RESEARCH PAPER

Effects of SQ3R Strategy on Grade 11 Students' Reading Comprehension and Attitudes: The Case of Ambo Secondary School

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) strategy instruction on students' reading comprehension and their attitudes toward using SQ3R at Ambo Secondary School Grade 11 students. Experimental and control groups participated in this study. The experimental group (N=68) participated in SQ3R instruction for four months while control group (N=72) did not participate the instruction. A quasi-experimental research design was used. Reading comprehension test and interview were used as data gathering instruments. Quantitative data was analysed by using T-test and interview results were analysed qualitatively. The result of this study indicated that SQ3R strategy instruction positively affected the students' reading comprehension. There was statistical difference between the students who participated in the intervention and those who did not, t (69) =-7.27, p=.001. Students participated in SQ3R intervention also had positive attitude toward using the SQ3R as active reading strategy. Hence, SQ3R should be included in the reading skills instruction to improve students' reading comprehension, and their attitudes toward the SQ3R use.
Keywords: SQ3R, reading comprehension, direct instruction, effects, attitudes

Introduction

English language is global language. The students we teach, therefore, may want to learn English to communicate with others, interested living in abroad, doing international business, working as translators, and working in the tourism industry. Therefore, gaining different strategies of learning English is paramount (Ariffin *et al*., 2011). According to Akbari (2015), foreign language students should be able to use English as a global language to communicate in English with people from other parts of the world, at least at their levels. Classroom English instruction in Ethiopia needs to continue along with international trend. Where this study was carried out in Ethiopia, Oromia, English is used as medium of instruction (Solomon, 2006). The students are expected to develop their communication abilities in all basic language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among these language skills, reading skill is very important in countries where English is used as a foreign language (Yenisa, 2017). Reading is a complex process, which requires readers' active and intentional cognitive efforts. This requires teachers to use classroom program like direct instruction since developing adequate reading skills in English is pivotal for ensuring success in education as well as in professional life in the modern world (Grabe and Stoller, 2011). Mohammed and Amponsah (2018) also added that there is evidence negative academic is correlated with an inability to read well. Inability to read in English also caused the students drop out of school, have negative viewpoint toward reading and low participation in extracurricular school activities, which lead them to fail academically behind other peers (Lazarus and Callahan, 2000).

Ethiopian high school students fail to read simple materials in spite of spending long time on learning English and the importance of

reading skills in education and later after school in career development and comprehension in this competitive age (Yohannes, 2013). In addition to this, students' negative attitude toward reading itself is one factor for this (Kalaja, 1995). Therefore, there is a need to help such students in our schools, which can be achieved through providing effective training.

Active reading strategy is mental process that active readers use in order to maximize their reading comprehension (Habtamu *et al.*, 2021). There are varieties of reading strategy that readers use to read efficiently. They are divided into pre-reading strategy, while reading strategy, and post-reading strategy. This study focused on the effects of SQ3R strategy on reading comprehension and their attitudes toward using the strategy. In SQ3R, S is survey, Q is question, the first R is read, the second R is recite, and the last R is review. SQ3R is, therefore, active reading strategy that effective readers use when they approach reading (Macaro, 2001).

There are several international studies conducted on the effectiveness of SQ3R as an active reading strategy in terms of its effects on students' reading performance and their attitude toward the use of SQ3R. For example, Al-Khatib and Al-Momani's (2017) found that college students in Jordan University had positive attitudes toward the use of the SQ3R strategy. Their study also showed that their subjects believed that SQ3R as an effective reading strategy that helped them easily understand and comprehend reading texts. Similarly, a study by Zinah and Salam (2018) investigated the effectiveness of SQ3R on Iraqi students reading comprehension. Their study showed that students believed that it helped them to improve their reading comprehension. Additionally, a study by Rizqia and Warganegara (2022) compared the effectiveness of the SQ3R method to the KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) method in improving reading comprehension among EFL (English as a Foreign language) learners. The results showed that the SQ3R method was more effective in improving students' reading comprehension than the KWL method.

In local contexts, some studies were conducted around active reading strategies. For instance, Habtamu et al. (2021) conducted a study on the metacognitive reading strategy explicit instruction on grade 11 students' reading strategy awareness and perception towards reading strategy instruction. They found that the students who participated in the explicit teaching metacognitive reading strategy affected students' reading strategy awareness. Dawit (2014) conducted a study on the effects of reading strategy instruction on grade 8 students. He found positive effects of the reading strategy on the students' reading comprehension. Yohannes (2013) also conducted survey study on the implementation of metacognitive reading strategies. He found that metcognitive reading strategies are moderate levels. However, reading strategies help students to be strategic readers. The importance of learning strategies was emphasized by scholars since 1970s (Rubin, 1975). Therefore, teaching reading strategies in classroom help them to read and comprehend easily. Current study is different from above studies since it is concerned with instruction of SQ3R as active reading strategy to see whether the students' who participated in the instruction develops their reading comprehension and have positive attitude toward use of SQ3R strategy in their reading activities.

