

## Teaching Pre-viewing and Predicting to High School Students in Georgia

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### Abstract

Teaching reading strategies, including predicting, is one of the parts of the Georgian National Curriculum. The goal of the article is to find out whether Georgian high school teachers and students are aware of the concepts of one of the effective reading strategies called predicting and whether teaching predicting guarantees a better understanding of reading comprehension. A conclusion is made that the majority of students have even not heard of effective reading strategies, as for teachers, some of them are not even aware of the requirements of the National Curriculum. So, more attention should be paid to teaching effective reading strategies, as they help students to have better academic achievements not only in educational institutions, but also at students' future jobs.

**Key words:** effective reading strategy, predicting, high school

### Introduction

Reading is one of the four foreign / second language skills that are taught at schools. Being fluent at reading is a critical skill, as fluency in reading is somehow a guarantee of better academic achievements not only in English, but also in any school subjects (with English as tuition language), it is a guarantee of better academic achievements at the University (whether the tuition is in English or students' native language) and finally a guarantee of personal fulfillment, of getting or maintaining a job (Kanar, 2013; Marks, McMillan, & Hillman, 2001). Fluency in reading let the reader to comprehend the course well. For this reason teaching effective reading strategies, amongst them predicting and pre-viewing, from the early school years is very important. Predicting lets the reader to interact with the text that leads to the increase of the reader's interest and comprehension of the text (Oczkuz, 2004). Yet, despite the fact that teaching reading strategies are part of the Georgian National Curriculum (Erovnuli saswavlo gegma, 2014), too little attention is paid to their development (Mikeladze, 2014). According to the survey held by Oczkuz (2004), it can be said that nowadays reading is the weakest area in the educational institutions. Besides, in the era of technologies literacy is on high demand, which makes the problem even worse (OECD, 2000; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998; Yağci, 2016).

No student is born an efficient reader. Only few EFL students intuitively transfer reading strategies from their native tongues to the target language (on condition that they possess these strategies in the native-language

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reading). Reading strategies have to be developed through special activities (Doghonadze, 2017) approaches and methods, such as, for instance, project method (Kavlu, 2016).

The reasons to spend time and effort on reading strategies development are multiple: the absence of programs of effective reading strategies at the Universities automatically causes the lack of qualified teachers at schools, and in some cases, those teachers who are even unaware of the contemporary requirements and lack corresponding training trigger a low level of employability skills in school and even university leavers.

### **Literature review**

Although reading is a receptive skill, a language learner might be mentally active or passive while reading. A significant distinction might be made between active skilled and passive unskilled readers. According to Afflerbach et al. (2008, p.368), reading skills are “automatic actions that result in decoding and comprehension with speed, efficiency, and fluency and usually occur without awareness of the components or control involved”. But skilled readers do not just decode, they hold a sort of a dialogue with the text. This skill of interaction with the text is called an effective reading strategy. Pre-viewing and predicting are parts of these strategies (Mihara, 2011). Both of them are one of the most important reading strategies, because reading starts far before the reader starts the process of reading itself. Pre-viewing gives the possibility to the reader to use visual effects of the text, such as title, diagrams, pictures, etc. to predict what will happen in the story or to interact with the text. Pre-viewing lets the student activate his/her prior knowledge, to fill in the gaps, control misunderstanding or to set the purpose for reading. On the other hand, predicting differs from skimming in a way that the reader does not read the first or last lines of the paragraphs. Teaching predicting to students is important for multiple reasons. Predicting promotes interest, motivation, critical thinking and problem solving skills in students. Furthermore, predicting strategies could be used not only before reading the text, but also while reading, in order that the reader could adjust the previous predictions to the information he/she has read. Predicting is one of the most often used strategies by the most successful readers (Çakıcı, 2016).

Predicting helps the reader to set the goal for reading. Having the purpose for reading makes the student a good reader. In order to make prediction, good readers tend to rely on their prior knowledge and experience and to formulate ideas that they read (Block & Israel, 2005). Mastering reading strategies does not happen in a day. It is a long-term process.

Taking into consideration all the advantages of effective reading strategies, teaching reading of effective reading strategies are part of the National Curriculum (Erovnuli sasvavlo gegma, 2014). In the first years of the primary school students are taught mostly the strategies of decoding and later the reading comprehension strategies such as introductory, learnitive and investigatory are taught step by step. In the middle school students are believed to master all the above-mentioned reading strategies. In the high school students are thought to be good enough to appropriately use effective reading strategies.

