FULL LENGTH ARTICLE

The Effect of Explicit Reading Strategy Training on Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement and Reading Self-Efficacy: Grade 11 Students at Jimma Preparatory School, Ethiopia, in Focus

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of explicit reading strategy training on the reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy of Grade 11 students at Jimma Preparatory School. The study employed quasi-experimental design through the use of reading comprehension test and structured questionnaire as tools of data collection. The subjects of the study were 100 grade eleven students. From these students, 50 students participated in the experimental group, and another 50 students involved in the control group. Quantitative method of data analysis (mean scores and independent sample t-test) was used to analyze the data. The finding of the study revealed that while both the experimental group (who received explicit reading strategy training) and control group (who received implicit reading strategy training) benefited from reading strategy training, the students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group in reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy scores after the experiment. This shows that explicit reading strategy training helped the experimental group students to significantly improve their reading comprehension ability and reading self-efficacy. Thus, the study concluded that explicit reading strategy training has more positive effects on reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy than implicit reading strategy training. It is, thus, recommended that teachers of English in the Ethiopian context need to focus more on explicit reading strategy in their strategy-based reading instruction.

Key words: /English/Reading comprehension/ Reading strategy /Self-efficacy/

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Reading in English is crucial for academic success in Ethiopia where English is used as a foreign language (EFL). In the Ethiopian context, English is learned as a subject and used as a medium of instruction in most subjects in secondary schools and higher institutions. Secondary school students are, therefore, required to develop their reading skills along with their reading self-efficacy to successfully tackle their academic readings in their current and future academic endeavours. Studies also show that the reading skill is highly important for obtaining information which is vital for effective functioning in the contemporary societies (Anderson, 1999).

Improving reading abilities also helps secondary school students in the Ethiopian context to succeed in national exams such as the Ethiopian General School Leaving Certificate Examination **(**EGSLCE) and University Entrance Examination (UEE). Thus, it is necessary that students be trained to use effective reading strategies to improve their reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy.

The goal of reading is comprehension while reading strategies are a means to this end (Bra˚ten & Samuelstuen, 2004). Comprehension is conceptualized as an ability to go beyond the words, to understand the ideas in a text and to discover the relationships that exist between these ideas (McNamara, 2007). Therefore, students should possess several sub-skills of reading which they apply to comprehend leveled texts (Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson, 1991). In addition, Alfassi (2004) points out that to achieve comprehension effectively, students should work out the meaning of a text, critically evaluate the message, remember the content and apply the newly acquired knowledge flexibly. All these require effective reading strategy use and appropriate perception of one's reading ability, both of which can be boosted through strategy-based reading instruction.

Reading strategy can be conducted in two different ways. One way is informing students directly about the types of reading strategies, their components and their applications (Guthrie et al., 2004). This is called explicit reading strategy training. The second way is called implicit reading strategy training. In this type of training, unlike in explicit reading strategy instruction, students are not openly told the types of reading strategies, their components and their specific characteristics. Rather, they are exposed to reading tasks and activities in which various strategies are embedded. The expectation in this case is that by doing such tasks and activities, which demand the application of various reading strategies, students can implicitly master the desired reading techniques. It is on this ground that this study was conducted on the effect of explicit reading strategy training on students' reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Lenski, Wham, Johns & Caskey (2007, p.1) describe, "Reading is one of the fundamental skills for the 21stcentury". Reading includes not only recognizing and decoding letters and producing phonics, but it also entails comprehension which calls for the application of various reading strategies (Bouchhard, 2005). Reading comprehension

strategies are operations or comprehension techniques that readers apply as they read to understand a text (Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris, 2008). These strategies are used selectively and flexibly according to the readers' aims, the type of texts and the reading contexts (Macaro & Erler, 2008). For example, reading academic texts requires awareness of reading goals with the view of applying appropriate reading strategies (Aebersold & Field, 1997).

