# STUDENTS' STRATEGIES IN HANDLING THE LEARNING PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION

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#### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui masalah-masalah belajar dalam membaca yang dihadapi oleh siswa-siswa dalam pemahaman membaca dan untuk mengetahui strategi-strategi yang digunakan untuk mengatasi masalah-masalah pemahaman membaca. Ia menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif. Eksperiensial adalah desain penelitian yang diterapkan dalam penelitian ini. Dalam penelitian, peserta terdiri dari tiga puluh dua siswa dari kelas di SMAN 1 Cibungbulang Bogor. Mereka adalah salah satu kelas sepuluh di tahun akademik 2018/2019. Kemudian, peneliti memilih lima siswa untuk menjadi informan di kelas tersebut. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa beberapa siswa menghadapi masalah-masalah belajar dari pemahaman membaca bahasa Inggris. Masalah belajar tertinggi dalam membaca adalah 25% yang mana adalah kurang daya ingatan kerja. Sementara, beberapa siswa menggunakan beberapa strategi untuk mengatasi masalah-masalah dari pemahaman membaca bahasa Inggris. Strategi tertinggi dalam membaca adalah 39% yang mana adalah mengaktifkan pengetahuan sebelumnya dan pertanyaan-pertanyaan inferensial.

Kata kunci: pemahaman membaca, masalah-masalah belajar, strategi-strategi siswa

# **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to know the learning problems in reading that are faced by the students in reading comprehension and to know the strategies that are used to handle the problems of reading comprehension. It used a qualitative research method. Experiential was research design that was applied in this research. In the study, the participants consisted of thirtytwo students of a classroom in SMAN 1 Cibungbulang Bogor. They were one of tenth grades in 2018/2019 academic year. Then, the researcher chose five students to become informants at the classroom. This research can be concluded that there are some learning problems in reading that are faced by the students in reading comprehension. The highest learning problem in reading is 25% which is lack of working memory. Meanwhile, there are some strategies that are used to handle the problems of reading comprehension. The highest strategy in reading is 39% which is activate prior knowledge and inferential questions.

Keyword: reading comprehension, learning problems, students' strategies

# INTRODUCTION

In this era, it is different than the previous era. The development of era is more and more advance. Therefore,

learning process should follow the development of era especially the development of technology. Students in this era grow in the different era with the previous era and the development of technology that is different from before, thus they have to prepare themself to face their job in the future which the technologies are important to are learned.

Therefore, the writer's personal reason is students should be forced to read in English and would like to learn English in confronting life in the future. Moreover, students are required to be able to understand English by want to read in English because English is important to their life or job in the future. Students should have strategies to handle learning problems in reading the English text for the sake their life after pass the school to be better.

Based on Islamic view, reading is commanded by Allah SWT for us and it is His first obligation. This recommendation is found in holy Qur'an of Al-'Alaq sura (1-5 verses) which according to Taqi-ud- Din Al-Hilali Muhammad & Muhsin Khan Muhammad as cited in Ismiyanti (2017, p. 21), "It is relevant to the first of holy Qur'an received by our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)."

## Meaning:

"Read! In the name of your Lord who has created (all the exists). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick congulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the most Generous. Who was taught (the writing) by pen. He has taught man that which he knew not."

Therefore, the sura explains that reading is important because it is the first obligation from Allah SWT and we also have to like to read.

Reading comprehension important to be realized. According to Nasution (2017, p. 70), "Its important is realized as very substantial because it opens up new knowledge for individual." It is also important because students will get achievement especially in learning through their reading skill. If their reading comprehension are lack, they will have problems to construct learning development. Meanwhile, achievement of reading comprehension is command and skill of the students which it is not easy. Students require to have practice in English reading text to get the English reading comprehension that is better. However, students are more difficult to attain success in learning if they are lazy to read.

Medjahdi (2015) conducts a case study design of third-year learners at Nehali Mohamed Secondary School in the academic year of 2014/2015 carried out in Nehali Mohamed Secondary School discovered that most of the learners have difficulties in reading comprehension at the level of pronunciation and ambiguous words.