The researcher of this study also observed that the students he used teach at different levels had difficulties to understand reading texts even at texts of their levels. Hence, this study is aimed at investigating the effects of SQ3R on Grade 11 students' reading comprehension and their attitude toward using of SQ3R strategy at Ambo Secondary School.

Hypotheses of the study

H1: There is statistical difference in reading comprehension between the students who participated in the direction instruction of SQ3R and those who did not.

H0: There is no statistical difference in reading comprehension between the students who participated in the direction instruction of SQ3R and those who did not.

Research questions

This study answered the following two research questions:
1. Does SQ3R strategy instruction have effect on Grade 11 students' reading comprehension?
2. How do grade 11 students perceive SQ3R strategy use after the treatment?

Theoretical Framework

Cognitive theory suggests that learning involves the acquisition, organization, and use of knowledge, and that individuals actively construct meaning from their experiences (Mayer, 2012). The SQ3R reading technique is a method that can be used to help students actively engage with texts and construct meaning from what they read. The technique involves five steps: First of all, the student surveys the text, looking for headings, subheadings, and other organizational cues. After that, they generate questions based on the survey. Then, they read the text, looking for answers to the questions generated. Next to that, the student recites the answers to the questions out loud or in writing. Finally, they review the material to reinforce learning (Gian and Roby, 2019).

Incorporating cognitive theory into teaching the SQ3R reading technique involves emphasizing the importance of active engagement, organization, and reflection. Teachers can encourage students to ask questions, identify organizational cues, and review the material to reinforce their learning. By doing so, students can become more effective readers and learners. The theoretical framework for this study was also based on Anderson's (1996) cognitive theory. According to this theory, reading strategies instruction should include what the students know the strategies (declarative knowledge), what they know how to apply in reading practice (procedural knowledge) (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Anderson (1996) identified both declarative and procedural knowledge. The former knowledge is what we know about things, such as the definition of words, facts, and rules. Our memory for images and sequences of events also counts as declarative knowledge. Since

declarative knowledge can usually be expressed verbally, one can easily describe the content of declarative knowledge (Fayol, 1994). In another way, procedural knowledge refers to knowledge about how to do things, or "perform tasks" (Anderson, 1996). The examples of procedural knowledge include our ability to generate language, make decisions, apply rules to solve mathematical problems, and write source code of computer programs. Whereas acquiring declarative knowledge may be fast, acquiring procedural knowledge, such as learning a foreign language, is gradual and only with considerable amount of time and practice (Fayol, 1994).

Importance of SQ3R approach

SQ3R as reading approach is beneficial for EFL students in many ways. For instance, it guides students through a step-by-step process to help them become better readers. This means that EFL students who use the SQ3R approach become active readers who are involved in the contents of learning. Before reading, they are urged to make predictions and ask questions regarding the contents. As a result, they have a deeper understanding of the material and improve their memory (Anjuni and Cahyad, 2019). The other implication is that in order to help EFL students learn new vocabulary, the SQ3R technique encourages them to recognize and search up unfamiliar words. They can broaden their vocabulary, which in turn will help their general reading comprehension. In addition to this, SQ3R develops students' critical thinking skills. The SQ3R technique challenges EFL students to analyze the text they are reading critically. They are actively engaged with the material and developing their critical thinking skills by posing queries and speculating about it (Yenisa, 2017).

The students can get better note-taking skills after learning SQ3R. This method encourages EFL learners to take notes while they are reading. This helps them to remember important information and to organize their thoughts about the text. SQ3R technique increases students' self-confidence (Yenisa, 2017). By using it, EFL learners may feel more confident in their reading abilities. This can

lead to improve their motivation and a greater willingness to engage with reading materials. By using the SQ3R method in an EFL classroom can be an effective way to improve reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking skills, note-taking skills, and confidence since it helps students to break down the texts into smaller, more manageable chunks, the SQ3R method can help reduce stress and make studying less overwhelming. It's important for EFL teachers to provide explicit instruction on how to use this method and to model its use in the classroom (Suhartini *et al.*, 2023). The SQ3R method can also be a time-saving strategy because it helps you identify the most important information and focus on that, rather than getting bogged down in irrelevant details. Moreover, the SQ3R method encourages active learning by asking to engage with the material through questioning, summarizing, and reviewing (Andini *et al.*, 2022).

