

# THE READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES USED BY THE STUDENTS OF SMAN 3 PEMATANGSIANTAR

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis entitled “The Reading Comprehension Strategies Used by Students of SMA N 3 Pematangsiantar” is designed to investigate the strategies implemented by the students in comprehending the reading texts and the underlying reasons why the students implemented the strategies as they did. Qualitative research design was conducted as the research method in this study. The subjects of this study were 6 students of grade eleventh at SMA N 3 Pematangsiantar in academic year 2017/2018. Three of the students were identified as the students who have high English ability, while the other three students have low English ability. The data were collected by in-depth interview. The data were analyzed by using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) data analysis technique. The findings of the study showed that the students implemented 4 strategies in comprehending the reading text, they are (1) Experience, (2) Summarize, (3) Re-read, and (4) Look up the words you don’t know. The underlying reasons of the strategies in comprehending the reading text are different for each strategy. The underlying reason for experience strategy is the reading comprehension facilitation, summary strategy is indicator of comprehension, re-read is the cognitive process, and look up the word you do not know is the lack of vocabulary mastery.

**Key words:** *Reading, Reading comprehension, strategies*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### *Background of the Study*

Language is a tool of communication. Language is a communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of arbitrary signals such as sounds, gestures or written symbols. English is an international language. English is not only as a medium of communication, but also as medium of transforming the knowledge and technology.

Learning is a complex experience process to get the knowledge. When learning, people use the language to exchange information. It can be ideas, feelings, and thought. Exchanging the information are not only using their language but also sometimes using another language. People must study another language to reach their goal. English has been studied by many people in the world. English print in everywhere. Everybody can see the pamphlets, magazines, bills, school materials, advertisements, work instruction, and mails are printed in English that come to their way. That is show how important English nowadays.

In learning English, there are four domains of language skills that must be simultaneously achieved by the students namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Brown (2001: 232) states that speaking and writing are referred to the productive skills while reading and listening have many parallels and are referred to receptive skills. In this case, the sounds and the messages are produce when speaking and writing are being done. It is different from reading and listening. Through reading and listening, the one gets some information or messages from certain source. Lems et al (2010: 3) assume that reading and writing are not inevitable processes even in a first language. It stands to reason that considerable

energy and effort are needed to learn to do them in a new language. Reading is one of the most important tools to gain knowledge. Reading is the window of knowledge. By reading everyone will know everything in the world. Reading can increase our knowledge so we will not be out of date because we will know the actual news which happens in this world. Reading also will open our sights so that we can do the best in our life. To comprehending the reading text, students have their own strategies. The strategies helped them to understand the reading text easily.

Reading comprehension strategy is a cognitive or behavioral action that is enacted under particular contextual conditions, with the goal of improving some aspect of comprehension (McNamara, 2007: 6). Students' cognitive action will affect their comprehension in comprehending the reading text.

Based on the researcher's experience during her teaching Field Practice (PPL program), she found the various of students' strategies in comprehending the reading text. Each student has their own strategies. Some students used make inference strategy, some used re-read, some used determine importance and so on. Basically, students have the reasons why they use the strategy they do. The reason why they use such inference strategy is because the content of the text is familiar to their daily activity. Some of them said that they need to re-read the text because they could not understand when they read at once. Some also used determine importance strategy because they did not need to translate each word because it could waste their time, so they decided to determine the importance of the text.

This condition is affected by some factors. It can be seen from the students itself and/or from the reading text that they read. Factors which come from the students side is called reader factors and factors which come from the text or out of students side is called text factors. In learning English, the reader factors can be seen from the age, motivation and attitude, personality and intelligence. Meanwhile, text factor can see from the reading text such as the lexical reading, etc. Based on the explanation above, the researcher conducts the research that entitled 'the reading comprehension strategies used by students of SMAN 3 Pematangsiantar.'

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A Significant amount of research conducted on effective reading comprehension strategies has focused on the cognitive operations readers employ when constructing meaning in transactions with texts (Dole, Du" y, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991). This is focus on the cognitive operations readers draw upon can certainly be considered an expanded perspective compared to the behavioral research on comprehension instruction conducted previously (Fitzgerald, Robinson, Farone, Hittleman, & Unruh, 1990). However, a primary focus on the cognitive aspects of reading comprehension does not adequately address the social and cultural aspects of reading.

