive knowledge is one of the many components that students in the field of foreign language education encounter when reading. To equip students with the skills they will need for future endeavours in the contemporary world, this study focuses on metacognitive processes associated with EFL reading. The understanding of how metacognitive strategy teaching affects the reading skills of Cambodian EFL high school students when applied in an EFL reading class over a semester has been significantly advanced by the empirical findings of this study.
 - b. Students were exposed to the real-world applications of reading strategies, and through small-group discussions, they actively shared their thoughts on how each strategy should be applied. The interaction enhanced the students' knowledge of metacognitive reading strategies for application in subsequent reading tasks, both individually and in real-life situations. The students appeared to learn the metacognitive reading methods because the emphasis was on how well the strategies worked rather than on providing precise answers to the questions. This was demonstrated by the statistically significant improvement in reading test scores.
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- c. The educational implications of this study are focused on future teacher and student training in metacognitive reading practices. Students require instruction in these kinds of tactics to apply them appropriately in various reading contexts. Teachers would be readers in their free time and serve as demonstrations of the reading process in class. This idea highlights the requirement for teachers to receive training on the application of metacognitive reading strategies. Increasing teachers' knowledge of metacognitive reading strategies might help them teach reading more effectively. The results of the current study motivate educators to incorporate metacognitive reading strategies into their lesson plans. Because metacognitive reading strategies are so effective, teaching them would improve students' reading comprehension, boost their academic accomplishment, and encourage their interest in learning to read.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The study demonstrated that explicit metacognitive reading strategy teaching significantly increased both awareness and standardised test performance among Cambodian EFL high school students.

- a. This study could be used as a test run for teaching metacognitive reading strategies. Because of the study's inquiry into the students' increased knowledge of reading strategies, researchers may now examine the perceived effects of the instruction that SORS was unable to provide. This can be obtained through qualitative research techniques, such as interviews, think-aloud protocols, and observations.
- b. This research study's introduction to the teaching model of metacognitive reading strategies offers ideas for further research into the model's potential applicability in other EFL contexts. The information on EFL reading phenomena can be expanded and formed by the results of future studies.
- c. To determine whether this approach still yields the same favourable outcome as observed in this study, future research may investigate the use of metacognitive reading strategy teaching through a modelling technique with high school students from diverse learning backgrounds (Social and Science) and across different text genres. To identify the similarities and differences between regular English courses and special courses, researchers can also examine the efficacy of teaching metacognitive reading strategies by comparing two groups of students: those who study reading in regular English courses and those who participate in and learn to read in English for special courses.

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