Kusnadi (2017) conducts a descriptive qualitative method of the XI<sup>th</sup> grade of SMK Insan Madani in academic year of 2017/2018 carried out in SMK Insan Madani discovered that the most of the students are lack of interest to reading, they consider that learning English is too difficult, lazy to open dictionary when they find a word that they do not understand.

Then, the participants consisted of thirtytwo students of SMAN 1 Cibungbulang Bogor. In the study, they are one of tenth grade participates in the academic year 2018/2019. Meanwhile, the researcher chooses five students to become informants at the classroom. The reason of why the participants are students in Senior High School because in this phase students have been start to think about

their future especially their life after they pass from Senior High School. It is what happen in the world for the future and what they should do to face it.

Based on the problems above, the research has two questions: What are the learning problems in reading that are faced by the students in reading comprehension? What are the strategies that are used to handle the problems of reading comprehension? Meanwhile, purpose of the study are: To know the learning problems in reading that are faced by the students in reading comprehension. To know the strategies that are used by the students to handle the problems of reading comprehension.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## The Nature of Reading

According to Tarigan as cited in Kurniawan et al. (2014, p. 1), "Reading is a process that is done by the readers to attain the messages or information about are submitted by writer through the words or oral language medias." It means that, reading is a process to understand the messages or information in the written materials or oral language medias. It can be concluded that reading is an activity or a process that is done by the readers to connect the their previous knowledge with the text to understand meaning and information that is conveyed by the writer through the written material.

#### The Kinds of Reading

# **Intensive Reading**

According to Rahmawati & Ummah (2017, p. 132), "The objective of intensive reading is developing the ability to decode meaning or messages by drawing on both syntactical and lexical clues." In this kind, students are usually asked by their teacher to look for reading text from newspapers, magazines, novels, poems, and

websites. They find genre of the text based on their purpose for the text.

#### **Extensive Reading**

According to Rahmawati & Ummah (2017, p. 132), "It should involve reading for pleasure." It differ with the intensive reading because this kind make students choose the reading text that they will read such as novels, poems, newspaper, and the other references. It can make them have habit in reading.

# **Reading Comprehension**

# Definition of Reading Comprehension

According to Brown (2001) as cited in Anggraini (2017, p. 16), "Reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies." In other words, reading comprehension is a subject of right progress and is built by useful reading comprehension strategies. The definitions of the reading comprehension can concluded that reading comprehension is a material of appropriate reading comprehension strategies which are gotten by a complex process in active manner that involves interactions between the previous knowledge and experiences that is owned by the readers with the text to comprehend meaning of the text.

# Purposes for Reading Comprehension

Reading has several purposes that can be gotten by readers. Reading can give many information that are needed. It can carry many experiences because in reading we connect the new experiences that just are gotten by reading with the previous experiences that have been known. Steve Stahl (2002) as cited in Santrock (2014, p. 80) proposes that, "Three main

purposes of reading instruction should help children (1) automatically recognize various words, (2) understand the text, and (3) become motivated and appreciate to read."

# readers make inference to connect the information is telled of the text and the reader's previous knowledge. Some questions are open ended such as why, what if, and how.

# The Process of Reading Comprehension

There are three models of reading comprehension that are bottom-up models, top-down models, interactive models. Bottom-up model the process of reading comprehension which the readers recognize the words from one to another and more concerns in reading the text than comprehend itself. Topdown model is the process of reading comprehension which the readers concern in syntax and semantic in the words to predict meaning of the text. Whereas, interactive model according to Anggraini (2017 p. 15), "The third type combines element of both bottom-up and top-down models assuming 'that a pattern is synthesized based on information provided simultaneously from several knowledge sources."

