Original Article

A Survey on the use of Metacognitive Strategies among Rural Junior High School Students' English Reading

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Abstract - English reading plays an important role in the process of English learning. The use of reading strategies is an important way to improve students' English reading performance and reading ability, and also conducive to promoting students to develop the habit of autonomous learning and realize personalized learning. Via questionnaire, this paper investigates the current situation of rural junior high school students' English reading and their use of metacognitive strategies in English reading. The results majorly reveal that rural junior high school students are not satisfied with their English reading scores but unlikely to use metacognitive strategies to improve their English reading ability. On this basis, suggestions are made for teachers to construct a framework of reading strategies for students, improve students' internal drive to use reading strategies, and increase the reading volume of English publications.

Keywords - Junior high school, English reading situation, Metacognitive strategy.

1. Introduction

Reading is very important in the English learning process of junior high school students. Reading teaching can not only lay a solid language foundation for students, develop their language skills, and help them form a good English language literacy, but also help them broaden their cultural horizons, enrich their life experiences, and learn to know themselves, others, society, and knowledge world. For junior high school students, good reading skills are important in mastering English knowledge and acquiring information.

Metacognitive strategies generally refer to learners' strategies to plan, manage, monitor, and evaluate learning. English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition) stipulate that the use of metacognitive strategies of junior high school students must reach Level 4, which means that students should "be able to formulate clear English learning goals and plans and monitor, reflect and adjust; be able to regularly reflect and evaluate the gains, progress, and deficiencies in one's learning; be able to explore suitable learning methods for oneself actively; be able to consciously strengthen oneself in learning able to plan, allocate, utilize and manage time reasonably, improve learning efficiency and self-control; be able to search and use online and offline resources to enrich their English learning content; be able to use reference books to find information, understand and learn English, etc."

In reading teaching, there are significant problems in junior high school English. Students have a small vocabulary and a slow reading speed, so they often feel frustrated without a sense of achievement in the reading process. Because of the lack of strategic guidance, they don't know how to guess the meaning of new words based on the context, which greatly leads to a decrease in overall efficiency but only relying on reference books and developing the habit of learning new words without dictionaries. Regarding reading habits, some students like to read aloud, some students like to whisper, or they can use their fingers to write sentences. Some students have the low reading ability and have difficulty understanding the logical structure between paragraphs, which leads to confusion and misunderstanding of the article and makes their grades unsatisfactory. These reading methods slow down the reading speed, and the reading comprehension score is too low.

Therefore, how to explore more efficient reading teaching methods in practical teaching has attracted the attention and research of many scholars. With the combination and development of psychology, linguistics, and pedagogy, we are pleased to see that this phenomenon is improving. More and more researchers and educators believe that students should actively participate in every link of classroom learning activities and be in the leading position in this process, through the means of independent learning, to form their learning strategies to reasonably regulate their own learning process.

To understand whether the above problems occur or not in rural junior high schools, this study conducted a

questionnaire survey on all junior high schools in a small county of Sichuan province to investigate the current situation of rural junior high school students' English reading and then put forward some countermeasures and suggestions, intending to provide some feasible suggestions for teachers' teaching and students' English reading learning in rural junior high school.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Metacognitive Strategies

Psychologist Flavel proposed Meta-metacognitive (metacognitive) theory at Stanford University in the 1970s. Flavell (1979) argues that "metacognitive strategies refer to the cognitions or other behaviors employed by learners to achieve the learning objectives." Metacognition refers to cognition, the knowledge of cognitive subjects to focus on and regulate cognitive activities; it is also a series of self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-monitoring of one's own cognition. Metacognitive strategy is a term that frequently appears in the field of second language acquisition and foreign language teaching. Learning strategies were divided by O' Malley & Chamot (1990) into metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social and affective strategies. In recent years, metacognitive strategies have received extensive attention and research from researchers at home and abroad.