Teacher awareness of modern requirements towards reading skills and ways of their development is very important, as, without it, they cannot teach students adequately (Xu, 2015). Reading strategies can and should be taught (Mistar, Zuhairi & Yanti, 2016), and teachers have to be aware of how to do it. Unless foreign language teachers present and train the strategies to/with students, students might only intuitively transfer the strategies from native language reading (on condition they possess them).

So the aim of this research is to find out whether Georgian school teachers follow the National Curriculum, whether teachers and students are aware of effective reading strategies and namely of pre-viewing and predicting and whether teaching these strategies really improves reading comprehension.

## Method

This research applied quantitative methods. For the data collection an on-line and paper-based survey (to assess the awareness and application of pre-viewing and prediction reading strategies) as well as pre-, while and post-tests (to assess the participants' reading skills) were used. The experiment lasted for two months, with two academic hours of reading lessons a week.

## Survey

Questionnaires were designed and piloted with a group of 12 students and 10 teachers. The piloting aimed at finding out whether statements were clearly formulated. It turned out that some questions needed to be omitted, reformulated and some others - to be added to the questionnaire. The questions covered the following aspects of the research: teachers' and students' awareness of pre-viewing and predicting.

The questionnaire for teachers as well as the questionnaire for students included only five questions (plus five questions concerning students' gender, age, grade, residence and type of school/teachers' gender, age, teaching experience, residence and type of school). According to the researcher, identifying the respondents' residence and school type would give the possibility to see whether there is any difference between the private and public school teachers or students. All questions were close-ended. Questionnaires were bilingual (translated into students' native language) in order to avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation and to get more accurate responses. Questionnaires were both distributed on-line and paper-based. The online questionnaires were created in the surveymonkey.com and were published in the social media and the paper-based versions were delivered to teachers during a training and some other paper-based versions were delivered to teachers and students of the Music Seminary and Chveni Skola of V.Saradjishvil State Conservatoire.

The statistical results were obtained with IBM SPSS program. 59 teachers and 83 students from private and public schools of the capital and other cities and regions in Georgia took part in the survey, while 28 students from

Music Seminary and Chveni Skola of V. Saradjishvili State Conservatoire (both in Tbilisi) participated in the experiment.

## Experiment

In order to create a class profile for the experiment, students were asked to write an English proficiency test. It let the researcher become familiar with her students' strengths, weaknesses and to adapt teaching materials to their needs. Before the start of the experiment, a syllabus with students' assessment tools were developed. Later the students were asked to write a pre-test, two while tests and a post-test in reading comprehension, the results of which were compared and analyzed. The experiment took place at Music Seminary and Chveni Skola of V. Saradjishvili State Conservatoire. The experimental and control group were nominated at random among the groups having the same language skill levels. All students agreed to be part of the research, however, they were not informed about its essence. They knew that the research results published would be anonymous and would not influence them in any way. They were also informed that they would be able to quit at any stage of the experiment if felt they were somehow harmed.

There were seven 10<sup>th</sup> graders in the Experimental Group and seven 10<sup>th</sup> graders in the control group. The same situation was in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. All in all there were 14 students in the control group and 14 in the experimental groups. Students in the control group were taught with an ordinary syllabus and students in the experiment group with a syllabus that involved teaching reading strategies (pre-viewing and prediction) was developed specially for them. Otherwise their teaching was the same – the same coursebooks were applied, reading was taught for the same number of hours, teachers' qualification was the same.

## Results

The results presented in table 1 show that the majority of the respondents (94.92 %) are females. It might be explained by the fact that teachers of humanities are rarely males. Table 1 also revealed that in public schools the number of teachers with the experience of more than 30 years exceeds those in private schools, where the number of teachers with more than 30 years of teaching experience is only 5.08% compared to 22.03% in public schools. It seems that private schools tend to be in search of younger teachers. Reasons can be multiple, including salary and more contemporary approach to teaching, more enthusiasm or free time for self-development. 77.97% of teachers who participated in the survey were from Tbilisi, the capital city of Georgia, 18.64% - from cities and only 3.39% - from villages. The reason might be the lack of access to internet, as the majority of answers were gathered from the on-line version of the questionnaire.