#### Levels of Reading Comprehension

# **Literal Comprehension**

Literal comprehension is the lowest level of reading comprehension. Nasution (2017, p. 71) proposes that, "Literal comprehension recognizes about names of characters and details of the setting, rote learning and memorization, surface understanding only by using who, what, when and where questions." It also need to retell the information of the text.

# **Inferential Comprehension**

According to Nasution (2017, p. 71), "Inferential comprehension refers to the ability of a reader to take in information that is inferred or implied within a text." It means that, the

# **Critical Comprehension**

Critical comprehension is the highest level of reading comprehension. Nasution (2017, p. 71) indicates that, "At this level, the readers can be tested on the skills of the ability to differentiate between facts and opinions, to recognize persuasive statements, and to judge the accuracy of the information given in the text." Inferential answer and critical-level questions are depend on the reader's background, interest, character which it can determine the readers level in concluding and critical comprehension.

# **Learning Problems of Reading Comprehension**

According to Kasim & Raisha (2017, p. 311), "Second, studies mention several common problems in the EFL reading classroom such as insufficient vocabulary, problems understanding linguistic complexity including lexical and syntactic knowledge, language inaccessibility, poor reading skills and lack of schemata." There are some situations of the problems. The EFL readers usually feel difficulty to differentiate between several meanings of similar words. For example, in differentiating between homonyms or homophones. In this case, the word "left" has more than one meaning.

After that, Nuttal (2000) as cited in Kasim & Raisha (2017, p. 311) claim that, "Complex noun groups, nominalizations, co-ordinating conjunctions, participial phrases, and prepositional phrases tend to be the cause of many problems in reading

comprehension because those elements make texts more complex and harder to understand by EFL students." In addition, the reader do not understand a text because they may lack background knowledge about what they read. There are two learning problems of reading comprehension that are faced which are identified by Kasim & Raisha (2017, p. 312), "Furthermore, reading comprehension problems can be categorized into linguistic and nonlinguistic reading problems."

# **Linguistic Reading Problems**

Linguistic is a study that discuss about language such as sounds, structures, and meanings. However, Kasim & Raisha (2017, p. 312) adds that, "The linguistic reading problems include semantic, lexical, and syntactical reading problems." Semantic contains of vocabulary knowledge especially about tolerable collocations. Lexical means that lack of knowledge about derivations and word classes. Meanwhile, syntactical contains lack of knowledge about acceptable sentence structure and acceptable grammar.

# **Non-Linguistic Reading Problems**

According to Kasim & Raisha (2017, p. 312), "Non-linguistic reading problems refer to any reading problem which is unconnected to the reader"s linguistic abilities." It means that, non-linguistic reading problems are some problems that are faced by the students which they do not relate with linguistic ability. However, Kasim & Raisha (2017, p. 312) add that,

"They include difficulty to connect ideas in the text, difficulty to differentiate the main and supporting points in the text, lack of a good reading strategy, lack of cultural

knowledge, the text length, lack of background knowledge, lack of working memory and inability or never been trained to do speed reading."

# **Reading Comprehension Strategies**

According to Adler (2001) as cited in Sarjan (2017, p. 17), "Reading comprehension strategies conscious plans-sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text." In other words, students use some idea of aware plans to comprehend the text. There are some reading comprehension strategies which according to Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 45) that are pre-reading strategies, while reading strategies, and post reading strategies.

# **Pre-Reading Strategies**

# **Activate Prior Knowledge**

According to Rumelhart (1980) as cited in Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 45), "Basically, to activate prior knowledge means that, to relate and connect previous experiences, topics and concepts recorded in our minds with the current facts in order to understand anything." It means that, activate prior knowledge is an activity to comprehend meaning of the text that relate the prior knowledge are prior occurance, theme, and idea in our thoughts with the flow reality. Besides that, the readers have experience in reading the different kinds of texts will be easier to comprehend the text, it is caused the previous knowledge that have been gotten.

## Visualization

According to Shepard (1967) as cited in Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 46), "It is a strategy that lets a reader to go beyond the mere text." It means that, visualization is the strategy allows the readers get further than the text to comprehend it. It is a story text which contains sketchs design, pictures, and situations that make easier in order to the readers can comprehend the text that they read.

