



Students' Strategies in Improving Their Reading Comprehension

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Abstract: The problem of this research was that there was no clear information about students' strategies in improving their reading comprehension. Therefore, a descriptive quantitative method was used to find out the students' strategies in improving their reading comprehension. A questionnaire consisting of 10 questions was distributed English Education Department students of IAIN Batusangkar to collect research data. The questionnaire was distributed to them, and there were 37 students who gave their responses. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistical analysis. Based on the research results, it was found that there were three steps of reading strategies applied by students in improving their reading comprehension. In pre-reading stage, students applied six reading strategies: previewing, creating question, making prediction, writing the main points of what reader already know about the text, reading introductions and summaries, and creating a pre-reading outline strategy. The mostly applied strategy was previewing strategy, and the least one was reading introductions and summaries strategy. In whilst reading stage, they applied reading the selection text, visualizing, paraphrasing, elaborating, changing reading rate, inferring, note-taking, and rereading strategy. The mostly applied strategy was paraphrasing strategy, and the least one was rereading strategy. In the post-reading stage, students applied two reading strategies: summarizing and reviewing. Between both strategies, summarizing was dominantly applied.

Abstrak: Masalah dalam penelitian ini adalah tidak adanya informasi yang jelas tentang strategi mahasiswa dalam meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan mereka. Oleh karena itu, metode deskriptif kuantitatif digunakan untuk mengetahui strategi mahasiswa dalam meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan mereka. Kuesioner yang terdiri dari 10 pertanyaan dibagikan kepada mahasiswa jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris untuk mengumpulkan data penelitian. Kuesioner dibagikan kepada mahasiswa, dan sebanyak 37 mahasiswa memberikan respon mereka. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, ditemukan bahwa ada tiga langkah strategi membaca yang diterapkan oleh mahasiswa untuk meningkatkan pemahaman bacaan mereka. Pada tahap pra-membaca, mahasiswa menerapkan enam strategi, yaitu: melakukan pra tinjau, mengajukan pertanyaan, membuat prediksi, menulis poin-poin penting dari apa yang sudah diketahui pembaca tentang teks, membaca pendahuluan, dan

ringkasan, serta strategi garis besar pra-membaca. Strategi yang paling banyak diterapkan adalah strategi pra-tinjau dan yang paling sedikit adalah strategi membaca pendahuluan dan ringkasan. Pada tahap membaca, mereka menerapkan strategi membaca teks pilihan, memvisualisasikan, memparafrasekan, mengelaborasi, mengubah kecepatan membaca, menyimpulkan, mencatat, dan membaca ulang. Strategi yang paling banyak diterapkan adalah strategi membaca ulang, dan yang paling sedikit adalah strategi

Keywords: Reading strategies, university students, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

This research is inspired by the previous research about the students' problems in understanding English sentences in Informational Reading classroom. Based on observations in the classroom, it was realized that students had many problems in understanding English sentences. They also got problems of lack of vocabulary, reading strategy, grammar mastery, background knowledge of English, and some other personal problems. It is assumed that the problems would impact to their reading comprehension. In fact, they had problems in reading, i.e., a capability to figure out meaning from the printed materials and interpret them appropriately (Grade & Stoller, 2002); or doing the process of transferring author's idea into mind successfully, in which they as readers must grasp some presented ideas, know the meaning of words are made, gain the statements and follow the author's ideas (Harmer, 2007). Reading, using other phrases, is a set of abilities involving the process of making sense and discovering the meaning of a pointed world (Linse, C. T., & Nunan, 2005). Therefore, teachers must have sense of motivation as people who play a core role to interest their students to be involved in reading classroom activities (Harmer, 2007) so that the students will not face the problems of anxiety, self-esteem, inhibition, risk talking, and extroversion (Brown, 2007).

To overcome some problems in reading, a reader needs appropriate strategy. Reading strategies are plans or the ways that helps the readers to understand the information that they read (G. J. Kinsella et al., 2009). Reading strategies are often categorized as those behaviors designed to help students before, during, and after reading (McWhorter, 1986).

