Addis Ababa University Students' Strategy Use in a Reading-to-Writing Task

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Abstract: Provision of all the necessary learning materials and support systems may not create the required learning process. Even though learners have all similar supports they definitely learn in different ways. Learning begins in the learners. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the reading-to-writing strategies employed by graduating students in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at Addis Ababa University. The necessary data was collected from: (1) a questionnaire administered to 20 students, (2) think-aloud recording of 20 students, (3) interview with three students and, (4) writings of 19 students. Analysis of the data from the sources revealed that while doing reading-to-writing task, students use strategies in the following order: cognitive, social affective and metacognitive strategies. It was also found that students use less demanding strategies such as repetition, asking for clarification and self-monitoring more frequently than demanding strategies such as planning, elaboration, transfer and inference. It was also observed that students with less competent writing less frequently use metacognitive strategies. What is more, a difference within strategy uses among students who have produced competent, average and less competent writing was observed. The study indicates that there is a need to provide training and practice on uses of different strategies and tasks in order to make students able to direct their own learning. The need to train teachers and include learner training components into teacher training course and language learning materials are the overall recommendation of the study.

Keywords: Reading to Writing, Strategy use, writing competence

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Introduction

Language learning is a process that involves learners' active engagement in the learning process in addition to the input from the teacher and materials. It requires *an active process* of *meaning construction and expression* (O'malley and Chamot, 1990:21). In spite of the similarities of teaching materials, teachers and the teaching methods used, difference among learners' performance is observed in every classroom. Even with the best teachers, materials and methods, students are the only ones who can actually do the learning. As Nyikos and Oxford (1993:11) put it: *learning begins with the learner*. Some learners are more successful than others in performing certain tasks in second language. Research indicates that aptitude, motivation and opportunity for learning are basic factors for individual differences (Gardner et al 1985). However, these factors are limited in predicting future success of the individual in learning second language. They do not show what the successful or unsuccessful learner does in order to learn (Rubin 1975, Vann and Abrahams, 1990). However, learning what a successful learner does to learn could be a lesson to help the successful ones.

Learners come to classrooms with their own individual perception and specific techniques that can be used at a specific learning situation to facilitate their learning (Williams and Burden, 1997). These specific techniques are termed as cognitive processes (Wong fillmore 1985), learning strategies (Rubin 1975; Oxford, 1990: O'malley et al, 1985), learning behaviors (Politzer and Mc Groarty, 1985) or tactics. These strategies are *organized approach to* a *task (*Smith,1994, p. 208) employed by the learners to regulate their learning (Wenden, 1987). Zeleke (2014) argued that the teaching of these strategies has significant effect on learners' writing performance. Both local and international studies seem to agree that strategies have better roles than the linguistic proficiency of the learner on certain skills such as writing. Zamel (1984:198) as quoted in Raimes (1985) argues that w*hile ESL students*

must certainly deal with concerns that are linguistic specific, it seems that it is their writing strategies and behaviors and not primarily language proficiency that determine composing skills.

The current approach in language teaching, communicative language learning, stresses the role of integrated language tasks (Delany, 2008). As a result, presenting tasks that involve reading and writing in a higher education context is considered as part of the academic exercise (Soltain and Kheirzadeh, 2017). In addition, Al Ghonaim (2005) stated that those who read well are those who write well. Similarly, Hirvela (2004) argued that academic writing has to be supported with meaningful inputs from reading. Local studies (Taye, 2004) have also indicated that writing becomes very successful if reading is used as an input. Particularly, students in the final year of their study are expected to produce original research work based on their reading and overall learning exercise they had. These call for the relevance of reading-to-writing tasks. Flower et al (1990:4) suggest that reading-to-writing is an "academic task" that involves critical literacy that is mostly associated with college level academic activities. This task also requires learners to base their argument and suggestion on their understanding of the source text. Thus, it is an activity that involves both comprehension and production and calls for complex interaction in the process of reading in order to create one's text (Flower, et al, 1990). Studies indicated that students' in reading- to-writing task perform better than students in only writing task (Watanabe, 2001 and Gebril, 2006). Reading-to-writing also requires learners to base their argument and suggestion on their understanding of the source text. All these processes encourage learners to use different strategies that will help them to understand the text and produce their own organized writing. Strategy research to date has shown that all language learners use some type of strategies (Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006), yet the frequency, variety, and the choice of strategies show variation among learners and language learning tasks (Chamot and Küpper, 1989). Although there seems to be an agreement on the benefit of integrating reading and writing as reading-to writing task, the researches on strategies use were on individual skills and sub

skills (Temesgen, 2013, Fekadu and Ymesrach, 2019). Thus, investigating learning strategies used by learners in reading-to-writing task will provide an insight into learners' success difference and learner training. In light of the above suggestions and arguments, this study is interested in studying strategies employed by a sample of graduating students at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature during a reading-to-writing task.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to investigate strategies employed by graduating students at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature while they are working on a reading-to-writing task. To this end, the study will (a) identify types and frequency of strategies used by the students during the task; and (b) determine if strategies varied depending on learners writing performance.

