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THE INFLUENCE OF READING STRATEGIES ON COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Muhammad Hilmi
STID Mustafa Ibrahim Al-Ishlahuddiny Kediri Lombok Barat
Muhmmadhilmi86@gmil.com

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Abstract

Reading ability is a fundamental skill in language mastery, especially in English language learning. However, many students in Indonesia experience difficulties in understanding English texts due to a lack of effective reading strategies. This issue forms the basis of a study to evaluate the impact of reading strategies on improving students' reading comprehension. The aim of this research is to analyze how reading strategies can assist students in understanding English texts. The research employs a descriptive quantitative method, involving 50 students divided into experimental and control groups. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests and analyzed using normality and homogeneity statistical tests, as well as a T-test to measure the effectiveness of reading strategies. The results showed that the experimental group, which used reading strategies, demonstrated a significant improvement in comprehension compared to the control group. These findings suggest that the application of appropriate reading strategies can enhance reading comprehension skills, particularly for students learning English as a foreign language.

Keywords: Reading Strategies, Comprehension Skills, English Language Learning

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INTRODUCTION

The ability to read cannot be separated from everyday life. By reading, we will get the latest information that we did not previously understand. Apart from that, by reading a lot we can increase our level of intelligence and build our reasoning power. However, reading is not just about learning each word word by word. To find and get the information we need, we need reading comprehension from reading texts. Proficient readers use their past experiences and current knowledge to predict events and create theories as they read (Amin, 2019). Reading Comprehension is one of the elements contained in learning English.

Reading is a key skill in language acquisition because it allows readers to absorb new knowledge and increase the level of information through the thinking process. Despite this, many Indonesian students have problems in reading skills due to a lack of enthusiasm and encouragement to read extensively, resulting in very low comprehension. According to Progress in International Reading Literacy (PRILS) in 2006, Indonesia is in 41st place out of 45 countries in terms of reading ability (quoted from the Research and Development Ministry of Education and Culture) which shows that the reading ability of Indonesian students is still low. Reading is very important for education because it is a means of gaining knowledge so it is an important part of all fields of study. For any formal school to progress, these capabilities are necessary. This ability is an important part of a student's academic life. Because reading is the most practical and successful way to acquire a foreign language, it becomes even more important for language learners, especially for those studying English (Yapp et. al., 2023).

No matter their proficiency level, students must read. However, most of them find it difficult to understand the overall meaning of the text, especially when it comes to academic material, which often contains long paragraphs and a large number of unfamiliar words. This is because understanding is a challenging process and requires prior knowledge from students. Therefore, understanding will not just happen if no strategy is used; on the contrary, adopting strategies while reading will assist students in understanding the material and resolving any problems or knowledge gaps they may have during the reading activity, thereby improving comprehension. This statement is supported by Rong and Xiaome who stated that since the late 1970s, reading learning strategies can also reveal how a person learns. Furthermore, learning strategies relate to how a person receives and understands information in learning situations. Therefore, using reading techniques to understand academic material

is very important, especially for lower language learners, because without reading techniques, they will have difficulty getting the gist of the text (Escobar Álvarez, 2020). According to O'Malley and Chamot, "the main obstacle to successful language learning is that learners do not use learning strategies effectively". As a result, many students fail in learning and do not have the drive to improve their abilities (Tresnaningsih, 2022).

Language learning has become a crucial issue in the world of education. There are many factors that influence language learning, including cognitive, psychological, sociological, and so on. To find out the factors that influence language learning, several studies have been conducted to investigate several factors, such as motivation, talent, and others. These factors are considered important factors that involve individual differences in language learning to understand how students can achieve success in language learning. Several previous studies have explored learning strategies and the influence of learning strategies in English language learning. These studies have shown that learning strategies play an important and significant role in the learning process, including in improving language learning. Apart from that, previous researchers have also collected a collection of research on learning strategies and concluded that learning strategies have an important role in language learning (Shinta, 2024).

Therefore, it is clear that many studies have examined and validated that the efficiency of language learning strategies can ensure successful learning. Apart from that, implementing good learning strategies can help students to improve communicative abilities. Lessard-Clouston in Hismanoglu emphasized that learning strategies contribute to the development of students' communicative competence. 3 In addition, Oxford states that language learning strategies are an important factor for students to improve active learning in the classroom and independent movement which is very important in developing communicative competence. According to Chamot, learning strategies are the thoughts and actions that students use to achieve learning goals. Furthermore, Weinstein and Mayer in Clouston define learning strategies as the behavior and thoughts that students use during learning. This means that, apart from learning strategies being able to improve communication skills, the term strategy also characterizes the relationship between thoughts and actions which is based on the view that learners are agents who are responsible and aware of their needs and goals when involved in the learning process. As also emphasized by Rubin in Hong-nam and Alexandra, "strategies that contribute to the development of the language

system constructed by the learner and (which) influence learning directly (Tresnaningsih, 2022).