Materials and methods

Research Design

This study used a quasi-experimental pre-test-post-test design. Qualitative data was also collected using interview. The benefit of mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods is to balance the weakness of one method with the strength of the other, resulting in well-validated and substantiated findings (Creswell, 2009). This study hypothesizes that by using SQ3R reading strategy intervention, Grade 11 students improve their reading comprehension. In addition to this, the students may have positive attitude toward reading skills and SQ3R strategy use.

Subjects of the Study

Participants of this study were grade 11 students of Ambo Secondary School, which is found in West Shoa, Ormoia, Ethiopia. There were 1980 grade 11 students in the school. There were 18 sections. The students were randomly assigned to the sections. Section D and section G were selected as experimental and control group respectively. The experimental group participated training on the

SQ3R as active reading strategy and control group did not participate in the instruction. Both of the group attended their regular classrooms. Five students were also participated in the interview. These students were selected from the students who participated in the SQR3 strategy instruction.

Sampling Techniques

Ambo Secondary school was selected as it was near to where the researcher works. Two sections (D and G) were selected using simple random sampling. Accordingly, section 'D' participated in treatment, while section 'G' did not participate in the direct SQ3R instruction. There were 68 students in experimental group and 72 in control group. Two assistants were selected from the school based on their willingness in order to avoid the biases in scoring the students' scores.

Instructional model and descriptions of the SQ3R reading strategy direction instruction

The instructional treatment of this study was comprised of a four-month training program of direct teaching of SQ3R on how to use SQ3R reading strategies by using CORI as instructional framework. Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) was used as model of reading strategy direction instruction, in which the students practiced the strategy using the hand-on activities. CORI is designed to help students become more proficient readers by developing their understanding of the concepts in the texts they read. CORI aims to foster deep and meaningful learning by focusing on the big ideas and helping students make connections between different texts and their own experiences (Guthrie et al., 2007).

They practiced how to use each strategy in the classroom and out of the classroom on their own paces after they learnt each strategy. The reading passages that reflected the level of the participants were selected by the researcher. Classroom strategy practice was part of this study since only on teaching of reading strategies was not enough. All of the students in

experimental group participated in reading exercises consisting of short reading passages and comprehension activities. The reading passages were prepared from daily activities, autobiographies and short stories. These passages were also taken from news reports, television shows, web series, documentaries and students' textbooks.

Instruments of data gathering

Reading Comprehension Tests

Reading comprehension test was adapted from TOEFL, which are available online. The reading comprehension tests' simplicity and familiarity was considered in this study. The reading comprehension aims at measuring reading comprehension performance prior and after the training. The passages need to be short estimate not more than 250 words. The tests addressed fundamental reading comprehension skills including main ideas, inference, and specific details in the passage. The test formats that were familiar to students such as multiple choice, True-false and short-answer questions were used in the study. The totals of 33 items were used to collect quantitative data.

Interview

Semi-structured interview type was one of the data gathering instruments used in this study. The purpose of using interview was to determine the participants' SQ3R reading strategy attitude and use after the direct instruction of SQ3R. Five students were participated in the interview. The interview allowed participants the opportunity to express their opinions as to the effectiveness of each of the interventions in addition to their overall attitudes of their learning and use of SQ3R reading strategy. The interview was conducted after the post-test comprehension tests. The aim was to gather qualitative data on students' attitudes toward SQ3R using and to back up and assist the interpretation of the quantitative data.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data were transcribed by the researcher after gathering the data through the semi-structured interviews. T-test was used to compare the scores of pre-tests and post-tests in reading comprehension. The interview was analysed qualitatively based on thematic.

Analyses of Quantitative Results

Reading Comprehension Test Reliability

Reliability of the reading comprehension test was high, which was 0.853 Cronbach's Alpha. If the reliability coefficient is more than 0.70 in social science, it is acceptable test. Therefore, the reading comprehension prepared to measure the participants' reading comprehension is acceptable (Livingston, 2018).

Table 1. Reading comprehension pre-test scores for experimental and control groups

Group	Tests	Mean	Standard deviation
Control group (N=72)	Pre-test	39.74	8.34
Treatment group (N=68)	Pre-test	40.58	9.68

In the Table 1, the result indicated that both comparison and treatment groups scored similar mean in reading comprehension before SQ3R reading strategy. The control group scored (M=39.74, SD=8.34) and treatment group scored (M=40.58, SD=9.68). This implies that the assignment of the students into the two groups was reasonable since the results of the two groups were similar.