This study was carried out on the 2016 third year students of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature in Addis Ababa University. It involved 20 volunteer students out of 34 students. This study was not intended to evaluate the effect of learning strategies in light of other variables and to determine the most effective strategy. Rather it was to investigate the strategies used by these students and to find if there was a difference among the students in their strategy use.

There might be a relationship between the strategies used and the students' writing that can be explored quantitatively. Such exploration requires continuous think-aloud and writing assessment. Thus, such comparative investigation was not included in this study.

Operational Definitions

Think aloud: a research method in which a participant speaks aloud any words in mind as he/she completes a task.

Strategy use: use of once technique or approach to perform an activity successfully

Reading to writing: an activity that involves both comprehension and production and calls for complex interaction in the process of reading to create one's own text in writing.

Literature Review

Language Learning and Strategies

Oxford (2003) widely acknowledged that learning strategies have become one of the main factors that help students to learn a second or foreign language successfully. Bialystok's (1978) defining learning strategies as *optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in second language* (1978: 71) includes four language-learning strategies: Inferencing, monitoring, formal practicing and functional practicing as factors that have implications to competences that are implicit, explicit and general competences. Explicit competence refers to formal language competence such as the knowledge about language rules and vocabulary. Implicit linguistic competence is related to cognitive knowledge, and general competence of the world refers to knowledge about the nature of language in general and first language in particular. Inferencing has connection with explicit and general competence of the world while monitoring, formal practicing and functional practicing were used in explicit and implicit competence. Bialystok's model indicates the possibility of consciously used strategies contribution to implicit linguistic competence, which in turn helps learners to comprehend and produce language subconsciously.

Another model that was developed by Krashen addresses two different processes in second language acquisition. Krashen's (1982) Monitor model describes these two processes as 'acquisition' which is subconscious and 'learning' which is conscious. However, learning does not lead to acquisition (implicit linguistic competence) and the uses of

learning strategies such as monitoring under conscious rule learning process do not have contribution to acquisition. In addition, Krashen's (1986) input hypothesis gave priority to the input as the only source of success in language learning and disregarded learning strategies role in language acquisition. Contrary to Bialystok's model, Krashen's model disregards the contribution of learners and their active and conscious use of strategies in the development or acquisition of second language. However, Krashen's distinction between acquisition and learning seems superficial because there might be a possibility for learned elements to be acquired subconsciously and vice versa.

Chamot and O'Malley (in Herrera & Murry, 2011:46) discussed the importance of using strategies for learning languages. They stated that *Academic language learning is more effective when it is supported by learning strategies*. Oxford (2003) believes that *language learning styles and strategies are among the main factors that help determine how - and how well - our students learn a second or foreign language*. When chosen consciously, language learning strategies can act as a key to active, conscious, and purposeful self-regulation learning. Some researchers have even gone to the extent of considering learning strategies as basic factors that determine learning outcome in second language learning (Brown et ai, 1983). However, learning strategies as presented in each of the models are not the only factors that contribute to individual difference and success in language learning.

Learning strategies are behaviors (Oxford, Lavins and Crookall, 1989) a series of skills (Williams and Burden, 1997), mental steps or operations (Wenden, 1991), specific actions (Oxford, 1990) and specific procedures (Richards and Lockhart, 1996) that individual learners use in order to learn language. Ortega (2009:208) defined learning strategies as *conscious mental and behavioural procedures that individuals engage in with the aim to gain control over their learning process*. According to Brown (2006), strategies are "attacks" used by humans in a particular situation, those differ within each person. In addition, Chamot (2005:112)

defined strategies quite broadly as *procedures that facilitate a learning task, they are most often conscious and goal driven*.

The focus of almost all research on learning strategies is on strategies used by 'good' language learners in order to develop their language competence. All appreciate that the need for studying learning strategy has come from cognitive psychology and the increasing demand of research to understand individual behaviors in order to learn. The shift of research focus in language learning from teaching methods and procedures employed in classroom to learners' behavior is the influence of cognitive psychology (Williams and Burden, 1997). Researchers who attempted to identify factors that bring success difference among students have addressed the issue of strategies. (O'malley, Chamot and Kupper, 1989; Macintyre and Noels, 1996; Zeleke 2014; Fekadu and Yemserach, 2019)

Rubin (1975: 43) in her prominent work on strategies of "good" language learners described strategies as *techniques or devices that a learner may use to acquire knowledge*. She identified a list of seven strategies that are used by what she calls a good language learner. She argues that 'good language learners' (1) are willing and accurate guessers; (2) have strong drive to communicate; (3) are willing to make mistakes; (4) focus on form; (5) make practice; (6) monitor their own speech and others speech and (7) pay attention to meaning.

Naiman et al (1978) has come up with five categories of strategies that are used by successful language learners. These strategies are active task approach (engaging in practice activity), realization of language as a system, understanding of language as a way of communication, controlling affective (emotional) demands and monitoring language performance.

Stern (1983) has also summarized four sets of strategies: active planning strategies, academic (explicit) learning strategy, social learning strategy (that involves cooperative activities) and affective learning

strategies. These sets of strategies are supposed to be employed by good language learners while less efficient learners use them rarely or even sometimes wrongly.