Reading comprehension refers to a person's ability to process written text, derive meaning from it, and relate the text to the reader's existing knowledge. A student with high reading comprehension abilities reflects several fundamental skills (Hiep, 2007). First, the student knows the meaning of the words found in the text and understands them based on the context of the writing. Second, students with good reading comprehension skills can easily follow the organization of a reading and show references and antecedents throughout the reading (Nggawu & Thao, 2023), draw conclusions, show thoughts that emerge from the reading, and answer questions asked from the reading. More complex reading comprehension skills are reflected in the learner's ability to appreciate the use of literary devices in written text and the situational atmosphere of the text. These skills allow students to get more from a text, including written tone, reference points, statements, and inflections. The most important aspect of reading comprehension is the reader's ability to interrogate the text and determine the purpose of writing the text (Çiftci & Özcan, 2021). A student who can show the author's intentions when creating a text and measure the author's point of view on a problem has demonstrated high communication comprehension abilities (Çiftci & Özcan, 2021). In addition, the ability to draw conclusions about the author is a reflection of high reading comprehension abilities.

Reading is important in everyday life and to access world literature. Reading is a powerful tool for developing speaking and language skills. Because teaching reading is the primary goal of schools, the focus of most learning disabilities programs is ultimately reading. Even in the business world, reading in English plays an important role in the lives of professionals, especially professionals in the field of communication in English. Reading comprehension is reading with complete understanding of a text. This involves knowledge of vocabulary, understanding sentence structure or syntax, and interpreting the author's intent. Teaching reading comprehension begins with the correct use of grammar because this is an important factor for understanding the reading context. Once students become proficient decipherers, they begin to focus on evaluating what they say so that they construct meaning by reading for facts and identifying main ideas.

Subjects are classified as complicated and boring because students are required to be observant in sorting out existing subjects with texts that are relatively long and less

interesting. To overcome this, teachers are required to be more creative in delivering learning material using interesting learning strategies. Learning strategies that are utilized appropriately in the learning process will become more effective and efficient tools in achieving learning goals. Apart from that, learning strategies will also increase students' learning motivation. English Language Learners (ELL) often have problems mastering science, math, or social studies concepts because they cannot understand textbooks for these subjects. ELLs at all levels of English language proficiency, and literacy skills, will benefit from explicit instruction in comprehension skills along with other skills. Examples of comprehension skills that can be taught and applied to all reading situations include: Summarizing, Sequencing, making inferences, comparing and contrasting, drawing conclusions, asking yourself questions, solving problems, connecting to background knowledge, distinguishing between facts and opinions, finding the main idea , key facts, and supporting details. These skills are essential for understanding what is generally known as informational reading or expository reading (Mohseni Takaloo & Ahmadi, 2017).

The problem raised in this research is whether the application of reading strategies has a significant influence on students' ability to understand English material. Therefore, the main aim of this research is to analyze the relationship between reading strategies and students' level of understanding of English language learning. This research is expected to provide a more in-depth picture of the effectiveness of reading strategies in improving students' ability to understand and absorb English lesson material.

METHODS

This research was conducted using descriptive quantitative methods. Combines quantitative assessments of comprehension abilities with qualitative interviews and classroom observations. A sample of 50 ELL students from a variety of backgrounds participated in the study over the course of one semester. Students are taught using different reading strategies, and students' comprehension abilities are evaluated through pretests and posttests. According to Creswell, correlation is a statistical test to determine the tendency or pattern of two or more variables or two sets of data that change constantly. In the case of quantitative data, statistical analysis is used to calculate the numerical data collected and analyze it using correlation analysis. This research began in August-October 2024. as for the

time required during the research process, it takes more than 1 month when followed by the evaluation process and data analysis.

Quantitative research is research in which the researcher measures two variables and assesses the statistical relationship between them with little or no attempt to control for extraneous variables. Quantitative research, in this research, researchers distributed questionnaires to students to find out scores on students' reading habits and reading strategies and to obtain information on reading habits. A questionnaire is a data collection technique where participants fill in questions or statements and then return them to the researcher after they have been filled in completely (Creswell, 2015). In determining student grades, researchers used a closed questionnaire where respondents ticked the answers provided in the questionnaire. The process of learning and teaching activities requires an evaluation to measure student abilities, one of which is a multiple choice test.