Table 2. Reading comprehension post-test scores for both groups

Group	Tests	Mean	Standard deviation
Control group (N=72)	Post-test	41.35	8.56
Treatment group (N=68)	Post-test	43.35	7.68

Reading comprehension post-test score of experimental group was improved from 40.58 to 43.35. The difference was 2.77. However, the students in control group's reading comprehension results in pre-test and post-test were similar (see Table 2 above). This implies that SQ3R reading strategy direct instruction had positive effects on Grade 11 students who participated in the four-month intervention. Hence, the SQ3R direction instruction as reading strategy had positive effects on Grade 11 students' reading comprehension.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing

Pre-test and post-test	M	Std.	T	df	p
Experimental group post-test reading comprehension scores minus control group post-test reading comprehension scores	3.89	3.89	-7.27	69	0.001

There was statistical difference between experimental group students' reading comprehension scores and control group students after SQ3R reading strategy direct instruction, which is reported as t (69) =-7.27, p=.001. As the significance statistical values is less than .05, there was significance statistics between reading comprehension results of students who participated in SQ3R reading strategy and those who were not participated in the strategy instruction (see Table 3). Therefore, alternative hypothesis is accepted in this study.

Analyses of Qualitative Results

This study also aimed at investigating the students' attitude toward the use of SQ3R as an active reading strategy. Semi-structure interview was conducted with the treatment group students in order to achieve this objective. As stated in the in data gathering instrument, five students selected from experimental group were interviewed. These students were given codes (S1, S2, S3, 34, and S5) and their codes were used when evaluating their knowledge of SQ3R reading strategy in terms of each strategy use, knowledge and experiencing as the goal of SQ3R reading strategy direct instruction was to enrich mental of participants of the study. As a result, positive attitude toward the use of the SQ3R reading strategy was expected from the students who did participate the intervention.

The interview result indicated that all of the participants took part in the intervention liked and able to names confidently of reading strategies used in the SQ3R intervention. Most of them believed that the intervention of the SQ3R reading strategy direct instruction was very interesting. The reasons for their interest were that the SQ3R reading strategy was new for them, and they responded that they learned the strategies their reading tasks. The strategy instruction also helped them to improve their vocabularies. For instance, S3 said, *"SQ3R reading strategy enriched my vocabulary."* Additionally, S4 reported as *"It [SQ3R reading strategy instruction] assisted me to ask questions about reading texts and to write the summary of the text...."* The result of this study showed that students had positive attitude toward the SQ3R reading strategy use and intervention. Moreover, most of them reported that SQ3R strategy assisted them to comprehend texts. The other indication for this was that they said that they learned how to use SQ3R, and helped them to ask questions and answering questions from the reading texts. In addition, S5 said, ''The strategy training helped me to read and comprehend texts easily.''

All of the participants showed positive attitude toward the SQ3R strategy intervention. Participants of this study favoured SQ3R strategy instruction. They agreed that SQ3R strategy instruction made their reading easier. In addition to this, they enjoyed the instruction. Siegel (2013) argues that learners' beliefs about the effectiveness of learning strategy give

implication in strategy learning. The reason for that they were provided opportunities to discussions on how the strategy they learnt work and how it helped them. According to Oxford (1990), strategy instruction is fruitful if the students identified each strategy's reason and occasion of its use, and how to use the strategy in new context. The researcher used active teaching methods. He enabled the students to discuss during strategy instruction, especially when making connection previous strategy with new strategy.

The interviewees also reported that the intervention helped them a lot to develop their reading skills in general. One of the reasons they explained was that reading practice and teaching materials used in the SQ3R strategy were enjoyable and interesting. All of the participants in the interview were also asked to name the SQ3R strategies. Accordingly, all of them confidently reported all of the strategies in the SQ3R strategy. Researcher prepared teaching material for the intervention. The research found that the strategy training helped them to increase their academic grades. Bracho (2007) argues that there is association between students' reading improvement and academic achievement.