In contrast, Vann and Abraham (1990) argue that even unsuccessful learners use strategies. This indicates that learners at any success level use strategies. The difference among learners' success is attributed to types and frequency of strategy use on a given task. Each of the description also shares common aspects or types of strategies that have given a direction for the need of further research on learning strategies.

In order to classify and study learning strategies, researchers have developed different taxonomies and descriptions. Perhaps most of them share common features on these strategies (Richard and Lockhart, 1996). Oxford (1989) has slightly a different classification that has served her to develop the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire. Her classification has memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social and affective strategy components. In classifying learning strategies, most writers preferred the three-group classification; Metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies (O'Malley, et al 1985; Wenden, 1991).

Metacognitive strategies include seven strategies: planning, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-evaluation, self-monitoring and problem identification. These strategies involve thinking about the overall reading-to-writing process. The second groups, cognitive strategies that require learners' task interaction are thirteen. The last group is social/affective strategies. These strategies involve learners' interaction with another person and learner's personal techniques to control their affect (emotion) that help them to do the task (please see the Appendix).

Reading and Writing as Cognitive Processes

Practices in an academic context show that more people are involved in reading than writing. This is due to many reasons. Social, economic and ideological demands of the society are the possible causes for the emphasis difference on the two skills (Kress, 1994). Reading that involves comprehension of messages is not a simple passive decoding process of meaning from a written text. Kress (1994:4) defines reading as 'an active process in which the reader is engaged in the (re) construction of meaning, indeed in the (re) construction of text which is being read. The reader is expected to know and understand the form and arrive at the intended meaning. As a result, reading requires more than the knowledge of language structure or ability to say out each and every word or letter in the text. As one of the skills in language learning, it involves the processes of perception, parsing and utilization (Grabe, 2009). Reading involves the interaction of the reader's background knowledge and the text (Just & Carpenter, 1992)

Hence, reading is an active and constructive process, which requires the use of different strategies to find out meaning and relate it with the prior knowledge (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Wallace, 1992). Inference, deduction, elaboration, transfer, note taking, summarizing, outlining and self-questioning are some of the strategies identified by researchers in relation to a reading task (Brown et al., 1983). These strategies are elements that can facilitate the language comprehension process.

On the other hand, writing involves both meaning (message) and code to write out what one intends to say. However, complete writing is more than having meaning and representing it with certain codes. It is an *active meaning construction and expression* (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990: 21). Greater knowledge of the language structure in addition to clear meaning to be conveyed through the written medium is important in this form of language production (Vollmer and Sang, 1983).

However, practice showed that treating reading and writing skills separately might be difficult and artificial in real life and in advanced classroom situation. Students particularly at advanced level are expected to read, comprehend and write about what they have understood in relation to their personal feeling (Rosenfeld, Leung and Oltman, 2001). In such a situation, learners have a reason to read a text, i.e., to write. The whole process requires learners to construct purpose, integrate the text with their pre-knowledge and writing out their organized understanding and perception. This can only be achieved when reading and writing are integrated. Zamel (1992: 463) states that *in order to give students experience with reading that demonstrates the way in which readers engage, contribute to, and make connections with texts, writing needs to be fully integrated with reading.*

Reading-to-writing is, then, the result of the need to integrate reading and writing to develop learners' awareness on the nature of language learning and language use. Flower et al (1990:4) say

> *Reading-to-writing is a tool used to learn, to test learning, to push students to build beyond their source. It is also a gate in to that higher literacy in which information from a source text is not only understood in its own terms but is transformed in the hands of the writer.*

This implies that reading-to-writing is not a simple act of comprehending a written text to put the idea in a written form. It requires critical literacy that is more than reading and writing. Reading to writing can be examined and conceptualized as *a reciprocal interaction between literacy skills, in which the basic process and strategies used for reading and writing are modified by an individual's goal and abilities and also by external factors* (Delaney, 2008: 141). However, just reading and writing abilities are not enough to perform a reading-to-writing task effectively (Delaney, 2008). In other words, it involves processing information from a written text to produce one's original expression. Consequently, it allows the reader to examine the texts and come up with a particular

meaning in it. Such comprehension can be achieved through extended discourse, where readers become writers who articulate their understandings of and connections to the text in their response.

Flower et al. (1990) have shown that reading-to-writing calls for comprehension of procedures and instructions, understanding ideas through questioning the source, reading out assumptions and intentions which are more than taking down facts, transforming what has been comprehended and understanding and integrating all with one's idea to produce a text. They argue reading-to-writing is used to develop critical consciousness one that gives learners the power to understand others meaning and to make their own. Such ability and skill of integrating what they know with what they read from a source text and identifying important points from a text in order to use them to solve a problem or achieve their goal is considered as academic task. As a result, practicing reading-to-writing task in a classroom is believed to have contribution to make learners effective and self-directed in their academic life and allows learners to actively engage in the text, investigate how and why others produce the text and to produce "autonomous text" (Zamel, 1992). However, most language learning strategy use studies were on either reading or writing tasks. Thus, understanding strategies that are employed by students in such a very complicated integrated language activity has great contribution in designing ways and approaches that help learners to improve their performance (O'malley and Chamot, 1990).