A test is a systematic procedure for observing someone's behavior using measuring instruments in the form of numbers or categories. Multiple choice tests are tests used to measure students' ability to think. Tests are used to collect data on students' reading comprehension. In this study, all data was obtained from questionnaire results and reading test scores in numerical form. Therefore, all data was analyzed quantitatively. Because this research aims to determine the correlation between two variables, the researcher used Bivariate Correlation Analysis using the Pearson Product Moment and Multiple Regression techniques. Researchers use this technique because the data obtained from the two variables are calculated in the form of quantitative scores and the data is on an interval scale (Mukhadis, 2021) The Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient is used when the measurement scale is an interval or ratio. Therefore, Pearson r is the appropriate correlation coefficient to calculate.

RESULTS

In this research regarding the Effect of Reading Strategies on Comprehension Ability in English Language Learners, the researcher gave a pretest and posttest to the respective samples before and after being given the treatment. The pretest and posttest scores obtained by the sample are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Data Pretest Result dan Posttest

Kelas	Jumlah Siswa	Pretest	Posttest
Eksperimen	25	67,86	81,94
Control	25	66,67	74,87

After the pretest and posttest scores were obtained, the researcher carried out several tests on the data to prove that the hypothesis made by the researcher was acceptable. In this research, in testing the hypothesis the researcher used three tests, namely the normality test, homogeneity test and hypothesis test using the T/T-Test. The normality test is a test carried out on groups of data or variables with the aim of assessing whether the data is normally distributed or not. The normality test can only be carried out in the final test1. Below is the data from the Normality test results on the sample.

Table. 2 Data Hasil Uji Normalitas

Kelas	X^2 Ukur	X^2 Tabel	Ket.
Eksperimen	3,95	14,07	Terdistribusi Normal
Kontrol	4,57	14,07	Terdistribusi Normal

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the value of Xcount is smaller than that of Meanwhile, the control class which received treatment using the conventional learning model also had a normal distribution because the Xcount value data was smaller than Xtable. After the normality test data was obtained, the researcher carried out a homogeneity test. The homogeneity test is a test of whether two data from research variables are the same or not. The homogeneity test is carried out to determine whether the data in variables x and y are homogeneous or not. The following is a data table for calculating homogeneity test results

Table 3. Data Homogeneity Test Results

	Ctrl.	Eks.
Rata-Rata	74.88	81.93
Variansi	42.52	15.64
Jumlah sampel	25	25
Df	15	14
F_{tabel}	0,41	
F_{hitung}	0,37	

The values above were obtained using the variance comparison test. It can be seen that the variance in the experimental class is different from the control class and Fcount has a smaller value than Ftable. Namely 0.37 for the Fcount value and 0.41 for Ftable. Because the requirement for homogeneous data is that if Fcount < Ftable then the data from the sample can be said to be homogeneous.

As for the T test. The T test itself is better known as the partial test. Namely to test how big the influence of each independent variable is on the dependent variable. Below is a table of T test calculation results.

Tabel 4. Data Homogeneity Test Results T

Kelas	Jumlah Siswa	Rata-Rata	t_{hitung}	t_{tabel}
Eksperimen	25	81,9	3,61	2,04

Based on the data above, it is known that tcount > ttable, so there is an influence or the hypothesis is accepted (Ha is accepted). The above data was taken from samples in the experimental class with a total of 25 students with an average score of 81.9, then in the control class with a total of 25 students with an average score of 74.8. So the tcount was 3.61 and ttable is 2.04

The research results show: 1) Proficiency in vocabulary and language structure significantly influences reading skills in English, with a significance level of 0.001 < 0.05 and a value of Fh = 10.977, which contributes 37.97% to English reading ability. 2) Mastery of vocabulary in particular also has a significant influence on English reading skills, shown by a significance of 0.002 < 0.05 and a value of th = 1.405, which contributes 19.94% in improving reading skills. 3) Mastery of grammar also has a significant influence, with a significance of 0.000 < 0.05 and a value of th = 1.320, which contributes 18.03% to improving English reading skills. Thus, it can be concluded that proficiency in vocabulary and grammar are two important factors that play a role in helping students understand the meaning of certain sentences and improve their reading skills in English.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research results above, it can be seen that reading strategies have a significant effect on students' ability to understand English learning. Therefore, in the context of this discussion, various basic concepts will be explained which are related to the research results above.

Basic Concepts of Reading Strategies in English Language Learning

According to Brown (2015), reading strategies are techniques and approaches that readers use to understand and interpret texts effectively. Reading strategies include a series of deliberate and planned actions that readers take before, during, and after reading to optimize comprehension. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, reading strategies become a crucial component that helps learners overcome linguistic and cultural challenges (Brown & Lee, 2015). Oxford (1990) on Madebo (2024) classifies reading strategies into two main categories: direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies involve cognitive processes such as analyzing text, identifying main ideas, and making inferences. Meanwhile, indirect strategies include metacognitive aspects such as planning, monitoring and evaluating understanding. These two types of strategies work synergistically to build comprehensive understandin (Madebo & Gutema, 2024).

