

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-58287

Title: Students' Perceptions of Reading Habits and Schemata in Reading Comprehension at a Bilingual School.

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		√		
Techn. Quality		√		
Clarity	√			
Significance		√		

Reviewer's ID: JPR- 212

Detailed Reviewer's Report

General Assessment

This is a well-designed and competently executed mixed-methods study investigating Grade 7 students' perceptions of reading habits and schema use in a Vietnamese bilingual school context. The manuscript makes a meaningful contribution to the literature by examining the relationship between these two constructs from students' perspectives, addressing a notable gap in bilingual education research. The theoretical framework is robust, the methodology is appropriate, and the findings are clearly presented.

Strengths

- Theoretical Grounding:** The study is firmly anchored in Schema Theory, the Interactive Model of Reading, and the Extensive Reading Hypothesis, providing a solid foundation for the research questions and interpretation of findings.
- Methodological Rigor:** The embedded mixed-methods design is appropriate and well-executed. The integration of quantitative survey data (N=153) with qualitative interview data (n=15) strengthens the validity of the findings and provides richer insights than either approach alone.
- Clear Presentation:** The manuscript is well-organized, with logical flow from introduction through discussion. Tables and statistical reporting are clear and appropriately detailed.
- Practical Relevance:** The identification of cultural schemata as the weakest area has clear pedagogical implications for bilingual schools, particularly those implementing Western curricula in Asian contexts.
- Contextual Significance:** The study addresses an underexplored population (lower-secondary bilingual students in Vietnam), making a valuable contribution to the growing body of research on bilingual education in Southeast Asia.

Minor Revisions Recommended

1. Clarification of Statistical Terminology

Issue: The manuscript states that correlations indicate "strong positive relationships" (p. 12) but notes that "these correlations indicate a strong relationship between the two constructs but do not confirm that one directly causes the other." The phrase "relationship scale" is introduced without sufficient explanation.

Suggestion:

- Clarify that the "relationship scale" refers to the set of items (Q18-Q25) measuring students' perceptions of how reading habits support schema development.

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- Consider adding a brief explanation that while the correlations are strong, they represent associations rather than causal relationships, which is appropriate given the correlational design.

2. Interview Participant Selection Criteria

Issue: The manuscript states that interview participants were "chosen to represent diverse reading experiences and levels of engagement" (p. 5) but does not specify how this diversity was determined or operationalized.

Suggestion: Briefly describe the criteria used to select interview participants (e.g., based on questionnaire scores, teacher recommendations, or self-reported reading frequency). This would enhance transparency and replicability.

3. Cultural Schemata Interpretation

Issue: The finding that cultural schemata received the lowest rating (M=3.74) is appropriately highlighted, but the discussion could more explicitly address whether this reflects the CCSS curriculum's Western orientation or a broader challenge in intercultural reading comprehension.

Suggestion:

- Expand slightly on whether the cultural schema challenges are specific to the bilingual context or likely generalizable to other EFL settings.
- Consider acknowledging that Vietnamese students may have cultural schemata from their own cultural background that are not captured by the instrument's framing.

4. Minor Formatting and Consistency

Issues:

- The percentage signs (%) are inconsistently formatted in Table 1 (some include spaces, others do not).
- On Page 16, reference "[Schmidt, 2023]" appears in the text but is not included in the References list (likely a placeholder that should be removed or properly cited).

Suggestion:

- Standardize percentage formatting throughout all tables.
- Verify that all in-text citations appear in the reference list and vice versa.

5. Limitations and Future Directions

Issue: The limitations section is appropriately brief but could be strengthened by acknowledging potential social desirability bias in self-reported perceptions, given that students may overstate their reading habits and schema awareness.

Suggestion: Add a sentence acknowledging that self-report measures may be subject to social desirability bias and suggest that future research could incorporate observational measures or reading comprehension tests alongside perceptual data.

Queries for the Authors

1. **Clarification on Research Context:** The manuscript refers to "WSSG" but only defines it as "Wellspring Saigon International Bilingual School" (p. 5). Was the school selected purposively due to its bilingual model? If so, this could be stated more explicitly.
2. **Questionnaire Validation:** While Cronbach's alpha is reported, the manuscript does not mention whether the questionnaire was piloted or whether any items were adapted based on pilot testing. Could the authors clarify whether a pilot study was conducted and, if so, how it informed the final instrument?
3. **Data Collection Timing:** Data were collected during the second semester (p. 6). Could the authors explain whether the timing was strategically chosen to ensure students had sufficient exposure to the bilingual curriculum before responding?
4. **Interview Duration:** The interviews lasted only 10-15 minutes (p. 6). While this may be appropriate for Grade 7 students, did the researchers consider that shorter interviews might limit the depth of qualitative insights, particularly for complex topics like schema awareness?
5. **Generalizability:** The authors acknowledge the single-school limitation. Could they comment on the extent to which WSSG's bilingual model (MOET + CCSS) is representative of other bilingual schools in Vietnam or the region?

Overall Recommendation

Accept after minor revision

This is a well-conceived and competently executed study that makes a meaningful contribution to the literature on reading comprehension in bilingual education. The minor revisions suggested above would enhance clarity and methodological transparency without requiring significant additional analysis or rewriting. The authors should

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address the formatting consistency issues, clarify the "relationship scale" terminology, and expand slightly on the interview participant selection criteria. With these minor adjustments, the manuscript will be suitable for publication