Reading strategies relate to how readers conceive a task, what textual clues they should attend to, how they make sense of what they read and what they need to do when they do not understand what they are reading. Reading strategies range from simple fix-up strategies such as simply rereading difficult segments and guessing the meaning of unknown words from context, to more comprehensive strategies such as summarizing and associating what is being read to a reader's background knowledge. Skilled readers actively and strategically interact with texts (Akkakoson, 2013). Studies indicate that reading strategies are teachable. Reading strategy instruction helps students to enhance their performance on tests which involve reading comprehension (Fielding & Pearson, 1994). Studies also document that strategy-based reading instruction has a positive effect on learners' reading comprehension ability and their awareness of reading comprehension strategies (Kern, 1989; McNamara, 2007).

Reading strategy training can be explicit or implicit. Students in Ethiopia where English is learned as a Foreign Language (EFL) may need more explicit reading strategy training supported with appropriate practice to raise their awareness of the strategies and enhance their abilities to apply them. It can also be the case that implicit practice in the use of reading comprehension strategies can suffice to make direct lecture less important. In fact, there are a number of studies which have been conducted on the effect of teaching reading strategies on students' reading comprehension in other countries. Just to mention two studies, Vafaeeseresht (2012) has conducted a study on 'The Impact of Reading Strategy Training on the Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners'. The study found that preparatory students who participated in reading strategy training courses differed significantly from those who did not. Soleimani and Hajghani (2013) also investigated 'The Effect of Teaching Reading Comprehension Strategies on Iranian EFL Pre-University Students' Reading Comprehension Ability'. The study showed that while reading strategy training appeared to raise students' awareness of reading strategies and could encourage strategy use by some students, the reading strategy training was not able to enhance the students' reading performance. From this, one can reasonably conclude that reading strategy instruction still needs further studies, particularly in the Ethiopian context where there is a shortage of studies in the area.

Explicit reading strategy training can also increase other areas related to reading such as self-control and self-efficacy (Haller, Paris, Wixson & Palincsar, 1986; Child & Walberg, 1988; Bandura, 1995). However, it seems that studies which compare the effect of explicit reading strategy training with that of implicit reading strategy training on students' reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy in the Ethiopian context are lacking. Thus, this study investigated the effect of explicit reading strategy training on Grade 11 students' reading comprehension achievement and their reading self-efficacy with specific focus at Jimma Preparatory School. Accordingly, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the level of reading comprehension of the target students before and after receiving reading strategy training?

2. How do the students perceive their reading self-efficacy before and after receiving reading strategy training?

3. Do students who receive explicit reading strategy training significantly outperform reading comprehension than those who receive implicit reading strategy training?

4. Is there a statistically significant difference in reading self-efficacy between students who receive explicit reading strategy training and those who receive implicit reading strategy training?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are defined as the actions chosen and controlled by the reader to reach the goal of reading (Carrell, 1998). Researchers agree that there is a relation between reading strategy use and reading achievement in foreign language learning. Put differently, reading strategy use has a positive effect on students' skills to comprehend what they read (Anderson, 1999; Koda, 2007). Thus, reading strategies are reading techniques for reasoning about how to remove blockages to meaning that can be applied thoughtfully, consciously and adaptively (Duffy et al., 1986). In using reading strategies, readers conceive of a reading task, use different techniques to extract meaning from texts and take corrective measures when comprehension fails (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Reading strategies fall into the categories of cognitive strategies (scanning for specific details, using context clues to work out meanings of new words, skimming for main ideas, using prior knowledge, using images to make sense of texts, making notes or summarizing key points, reading to get questions answered or expectations confirmed, etc), meta-cognitive strategies (techniques of monitoring comprehension, evaluating one's reading progress and reflecting on strategy use) and social strategies (discussing and cooperating with others in the dealing with reading tasks) (Bouchard, 2005).

Reading strategy training has been given emphasis to enhance students' strategic reading. Training which emphasizes the coordinated utilization of multiple reading strategies helps to negotiate the meanings of texts in more efficient ways (Bouchard, 2005). According to Grabe (2004), effective strategy instruction focuses on Experiencing Text, Question–Answer–Response, Directed Reading, Thinking Activities, Reciprocal Teaching Procedure (RTP), Collaborative Strategic Reading, and Direct Explanation, Questioning the Author, Transactional Strategies and Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction. Some of these approaches involve four to eight major strategies, whereas others tend to incorporate more than eight strategies. The strategies that are commonly included in these approaches are summarizing, clarifying, predicting, imaging, forming questions, using prior knowledge, monitoring comprehension, evaluating one's reading comprehension, etc.