Metacognition is the process of re-examining one's behavior, view, experience, feeling, etc. Metacognitive strategy is the process of continuous monitoring, control, and adjustment of cognitive learners' cognition under the guidance of metacognition (Carrell 1989). Studies have shown that metacognition and metacognitive theory can be taught and implemented in real classrooms. If taught as soon as possible, students in various disciplines can apply this learning strategy and benefit from life. Therefore, the purpose of teachers is not only to impart knowledge from books to students but also to teach students how to understand and acquire metacognitive concepts and knowledge to obtain better learning methods.

Metacognitive strategies are the strategy for students to monitor and control their own cognitive processes and results effectively. SALL (self-acquisition language learning) ability can be developed by training students' learning strategies. After acquiring this ability, students can develop their own learning plans and styles, reasonably arrange learning tasks, and monitor and evaluate their learning process (Wang&Qiong, 2005).

2.2. Studies on the Application of Metacognitive Strategies to English Reading

Teachers combine junior high school English learning with teaching tasks and complete reading tasks and teaching tasks through effective formulation and guidance of metacognitive strategies. Improve students' emotional experience in the English classroom. In the orderly steps, students can feel the charm of English learning in a relaxed collective environment. At the same time, improving English reading ability (Lin, 2008) believes implementing metacognitive strategy must be student-centered. Middle school teachers should adopt a harmonious and cooperative classroom atmosphere in teaching. In assigning learning tasks, the principle of authenticity and closeness to life is always maintained to stimulate students' interest in learning and develop their potential.

Many scholars (Zhang, 1992; Yang and Zhang, 2001; Liu, 2004; Yang, 2011, Cui,2019) believe that metacognitive strategies play an indispensable role in English reading. Reviewing the relevant literature found that the related research on using metacognitive strategies in English reading appeared relatively late in China and arose scores of problems. At first, most Chinese scholars paid more attention to English reading in high school. Secondly, English teachers taught vocabulary memorization and explained key sentence patterns but barely introduced metacognitive strategies to students in reading teaching classrooms. Finally, the students hardly conducted metacognitive strategies in English reading, and their awareness of metacognitive strategies needs to be improved.

3. Research Design
3.1. Research Questions

In order to achieve the above goals, the specific research questions are as follows:
- How are the English reading conditions of junior high school students?
- What is the current situation of the use of metacognitive strategies in English reading among junior high school students?

3.2. Research Subjects

The survey was conducted on junior high school students in a small county of Sichuan province. There were 496 students in this survey (see Table 1), of which 210 were boys, accounting for 42.34% of the total, and 286 were girls, accounting for 57.66% of the total, with a boy-to-girl ratio of 4:6. In terms of the proportion of grades, the eighth grade has the largest proportion, accounting for 48.79% of the total number, the ninth grade has the smallest proportion, accounting for 23.79% of the total number, and the seventh grade accounts for 27.42%.

Table 1. Basic student information

Gender	Boy	210	42.34%
	Girl	286	57.66%
Grade	Grade 7	136	27.42%
	Grade 8	242	48.79%
	Grade 9	118	23.79%

3.3. Research Instruments

The present questionnaire is revised from the reading metacognitive strategies questionnaire compiled by Liu Huijun (Liu, 2004). Table 2 shows the main contents of the revised questionnaire. After that, SPSS 25 was used to analyze the questionnaire data, and the office software Excel table was used to organize the data.