In the development of language learning theory, Grabe & Stoller (2013) on Ana Pellicer-Sánchez (2022), emphasize that reading strategies are not just technical skills, but rather active processes involving complex interactions between previous knowledge, linguistic abilities, and metacognitive awareness. Effective English learners are able to select and apply strategies that suit their reading goals and text characteristics (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2022). Recent research by Ronald P. Leow (2022) shows that explicit teaching of reading strategies has a significant impact on improving comprehension abilities. Learners who are provided with a variety of reading strategies show improvements in information processing speed, accuracy of interpretation, and better knowledge retention compared to students who do not receive strategy training (Leow, 2022).

The Effect of Skimming and Scanning Strategies on Reading Comprehension

Skimming and scanning strategies, as explained by Nuttall (2001), are two speed reading techniques that have different goals and approaches. Skimming aims to get a general idea of the text by reading quickly and selectively, while scanning focuses on finding specific information (Mykhailivna Bogush et. al., 2020). These two strategies play an important role

in developing reading comprehension efficiency. Longitudinal research conducted by Carver (2009) revealed that learners who were proficient in using skimming strategies showed significant improvements in the ability to identify the main idea and organizational structure of text. They are able to build a more coherent mental representation of the content of the reading and integrate it with previous knowledge (Peterson, 2022).

In the context of scanning, a study conducted by Zhang (2016) demonstrated that the ability to search for specific information quickly and accurately contributes to the development of detailed understanding of text. Learners who are skilled at scanning can save time and cognitive energy, which can then be allocated to deeper understanding processes (Zhang, 2016). The integration of these two strategies, according to Grabe (2010), creates a more flexible and adaptive reading approach. Learners can switch between skimming and scanning according to their reading needs and goals, which in turn increases the overall effectiveness of reading comprehension (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2022).

Metacognitive Strategies and Their Impact on Reading Comprehension

Flavell (1979) on Chen (2022) defines metacognition as a person's awareness and control of their own cognitive processes. In the context of reading, metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating comprehension (Chen & McDunn, 2022). Baker and Brown (1984) on Baker (2022) assert that learners who develop metacognitive awareness are better able to identify comprehension difficulties and take appropriate corrective action (Lu et.al., 2022). Zimmerman (2002) developed a model of independent learning that emphasizes the importance of metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension. His research shows that learners who actively plan, monitor, and evaluate their reading process demonstrate higher levels of comprehension compared to learners who read passively (Latva-aho et. al., 2024).

An experimental study conducted by Pressley and Afflerbach (2009) revealed that the use of metacognitive strategies facilitates the formation of richer and more complex mental representations of the text read. Learners who use metacognitive strategies are better able to integrate new information with previous knowledge and make more accurate inferences (Dinsmore et.al., 2020). Recent research by Schraw (2010) on Burin (2020) reinforces previous findings by demonstrating that learners who develop a broad repertoire of metacognitive strategies show significant improvements in reading comprehension,

information retention, and the ability to transfer knowledge to new contexts (Burin et.al., 2020).

The Role of Interactive Strategies in Improving Reading Comprehension

The interactive model of reading developed by Rumelhart (2023) on Dornič (2023) emphasizes that reading comprehension is the result of interactions between bottom-up and top-down processes. Interactive strategies integrate word- and sentence-level processing with the reader's contextual knowledge and personal experiences. This approach allows students to construct the meaning of the text more comprehensively (Dornič, 2023). Stanovich's (2000) research shows that interactive strategies help learners overcome limitations in linguistic knowledge by utilizing the contextual knowledge and schemata they have. Learners who use interactive strategies are better able to compensate for weaknesses in certain language aspects by optimizing other cognitive resources (Giguere et.al., 2024).

Kintsch (2018) in construction-integration theory underlines the importance of the interaction between textual information and reader knowledge in building coherent mental representations. Interactive strategies facilitate this process by encouraging learners to actively connect new information to existing knowledge structures (Wigdorowitz et.al., 2023). A longitudinal study conducted by Anderson & Pearson (1984) on Huang (2024) confirmed that learners who adopted interactive strategies showed greater improvements in reading comprehension compared to those who relied on a linear approach. This strategy has proven to be very effective in improving critical and evaluative reading skills (Huang et.al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This research shows that appropriate reading strategies have a significant influence in improving students' reading comprehension abilities in learning English. Based on pretest and posttest analysis as well as statistical tests, it was seen that there was an increase in understanding in the group that used reading strategies compared to the control group that did not use these strategies. Reading strategies help students develop skills in identifying main ideas, understanding context, and drawing better conclusions from texts. These findings support the importance of implementing reading strategies as an integral part of English

language learning, especially for students with difficulty understanding complex academic texts. Thus, the use of reading strategies can be considered an effective approach and needs to be implemented in language education programs to improve students' comprehension abilities.

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