Studies have reported positive results regarding effective combined-strategies instruction that improve learners' reading comprehension (Macaro & Erler, 2008). That

is, less successful readers can be taught new strategies to help them to become better readers. Reading strategy training is based on the belief that learning strategies are teachable and that learners can benefit from being coached in acquiring relevant strategies (Pressley, 2009). For example, English language teachers can train students to develop meta-cognitive skills of monitoring and controlling their comprehension processes (Anderson, 1999). That is, students can be directed to focus their attention on monitoring what occurs to achieve effective comprehension. When they become aware of their own reading strategies, students can consciously decide how to improve their reading comprehension (Bouchhard, 2005).

As indicated before, reading strategies help readers to conceive a task, decide what textual cues they should attend to, make sense of what they read and take corrective actions when comprehension fails. The literature indicates that reading strategies range from simple fix-up strategies such as simply rereading difficult segments and guessing the meanings of an unknown words from context to more comprehensive strategies such as summarizing and relating what is being read to the readers' background knowledge. Therefore, training on reading strategy use helps students to enhance their performance on reading comprehension tests by enhancing their reading abilities and strategic awareness (Janzen, 1996). Reading strategy training can be explicit or implicit. Explicit reading strategy training involves direct awareness-raising on reading comprehension strategies and their applications followed by tasks and exercises designed to enable students to apply these strategies. On the other hand, in implicit reading strategy training, students are not directly told about the nature and application of the strategies but are exposed to reading tasks and activities which help them to apply reading strategies.

2.2. Reading Strategy Training

Pressley (2009) emphasizes the value of strategy-based reading comprehension instruction. In other words, informed instruction in the classroom could enhance awareness and comprehension skills. Different studies suggested that reading strategy training needs to be conducted in conjunction with the regular course of instruction over an extended period of time. This suggests that teachers should conduct reading strategy training to equip students with necessary reading skills which improve their reading comprehension achievement.

One of the best tools available to educators is explicit instruction, a structured, systematic and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. It is called explicit because it is an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures. Explicit instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved. Marcahnd-Martella and Martella (2008) consider this form of reading instruction a systematic method of teaching which proceeds in steps, checking for student understanding and achieving their successful participation.

Elements of explicit reading instruction have been identified (Solity et al., 2000). These instructional elements are listed and briefly described below.

1. **Focusing instruction on critical content**: Teaching skills, strategies, vocabulary terms, concepts, and rules that will empower students in the future and match the students' instructional needs

2**. Sequencing skills logically:** Considering several curricular variables such as teaching easier skills before harder skills, teaching high-frequency skills before less frequent skills in usage, ensuring mastery of prerequisites to a skill before teaching the skill itself, and separating skills and strategies that are similar and thus may be confusing to students.

3. **Breaking down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units:** Teaching in small steps, segmenting complex skills into smaller instructional units of new material addressing concerns about cognitive overloading, processing demands and the capacity of students' working memory.

4. **Designing organized and focused lessons:** Making sure that lessons are organized and focused, to make optimal use of instructional time; organizing lessons on relevant topics and sequencing them well.

5. **Beginning lessons with a clear statement of the lesson's goals and expectations:** Telling students clearly what is to be learned and why it is important.

6. **Reviewing prior skills and knowledge before beginning instruction:** Providing a review of relevant information and verifying that students have the prerequisite skills and knowledge to learn the skill being taught in the lesson, i.e., linking the new skill with other related skills.

7. **Providing step-by-step demonstrations:** Modeling the skill and clarifying the decision-making processes needed to complete a task or procedure by thinking aloud as one performs the skill; clearly demonstrating the target skill or strategy in order to show students a model of proficient performance.

8. **Providing adequate range of examples:** Providing examples illustrating situations when the skill will be used or applied so that students do use it as they read a range of texts.

9. **Providing guided and supported practice:** Engaging students in adequate practice, regulating the difficulty of practice through systematic guidance which decreases as students master the skill.

10. **Requiring frequent responses:** Planning a responsive high level interaction using questioning; having the students respond frequently (i.e., oral responses, written responses, or action responses) to help them focus on the lesson content and strategy.

