Metacognitive Reading Strategies and their Contribution to Reading Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the dominant metacognitive readings strategies applied by EFL students and analyze the correlation between metacognitive reading strategies and reading comprehension. This study applies quantitative and qualitative methods. Respondents of this study are the students of English Education Program. The research results show that The dominant metacognitive reading strategies are as follows: *I previewed the questions or the instructions, so I could understand what to do at 4.2, I paid selective attention to the information predicted and required in the task* that is at 4.1, *I spent time to motivate myself to improve the reading even I found that I do a poor job* that is at 3,71. and Metacognitive reading strategy correlates significantly to reading comprehension with coefficient value 97.3 and p value 0.00.

Keywords: metacognitive reading strategy, reading comprehension.

1. INTRODUCTION

Everyday we face million of text and most of them are written in English. They have been already customized by EFL learners in searching information of references related to their study. Benhart (2011:19) states that millions across the globe routinely access expository information from the internet written in English—a second language for the overwhelming majority. Researchers or lectures should deliver their new findings for public to promote the development of scientific works. Related to this phenomenon, reading has important role in getting and sharing information. Reading is an important language skill for EFL learners in Higher Education in exploring information as references and additional materials for their study. Reading is one of important language skills needed by EFL learners to get their expectation for their concern. Reading is assumed as the most important skill to gain knowledge of their own discipline for university students in higher education today (Safdarian, et.al., 2013:121).

Reading becomes a path to get knowledge as an input in interpreting a phenomenon or situation. Grabe (2009:15) view reading as the most important skill required of people in multicultural and international settings, academic learning, and self-study situations. For example, there are many events in multicultural setting that have been written in form of magazine or booklet. Many articles must be read at international conferences. There many academic writings at campus also must be read by many students and lecturers, and the situation in where a learners must learn independently for example; reading for examination, reading for self competency improvement.

Reading is an effort to decode graphics into words and interpreting them in making meaning. This process always is done by EFL learners at University in the framework of searching references that will be paraphrased. Reading is also an interactive activity in drawing and comprehending the meaning contained in the texts. Koda (2007:2) stated that the ultimate goal of reading is to construct text meaning based on visually encoded information. Essentially, it entails converting print into language and then to the message intended by the author.

Reading activity aims to get many facts, main idea, plot, and conclusion of the texts. The others aims are to group or classify, assess and evaluate and compare one idea to another. For more detail the purposes of reading as stated by Grabe (2009:15) as follows : reading to search for simple information, reading to skim quickly, reading to learn from texts,

reading to integrate information, reading to write (or search for information needed for writing, reading to critique texts and reading for general comprehension.

Many researchers have paid attention to reading very enthusiastically because of the importance of reading for searching science, technology and art developments. By reading the previous researches on EFL or ESL learners' reading comprehension will make an explanation related to reading more detail theoretically and empirically. So, we should consider some factors affecting EFL learners' reading comprehension such as vocabulary, and syntactic or grammatical knowledge to success in reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009:15).

In the process of reading, "comprehension of a message entails drawing information from both the message and the internal schemata until sets are reconciled as a single schema or message" (Anderson et al. in Hudson 1982:187). The reading process, therefore, involves identification of genre, formal structure and topic, all of which activate schemata and allow readers to comprehend the text (Swales 1990:89). In this, it is assumed that readers not only possess all the relevant schemata, but also that these schemata actually are activated. Where this is not the case, then some disruption of comprehension may occur. In fact, it is likely that "there will never be a total coincidence of schemas between writer and reader" (Wallace 1992:82) such that coherence is the property of individual readers. The following section describes some of these differences in interpretation.

The ability to read is to decode the text on a page into understandable language and comprehending what we have decoded is an important element of the complete skill of reading for university students. Klinger, et al (2007:8) states that reading comprehension is a multicomponent, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text types).

An effort to make meaning is a comprehending process through interpretative, creative and evaluative comprehensions. This process is always done by EFL learners at University in the framework of searching information for their research interest. They try to interact with the text to get meaning from the text that they are reading. Koda (2007:1) stated that the ultimate goal of reading is to construct text meaning based on visually encoded information. In the other word making meaning is converting print into language and then to the message intended by the author.