Methodology

The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Since the main intention of this study is to investigate the strategy use which is a mental process, engaging participants to describe their mental process qualitatively and rate performance quantitatively is very central. The think aloud method provides what the mental processes during the complex task performance and can provide rich data on cognitive processes to be further organized and presented quantitatively in

frequency count. To triangulate this data an in-depth interview was conducted to learn more about what were identified from the think aloud. This approach was preferred to have deeper understanding on the strategy uses of the participants while they are performing a reading-to-writing activity. On the other hand, the participants' writing which is a result of the whole process of the reading to writing was rated to group the participants into competent, average, and less competent writers. Then a comprehensive analysis was done to see the relationship between the self-reported strategies and the writing results.

The participants of this study were 20 graduating class students who were taking the course Advanced Writing Skills in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. All these students were majoring in English. These students were approached by the researcher who was also their instructor. They were given five days of training to think aloud and only those who were comfortable and willing to say loud their mental processes were involved in the study. Their think aloud was recorded in the Spoken English Laboratory for each of them.

Instruments

Questionnaire, interview, writing test and think aloud procedures were used to collect the data. These instruments are considered as relevant since the issues under investigation both strategy use and reading to writing are mental processes that have to be captured using both numerical and descriptive data. And the use of both qualitative and quantitative data will eliminate the limitation of one by strengthening the other. A questionnaire consisting of nine items that focuses on the students' personal information and reading-to-writing experience was designed and distributed to the students. It has two parts: Items related to student's personal information (items 1-3) and items related to students reading, writing and reading-to-writing experience (items 4-9). These items help to get the students personal reading, writing and reading to write previous and current experience.

An interview was conducted with students after they had completed the questionnaire and had done the reading to write task. The interview was made with the help of seven open-ended questions which were used as a guide to learn about the students' language learning experiences. Furthermore, the interview is conducted in order to learn more about what the students do while they are learning language and in particular while they are doing reading to writing activities.

Finally, students' writings from the reading-to-writing activity were also assessed to see if there is a relationship between students' writing achievement and reading-to-writing strategies used. The students' writings were collected and marked by two raters using Test of Written English (TWE) Scoring Guide (Boyd, 1991). The students' written work was assessed using the guideline to find out the level of their writing and categorize it as competent, average and less competent writing.

In order to investigate the actual reading-to-writing strategies used by the students a think aloud /say out/ protocol was used to get their mental processes while they were reading five paragraphs from different sources on a topic - time management in professional and academic setting and writing their organized piece of writing on the same topic. As a method of inquiry, the thinking aloud is preferred as the flexible and goal-directed processing of what the participants were doing at the actual time and a way to learn about the mental process of the readers are involved in. It also provides rich information about how learners solve problems, what difficulties they encounter and to what extent and in what contexts they use certain strategies in a learning task (Jahandar, Khodabandehlou, Seyedi, G., and Abadi, 2012).

The think aloud that was recorded in the lab was transcribed and strategies were identified with the help of a description model adapted from O'Malley et al. (1985) and Chamot, Kupper and Impmd-Hernandez (1988). The words, phrases and sentences which were uttered by the students were named by the researcher and one English Language teacher who have studied the description model. The two persons

listened to the records and read the transcriptions in order to assign a name to each strategy based on the model. The strategies which were named similarly by the two persons were used for the final analysis. Strategies which were named differently by the two persons and strategies which were named only by one of the two persons were excluded from the strategy list and count.

Data Presentations and Discussions

Students' Responses to the Questionnaire

In this study, the purpose of the questionnaire was to find out whether students had the experience of doing reading-to-writing task, and if so, to identify strategies that the students employed to work on the task. Items 1-3 were used to identify students' code, age and sex respectively. It was found that 16 students were male and 4 were female whose age ranges between twenty and twenty-five. Items 4-9 of the questionnaire were set to elicit some general information about students' judgment of their ability to read, write, read and write.

Students rating of their ability of reading, writing and reading-to-writing indicated that they were able to perform such tasks. All the students rated their ability to read and understand a text as very good and good. The majority (17) rated their writing ability as good. Most of them (15) claimed that their reading-to-writing ability was good. These seem to suggest that students have the confidence to do the task and may not have any practical problems related to their skills of reading and writing. Thus, the task that students were expected to do for this study did not demand them additional effort and strategies which may not be in their experience.

Almost all of them (18) answered that they have the experience of reading-to-writing task. This suggests that reading-to-writing is one of the academic skills that these students need to develop in their language learning process. Most of them stated that reading-to-writing is the

activity they are engaged in to produce term papers for literature courses, senior essay, composition papers and portfolios for skill courses. Thus, this implies that reading-to-writing had an important place in their academic life in the University.

Producing term papers for literature courses was an activity the highest number of respondents referred to as a situation that they experienced reading-to-writing. The senior essay that they were working on at the time of the investigation was also the second situation identified as an activity that required them to read and write. In any form the students had the experience of reading-to-writing.

Students were asked what special ways or strategies they used in order to understand what they were reading, transferring or using what they read to their own organized piece of writing and write their final piece of writing based on what they read. Students indicated that they used different strategies to perform each process of the reading-to-writing task. The students identified eight strategies in order to understand what they read. Reading the text again and again (repetition) and note-taking were strategies that were reported by most of the respondents (7 of the respondents for each). Six of the respondents said that identifying the main idea was their strategy to read and understand the text while 4 said that they have a strategy of relating the text to background knowledge. Using dictionaries (resourcing), translation, identifying specific ideas and asking friends and teachers were also strategies used by the least number of respondents.