11. **Monitoring student performance closely:** Carefully watching and listening to students' responses, verifying mastery, making timely adjustments in instruction if students are making errors and closely monitoring their progress.

12. **Provide immediate affirmative and corrective feedback:** Following up on students' responses as quickly possible, providing immediate feedback to students about the accuracy of their responses.

13. **Delivering the lesson at a brisk pace:** Delivering instruction at an appropriate pace to optimize instructional time, amount of content that can be presented and on-task behaviour; using a rate of presentation that is brisk but includes a reasonable amount of time for students' thinking/processing, especially when they are learning new material

14. **Helping students organize knowledge:** Using teaching techniques that make connections of learning experience more apparent or explicit to transfer well-organized

and connected information which makes it easier for students to integrate new skills with previously experienced ones.

15. **Providing distributed and cumulative practice:** According to Solity et al. (2000), Distributed (vs. massed) practice refers to multiple opportunities to practise a skill over time. Cumulative practice is a method for providing distributed exercise by including practice opportunities that address both previously and newly acquired skills.

2.3. Reading Self-Efficacy

In addition to skills to comprehend texts, reading needs positive self-efficacy which has been proven to improve learning (Zimmerman, Bonner & Kovach, 1996). That is why scholars give a considerable emphasis to the role of self-efficacy in learning reading. Schunk and Rice (1993) accordingly consider that reading self-efficacy is an important area for educators to consider.

Self-efficacy perception has an important role to play in the development of reading skills (Combs, 2012). It is, thus, not possible for students to develop effective text comprehension abilities if they do not have positive reading self-efficacy. In other words, to become readers, students should also develop positive perceived reading ability and risk-taking skills. As Lawrence (2008) emphasizes, students who have poor self-efficacy beliefs do not think that they are capable of improving their reading skills and are not motivated to read. As a result, they do not engage in reading if they are not coerced to read. Therefore, it can be argued that strategy-based reading instruction should foster students' reading self-efficacy (perceived reading ability and challenge-facing/risk-taking bahaviour) which help them to improve their reading comprehension achievement since for most of our day-to-day activities are efficacy-driven (Bandura, 1995).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Design of the Study

The research design employed in this study was quasi-experimental. Quasi-experimental research design uses treatment group and non-treatment or comparison group. The two groups are similar in terms of the baseline or pre-intervention characteristics. The treatment group captures the outcome, i.e. the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Quasi-experimental design is often described as non-randomized design, for it depends on intact groups and lacks randomization (Morgan, 2000). Despite its drawbacks, quasi-experimental design was chosen in this study to collect data from existing groups without disrupting the groups already arranged by the school.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The population for this study was Grade 11 students at Jimma Preparatory School. Grade 11 was selected purposefully, for one of the researchers was teaching English to grade 11 students at the school, and it was believed that the study could be conducted easily. According to the information obtained from Jimma Town Educational Office, the

number of Grade 11 students in this school in the 2015/16 academic year was 800. These students were distributed to 16 classes. Of these, two classes were taken from the natural science stream. The natural science stream was chosen because the numbers of students in classes of social science stream were small. The two classes were selected using lottery method because the method gives an equal chance of being selected to the other classes of natural science stream, and one was assigned as experimental group while the other one was selected as control group through lottery draw. After the classes were identified, all the students in the experimental group (N=50) were included in the study using compressive sampling technique, for the number of the students was relatively small. The same sampling technique was used to include all students in the control group (N=50) of the study. Therefore, the study employed both probability (lottery) and non-probability (purposive and compressive) sampling techniques.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

Two data collection tools, i.e. reading comprehension test and structured questionnaire were used in this study.

Reading comprehension test. Since one of the objectives of this study was to identify the effect of explicit reading strategy training on students' reading achievement, tests were used as data collection instruments. Thus, a reading comprehension test adapted from TOEFL sample test from online sources was used for this purpose. This test had five parts: true/false, multiple-choice and open-ended items which were taken from two passages entitled '*Running water on mars'* and '*Dodder plant'*. After it was adapted and assembled carefully, the test was given to an experienced Grade 11 English language teacher for comments. The teacher provided critical comments which helped to improve the difficulty level, the face validity and the content validity of the test. After this, a pilot-test was conducted with 50 Grade 11 students in a preparatory school other than the target school. On the basis of the results of the pilot-test, items which had poor difficulty level and discrimination power were modified before the test was administered in the main study. This last version of the test was then administered before (pre-test) and after (post-test) uniformly to both the experimental and the control groups.