A question today is that do the desire of Indonesian students in reading English text increase or decrease? To answer it, of course, we need evidence showing that conditions. If we look back to the phenomenon, most of university students still groan about reading assignments related to their study. After observing and interviewing some EFL learners, the researcher has got some reasons for their constraints in reading academic readings. They still have difficulties to understand the meaning of some words or they still have lack of vocabulary. The other constraint faced by most students is that they still take more time to find main ideas. The next serious problem also still experienced by EFL learners that is some of them still have difficulties in comprehending the journal articles. So this condition may cause difficulties in finding relevant materials to their study, for example no guidelines (such as where we can get the materials or the sources of materials).

These problems, therefore, triger researcher to explore metacognitive reading strategies used by EFL learners by applying phenomenology study that tries to describe them more completely and deeply. This current study also apply correlational research to know and analyze the contribution of metacognitive reading strategies of EFL learners to their reading comprehension described in the research question as follow: 1) What metacognitive reading strategy is dominantly used by EFL learners in reading English text? and 2) What is the contribution of metacognitive reading strategies to EFL Learners' reading comprehension?.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Academic Literacy

Academic literacy involves skills in reading, writing, and thinking about material that students encounter in learning situations, including during standardized measures of academic achievement situations (Berman & Biancarosa, 2005) in Halpern (2009:23-27). Academic literacy refers to the situational context under which the reading acts that are the focus of the current study take place. Certainly, some students may self-select to read a historical novel while learning about a particular historical figure or era, but the fact remains that the majority of literary events in which students engage for instructional purposes are dictated by the curriculum and are teacher-imposed. The situational context has also been characterized as purpose, activity or simply context by different literacy experts (Halpern; 2009:23).

Grabe (2009:15) proposes that academic reading consists of six purposes or goals: (a) reading to search for information (scanning and skimming), (b) reading for quick understanding (skimming), (c) reading to learn, (d) reading to integrate information, (e) reading to evaluate, critique, or use information, and (f) reading for general comprehension which he posits many readers do for interest or entertainment. These purposes are goal-oriented, task-specific, and they make the readers act distinctively according to the situational context for which they are applied. For example, those who scan for information in a text because they want to prove a point to a peer over a friendly wager will do so differently than a student who scans a source because he is assembling notes to study for an upcoming examination. The first reader seeks

specific information he believes to be located in the text, the latter may try to gain additional background information on a topic that will be covered on the test. Both readers probably search for exact words or phrases that would inform them of the sought information being contained in that area of the text, but the end-goal with which they approach the task will dictate the level of attention they pay. Similarly, students who are reading to evaluate, critique, or use information during the development of a class project will engage with the text passages in a manner that diverges from that of a student who is doing the same to answer a set of pre-specified questions.

B. Reading

Koda (2007:1) defines that reading is "converting print into language and then to the message intended by the author". Furthermore Urquhart & Weir say that "Reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print" (Grabe, 2009:14).

Essentially reading is divided into two components: decoding (word recognition) and comprehension. The latter is often described as consisting of parsing sentences, understanding sentences in discourse, building a discourse structure, and then integrating this understanding with what one already knows (Alderson, 2000 in Grabe & Stoller 2013:15).

C. Reading Comprehension

Comprehension has multiple definitions (Koda, 2005). It could be seen as a process versus a product; as a sum of parts versus a whole or having varying degrees. Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive ability providing the ability to integrate text information with the background knowledge of the reader and resulting in the explanation of a mental representation (Meneghetti, Carretti, & De Beni, 2006 in Ahmadi et al, 2013:236). It is widely discussed that reading comprehension requires many supporting skills such as vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, knowledge of grammar, metacognitive awareness, syntactic knowledge, and reading strategies (Grabe, 2009; Koda, 2007). Grabe (2009) states that reading comprehension involves abilities to recognize words rapidly and efficiently, develop and use a very large recognition vocabulary, process sentences in order to build comprehension, engage a range of strategic processes and underlying cognitive skills (e.g., setting goals, changing goals flexibly, monitoring comprehension), interpret meaning in relation to background knowledge, interpret and evaluate texts in line with reader goals and purposes, and process texts fluently over an extended period of time.

Reading for general comprehension is the ability to understand information in a text and interpret it appropriately. However, comprehension abilities are much more complex than this definition suggests. To offer a more accurate picture of reading comprehension, Grabe & Stoller; (2011:14) define it according to a set of necessary processes. These processes involved in fluent reading comprehension Fluent reading is a rapid process, an efficient process, an interactive process, a strategic process, a flexible process, an evaluating process, a purposeful process, a comprehending process, learning process and a linguistic process. Klinger (2007:16) states that reading comprehension is a multicomponent, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text types).