# **Making Predictions**

According to Teplin (2008) as cited in Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 46), "Prediction is the metacognitive exercise of guessing what it is going to happen in a text." It means that, making prediction is a strategy which the readers guess what will occur of the text. In this strategy, the readers usually study about titles, headings, images of the text to can know what the text is about. It is also can relate the previous knowledge and the new knowledge.

# **Scanning**

According to Brown (2001) as cited in Asmawati (2015, p. 71), "Scanning strategy is the strategy for quickly finding specific information in a text while ignoring its broader meaning." It means that, scanning is the strategy to find the specific information quickly of the text. In this strategy, the readers can search names and dates in a passage of the text.

#### While Reading Strategies

# **Making Inferences**

Making inference is an activity to make rational inference in order that obtain a deep understanding of the text and connect with fact information. Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 47) indicate that, "It consists on deducing what the author wants the readers think, judge and conclude, implicitly and explicitly about a text." It make the readers can find meaning and information of the text which it will be saved in their memory.

# Skimming

According to Harmer (2001) as cited in Asmawati (2015, p. 71), "Skimming is a technique in looking for a text to get a quick idea of the gist of a text." Skimming is a strategy to read quickly and find main idea of the text. In the skimming, the readers need to see heading, subheading, image, chart and the others of the text.

# **Literal Questions**

Literal questions are a common matter in the strategy of reading comprehension. According to Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 47), "Questions in which readers can find the answers by reading the text carefully in order to find the right words to give the right answers." It means that, it is done with make some questions about the text and the students have to understand contents of the text to get the answers correctly.

## **Inferential Ouestions**

Inferential questions are one of strategy in while reading strategy. According to Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 47), "In this type of questions it is necessary the readers read very carefully and make use of their previous knowledge to give answers that are not evident in the text." It means that, the inferential questions are the questions about conclusion of the text which the readers involve their prior knowledge to know their comprehension about the text.

# **Post Reading Strategies**

# **Summarizing**

According to Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 48), "Summarize is a strategy that consist of saying or

writing into a few and own cohesive words something that have been written." It means that, summarize is one of the reading comprehension strategies which the students rewrite with their own words or sentences of the text that has been written based on their comprehension. It is also concern with the main idea and main information of the text.

#### Questioning

Questioning is the strategy that is usually applied in reading comprehension. Marzano et al. (2001) as cited in Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 48) state that, "Questions need to be focused on motivating and preparing check and review knowledge, develop critical thinking and involving students in the text they are reading." Ouestioning concentrates with motivation and evaluation of students of the text that is read by them.

# **METHOD**

#### Research Design

This study used a qualitative research method. The research design was chosen by the writer because it was suitable with this research. It was to describe the phenomenon that was the text and statement data and was never analyzed by statistic formulas, but in form of words. Experiential was research design that was applied in this research.

# **Research Setting and Participants**

The qualitative research tended to use technique which it was called as purposeful (purposive) sampling. Ahmadi (2014, p. 86) added that, "The purposeful sampling was intended to determined informants that they represented the number of information

needed in research."In the study, the participants consisted of thirtytwo students of a classroom in SMAN 1 Cibungbulang Bogor. They were one of eleventh grades in 2018/2019 academic year. Then, the researcher chose five students to become informants at the classroom.

#### **Research Instruments**

According to Creswell (2012, p. 220), "On questionnaires, you may ask some questions that are close ended and some that are open ended." A questionnaire was a collection of written consist of the researcher's study questions that would be given to the participants to be answered. The questionnaires were close-ended questions.

According to Creswell (2012, p. 217), "A qualitative interview occurred when researchers asked one or more participants general, openended questions and record their answers." The researcher chose the participants based on they could add more information about what study would be researched and they were ready to were interviewed. There were two ways in collecting the data of interview were note and record.