In order to transfer or use what students read to their pieces of writing on the topic, they mentioned very limited strategies. Half of the students did not give any strategies for this activity. However, four strategies were identified by the rest half of the students. Preparing an outline to create a link between ideas and summarizing/ paraphrasing were used by three and four respondents respectively. On the other hand, the strategy reported by these students to produce their piece of writing- proofreading for organization, spelling, meaning and grammar to rewrite, seems to be

in line with the widely used strategy in writing i.e., revision. However, Raimes (1985) argues the students' revision is mostly editing. Discussing the ideas with friends and allowing friends to read the writing for comments are identified by Leki (1995) as important strategies used by students in approaching a writing task also reported in this study.

All the strategies listed by the students can be classified into the three basic groups of strategies identified in the literature. Thus, the questionnaire results, even if they are not conclusive due to limited number of respondents, seem encouraging in that students have various strategies in their repertoire in order to work on a reading-to-writing task. Moreover, there is an indication that students use more cognitive strategies than metacognitive and social/affective strategies to comprehend and transfer reading texts in order to produce their own writing.

When learners encounter a task that may not have been in their previous academic experience, the knowledge that they have about the purpose of the task affects their performance and the strategy use that they experience on the new task (Wenden, 1991). However, the result indicates that students have the practice on the task, and have strategies that contribute to their successful performance on the work.

Students' Think Aloud

From the transcribed think aloud of the 20 students the raters identified that the students had a range of strategies. As can be seen from table one below a total of 768 strategy counts was done. Among them more than half (51.43%) of the strategies were cognitive strategies while 25.92% and 22.65% of the strategies were Social/Affective and Metacognitive strategies respectively. This indicates that the students were using cognitive strategies more often than the metacognitive and social/ affective strategies during the task. Students were mainly focusing in completing the task using strategies that were useful for immediate problem solving and manipulation of the given task.

Table 1: Frequency of strategies identified

Strategy categories	frequency	Percentage
metacognitive	174	22.65
Cognitive	395	51.43
Social/ Affective	199	25.92
Total	768	100

Metacognitive Strategies

As indicated in Table 2, the various types of metacognitive strategies that accounted for 22.6% of all the strategies reported; include planning (2.47%), directed attention (1.56%), selective attention (1.43%) self-management (2.86%), self-monitoring (10.5%) self-evaluation (2.47%) and problem identification (1.3%). Self-monitoring, which accounted for 46.5% of all metacognitive strategies, was identified as the most frequently used strategy followed by self-management (12.6%) and planning (10.9%). Problem-identification (5.7%) was the least frequently used strategy.

Table 2: Metacognitive strategies named from the students' think-aloud

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage per type	Percentage per total
Planning	19	10.9	2.47
Directed attention	12	6.8	1.56
Selective attention	11	6.32	1.43
Self-management	22	12.6	2.86
Self-monitoring	81	46.55	10.5
Self-evolution	19	10.9	2.47
Problem identification	10	5.7	1.30
Total	174	100	22.6%
Population mean	9.15		

These results revealed that students were most frequently monitoring their comprehension and production. This indicates students' over concern for objectivity and accuracy, which in turn might be the result of their earlier academic experience. This was also clearly reflected in the students' writing where most of them (65%) produced writing, that is the summaries of given paragraphs while the rest (35%) attempted to interpret the paragraph although they tried too little to include their view or perception about the ideas in the writing. The interviewed students claimed that they read instruction only when they faced difficulties and unusual situations. They further suggested that most academic tasks that they had in their previous experiences were similar, thus reading instruction and preparing an outline or plan were a waste of time for them.

Although students used self-monitoring strategy more frequently than other metacognitive strategies, the areas that they were monitoring were mechanical aspects of the task such as spelling and word level comprehension that led them to repetition. For example, the following is an extract from student II think-aloud transcription:

> *what can I understand is failure failure, what is failure, mental energy? Actually, energies* as *James, no, W. James. But climax or critical point …*

This implies that the student's use of monitoring strategy was limited to verification of discrete item understanding rather than correcting or checking overall understanding and production of ideas or concepts. This was also true that most of them (75%) did not have any draft for their writing and even those who had draft (25%) did not make any idea or meaning revision except some mechanical corrections on the final draft. Their revision was not more than editing. However, this may be because their writing results have no impact or contribution to their achievement. But the interview supported that self-monitoring for the interviewed students is checking or correcting grammar, spelling and

punctuation. All this can be an indication for few instances of planning strategy that accounted for 10.9% of the metacognitive strategy use.

The limited instances of metacognitive strategy use indicated that students might have a problem to direct their own learning. Rather they seem that they were more dependent on their teachers and/or previous experience. Out of the 20 students think-aloud transcription only one gave attention to the instruction. Others were guided by their previous experiences. When they read texts, they read and wrote summaries.

Cognitive Strategies

As shown in Table 1, more than half of the strategies named from the think-aloud were cognitive strategies that accounted for 51.4% of the total strategy use. This might be because of the nature of the task which influences strategy use (Macintyre, 1994).

