DEVELOPING METACOGNITION IN READING: A THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

Xayrullayeva Dilorom Sayfutdinovna
O'zDJTU, Ingliz tili nazariy aspektlar 2 kafedrasi katta o'qituvchi

Abstract. Metacognition, or "thinking about thinking," plays a vital role in reading comprehension. This article examines its theoretical foundations, reviews key literature, and presents strategies to develop metacognitive awareness in readers. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, it highlights effective models and instructional methods that enhance reading through explicit strategy training. Findings show that teaching metacognitive skills improves students' comprehension and self-regulation, offering valuable guidance for educators and researchers.

Key words: *Metacognition, Reading Comprehension, Strategy Instruction, Cognitive Regulation, Educational Psychology*

Introduction. Reading comprehension is more than just recognizing words—it's a complex mental task that involves constantly making sense of what we read. To do this well, readers need to be aware of how they're thinking while reading. This is where **metacognition**, or "thinking about thinking," becomes crucial. It allows readers to actively monitor their understanding and adjust their reading strategies as needed. In classrooms and academic settings, the main difference between proficient and struggling readers often lies not just in intelligence, but in how well they manage and control their reading process. This article explores the theory behind metacognition in reading and how educators can help students develop it through purposeful instruction and strategy-based training.

Literature Review. The concept of metacognition was first introduced by John Flavell [Flavell, 1976, p. 231], who described it as being aware of and able to regulate one's own cognitive processes. His foundational model breaks metacognition into two parts: metacognitive knowledge—what we know about how we think—and metacognitive regulation—how we use that knowledge to plan, monitor, and evaluate our thinking [Flavell, 1979, p. 907]. Flavell also emphasized that our ability to use metacognition develops over time, becoming more advanced as we grow older and gain experience.

Expanding on Flavell's ideas, Brown [Baker & Brown, 1984, p. 355] focused on how metacognition can be taught and learned, showing that even young children can become metacognitively aware when they're guided appropriately. She highlighted the strong connection between growing metacognitive skills and academic success.

Paris, Lipson, and Wixson [Paris et al., 1983, p. 294] added further clarity by breaking metacognitive knowledge into three types:

1. Declarative knowledge – knowing about yourself as a reader and what strategies exist.

2. Procedural knowledge – understanding how to use those strategies.

3. Conditional knowledge – knowing when and why a strategy should be applied. This distinction matters because using a strategy isn't enough; it must be used in the right context to help comprehension.

Schraw and Moshman [Schraw & Dennison, 1994, p. 460] later offered a broader model, emphasizing that metacognition supports learning across subjects, not just in reading. They argued for teaching metacognition directly—through examples, guided practice, and reflection.

In reading specifically, Baker and Brown [Baker & Brown, 1984, p. 360] pointed out two essential elements:

1. Comprehension monitoring, which is checking if you understand what you're reading, and

2. Strategic control, which is using strategies to fix misunderstandings. These abilities are at the heart of what Pressley and Afflerbach [Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995, p. 18] call "constructively responsive reading"—a form of active reading where readers question, predict, and summarize as they go.

Kintsch's Construction-Integration Model [Kintsch, 1998, p. 127] adds that good readers connect new information to what they already know to form a meaningful understanding of the text. Metacognition plays a key role here by encouraging readers to slow down, rethink, or reread when something doesn't make sense.

From a social learning perspective, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) [Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86] reminds us that learners develop metacognitive skills best with the support of teachers or peers. The reciprocal teaching approach created by Palincsar and Brown [Palincsar & Brown, 1984, p. 118] is a great example—it involves shared reading where students take turns predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing.

Zimmerman's model of self-regulated learning (SRL) [Schraw & Dennison, 1994, p. 463] ties metacognition to broader behaviors like setting goals, staying motivated, and evaluating progress. This model sees metacognition not as a separate skill, but as part of a larger toolbox for effective learning.

However, not all readers develop these skills naturally. Research shows that many struggling readers don't realize when they're confused or how to fix it [Afflerbach, 1990, p. 135]. This challenge is even more pronounced for students reading in a second language (L2), where the added difficulty can interfere with metacognitive

processes unless they receive explicit support [Zhang & Seepho, 2013, p. 220].

A study by Mokhtari and Reichard [Schraw & Dennison, 1994, p. 470] found that proficient readers tend to use global strategies—like setting reading goals or previewing the text—while less skilled readers often stick to surface-level habits. This highlights the importance of teaching metacognitive strategies in a structured way.