They become important for students to gain if they want to be successful in reading. Reading strategies are plans coming from encountering problem solving in developing meaning (Richards et al., 2002). Students who have no strategies in reading may face difficulty to get best reading skill strategy to get their need in reading (Almutairi, 2018). It will be difficult for them to apply a strategy when reading because of their flop to control their understanding to reading material they read (Bos & Vaughn, 1994; Garner & Reis, 1981; Swanson & De La Paz, 1998 in (Almutairi, 2018), differentiate some addressed questions, use certain strategies to get intended meaning from printed materials Raphael & Pearson, 1985 in (Almutairi, 2018), relate their early knowledge with new information gotten, and have some related ideas that are presented ideas of a text to comprehend meaning (Oakhill & Patel, 1991 in (Almutairi, 2018).

Also, inefficient readers cannot use improvement strategies such as rereading certain paragraphs of text when they get failure to comprehend those paragraphs (Garner & Reis, 1981 in (Almutairi, 2018). Since poor readers have difficulty becoming people who know some reading strategies, they need for guidance and practice to use reading strategies to moderate their understanding (Swanson & De La Paz, 1998 in Almutairi, 2018)

Strategies could be classified into three categories: cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective categories (O'malley et al., 1990). The first category includes behaviors, techniques, or actions applied by readers to mediate skill of knowledge. They have closed relationship with the implementation of certain learning tasks (e.g., elaboration,

inferencing, and translation). The second category consists of some points: know the concept of learning and known how to control learning through planning, monitoring, and evaluating the process of learning activities. At last, the third category talk about some strategies involving resources control, time, effort, and endorsement. They include questions for clarification and partnership. Among the reading strategies, for instance, SQ3R, which can improve students' reading comprehension (Gusnetti et al., 2018); and so does Anticipation Guide Strategy (Sari & Sari, 2019).

English teaching department of IAIN Batusangkar provided the fourth semester students some strategies in reading classroom such as KWL Plus, PACA, Concept Building, Cornell-Note Taking, PQRS, DRTA, SQ3R, Reading in Social Studies, Reading in Science Texts/ Articles, Reading in Language Arts, and TOEFL. Unfortunately, most students were still low in their reading comprehension. The problems might be they did not apply appropriate strategy in reading. Thus, this article is aimed at finding out their reading strategies in improving their reading comprehension.

METHOD

Research Design

The method used was descriptive quantitative approach. Quantitative research closely related with measurement and analysis of some variables to get research result. It engages exploiting and analyzing data numbers using technical technique of numbers to answer questions such as who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how (Apuke, 2017). This might give information about students' strategies in improving their reading comprehension.

Research Respondent

This research had been done to English Teaching Department students of IAIN Batusangkar at any levels. They were registered in 2019/2020 academic year. There were 228 English students. 78 students were from semester I A, B, and C class. 74 students

were from semester III A, B, and C Class. 76 students were from semester V A, B, and C Class. From those students, only 37 students gave their responses. There were 14 students from semester I. There were 12 students from semester III. There were 11 students from semester V. In this research, the researchers described the students' reading strategies in improving their reading comprehension.

Research Instrument

The researchers designed the research questionnaire to get quantitative data. The questionnaire was created by using *Bahasa* to help the respondents understand and answer all stated questions. The questionnaire contained 10 questions that guided the students to mention and choose some possible strategies they might applied before, when, and after reading. Questions on the questionnaire distributed to students were made in Bahasa with the aim of allowing them to understand the questions on the questionnaire and got complete information about the reading strategies they applied. Before distributing the questionnaire, the instrument was validated by the research instrument validators. Based on the suggestions given, the instrument was revised. The following paragraph may give explanation of the questions in the questionnaire.

The first question was asked to know whether they had known various reading strategies or not. The second question was asked if students know several reading strategies and what difficulties are faced. The third question was about the possibility difficulties they faced. The fourth question was a question about whether students use reading strategies in the early reading stage. The next question was addressed to know what reading strategies they applied in the stage. The sixth question was about whether students use reading strategies at the whilst reading stage. The seventh question was asked to know what reading strategies they applied by giving them some possible reading strategies (reading faster, silent reading, and so on). They also gave their own answers if

they did not apply the reading strategies offered.

The eight question was about what reading strategies they applied after reading stage by providing a possible choice of reading strategies. They were also asked to provide information on the reading strategies they were doing at this stage. The ninth question was to know what strategies they used to test the right or wrong of their understanding of the text they had read based on what they had done by providing three possible answers. They also might give their own answer to the question. The last question was about what strategies they applied if they did not understand the text they had read. Even though the Covid 19 had attacked all over the world including Indonesia that make them difficult to get the information from the research respondents, they successfully distributed the questionnaire on mid-April 2019 in their classroom.