Table 3: Cognitive Strategies named from the students think-aloud

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage per type	Percentage per total
Repetition	162	41.0	21.09
Translation	19	4.8	2.47
Grouping	10	2.5	1.3
Note making	33	8.35	4.29
Deduction/Induction	5	1.2	0.65
Summarization	28	7.08	3.6
Key word	2	0.5	0.2
Contextualization	3	0.7	0.3
Elaboration	64	16.2	8.3
Transfer	32	8.1	4.1
Inference	37	9.36	4.8
Total	395	100	51.4
Population mean	20.78		

One of the cognitive strategies - repetition- which requires little effort and conceptual processing accounted for 41% of all cognitive strategy uses. It also covered 21.9% of all the strategy uses. Repetition strategy use was almost equal to the overall metacognitive strategies use (22.6%). This suggests that students mostly depended on repetition to memorize and transfer what they read. In addition, their writing showed that most of the words and expressions were taken from the source text. This supports that students were repeating not only ideas and concepts but also words.

On the other hand, there were only 28 instances of summarizing strategy use. Nonetheless the frequency of the use of summarizing strategy that accounted for 7.08% seems small, students' writing and interview responses proved that students were highly dependent on summarizing strategy. The use of this strategy may have a contribution for the frequent use of repetition and questioning for clarification since summary writing/summarizing is a recursive process. It is observed that students were looking back at what they had read and asked themselves to recall what they had read.

Other cognitive strategies identified were translation (4.8%), grouping (2.5%) note-taking (8.35%) deduction/induction (1.2%), key word (0.5%), contextualization (0.7%), elaboration (16.2%), transfer (8.1%) and inference (9.36%). Elaboration that accounted for 8.3% of the total strategy use was the second frequently used cognitive strategy whereas inference and transfer were the third and fourth frequently used cognitive strategies respectively. Note-taking was the fifth and key word was the least of all the cognitive strategies. This indicates that although there was a high number of instances of repetition strategy use, students had also used demanding strategies such as elaboration, inference and transfer. Though the frequency count of strategies showed 33 instances of note-taking strategy, the students' writing confirmed that their notes were not more than a paragraph-based copy and summary. This contradicts with the view that note-taking involves critical thinking and organizing ideas (Leki, 1995). In short, the overall cognitive strategies

identified suggests that students were accustomed to less demanding and mechanical strategies such as repetition and summarizing than demanding and active strategies such as elaboration and transfer.

Social Affective Strategies

The social affective strategies of the 20 students account for 25.9% of all strategy uses. Though the environment that the students did the task did not allow the presence of another person, the uses of the social affective strategies were more than expected.

As indicated in Table 4, 79.3% of the social/affective strategy use was taken by questioning for clarification. It covered 20.57% of all the strategy uses. Some argue that questioning one-self for clarification is a metacognitive strategy (Brown et al 1983), but the students' think-aloud signified that this strategy was used to create close link between the on-going activity and their understanding. They questioned themselves, and to respond to their own question they reread or recall what they have comprehended. This gave them a confidence to keep on doing the task.

Table 4. Social /affective strategies named from the students think aloud

Strategies	frequency	Percentage per type	Percentage per total
Questioning for clarification	158	79.3	20.57
Self-talk	14	7.03	1.82
Self-reinforcement	11	5.5	1.43
Avoidance	16	8.4	2.08
total	199	100	25.9
Population mean	10.47		

As the think-aloud transcription of student III indicated below, the questions that were raised by the student were less likely to involve him/her in cognitive processes as most metacognitive strategies do.

Where is it? What? Ok Walter Pauk Walter Pauk,

who is he? Ok is he from Cornell University? Students,

which students What? What is will power?

Furthermore, the interviewed students remarked that questions that they asked themselves were about what they read and needed to keep in mind ideas that they expected to read from the text. This, as they argued, gave them comfort and ease to do the task.

Even if the instance of their use was very low, the students used self-talk, self-reinforcement and avoidance strategies. These strategies that accounted for 7.03%, 5.5% and 8.04% of all the social/affective strategy uses respectively were used to maintain conducive affective climate. As students argued during the interview they rarely cared for their emotion. However, indirectly they mentioned motivation as an important factor for success.

Avoidance that accounted for 8.04% of all the social affective strategy uses is a new strategy identified during the naming of strategies from the think-aloud transcription. Sixteen instances of excluding some part or whole reading paragraphs during difficulty of understanding were observed. Students preferred to ignore some parts of the task that were difficult for them rather than trying to work out with the help of different strategies. This may be due to lack of appropriate strategies that could tackle their problem of understanding the text.

In general, the students used the three types of strategy groups identified in earlier works (Oxford, 2003). Less frequent uses of metacognitive strategies indicated that the students' awareness about language learning, strategies use and activation or manipulations of cognitive strategies were limited. In the interviews, they claimed that quoting and paraphrasing were best mechanism or strategies they used to work on a reading-to-writing task. This, in turn, suggests that the students were

more dependent on the sources. However, in an input poor classroom practice where more is expected from the students, students over dependence on only one or two available resources might limit their endeavor to succeed. In addition, students might be less self-directed. This condition contradicts with the effort to create learner centered autonomous learning environment, which involves higher use of metacognitive strategies and being self-directed (Doyle, 2008).