3.3.1. *Questionnaire*

A Likert scale type questionnaire consisting of ten closed-ended items was used in this study to collect data to address the research questions regarding the students' reading self-efficacy. The questionnaire was adapted from the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) developed and validated by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). The MRQ measures reading efficacy beliefs in terms of the dimensions of reading self-efficacy and challenge/risk-taking. Five of these items measure reading self-efficacy, while the remaining five measure challenge/risk-taking. Therefore, these ten items of the MRQ were considered appropriate for this study and used with some modifications.

Firstly, two new items were added to the three items on reading self-efficacy to make this part more comprehensive. However, the five items which measure challenge/risk-taking were found sufficient and no item was added to them. Secondly, slight modifications were made on some of the items to make them contextually fit and easier to understand. After these adaptations, the questionnaire was pilot-tested on other

50 grade 11 students who have not been included in the final study at the school. Since the pilot study showed acceptable internal consistency of the items (Crombach's alpha coefficient = 0.79), the questionnaire was administered to the experimental and the control groups before and after the experiment in a face-to-face administration modes.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The following steps were undertaken during data collection. After the test and the questionnaire were prepared, piloted and made ready for administration, the experimental and control groups were identified. Then, training was given to the English teacher who later conducted strategy training under regular supervision and assisted in data collection. The training focused on strategy-based instruction in general and strategy-based reading instruction in particular, the components of reading strategy and the contents of the instruments along with their administration procedure. Following this, in collaboration with the trained teacher, the pre-test was administered, followed by the administration of the questionnaire before the experiment.

Afterwards, the experiment was commenced. During the experiment, the experimental group received explicit reading strategy training in ten lessons (45 minutes each), while the control group received implicit reading strategy training for the same period of time. In other words, the students in the experimental group were informed about the characteristics and application of specific reading strategies. They were also exposed to reading comprehension exercises which required them to apply the various reading strategies they were made aware of. On the other hand, the students in the control group practiced applying the same reading strategies in dealing with the same reading comprehension activities. However, direct awareness raising about the characteristics and application of the reading strategies was not done for this group. After the ten lessons, the post-test was given to both experimental and control groups followed by the second-step questionnaire administration.

Students' reading comprehension achievement and their reading self-efficacy are influenced by a host of factors. One of such factors is reading strategy training. The other possible extraneous factors or variables have been controlled in the study by assigning the experimental group and the control groups through lottery draw to control subject related attributes such as intelligence, age, gender etc. The temperature of the room and the time of the experiment were also taken into account in administrating the reading comprehension test and structured questionnaire.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data which were collected using tests and structured questionnaire were used in this study. Therefore, quantitative method of data analysis was used to analyze the data. In the data analysis, on the one hand, mean scores were used to describe the students' (experimental group and control group) reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy. On the other hand, independent sample t-test was conducted to test differences between the students in the experimental group and those in the control group in their reading comprehension achievement and perceived reading

ability. In this case, p-values < 0.05 were considered statistically significant. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software was applied to analyze the data.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

In this study, appropriate steps were taken to meet ethical requirements. Firstly, to obtain permission to conduct the study, an official cooperation letter written from the Postgraduate Programs and Research Coordinating Office of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at Jimma University was submitted to the Administration of Jimma Preparatory School. Secondly, consent form was prepared and distributed to students to enable them to express their willingness to participate in the study. All the students in both groups expressed their consent and were in effect included in the study. This was possible because they were briefed about the purpose of the study, assured that the tests would not affect their grades and informed that anonymity will be kept.

4. Findings

The findings of the study are presented and interpreted in two parts. The first part deals with the findings pertaining to reading comprehension test which tried to answer the research question about the participants' reading comprehension abilities and the one which focuses on differences in reading comprehension achievement between the experimental and control groups. On the other hand, the second part pertains to the findings from the data collected through a structured questionnaire to answer the research question regarding the effect of explicit reading strategy training on students' reading self-efficacy.