Table 2. Questionnaire on the use of metacognitive strategies

Category	Metacognitive description
Plan	1. Before reading, I will set a clear reading goal.
	2. Before reading, I will find books that meet my level according to my reading goals.
	3. I will make my reading plan (such as specifying the number or time of reading in a certain period of time, etc.)
	4. I will consider different reading methods or strategies depending on the article.
Manage	5. I will quickly scan the article before reading it and then read it carefully after understanding the main points.
	6. I predict the content of the article based on the title of the article at the beginning of the reading.
	7. When I read, I link my existing background knowledge to the article's content to improve my understanding.
	8. When I read, I connect the text's main points to help myself understand.
	9. I underline or mark as I read to highlight and help myself recall content.
	10. I pay attention as I read and use annotations to help me understand the content of the text.
	11. When I read, I pay attention to the typographical features of the article and use them to judge the main message.
	12. I pay attention to the structure and organization of my articles as I read.
	13. When I read, I pay attention to the paragraph's topic sentence and use it to determine the main idea or the general idea.
Monitor	14. I stop and think while reading to check if I understand what I'm reading.
	15. I ask myself questions while reading and find answers by reading.
	16. I revise previous predictions based on what I read as I read.
	17. During the reading process, I check whether the reading method is appropriate and adjust the improper method in time.
	18. I adjust my reading speed according to the reading time and the amount of reading during the reading process.
Evaluate learning	19. How well do I rate my understanding of the article after reading it?
	19. After reading it, I think about my opinion of the article instead of accepting it completely.
	20. After reading, I summarize whether the reading method or strategy helped me comprehend the text.
	21. After reading, I evaluate whether the article I read meets my reading goals or requirements.
	22. After reading, I evaluate what I have gained.
	24. After reading, I identify my weaknesses and consider future improvements.

According to table 2, the questionnaire consists of 4 dimensions: planning, managing, monitoring, and evaluating learning. The questionnaire sets a "Metacognitive Strategy Usage Scale" for each item in the metacognitive strategy, in which the "degree of compliance" has 5 levels from low (1: completely disagree) to high (5: completely agree). , using Likert's 5-point scoring method, from completely agree to disagree, it is rated as 5 to 1 points, and the higher the score, the better the use of metacognitive strategies.

3.4. Research Process

A total of 496 students participated in the online survey; all questionnaires were valid, and the effective rate was 100%. The data in the valid questionnaires were complete, there were no missing values, and the data were statistically analyzed by SPSS 25. The Cronbach reliability coefficient is 0.965>0.6, the reliability of the data is good, and the research data is true and reliable. The KMO value is 0.975>0.6, so the data of this study have a good level of construct validity.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Junior High School Students' English Reading Situation

4.1.1. Junior High School Students' Interest in English Reading

From the reading interest situation, 69.32% of the students are interested in English reading. In terms of reading materials, story articles are the most interesting,

Table 3. English reading interest

Your interest in English reading		
Interested	344	69.35%
Not interested	94	18.95%
Indifferent	58	11.69%
What kind of reading material are you interested in?		
Stories	292	58.87%
Popular science articles	94	18.95%
Social and Cultural	55	11.09%
Neither interested	55	11.09%
Do you prefer to read long articles or short articles?		
Long articles	47	9.48%
Short articles	340	68.55%
Indifferent	109	21.98%
What is your favorite type of reading practice questions?		
Multiple choice	373	75.20%
True or False	87	17.54%
Question and Answer	36	7.26%

Table 4. English reading satisfaction

Are you satisfied with your reading comprehension scores?		
Dissatisfied	359	72.38%
Satisfied	137	27.62%
Reading comprehension topics that are more difficult for you to		
Advertising	36	7.26%
News	79	15.93%
Stories	58	11.69%
Popular science articles	112	22.58%
Argumentative paper	211	42.54%
Your lexical difficulties during reading manifest as		
Many new words affect the article's understanding of the subject and details.	209	42.14%
New words do not affect the understanding of the article's main idea but affect the understanding of the details.	184	37.10%
Get upset when reaching new words, and lose interest and confidence in reading.	103	20.77%
Your syntactic disorder during reading manifests itself as		
When encountering long sentences, it is often difficult to understand the sentence structure, and it is difficult to understand the meaning of the sentence.	220	44.35%
When encountering compound sentences, it is easy to cause comprehension deviation, and it is difficult to understand the meaning of the sentence.	145	29.23%
Various syntactic phenomena (omission, inversion, separation, etc.) have a great influence on understanding sentence structure and meaning.	131	26.41%
Your semantic disorder during reading manifests itself as		
Confused about the semantic connection or logical relationship between contexts.	189	38.10%
Can not grasp the main idea of paragraphs or the whole text and have difficulty understanding the meaning of the text.	185	37.30%
Understanding the superficial meaning, not the connotation, makes it difficult to make guesses and judgments.	122	24.60%