**Table 1.** Age, Gender, Teaching Experience and Demographic Data

		Private School		Public School	
		Numb.	Perc.	Numb.	Perc.
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	1	1.69%	2	3.39%
	<b>Female</b>	26	44.07%	30	50.85%
<b>Age</b>	22-25	4	6.78%	1	1.69%
	26-30	12	20.34%	5	8.47%
	31-40	7	11.86%	6	10.17%
	41-50	2	3.39%	7	11.86%
	51-60	2	3.39%	8	13.56%
	61-70	1	1.69%	4	6.79%
	71 and more	0	0%	1	1.69%
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	0-3	4	6.79%	1	1.69%
	4-10	10	16.95%	5	8.47%
	11-20	6	10.17%	6	10.17%
	21-30	5	8.47%	7	11.86%
	31-40	2	3.39%	8	11.86%
	41- and more	1	1.69%	5	8.47%
<b>Demographic data</b>	Capital city	24	40.68%	22	37.29%
	City (Kutaisi, Batumi, Rustavi, Gori, Zudidi, Telavi)	3	5.08%	8	11.86%
	Village (Pirveli maisi, Kirnati)	0	0%	2	3.39%

The first part of the questionnaire revealed that the participants involved teachers of various age and teaching experience, as well as both genders; this makes the results reliable enough.

The results of the second part of the survey (Table 2) for teachers revealed that only 49.15% of teachers are aware of pre-viewing strategy and quite more than half of teachers have not even heard of effective reading strategies. Nine percent of teachers think that in order to pre-view the text the reader needs to read the text in detail and 14% consider that in order to pre-view reading the first and last lines of the paragraphs is important, which is definitely wrong. 23% of teachers believe that in order to pre-view, the reader needs to pay attention only to the visual components (pictures, graphs). 13% think that pre-viewing happens while reading rather than before

starting reading but none of the respondents admitted the possibility of both answers. Only 30.51% consider that activating background knowledge is important while adopting the predicting strategy. 35.59% of teachers implement pre-viewing and predicting in their teaching routine and only 30.21% is aware of the fact that pre-viewing and predicting are part of the national curriculum. It is equally worth mentioning that those respondents who claimed being aware of effective reading strategies were younger, between 23-35 and all from private schools. It might be explained by the fact that private school teachers have better computer skills, so they tend to read extra materials on the internet to perform in their profession, because hard copies are rarely available in the shops or too expensive. Another reason might be the fact that younger teachers tend to have more chances to get education or working experience abroad due to the contemporary exchange university programs or programs organized by private schools. It is evident that due to the latter reasons the younger generation of teachers is "equipped" with fresher knowledge than the older one.

**Table 2.** Teachers' questionnaire results

N	Question	Answer	Numb.	Percent.
1	Have you heard of the pre-viewing strategy?	a) yes	29	49.15%
		b) no	30	50.85%
2	What do you think pre-viewing strategy lives?	a) reading the whole text	9	15.25 %
		b) reading only first and last lines of each paragraph	14	23.73%
		c) just looking at the pictures, diagrams, charts, title, subtitle and other visual components	23	38.98%
		d) stopping while reading the text and predicting what will happen next in the text	13	22.04%
3	In order to predict, the reader needs to activate his/her prior knowledge	a) yes	18	30.51%
		b) no	41	69.49%
4	Do you teach pre-viewing / predicting strategies to your students?	a) yes	21	35.59%
		b) no	38	64.41%
5	Teaching pre-viewing/predicting is part of the National Curriculum	a) yes	18	30.51%
		b) no	15	25.42%
		c) I do not know	26	44.07%

As for the questionnaire for students, it revealed that only 3.61% of students have heard of pre-viewing. 3.61% think that in order to pre-view the text the reader has to read the text in details or to read the first and last lines of each paragraph (13.25%). Only 79.90% consider that pre-view is possible due to looking through the visual components. 95.18% believe that predicting might take place before reading the text and 4.82% believes that prediction is possible while reading the text too. Like the teachers none of the students mentioned that prediction can take place in both cases. 8.43% thinks that activation of the prior knowledge is important. Unfortunately, only 1.20% use pre-viewing or predicting strategy in his/her reading routine.