Table 1: Scores of comprehension before the experiment

	N	Mean	SD	Sig.
Exp. group	50	31.92	18.051	.001
Control group	50	29.48	10.731	

Pre-test was conducted to check whether the two groups (experimental and control) were equivalent on mean scores of comprehension before the experiment. As indicated in Table 1, the mean score on comprehension for students who were assigned in the experimental group was higher (Mean=31.92) than the one for students who were assigned in the control group (Mean=29.48). Similarly, the independent sample t-test revealed that the observed mean difference for the experimental and the control groups was statistically significant (t(98) =.841, p= .001). Two things can be observed from these results. On the one hand, the mean score for the experimental group (Mean=31.92) and the control group (Mean=29.48) are much less than the minimum average result, i.e.

50%, in most tests marked out of hundred. This shows that students in the two groups performed poorly in the pre-test. On the other hand, the fact that the observed difference between the two groups in the mean scores of reading comprehension test was statistically significant demonstrates that a marked difference found after the experiment (on the post-test) were the result of the experimental treatment.

Table 2: Scores of comprehension after the experiment

	N	Mean	SD.	Sig.
Exp. group	50	68.60	17.169	.000
Control group	50	31.93	10.749	

As indicated in Table 2, the mean score on comprehension for students who were assigned in the experimental group was much higher (Mean=68.60) than the one for students who were assigned in the control group (Mean=31.93). The independent sample t-test also revealed that the observed mean difference for the experimental and the control group was statistically significant (t (98) =14.899, p=.000). These findings indicate that explicit reading strategy training helped the experimental group students to improve their mean score (Mean=68.60) and significantly outperform the control group students in the post-test.

Table 3: Perceived reading ability before the experiment

	N	Mean	SD.	Sig.
Exp. group	50	3.376	.750	.066
Control group	50	3.068	.901	

As indicated in Table 3 above, the mean score on perceived reading ability for students who were assigned in the experimental group was slightly higher (Mean=3.376) than the one for students who were assigned in the control group (Mean=3.068). The independent sample t-test, however, revealed that the observed mean difference for the experimental and the control groups was not statistically significant (t (98) =1.857, p=.066). That means, the findings revealed that the students in the experimental group and those in the control group had nearly comparable perceived reading abilities before the experiment.

Table 4: Scores of challenge-facing (risk-taking) before the experiment

	N	Mean	SD.	Sig.
Exp. group	50	3.172	.856	.066
Control group	50	3.124	1.011	

Similarly, as indicated in Table 4, the mean score on challenge-facing (risk-taking) for students who were assigned in the experimental group was slightly higher (Mean=3.172) than the one for students who were assigned in the control group (Mean=3.124). The independent sample t-test, nevertheless, revealed that the observed mean difference for the experimental and the control groups was not statistically significant (t (98) =1.857, p=.066). In other words, the two groups were nearly similar in challenge-facing (risk-taking) before the experiment.

Table 5: Scores of perceived reading ability after the experiment

	N	Mean	SD	Sig.
Exp. group	50	4.080	.374	.000
Control group	50	3.172	.615	

After the experiment, post-test was conducted to see whether the treatment resulted in differences on mean scores of perceived reading ability between the experimental and the control groups. As indicated in Table 5, the mean score on perceived reading ability for students who were assigned in the experimental group was higher (Mean=4.080) than the one for students assigned in the control group (Mean=3.172). The independent sample t-test also revealed that the observed mean difference for the experimental and the control groups was statistically significant (t(98)=8.911, p=.000). This means that the two groups differed significantly in perceived reading ability because of the experimental treatment (explicit reading strategy training offered to the experimental group).

Table 6: Scores of challenge-facing (risk-taking) after the experiment

	N	Mean	SD.	Sig.
Exp. group	50	3.972	.679	.000
Control group	50	2.796	.662	

Similarly, as indicated in Table 6, the mean score on challenge-facing (risk-taking) behaviour for students who were assigned in the experimental group was higher (Mean=3.97) than the one for students who were assigned in the control group (Mean=2.80). The independent sample t-test also revealed that the observed mean difference for the experimental and the control groups was statistically significant (t (98) =8.76, p=.000). Thus, it can be concluded that the observed significant differences in challenge-facing (risk-taking) behaviour was the result of the explicit reading strategy training offered to the experimental group students.