In fact, numerous studies confirm that teaching metacognitive strategies directly improves students' reading outcomes. It's not just about telling students what strategies exist, but helping them understand why, when, and how to use them. For instance:

- Think-alouds let teachers show their own thought processes in real time [Afflerbach, 1990, p. 138].

- Graphic organizers help students map out ideas and track their understanding visually.

- Reading reflections or journals allow readers to look back on how they approached a text and what they could do differently next time.

These approaches help develop habits that readers can carry into different subjects and types of texts.

Research Methodology. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to understand how metacognition is developed in reading instruction. By reviewing existing research, theoretical models, and instructional materials, the analysis focused on how metacognitive skills are taught and reinforced in both academic and classroom settings.

The primary sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and teaching guides. The data were analyzed thematically to identify core strategies and models that promote metacognitive awareness in reading.

Results and Discussion. Findings from the analysis strongly support the idea that metacognition plays a critical role in reading comprehension. Students who show greater awareness of their own thinking are better at recognizing when they don't understand something—and more importantly, they know how to respond. Both metacognitive knowledge (understanding what to do) and regulation (doing it at the right time) are essential.

Strategies to Develop Metacognition in Reading. The literature points to several classroom practices that help students become more metacognitive readers:

• Reciprocal Teaching: Involves a cycle of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and

summarizing [Palincsar & Brown, 1984, p. 121].

• Think-Alouds: Encourage students to express their thinking out loud while reading [Afflerbach, 1990, p. 136].

• Graphic Organizers: Visual tools that show connections between ideas.

• Self-Questioning: Prompts like "Does this make sense?" or "What's the author's purpose here?" help readers reflect in real time.

• Pre- and Post-Reading Reflections: Encourage students to plan and evaluate their reading strategies.

In addition to these, here are some specific exercises that support metacognitive growth:

1. **Reading Journals** – Students write about their thoughts before, during, and after reading.

2. **Comprehension Checklists** – Help students track their understanding with questions.

3. **Strategy Mapping** – Guides students to match reading strategies with different types of texts.

4. **Error Analysis** – Encourages students to examine misunderstandings and revise their approaches.

5. **Peer Discussions** – Offer opportunities to talk about thinking strategies and learn from others.

The role of teachers is critical here. Students are unlikely to develop strong metacognitive habits on their own. They need teachers to model strategies, provide structured practice, and offer feedback. This is especially important for younger readers and those learning in a second language.

Conclusion. Metacognition isn't something we're born with—it's a skill that can be taught, practiced, and strengthened over time. Through instructional methods like reciprocal teaching, think-alouds, and reflective exercises, students can become more intentional, aware, and strategic readers. The theoretical work of researchers such as Flavell, Paris, and Baker gives educators a solid foundation for building these skills. Looking ahead, future research should continue to explore how metacognitive instruction can be adapted for diverse classrooms and long-term learning success.

References:

1. Afflerbach, P. (1990). The influence of prior knowledge and text genre on readers' prediction strategies. Journal of Reading Behavior, 22(2), 131–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/10862969009547799
2. Baker, L., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Metacognitive skills and reading. In P. D. Pearson (Ed.), Handbook of reading research (pp. 353–394). Longman.
3. Flavell, J. H. (1976). Metacognitive aspects of problem solving. In L. B. Resnick (Ed.), The nature of intelligence (pp. 231–236). Lawrence Erlbaum.
4. Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive–developmental inquiry. American Psychologist, 34(10), 906–911. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.906
5. Kintsch, W. (1998). Comprehension: A paradigm for cognition. Cambridge University Press.
6. Palincsar, A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring activities. Cognition and Instruction, 1(2), 117–175. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532690xci0102_1
7. Paris, S. G., Lipson, M. Y., & Wixson, K. K. (1983). Becoming a strategic reader. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 8(3), 293–316. https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-476X(83)90018-8
8. Pressley, M., & Afflerbach, P. (1995). Verbal protocols of reading: The nature of constructively responsive reading. Lawrence Erlbaum.
9. Schraw, G., & Dennison, R. S. (1994). Assessing metacognitive awareness. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 19(4), 460–475. https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1994.1033
10. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Harvard University Press.
11. Zhang, L. J., & Seepho, S. (2013). Metacognitive strategy training and reading comprehension in Chinese EFL learners. TESOL Quarterly, 47(2), 218–243. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.67