Being more than half of the strategies identified cognitive strategies suggests that the task was cognitively demanding and students were in cognitive processes to solve the task. This confirms the argument of Flower et al. (1990) and Asencion (2004) that mentioned reading-to-writing as a “critical conscious processing" to understand what one read and made it one's own. However, the types of cognitive strategies mostly reported in the think-aloud were not high-level processing strategies. The social/affective strategies which were the least identified indicated that the students attempt to maintain an affective climate to work on the task, and agrees with Leki's (1995) finding where he argues that social/affective strategies are important to approach writing task.

The most frequently used strategies from each type- self-monitoring, repetition and questioning for clarification- show that the students were aware of strategies that are identified as less demanding than demanding strategies such as planning, elaboration, transfer and self-reinforcement.

Strategies Reported and Students' Writing

The sample students were asked to write their organized piece of writing based on what they read from the given 4 paragraphs while they were thinking-aloud. Out of the writings of 20 students, only 5 had draft while 14 had no draft and one was just a copy of the five paragraphs. Students' writing analysis indicated that 14 of the writing were rated as summary of the texts whereas 5 of them were rated as interpretations. Based on

the scores assigned by the two raters, 8 of the writings were competent, 9 of them were average and 3 of them were less competent.

Table 5 summarizes differences and types of strategies use by students who produced competent, average and less competent writing. Students who wrote competent and average writings used metacognitive strategies more frequently than those with less competent writing. This finding is consistent with results of Abar and Locker (2010) and Samadi (2004).

Metacognitive strategy favored by students with less competent writing is self-evaluation whereas students with competent and average writing relied heavily on metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring, self-management and planning. Cognitive and social/affective strategies favored by students with competent, average and less competent writing showed many important differences. Students who had produced competent and average writing favored elaboration, transfer and inference strategies, whereas students who had produced less competent writing favored repetition, grouping, summarizing, questioning for clarification and avoidance. On the other hand, elaboration, transfer and inference were less favored strategies by students who had produced less competent writing. In addition, these students employed less instances of metacognitive strategies and high number of instances of social/affective strategies.

The above findings indicated that students with less competent writing heavily depended on less demanding strategies whereas students with competent and average writing favored more demanding strategies. This confirms the finding that types of strategy use have an impact on performance of learners on a task (Oxford and Ephrman, 1995). In short, the use of strategies by the students with competent, average and less competent writing showed that there is a relationship between writing competence and strategy frequency and types in use. This is in line with Karami (2001) finding which states that high achievers use much more strategies than low achievers.

Table 5. Number of learning strategies used by students who have produced competent, average and less competent writing

Strategies	Competent N=8		Average N=9		Less competent N=3	
	F	X	F	X	F	X
Metacognitive						
Planning	7	0.87	11	1.22	2	0.5
Directed attention	4	0.5	7	0.77	2	0.5
Selective attention	3	0.37	7	0.77	1	0.5
Self- management	7	0.87	14	1.55	1	0.5
Self- Monitoring	34	4.25	40	4.44	7	3.5
Self-evaluation	7	0.87	9	1.00	3	1.5
Problem-identification	2	0.25	7	0.77	1	0.5
Total	**64**	**1.14**	**95**	**1.50**	**15**	**1.07**
Cognitive						
Repetition	57	7.12	78	8.66	26	13.00
Translation	6	0.75	11	1.22	2	1.00
Grouping	3	0.37	5	0.55	2	1.00
Note-taking	15	1.87	18	2.00	0	0
Deduction/induction	3	0.37	2	0.22	0	0
Summarizing	8	1.00	15	1.66	5	2.55
Key word	2	0.25	0	0	0	0
Contextualizing	1	0.12	2	0.22	0	0
Elaboration	31	3.87	31	3.44	2	1.00
Transfer	10	1.25	22	2.44	0	0
Inference	16	2	12	2.11	2	1.50
Total	**152**	**1.72**	**204**	**1.76**	**39**	**1. 76**
Social/affective						
Questioning for clarification	77	9.62	60	6.66	21	10.5
Self-talk	5	0.62	9	1.00	0	0
Self-reinforcement	5	0.62	4	0.44	2	1.00
Avoidance	4 0.	50	7	0.44	5	2.55
Total	**91**	**2.84**	**80**	**2.21**	**28**	**3.50**

Summary and Conclusion

This study has attempted to investigate reading-to-writing strategies employed by sample graduating students in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at Addis Ababa University. Though the study was mainly aimed at investigating reading-to-writing strategies used by the students, it also tried to look into the relationship between students writing result and the strategies they used in order to complete the reading to writing task. The study revealed that reading-to-writing was perceived as an important activity in the students' academic practice in the university, and they were accustomed to doing reading-to writing task in different courses. This finding is consistent with Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) who claimed that an extensive reading makes background knowledge of the students accessible to their writing. Furthermore, this is in line with Krashen's (1984) argument which states that through reading activities readers can develop writing competences subconsciously. During the interviews, students stressed the relevance of the skills acquired in reading in the process of the writing. Therefore, integrating reading and writing in class seems to be very relevant in order to improve student's competence in both reading and writing.