D. Reading Strategies

Mokhtari and Reichard's (2002:3) classified three reading strategies namely; cognitive, metacognitive, and support strategies. Cognitive strategies are direct strategies used to orchestrate the mental processing of a target language. Metacognitive reading strategy awareness arestrategies that help students to regulate or monitor cognitive strategies. They are the notions of thinking about thinking, and are defined as, planned, intentional, goal directed, and future-oriented mental processing that can be used to accomplish cognitive tasks(Salataki & Akyel; 2002:2). Skimming a text for key information by readers is a cognitive strategy, whereas assessing the effectiveness of their skimming strategy for gathering textual information is a metacognitive strategy (Devine, 1993). Support strategies are basic support mechanisms (using dictionaries, taking notes, and underlining) that are employed to aid readers in having better reading comprehension (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002:2).

E. Metacognitive Reading Strategy

Metacognition is thinking about thinking, learners should know what strategies to find out what they need to do. The use of metacognitive strategies can lead to more profound learning and improved performance (Anderson, 2008:1) Metacognitive reading strategy awareness are strategies that help students to regulate or monitor cognitive strategies. They are the notions of thinking about thinking, and are defined as, planned, intentional, goal directed, and future-oriented mental processing that can be used to accomplish cognitive tasks (Salataki & Akyel, 2002:2).

The term metacognition, or "thinking about thinking," has been in existence for about thirty years (Haller, et al, 1988) in Allen (2006:24). The term originated in the field of developmental psychology and has been adopted into the field of education for its significance in terms of how people learn and how it can be used to improve their learning. Metacognition is defined in terms of awareness, ability to monitor, and control of one's thinking based on their monitoring (Flavell, 1985; Haller, et al, 1988) in Allen (2006:24). Flavell (1985: 104) in Allen (2006:25) believed metacognitive skills played an important role in many types of cognitive activity such as, oral communication of information, oral persuasion, oral comprehension, reading comprehension, writing, language acquisition, perception, attention, memory, problem solving, social cognition, and various forms of self-instruction and self-control. Flavell further defined metacognition in terms of knowledge and experience. Metacognitive knowledge refers to the knowledge and beliefs you have accumulated through experiences and stored in long-term memory. This is further subdivided into declarative knowledge, knowing something, and procedural knowledge that refers to knowing how to do something. Flavell provided this example: declarative knowledge could be that you know you have a bad memory. And an example of procedural knowledge would be how and when to supplement your poor memory by writing a shopping list to help you remember. Metacognitive knowledge can be further subdivided into knowledge about persons, tasks, or strategies

3. METHOD

The current research is mixed method study (quantitative-qualitative study) in nature that tries to describe the EFL learners's responses toward metacognitive reading strategies and to explain to what does extent the correlation between metacognitive reading strategies and EFL learners reading strategies. The qualitative data are intended to support quantitative data.

The research was carried out at UNS-Solo. The population of this research is the student of English Language Education Program. The samples are the second and fourth semester students of English Education Studies Program of UNS – Solo (about 48 participants). The samples will be stated by purposive random sampling

To obtain data, the researcher distributed questionnaires containing Metacognitive Reading Strategies Questionnaires in scale choices model and Reading Comprehension Test using IELTS Reading Testing and Metacognitive Reading Strategies Questionnaires in scale choices model. Correlation Product Moment was used to analyze the correlation coefficient of metacognitive reading strategies to reading comprehension.

4. RESULTS

The less proficient learners are larger in number than the proficient learners in almost all contexts of English instruction. It is essential to take account for these learners regarding their reading profiles. The metacognitive awareness of the group is addressed in the following based on the statistical findings. The interpretation and discussion focus on the three sub-categories of MARSI with overall mean score and standard deviation and its level of awareness in each of the sub-category. The level of awareness does not necessarily imply strategic and efficient learners for this group.

1) The highest metacognitive reading strategy I each phase of reading.

a. The highest metacognitive reading strategy applied before reading.