Discussions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of SQ3R strategy on the students' reading performances and their attitude toward using the SQ3R strategy. The data were collected using two data gathering instruments: Reading comprehension test with all students in experimental group and interview with five selected students from treatment group. The findings of this study revealed that explicit instruction of SQ3R increased the students' reading comprehensions, which is reported as t (69) =-7.27, p=. 001. Previous studies also conducted on the effectiveness of SQ3R as reading techniques, and found that it is more effective than other approaches of reading. For instance, McWhorter's (2008) study compared the effectiveness of the SQ3R to the PQRST method (Preview, Question, Read, Summarize, and Test) in improving reading comprehension of college students. The results showed that

both SQ3R and PQRST were effective, but the SQ3R method was more effective in increasing the students' reading performances. There are other studies that compared SQ3R with RAP (read, ask and paraphrase). For example, Ferreira and Audy (2018) compared the SQ3R technique to the RAP technique in enhancing their samples' reading comprehension in EFL classroom. Their study showed that both the SQ3R and the RAP were efficient techniques to improve students' reading comprehension, but the SQ3R was more efficient than RAP in improving both students' reading performances and critical thinking abilities.

The improvements were seen in the aspects such as the ability of finding main idea, detail information of the text, understanding the meaning of unfamiliar words, identifying the use of reference. The students` abilities in comprehending such text improved because they were taught with effective model, which was CORI. In fact, they understood how to comprehend texts, and they had many difficulties in comprehending text before the intervention, but they implemented SQ3R technique to comprehend such text effectively in the post-test reading. Besides, SQ3R contributed in helping the researcher convey the material easily, and made the students easy in receiving the material. The researcher taught SQ3R strategy in effective ways. This was why the students in treatment group improved their reading comprehension performances after the strategy instruction. For instance, they increased their reading comprehension from 40.58 mean to 43.35 mean. However, the students in comparison group did not increase their reading comprehension scores; they scored 39.74 in reading comprehension pre-test and 41.35 post-test. The data obtained using interview also support the data collected via reading comprehension test.

Similar to current study, Aramide and Abimbola (2021) also conducted a study on high school students in Nigeria on the effectiveness of SQ3R Technique in curbing literacy. Their finding indicated that students had a positive attitude toward the SQ3R technique, and believed that it increased their grades, reading performances and taking note skills. In short, this study and previous studies

suggest that subjects of the study have positive attitude toward the use of the SQ3R method as a reading strategy, and believe that it can be effective in increasing students' reading and academic performances. This implies that the teachers are expected to provide direct instruction on how to use the SQ3R strategy effectively.

Conclusions

The SQ3R method is a widely recognized and effective reading strategy that stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. It is designed to enhance comprehension while reading. This study was aimed at investigating the effects of SQ3R strategy on students' reading comprehension and attitudes toward the use of the SQ3R strategy. This study used cognitive theory as theoretical framework. The results of this study indicated that four months explicit instruction of SQ3R increased students' reading comprehension. The study has shown that students who participated the SQ3R method exhibit better reading comprehension compared to those who did not participate in it. Active engagement, questioning, and summarization components of SQ3R helped participants to extract meaning from the text and understand it more deeply. In addition, this study found that the students who participated in four-month training had positive attitudes toward SQ3R reading as active reading strategy. SQ3R contributed to a more positive reading experience by helping students develop a deeper understanding of the texts and improving their reading comprehension. There was evidence that the skills developed through the training of SQ3R method can transfer to other language skills. Consequently, they started using the strategy in their any kinds of reading tasks. They were also able to identify their weaknesses in using reading strategies.

One of the possible explanations of this result is that the students improved their reading comprehension due to the classroom and out of classroom SQ3R strategy practice. The students raised their awareness about SQ3R due to the explicit instruction. Hence, it is important to note that implementing the SQ3R method effectively requires explicit instruction and scaffolding from teachers. Teachers can use

different models to teach SQ3R; provide guidance in generating effective questions, and offer support as students develop their comprehension skills.

This study fills the gap in the literature as it provides a clear description of SQ3R strategy explicit instruction for secondary school students. The findings of this study also may have implications for the methods of research, English language teaching pedagogy, reading strategies and explicit instruction for L2 learners. More studies on SQ3R strategy explicit instruction in secondary school will further increase the understanding of the effects of SQ3R explicit instruction and help to identify more curriculum implications.

Recommendations

The teaching of the SQ3R reading strategy evidenced that it had positive effects on students' reading comprehension. Based on findings of the study, the recommendations were made for the English teachers, students, and other concern bodies.

The teachers should use SQ3R strategy to develop their students' reading comprehension. They need to prepare materials that develop interest in the students. This might encourage the students to participate in the lesson. They should provide multiple interesting reading materials so that the students practice reading strategy in classroom and out of the classroom.

Further research is needed by using different levels and methods. This study included only one class in one grade as treatment group, which was small size study. This could have effect on the finding of the study. Another future study can include more classes from different classes. The other weakness of this study is durability of the study, which was four months. Next researchers can give much time in training the students in SQ3R strategy. In addition to this, other may study factors that affect the instruction of this strategy.

Acknowledgments

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