accounting for 58.52% of the total number of people, and fewer people are interested in social and cultural articles, accounting for only 1.74% of the total number of people. Among the length of articles, the people who like short articles are the most, accounting for 68.37% of the total number of people, and the people who like long articles are the least, accounting for 9.85% of the total number of people. Among the reading questions, the people who like multiple-choice questions are the most, accounting for 74.81% of the total number of people, and the people who like quiz questions are the least, accounting for only 7.2% of the total number of people (see Table 3).

4.1.2. Junior High School Students' English Reading Satisfaction

72.38% of students were dissatisfied with their reading comprehension scores. Most students found argumentative essays difficult, while advertising was relatively easy. In the process of reading, 42.14% of the students have a lexical disorder, manifested as a lot of new words, which affects the understanding of the main idea and details of the article; in terms of grammar. 44.35% of the students often do not understand the sentence structure when they encounter long sentences, and it is difficult to understand the sentence's meaning. Semantic obstacles are manifested as not being able to understand the semantic connection or logical relationship between the contexts, unable to grasp the paragraph or the main theme of the whole text, and having difficulty understanding the meaning of the text. The proportion of the two is similar, accounting for 38.1% and 37.3% of the total number of people, respectively. (see Table 4)

Table 5. English reading learning situation

Do you have the following reading habits?		
Reading by finger	141	28.43%
Audio reading	222	44.76%
Look Back	50	10.08%
None	83	16.73%
Do you listen to or watch English programs outside of class or study English through the Internet		
Recurring	57	11.49%
Occasionally	293	59.07%
None	146	29.44%
What do you do when you get different reading materials?		
Read from cover to cover	333	67.14%
Read only interesting paragraphs	92	18.55%
Never noticed	71	14.31%
Do you frequently turn to the dictionary when reading short texts?		
Yes	91	18.35%
Sometimes	255	51.41%
Never	150	30.24%
What do you do when you come across a new word while reading?		
Check the dictionary now	123	24.80%
Skip	116	23.39%
Try to guess the meaning of the word	257	51.81%
Do you like new words in reading with Chinese explanations?		
Like	388	78.23%
Dislike	46	9.27%
Indifferent	62	12.50%
Will you be able to memorize the new words in the short text after reading it?		
Yes	137	27.62%
No	107	21.57%
Sometimes	252	50.81%

4.1.3. Junior High School Students' English Reading Learning Situation

44.76% of the students have the habit of audio reading when reading. Most people only occasionally listen to or watch English programs outside class or study English through the Internet. Students in 67.14 will choose to read from beginning to end when they get different reading materials. When encountering new words in the process of reading, most students choose to guess the meaning of the words as much as possible. 51.41% of the students sometimes look up the dictionary while reading the article, while 30.24% of the students choose not to look up the dictionary. 78.23% of the students said they liked the new words in reading with Chinese explanations, but only 27.62% of the students could memorize the new words after reading the short text (see Table 5).