After scoring all of metacognitive reading strategies in pre-reading phase, it had been got the highest mean score of metacognitive reading strategies, that is I previewed the questions or the instructions, so I could understand what to do at 4.2. And after interviewing selected student having high score on reading comprehension, some of them feel many benefits from this strategy, those are as follows:

- In order to answer the question rightly, and focus on searching the answers related to the task and do not take along time in reading. (Student 1; 2017)

- In order to get a guide for the goal of our reading. (Student 8; 2017).

Based on the qualitative above, it can be said that this strategy can help EFL students to read English text more effective and efficient in using time.

b. The highest metacognitive reading strategy applied while reading.

The highest mean score of metacognitive reading strategy used by EFL students while reading English text is I paid selective attention to the information predicted and required in the task that is at 4.1. All metacognitive reading strategies in this phase are on medium means score.

Researcher also gets qualitative data this question why do you need to pay selective attention to the information predicted and required in the task?:

- In order to look for right information. (Student 1; 2017.)

- In order to look for the needed things sonly, aswer the question rightly and it is easier to comprehend the content of the text. (Student 5, 2017).

Based on the qualitative above EFL students can look for right information and look for the needed things sonly, answer the question rightly by paying selective attention to the information predicted and required in the task. This strategy also is help EFL students to comprehend the content of the text easily.

c. The highest metacognitive reading strategy applied after reading.

The highest mean score of metacognitive reading strategy used by EFL students after reading English text is I spent time to motivate myself to improve the reading even I found that I do a poor job that is at 3,71. All metacognitive reading strategies used after reading are also on medium means score.

Based on qualitative data an EFL learner apply this strategy :

• In order to my capability does not decrease and loose.(Student 1; 2017).

• Remain to do exercises and read the text. (Student 2; 2017)

• To improve reading comprehension optimally. (Student 3; 2017).

• Keep spirit to improve reading ability. (Student 4; 2017).

• To motivate her/his self to be diligent in reading text and decide the right strategy to use. (Student 5; 2017).

By motivating their self to improve the reading even they found that they do a poor job, EFL students will keep spirit to improve reading ability, remain to do exercises and read the text.

2) Correlation Between Metacognitive Reading Strategies and EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension

After analyzing the data from questionnaires, researcher found that metacognitive reading strategies correlates significantly to EFL learners' reading comprehension with coefficient value 0.97.3 and p value 0.02. For more detail description, it can be seen at Table below:

Table 1. Correlation between Cognitive, Metacognitive Reading Strategies and EFL Learners' reading Comprehension

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Coefficient and P Values
Metacognitve Reading Strategies	EFL learners' reading comprehension	0.97,3 and 0.02

(Source: Analyzed Data)

Metacognitive reading strategies are important for EFL learners to know and should be applied in reading process. Based on the finding of this current research both reading strategies significantly correlate to their reading comprehension. The findings above show that more often use metacognitive reading strategies, higher level in reading comprehension.

Reading is an important language skill, because reading will deliver a learner to get much information from the texts. Reading is a process in getting meaning or making meaning through many activities before, while and after reading the text. The application of metacognitive reading strategies is a must because these strategies have contributed to EFL learners' reading comprehension.

The other many previous researchers such as Nergis (2013) who studies the EFL learners' reading comprehension and its determinant variables supports this findings of the current research. She applies multiple regression to analyze her data to know what factors affecting EFL learners' reading comprehension. She states that first language (L1) background learners, depth of vocabulary knowledge, syntactic awareness, and metacognitive reading strategies are the predictors of academic reading comprehension for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students.

Fotovatian & Shokrpour (2014) compares three categories of reading comprehension strategies (metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective) to determine their effects on 31 EFL students' reading comprehension. A standard reading comprehension test taken from the First Certificate in English (FCE) and a questionnaire were used to collect the data. The results of the analysis using Chi-square tests revealed that metacognitive strategies have positive effects on reading comprehension. Based on the research result above, this current study also support the previous studies stating that metacognitive reading strategies correlate positively and significantly to reading comprehension.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results above, the conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. The dominant metacognitive reading strategies are :

a. I previewed the questions or the instructions, so I could understand what to do at 4.2.

b. I paid selective attention to the information predicted and required in the task that is at 4.1.

c. I spent time to motivate myself to improve the reading even I found that I do a poor job that is at 3,71.

2. Metacognitive reading strategy correlates significantly to reading comprehension with coefficient value 97.3 and p value 0.00.

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