**Table 3. Students' questionnaire results**

N	Question	Answer	Numb.	Percent.
1	Have you heard of the pre-viewing reading strategy?	a) yes	3	3.61%
		b) no	80	96.39%
2	What do you think pre-viewing strategy includes?	a) reading the whole text	9	10.85%
		b) reading only first and last lines of each paragraph	11	13.25%
		c) just looking at the pictures, diagrams, charts, title, subtitle and other visual effects.	63	75.90%
3	Predicting takes place	a) only before the reader starts reading the text	79	95.18%
		b) while reading the text	4	4.82%
		c) in both cases	0	0%
4	To predict the reader needs to activate his/her prior knowledge	a) yes	7	8.43%
		b) no	76	91.57%
5	Do you use pre-viewing / predicting strategy in your learning routine?	a) Always	0	0%
		b) Often	0	0%
		c) Sometimes	1	1.20%
		d) never	82	98.80%

According to the National Curriculum, 10<sup>th</sup> graders are expected to have only A2 level whilst some 10<sup>th</sup> graders' level was B1 and some of others had even A1 level (mostly students from the regions). But the average level was A2. The picture was slightly different in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Their average level was B2 that is higher than expected according to the National Curriculum (B1). Due to the fact that classes were not homogenous, differentiated teaching strategy was adopted.

**Table 4.** Level Lest

10 <sup>th</sup> grade		
Level	Number	Percentage
B1	8	57.14%
A2	4	28.57%
A1	2	14.29%

11 <sup>th</sup> grade		
Level	Number	Percentage
B2:	9	64.29 %
B1:	5	35.71%

The pre-, while- and post-tests gave the following results.

**Table 5.** Pre-, While- and Post-Test Results

10 <sup>th</sup> grade Control Group				
St. N	Pre-test	While-test 1	While-test 2	Post- test
1	6	5	6	5
2	6	6	7	7
3	8	7	8	7
4	7	7	7	8
5	9	8	7	8
6	9	8	9	8
7	9	9	9	10
mean	7.7143	7.1429	7.5714	7.5714
st. dev.	1.38013	1.34519	1.13389	1.51186

We see that mean results of the control group are fluctuating between from 7.1 to 7.7. They are not growing, compared to the beginning of the experiment. Besides, standard deviation is above 1 and is fluctuating, which reveals that the group is rather heterogeneous by reading skills' level and the impact of the traditional approach is not equally beneficial for all students.

10 <sup>th</sup> grade Experimental group				
St. N	Pre-test	While-test 1	While- test 2	Post-test
1	5	6	7	7
2	9	10	10	10
3	6	7	6	7
4	10	10	10	10
5	7	8	8	9
6	9	9	9	9
7	8	8	10	10
mean	7.7143	8.2857	8.5714	8.8571
st. dev.	1.79947	1.49603	1.61835	1.34519

The initial mean results in both groups are equal, which really makes them comparable. We see that mean results of the experimental group are increasing from 7.7 to 8.9. However, standard deviation is above 1 and is fluctuating, which reveals that the group is rather heterogeneous by reading skills' level and the impact of the experimental approach is not equally beneficial for all students, either.

To assess whether the difference between the groups is statistically significant, we applied Paired Samples T-Test.

**Table 6. Paired Samples t-test results**

**Paired statistics**

	Mean	N	St. dev.	St. error mean
Pair 1: CG & EG	7.9277	8	0.58353	0.20631
	1.5000	8	0.53452	0.18898

**Paired Samples Correlations**

	N	correlation	Sig.
Pair 1: CG & EG	8	0.787	0.020

**Paired samples test**

	Paired differences					t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
	Mean	St. Dev.	St. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1: CG & EG	6.42768	0.36742	0.12990	6.2051	6.73485	49.481	7	0.000

The correlation between the independent (mean results) and the dependent (method applied) variables is high and high – 0.787. The Sig. value for the 10<sup>th</sup> graders is 0.00. It is less than 0.05, which means that the difference between the two groups' results is statistically different, so the experimental group really did better than the control one and there is a strong positive correlation between teaching reading strategies and reading comprehension level.