The result of the overall strategy use from the think aloud seems to be different from previous studies that claimed the order of strategy use is metacognitive, cognitive and social affective strategies. The think aloud revealed that the students used cognitive, social/ affective and metacognitive strategies during reading-to-writing in the given order. This finding is in line with Peacock (2001) study that Asian EFL students in academic context use more of cognitive strategies while metacognitive strategies are more effective. This difference from many previous research findings could be seen in relation with the current academic context of the country that focuses on just result.

Reading again and again and note-taking were the two cognitive strategies reported by the highest number of students. Summarizing and preparing an outline were the cognitive and metacognitive strategies

reported by relatively the highest number of students respectively. These strategies were some of the skills that the students developed in their academic career and the students had training on these strategies in their first-year courses. It is observed that the most frequently reported strategies were very limited and it could be concluded that the students used limited strategies in performing the reading to writing task. In addition, it was observed that the students were using less demanding strategies such as self-monitoring, repetition and questioning for clarification more frequently than demanding strategies such as problem identification, key-word and self-reinforcement. This result somehow supports what Oxford (1990:137) pointed out that "though Metacognitive strategies are extremely important research shows that learners use these strategies sporadically and without much sense of their importance."

Finally, the study shows that there was a difference in the types and frequency of strategies used by students who had produced competent, average and less competent writing. It was observed that students who produced competent and average writing used different strategies more frequently than students' who have produced less competent writing. In addition, it was identified that students who had produced competent writing preferred metacognitive strategies whereas students with less competent writing preferred social/ affective strategies. This agrees with what Zamel (1982) has claimed that successful writers go through a number of stages until they to their final product. Note taking, deduction/ induction, key-word, contextualizing and transfer were cognitive strategies not used by students' with less competent writing. On the other hand, elaboration, transfer and inference were cognitive strategies used frequently by students with competent and average writing. This finding seems to agree with Lan and Oxford, (2003) finding which states that more competent students use wide range of strategies more frequently that less competent ones.

Implications

Research indicated that reading and writing are very related skills in the context of higher education and learning strategies helped the students document their knowledge and enhance their learning, motivation, and autonomy (Allwright and Little, in Oxford, 2003; Harmer, 2008). This study also confirmed that the students have knowledge about the reading to writing task and the strategies they could use in performing the task. This implies that efforts should be made to raise students' awareness and belief about the relationship between readings and writing in academic context where students need to read, understand and transfer what they have read in to their work in order to solve problems and make knowledge a continuation of the previous works. Similarly, In order to help students take better responsibility for their learning and be autonomous learner (Macintyre, Noels, and Clément, 1997) there should be strategy training that focus on providing students with available list of strategies that help them to approach various academic tasks including reading to write so that they make an informed choice on their uses of learning strategies.

Finally, though the findings of this study have important implications, there should be further research on reading-to-writing task and strategies. Above all there is a need to learn more about the pedagogical relevance of reading to write task and the difference between strategies in the integrated reading to write task and the reading and writing tasks separately.

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Appendix

Learning Strategy	Description
A. *Metacognitive strategies*	
Planning	Making a general but comprehensive preview of the organizing concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity. Proposing strategies for handling an upcoming task; generating a plan for the parts, sequences of main idea, or language functions to be used in handling a task.
Directed Attention	Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant destructors; maintaining attention during task execution
Selective Attention	Deciding in advance to attend a specific aspect of language input or situational details that assist in performance of a task; attending to specific aspects of language input during task execution.
Self-Management	Understanding the conditions that help one successfully accomplish tasks & arranging for the presence of those conditions; controlling one's language performance to maximize use to what is already known.
Self-Monitoring	Checking, verifying or correcting one's comprehension or performance for appropriateness in the course of a language task
Self-Evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's own language performance against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy, checking one's ability to performs the task at hand
Problem Identification	Explicitly identifying the central point needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion.
B. Cognitive Strategies	
Repetition	Repeating words or phrases in the process of working out the task
Resourcing	Using target language reference materials such as dictionaries, and other printed materials.
Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language.
Grouping	Recording or reclassifying and perhaps labeling the material to be learned based on common attributes

Note-Taking	Writing out the main idea, important points, outline, or summary of information perceived orally or in writing
Deduction / induction	Consciously applying rules to produce and understand the second language
Recombination	Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known element in a new way.
Summarization	Making a mental or written summary of language and information presented in the task
Key Word	Remembering a new word in the second language by 1. Identifying familiar word in first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word, and 2. Generating easily recalled images of some relationship between the new words.
Contextualization	Placing a word or phrase in a meaning-full language sequence
Elaboration	Relating new information to other concepts in memory to create meaningful associations to information presented.
Transfer	Using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language-learning task.
Inferencing	Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information.
C. *Social Mediation/Affective*	
Questioning for clarification	Posing questions to oneself in order to have additional explanation rephrasing, examples, or verification about the task
Self-talk	Reducing anxiety by using mental techniques that make one feel competent to do the learning task.
Self-reinforcement	Providing personal motivation by arranging rewards for oneself when a language learning activity has been accomplished successfully.

Source*: O'Malley et al. (1985 a.) Chamot, Kupper and Impmd-Hernandez (1988).*