# The Procedures of Data Analysis

There are some analysis data from the questionnaires: Reading the result of questionnaires that had been worked by the participants. Categorizing the answer of each questions. It was categorized which the question included yes and no. Counting the number of data that was gotten from the questionnaires. Using the N letter abbreviate the number participants, and used percentage (%) to show the number of representation. Summarizing and grouping the strategies and the learning problems of reading comprehension. The reading strategies and learning problems were classified based on the materials.

Presenting the result of data by chart which would be gotten percentage.

There are some analysis data from the interview Reviewing the note of hand written and completing by the researcher's memory. Transcribing the data that was gotten from the result of interviews into the text. Summarizing and classifying the data based on the

materials of research. Answering the strategies and the learning problems of English reading comprehension based on the result of interviews that was gotten.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The highest linguistic reading problem is lack of knowledge about lexical relationship in the meanings of word which is 33%. Whereas, the lowest linguistic reading problem is lack of punctuation knowledge in English grammar which is 4%. Meanwhile, the highest non-linguistic reading problem is lack of working memory which is 26%. The lowest nonlinguistic reading problems are difficulty to differentiate the main and supporting points and lack of background knowledge which are 16%.

Then, the highest pre-reading strategy is activate prior knowledge which is 39%. Rumelhart (1980) as cited in Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 45) state that, "Basically, to activate prior knowledge means that, to relate and connect previous experiences, topics and concepts recorded in our minds with the current facts in order to

understand anything." Whereas, the lowest pre-reading strategy is *scanning* which is 6%. Meanwhile, the highest while reading strategy is *inferential questions* which are 35%. However, Hernandez & Solano (2017, p. 47) add that, "In this type of questions it is necessary the readers read very carefully and make use of their previous knowledge to give

answers that are not evident in the text."

The lowest while reading strategy is *skimming* which is 31%. Whereas, the data shows that post reading strategies of English reading comprehension that are faced by students which is summarizing is faced by fourthteen students.

# **CONCLUSION**

This research can be concluded that there are some the learning problems in reading that are faced by the students in reading comprehension. The learning problems that they face which are identified by Kasim & Raisha (2017, p. 312) are linguistic reading problems and non-linguistic reading problems of English reading comprehension. There are linguistic reading problems of English reading comprehension that are faced by the students are lack of knowledge about lexical relationship in the meanings of word (33%), lack of knowledge about derivations in the word (29%), lack of knowledge about word classes (5%), lack of knowledge about sentence structure (29%), and lack of punctuation knowledge in

English grammar (4%). Meanwhile, there are five non-linguistic reading problems of English reading comprehension that are faced by the students are difficulty to connect ideas (19%), difficulty to differentiate the main and supporting points (16%), the text length (23%), lack of background knowledge (16%), and lack of working memory (26%).

Thus, there are the strategies that are used to handle the problems of reading comprehension. The strategies that they use to handle the problems of English reading comprehension. which are identified by Kasim & Raisha (2017, p. 312) are pre-reading, while reading, and post reading strategies. First, there are three pre-reading strategies of English reading comprehension that are faced by the

students are activate prior knowledge (39%), visualization (19%), making predictions (36%), and scanning (6%). Second, there are three while reading strategies of English reading comprehension that are faced by the students are skimming (31%), literal questions (34%), and inferential questions (35%). Third, there is a post reading strategy of English reading comprehension that are faced by the students is summarizing is faced by fourthteen students. Thus, the highest learning problem in reading is 25% which is lack of working memory. Meanwhile, the highest strategy in reading is 39% which is activate prior knowledge and inferential questions.

Based on the result of this research, there are some suggestions that can be proposed. For the students, they should identify or know their own learning problems and strategies of reading comprehension to the future in order that can handle problems and use the strategies of English reading comprehension. Whereas, for the teachers, they need to teach the strategies of English reading comprehension. Beside that, for the next researcher, they can give knowledge about the learning problems and the strategies of English reading comprehension from the statements that are anwered by the students through the questionnaires.

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