Table 6. Metacognitive Strategies Usage

	Question\Option	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Plan (2.853)	1. Before reading, I will set a clear reading goal.	2.69	1.268
	2. Before reading, I will find books that meet my level according to my reading goals.	3	1.259
	3. I will make my reading plan (such as specifying the number or time of reading in a certain period, etc.)	2.77	1.223
	4. I will consider different reading methods or strategies depending on the article.	2.95	1.247
Manage (3.093)	5. I will quickly scan the article before reading it and then read it carefully after understanding the main points.	3.21	1.311
	6. I predict the content of the article based on the title of the article at the beginning of the reading.	3.16	1.281
	7. When I read, I link my existing background knowledge to the content of the article to improve my understanding.	3.09	1.22
	8. When I read, I connect the text's main points to help myself understand.	3.17	1.23
	9. I underline or mark as I read to highlight and help myself recall content.	3.1	1.316
	10. I pay attention as I read and use annotations to help me understand the content of the text.	3.22	1.28
	11. When I read, I pay attention to the typographical features of the article and use them to judge the main message.	2.88	1.214
	12. I pay attention to the structure and organization of my articles as I read.	2.96	1.238
	13. When I read, I pay attention to the paragraph's topic sentence and use it to determine the main idea or the general idea.	3.05	1.278
Monitor (3.064)	14. I stop and think while reading to check if I understand what I'm reading.	3.12	1.245
	15. I ask myself questions while reading and find answers by reading.	2.97	1.223
	16. I revise previous predictions based on what I read as I read.	3.1	1.248
	17. During the reading process, I timely check whether the reading method used is appropriate and adjust the improper method in time.	2.97	1.245
	18. I adjust my reading speed according to the reading time and the amount of reading during the reading process.	3.16	1.236
Evaluate (2.948)	19. How well do I rate my understanding of the article after reading it?	2.91	1.261
	20. Think about my opinion of the article after reading it instead of accepting it completely.	2.92	1.218
	21. After reading, I summarize whether the reading method or strategy helped me comprehend the text.	2.92	1.236
	22. After reading, I evaluate whether the article I read meets my reading goals or requirements.	2.9	1.243
	23. After reading, I evaluate what I have gained.	2.92	1.191
	24. After reading, I identify my weaknesses and consider future improvements.	3.12	1.264
	Average	3.01	

4.2. The Use of Metacognitive Strategies in English Reading among Junior High School Students

This survey investigates the current situation of students' use of reading metacognitive strategies from students' questionnaires and investigates whether students can use planning strategies, selective attention strategies, monitoring strategies, and evaluation strategies in reading. Table 6 is obtained by sorting and summarizing the questionnaires. It can be seen from the table that the average level of metacognitive strategies used in English reading for junior high school students is 3.01, among which the average level of reading planning strategies is 2.853, the level of reading managing attention strategies is 3.093, the average level of reading monitoring strategies is 3.064, the average value of the evaluation strategy application level is 2.948. It shows that the current situation of the application of metacognitive strategies in English reading of junior high school students is not particularly ideal. It can be seen from Figure 1 that most of the reading metacognitive strategies have values between 2.7 and 3.25 for each dimension. It can be seen that in the questionnaire, most students chose "basically consistent" and "not very consistent."
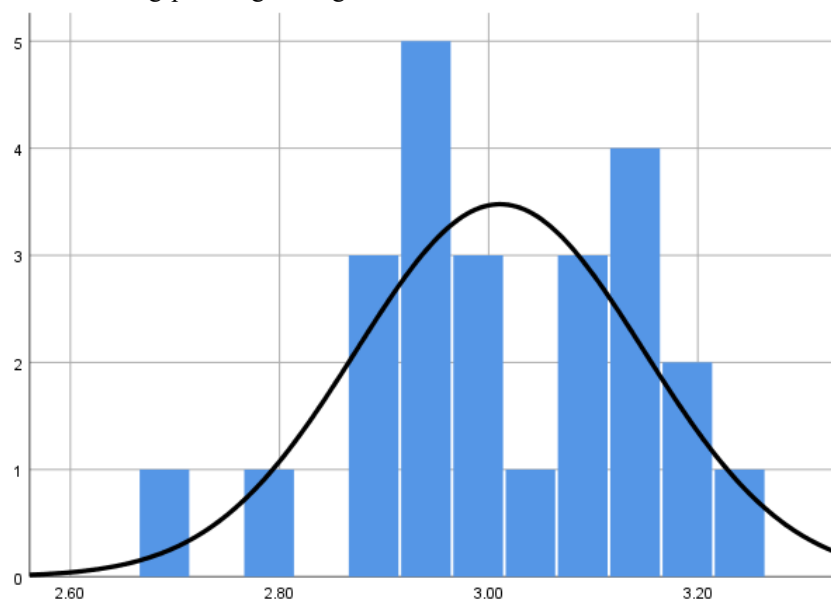