**Table 7.** Pre-, While- and Post-Test Results

<b>11<sup>th</sup> grade Control Group</b>				
<b>St. N</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>While-test 1</b>	<b>While-test 2</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
<b>1</b>	7	7	7	8
<b>2</b>	7	7	7	7
<b>3</b>	8	8	8	8
<b>4</b>	10	9	10	10
<b>5</b>	10	10	10	10
<b>6</b>	9	9	8	9
<b>7</b>	8	8	8	8
mean	8.4286	8.2857	8.2757	8.5714
St. Dev.	1.27242	1.11270	1.25357	1.13389

We see that mean results of the control group are fluctuating between 8.28 and 8.57. They almost did not grow, compared to the beginning of the experiment. Besides, standard deviation is above 1 and is fluctuating, which reveals that the group is rather heterogeneous by reading skills' level and the impact of the traditional approach is not equally beneficial for all students.

<b>11<sup>th</sup> grade Experiment group</b>				
<b>St. N</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>While-test 1</b>	<b>While-test 2</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
<b>1</b>	7	7	7	8
<b>2</b>	8	9	10	10
<b>3</b>	8	9	10	10
<b>4</b>	10	10	10	10
<b>5</b>	10	10	10	10
<b>6</b>	8	9	9	9
<b>7</b>	8	8	8	9
mean	8.4286	8.8571	9.1429	9.4286
St. Dev.	1.13389	1.06904	1.21499	0.78860

The initial mean results in both groups are equal, which really makes them comparable. We see that mean results of the experimental group are increasing from 8.4 to 9.4. However, standard deviation is above 1 (except in the post-test) and is fluctuating, which reveals that the group is rather heterogeneous by reading skills' level and the impact of the experimental approach is not equally beneficial for all students, either. However, the group is eventually becoming more homogeneous, which is a positive development.

To assess whether the difference between the groups is statistically significant, we applied Paired Samples T-Test.

**Table 8.** Paired Samples T-Test Results

**Paired statistics**

	Mean	N	St. dev.	St. error mean
Pair 1: CG & EG	8.6775	8	0.42392	0.14988
	1.5000	8	0.53352	0.18898

**Paired samples Correlations**

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1: CG & EG	8	0.719	0.045

**Paired samples test**

	Paired differences					t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
	Mean	St. Dev.	St. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1: CG & EG	7.17750	0.37377	0.13215	6.86502	7.48998	54.314	7	0.000

The correlation between the independent (mean results) and the dependent (method applied) variables is positive and high – 0.719. The Sig. value for the 11<sup>th</sup> graders is 0.00. It is less than 0.05, which means that the difference between the two groups' results is statistically different, so the experimental group really did better than the control one and there is a strong positive correlation between teaching reading strategies and reading comprehension level.

### **Limitations of the study**

Both the survey and the experiment were held with a limited number of participants, so the results cannot be generalized and require further research, on a larger scale. However, the obtained results coincide with other results (Block & Israel, 2005; Mistar, Zuhairi & Yanti, 2016; Xu, 2015) and thus can be viewed as more or less trustworthy.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Pre-viewing and predicting are important reading skills and guarantee of better academic achievements or success at the University or at the job. Pre-viewing allows the reader to predict what the text will be about, what will happen in the text or to set the purpose of reading. Pre-viewing and predicting help the reader to better understand the text and not to read just from left to right. The questionnaires revealed that quite none of the reading strategies are taught at schools. The majority of teachers are aware neither of predicting reading skill nor of the National curriculum requirements and those teachers who are aware of it are mostly younger and from the private schools. The survey revealed that predicting is sometimes confused with skimming and often considered as a skill to use only just before reading the text. There are practically no teachers or students who would have considered predicting as a skill to be used not only before reading but while reading too. As there are no trainings organized by the Teachers' House in Georgia or other institutions teachers should think on self-development. Though reading and getting acquainted with the national curriculum requirements should be a must for teachers. It is well known that internal motivation plays huge role in effective teaching but on the other hand the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has may be to think of the creation of the tools and of the environment that would ensure the promotion of the teachers' external motivation development. Some seminars, workshops or trainings might be organized concerning the methods of teaching effective reading strategies.

As for the survey for students it revealed that due to the lack of teachers' qualification, students are deprived of the awareness of the effective reading skills including predicting. Knowledgeable and motivated teachers will be the guarantee of student's better academic achievement and further successful career.

And finally the experiment proved that teaching reading strategies significantly improve students' reading comprehension that is beneficial for students at any level and stage of their lives should it be school, university or professional level.

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