To get quantitative data, the researchers analyzed the result of the questionnaire by using descriptive statistics analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

For quantitative data, the researchers analyzed the result of the questionnaire by using descriptive statistics. Based on the data analysis, it was known that the students had applied some reading strategies at the three stages (Before reading, when reading, and after reading). In the before reading stage, it was known that there were 10 respondents (63%) who applied *previewing* strategy, 2 respondents (13%) who applied *creating question* strategy, 7 respondents (44%) who applied *making prediction* strategy, 5 respondents (31.5%) who applied *writing the main point of what reader already know about the text* strategy, 1 respondent (6%) who applied *reading introductions and summaries* strategy, and 4 respondents (25%) who applied *creating a pre-reading outline* strategy.

It was also known that the students applied some reading strategies in when reading stage. There were 12 respondents

(75%) who applied *reading the selection text* strategy. 1 respondent (6.00) who applied *paraphrasing* strategy. There were 8 respondents (50.00%) who applied *changing reading rate* strategy. There were 3 respondents (19.00%) who applied *inferring* strategy. There were 7 respondents (44.00%) who applied *note-taking* strategy. There were 13 respondents (81.00%) who applied *rereading* strategy. While, In After-Reading stage it had been known that there were 7 respondents (44%) who applied summarizing strategy and 3 respondents (81.00%) who applied reviewing strategy.

Discussion

Based on the experts' theories, there are some reading strategies that could be applied by students in the three stages of reading activities (Lenz, 2005) and (K. G. Kinsella & Velkoff, 2001). Based on the research result, it had been known that the students had applied some reading strategies in improving their reading comprehension. They were: 1) the students' strategies before reading were previewing, creating question, making prediction, writing the main points of what reader already know about the text, reading introductions and summaries, and creating a pre-reading outline, 2) the students' strategies when reading were reading the selection text, visualizing, paraphrasing, elaborating, changing reading rate, inferring, note-taking, and rereading, and 3) the students' strategies after reading were summarizing and reviewing. By comparing what had been gotten from research findings with this theory, it was known that not all strategies in the three reading steps were applied by the respondents. Especially, there were no respondents who applied visualizing, paraphrasing, and elaborating in when reading stage.

Thus, it may be inferred the to improve their reading comprehension, the respondents applied reading strategies in every stage of their reading despite different frequency. In other words, their reading comprehension improved due to the application of reading strategies in their reading activities, before,

whilst, and after reading (McWhorter, 1986). The research results are in line with (Gusnetti et al., 2018; Sari & Sari, 2019; and Swanson & De La Paz, 1998 in Almutairi, 2018)

CONCLUSION

Based on the research result and discussion, it was known that the students had applied some reading strategies in improving their reading comprehension. They were as follows

1. In before reading stage, the students had applied 6 reading strategies such as *previewing, creating question, making prediction, writing the main point of what reader already know about the text, reading introductions and summaries, and creating a pre-reading outline strategy*. From the six strategies, the most strategy applied by the students was *previewing* strategy with 10 students (63%) from 37 respondents. The less strategy applied by the students was *reading introductions and summaries* strategy with 1 respondent (6%) from 37 respondents.
2. In when reading stage, the students had also applied 6 reading strategies. They were *reading the selection text, paraphrasing, changing reading rate, inferring, note-taking, and rereading* strategy. From the six strategies, the most strategy applied by the students was *rereading* strategy with 13 respondents (81%) from 37 respondents. The less strategy applied by the students was *inferring* strategy with 3 respondents (19%) from 37 respondents.
3. In after reading stage, the students had applied 2 reading strategies: *summarizing* and *reviewing* strategy. From both strategies, the dominant strategy applied by the students was *summarizing* strategy 7 respondents (44%) from 37 respondents, and the less one was *reviewing* strategy 3 respondents (19%) from 37 respondents.

Based on the conclusion, it is recommended to further researchers to drill more information about some possible reasons of applying those reading strategies, so that more in-depth research on this issue

can provide extensive information related to the reading strategies applied by students in their reading activities.

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