Fig. 1 Frequency distribution histogram of metacognitive strategies

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

This paper draws the following conclusions from the data of this survey: (1) Rural junior high school students are more interested in English reading but not satisfied with their English reading scores. (2) They occasionally study English outside of class and have varying degrees of vocabulary, syntax, and semantics during the reading process. (3) The average value of metacognitive strategies used in the reading process is between "basically agree" and "not quite agreeable." The current situation of the use of metacognitive strategies in English reading is not particularly ideal.

Therefore, the following suggestions are made to improve students' reading ability.

5.1. Teachers should construct a framework for students' reading strategies

In the process of reading teaching, teachers should systematically introduce and sort out the types of reading strategies to students, urge students to establish a framework of reading strategies, and guide students to learn reading strategies. For example, for constructing a metacognition strategy framework, teachers can first systematically inform students what metacognition is and explain in a way that students understand that metacognition is used to plan, manage, evaluate, and monitor cognitive strategies. Therefore, teachers can ask students to slow down when they are reading, stop to check whether they understand the content of the text and what problems they encountered during the reading process, and try to analyze the reasons and provide solutions on their own. After reading, teachers should guide students to summarize the reading materials and put forward their opinions and views on the article rather than completely accepting the original author's ideas. Afterward, ask students to self-assess the reading method they choose when reading according to their reading completion and see if the method they choose helps to understand the text better.

5.2. Students should Improve their Internal Drive to Use Reading Strategies

Effective use of reading strategies can improve readers' efficiency and achievement. The formation of the ability to use reading strategies is not achieved overnight. It is a long process for students to use reading strategies effectively. It requires students to use reading strategies continuously and then consolidate and strengthen the use

of reading strategies. Therefore, only the learners are conscious and can focus on improving the internal drive of reading strategies, that is, actively and actively use different reading strategies and methods in the reading process, increase the frequency of use, and gradually internalize the use of reading strategies can be achieved. First of all, In daily reading training, students should consciously cultivate the use of their reading strategies. After reading, students should be good at summarizing the article and putting forward their own opinions on the article. Students should also self-evaluate the use of their reading strategies and their understanding of the article after reading. Secondly, students should pay attention to the communication and cooperation between their peers, ask their peers or teachers for advice on time when they do not understand problems, and use the method of communicating and sharing with peers to improve their learning when they learn good reading methods, to cultivate their independent learning ability consciously. In a word, students are the main body of learning. Only when they recognize the importance of using strategies and continuously drive themselves to use reading strategies can they achieve the goal of improving reading performance and reading ability.

5.3. Students should Increase the Reading Volume of English Publications

Reading more English publications is an important way to improve students' English reading level and ability. Students should put forward a reasonable reading plan for themselves and increase their extra-curricular reading volume. This way, students will accumulate more background knowledge and materials related to the text. Students will be exposed to a large number of new words in the reading of English publications. These words cover a comprehensive range of knowledge and are also close to students' real life. Therefore, students' vocabulary will also improve with the increased reading volume, creating a win-win situation. At the same time, because students are exposed to a large number of articles of different genres, the formal schema of the students has also been expanded. Understanding different genres of articles can help students better understand the articles and grasp the main context of the articles.

Funding Statement

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