Reading comprehension strategy is a cognitive or behavioral action that is enacted under particular contextual conditions, with the goal of improving some aspect of comprehension (McNamara, 2007: 6). So, the cognitive activities in

comprehending texts are different from a text to another. The differences are affected by contextual conditions of text. The strategies in comprehending the reading texts was elaborated by three perspectives; Mary & Nancy (2016), Moore (2000), and Duke and Pearson (2001).

**Mary & Nancy (2016)** presented the FIVES strategies in comprehending the reading text. *Fact strategy* means that readers read to succeed, and gathering key information (facts) from a text is the first step. A reader in comprehend a text, start the cognitive action by identify the fact. The Fact is focused on assimilating key information presented in the text read and ensuring that readers do not dismiss ideas simply because they contradict their prior knowledge; investigating which ideas, both old and new, are valid is essential. *Inferences strategy* means that readers in comprehending a text start the cognitive action by combining the nature of background knowledge and personal experience which related to the topic of the text. *Vocabulary strategy* starts the cognitive action by clarifying the message, lessening the potential for misunderstanding. Some words may be new or unfamiliar in the context in which students found. It's incumbent on the reader to fully understand words, terminology, and expressions as used in the context of the text read. *Experience strategy* starts the cognitive action by connecting the background knowledge and experience. Readers elaborate, expand, evaluate, and make connections based on experiences (from background knowledge and life). *Summarize strategy* starts the cognitive action by demonstrating what they remember about the main idea, details, and central theme of a text.

**Moore (2000)** demonstrated 6 (six) reading comprehension strategies; *Determine importance strategy* starts the cognitive action by identifying essential ideas and information in comprehending the reading text. *Ask question strategy* starts the cognitive action by interrogating texts for a variety of purposes, such as checking one's understanding, querying the author about his or her writing, and discerning relationships among ideas and information within a text. *Make connections strategy* starts the cognitive action by connecting what is known to enrich authors' meaning; taking what has been learned from one's own life experiences, other texts, and cultural and global matters to deepen understandings of what the author presents. *Synthesize strategy* starts the cognitive action by putting together ideas from multiple sources; deciding how ideas go together in a way that is new; figuring out how what one is reading and learning fits together in a way not thought of before. *Visualize strategy* starts the cognitive action by forming sensory and emotional images of textual contents, especially visual images.

**Duke and Pearson (2001)** presented Fix-Up reading comprehension strategies; *Re-read strategy* starts the cognitive action by read the text more than once to help readers to clarify their thoughts or go back and re-read something that was misread to find the mistake and fix it. *Read out loud strategy* starts the cognitive action by producing sounds while reading the text. Readers can listen on a higher language level than they can read, so read out loud makes complex ideas more accessible and exposes readers to vocabulary and language patterns that are not part of everyday speech. *Use context clues strategy* starts the cognitive action by figuring out the decode words or figuring out a words meaning. As readers

advance, context clues are typically used to figure out how to read words with more than one pronunciation (such as tear or live) or words with more than one meaning (such as run). ***Look up a word you do not know strategy*** starts the cognitive action by researching on the computer, tablets, or phones and dictionary the meaning of words. Most readers do not even know how to use a dictionary. They might be able to look up the word they need, so they can find the definition quickly. ***Slow down strategy*** starts the cognitive action by read the texts slowly. They want to zoom right past so that no one can draw attention to their mistake. They may also want to just get the reading assignment “done”. ***Think about the author’s purpose strategy*** starts the cognitive action by finding out information about a subject, he may discover quickly that the author’s purpose isn’t to share all the arguments, but to persuade the reader only to one side. The author’s purpose for writing dictates the structure they use, the vocabulary they use, and the text features they use.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted by descriptive qualitative research. Patton and Cochran (2002) stated that qualitative research is characterized by its aims and its methods which are generate words, rather than numbers, as for its data analysis. Qualitative research seek to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the total picture rather breaking it down into variables. Qualitative research is focused on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in the study. The subject of this study was the students of eleventh