5. Discussion

Training on reading strategy use can be either explicit or implicit. This study investigated the effect of explicit reading strategy training on Grade 11 students' EFL reading comprehension achievement and their reading self-efficacy with a particular focus on Jimma Preparatory School in the Ethiopian context in the 2015/16 academic year. Here, the discussion of the main findings is presented.

Firstly, this study found that both the experimental group (those who received explicit reading strategy training) and the control group (those who received explicit reading strategy training) students had low reading comprehension achievement in the pre-test. However, while the students in the experimental group considerably improved their reading comprehension achievement on the post-test, those in the control group improved their achievement on the same test only slightly. This reveals that explicit reading strategy training helped students to improve their reading comprehension achievements. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference (favouring the experimental group) was found in reading comprehension achievement after the experiment (in the post-test). That is, explicit reading strategy training enabled the experimental group students to significantly outperform their counterparts in the control group in the post-test; explicit reading strategy training had a higher positive effect on reading comprehension achievement than implicit reading strategy training.

The slight improvement in the post-test among the control group students and the significant improvement in achievement on the same test among the experimental group students are in line with what is described in the literature. It has been documented that reading comprehension strategy training separates unskilled readers from skilled readers in that the latter interact with texts more effectively and, in effect, achieve better in reading comprehension tasks (Carrell, 1998). This means that reading strategy training helps students to enhance their achievement in reading comprehension tasks such as reading comprehension tests (Fielding & Pearson, 1994). Similarly, other studies (e.g. Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007) revealed that explicit reading strategy training has a positive effect on students' reading comprehension ability and awareness of reading comprehension strategies.

Secondly, the findings of the study revealed that the students in both the experimental and control groups had average reading self-efficacy before the experiment. However, the mean score for the experimental group students and the one for the control group students improved in the post-test. Statistically significant differences in reading self-efficacy (perceived reading ability and risk-taking), favouring the experimental

group, were also observed after the experiment. This suggests that whereas strategy-based reading strategy brought about positive changes in students' reading self-efficacy, the explicit strategy training which the experimental group students received had a stronger positive result in this regard.

Generally, this study proved that explicit reading strategy training improved students' reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy. From this, it can be inferred that students who obtain reading strategy training do better on reading comprehension tests and become more self-efficacious in reading than students who do not receive reading strategy training. The findings of the study also demonstrated that explicit reading strategy training had a more positive effect than implicit reading strategy training on students' reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy. This implies that explicit reading strategy training interventions should be given more attention than implicit strategy training, taking account of the particular context of EFL reading instruction.

This study has its own limitations. Firstly, its scope was limited to two groups of students in one preparatory school. Thus, the findings of the study may not reflect the situations in other preparatory schools in the country. Secondly, a pre-test and post-test quasi-experimental design, which lacks the characteristics of randomization, was used. Thirdly, the experiment was conducted using only ten reading lessons which could have affected the quality of the findings.

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The mean score for both the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test were found to be low. This shows that the students in both groups performed poorly before explicit reading strategy training. However, the experimental group significantly improved their mean scores of reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy after the experiment (in the post-test). This indicates that reading strategy training helped the experimental group to enhance their reading comprehension achievements and reading self-efficacies.
- Significant differences were identified between the experimental group students and the control group students, favouring the former, in mean scores of reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy in the post-test. In other words, the students who received explicit reading strategy (experimental group) had significantly higher mean scores than those who received implicit reading strategy training (control group) on the treatment variables. It can, therefore, be concluded that explicit reading strategy training had a much better positive effect than implicit reading strategy on reading comprehension achievement and reading self-efficacy.

6. Recommendations

The findings of this study generally found that the benefits of explicit reading strategy training outweighed those of implicit reading strategy training. Therefore, it would be better if teachers of English in the context of this study focus more on explicit reading strategy in their strategy-based reading instruction. It is also advisable that syllabus designers and materials writers focus more on explicit reading strategy training. However, further studies are needed for context-specific interventions.

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