grade of SMAN 3 Pematangsiantar. The researcher focused on 6 students. Three students were the students who had high English ability, while three others had low English ability. In order to collect the data for the study, In-depth interview was conducted as technique of collecting data. In-depth interview also was conducted as instrument. In-depth interview was one of the most common qualitative instruments. In-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic (Mack, Macqueen, Guest and Namey, 2005: 29). The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to "evaluate" as the term is normally used (Seidman, 2006). For collecting the data, the researcher used some texts to know what strategy they used in comprehending those texts. The data was collected based on the following steps; The researcher gave some tests to the students; The students in 30 minutes have to finish the test; After 30 minutes, the researcher collected the tests; The researcher checked test result; Afetr checked the test result, the researcher chose 6 students. Three of them were students who had high english ability and others were students who had low english ability; Then, the researcher gave two texts to the students. The given texts were written based on the familiar and unfamiliar topics; The students had 60 minutes to comprehending the text with their own strategies; Then the students were interviewed by researcher to found out the students' strategy in comprehending the reading texts and to know the reason why they used the strategy as they do.



## RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

In this study the data were collected in qualitative research data. The qualitative findings were obtained In-depth interview.

The findings showed there were 4 reading comprehension strategies used by students, they were (1) Experience strategy, there were two students applied this aspect strategy, they are student one and three. Experience they had helped them to comprehend the reading text easily. They could understand the text meant because they ever experienced as the content of the text. (2) Summarize strategy, three of students applied this in comprehending the reading texts. (3) Re-read, there were five students applied this in comprehending the texts given, they are student two till to student six. They said that it would be easy if they re-read the texts given because it helped them to understand more about the context of each text, and (4) Look up a word you do not know, all the six students applied this aspect in comprehending all the reading texts. They needed to know directly and check what the difficult words meaning they found so that they would not confuse in getting the real information from the texts.

Each of the strategies used by the students was described as follow:

#### **Experience strategy**

##### **Data 1**

R<sub>29</sub> : Apa lagi yang kamu lakukan? (*What are you doing next?*)

S<sub>30</sub> : Mencari fakta miss. (*Finding the fact*)

R<sub>31</sub> : Fakta? Apa arti fakta yang kamu maksud kan? (*Fact? What do you mean by fact?*)

- S<sub>32</sub> : Maksudnya miss, ada hal-hal yang disebutkan di teks yang di dalam kehidupan sehari-hari juga ada miss. (*It means that there is noted in the text and in daily activities*)
- R<sub>33</sub> :Misalnya? (For example?)
- S<sub>34</sub> :Misalnyakan miss, seperti...di paragraf satu dikatakan banyak sekali orang tidak suka makan sayur karna rasanya pahit dan aku juga merasakan itu gitu miss. Padahalkan sayur dapat mencegah penyakit, mengontrol berat badan dan nutrisi pokok. (*For example, in the first paragraph said that so many people do not like vegetable because of the bitter taste and I agree with them whereas the benefits of vegetables are disease prevention, weight control, and nutritional needs*).
- R<sub>39</sub> : Jadi apa alasanmu mencari fakta di dalam teks ini? (*So, why are you finding the facts*).
- R<sub>40</sub> : Mmm gini miss, aku itukan miss kalo belajar suka kali mengaitkannya dalam kehidupan sehari-hari miss, a... apalagi teks ini bercerita tentang sayur yang setiap hari kita makan. Jadi pas aku membacanya miss mmm aku membayangkan dan mengingat pengalamanku. Jadi dengan itu aku lebih mudah memahami teks ini. (*I like to associate what I read with my daily activities, a ... moreover this text tells about vegetables that we eat every day. So when I read the text, I imagine and remember my experience. So with that I have understood the text easily*).
- R<sub>41</sub> : Tadi kamu bilang membayangkan dan mengingat pengalaman. Jadi, apa yang benar-benar sudah kamu alami dan itu ada di dalam teks ini? (*You said that you imagined and remembered your experience. What have you experienced related to the text?*)
- S<sub>42</sub> : Mmm... itu miss a.... tentang berat badan. Akukan orang yang nggak terlalu suka makan sayur miss makannya badan ku gemuk hehehe. (*It was about weight. I did not like vegetable. That is why my body is fat*).

[SU/KS/P1-2/L62-89]

As seen in data above, the students applied this strategy in text 1 given. As the data above, we can get to know that the student 1 used Experience strategy to analyze the meaning of the text. The student 1 said that in that time she got the reading text, she directly remembered her past experience and she got the meaning easily because she ever experienced the story as the text had. That's why she didn't get any difficulties in analyzing the whole texts.

## **Summarize strategy**

### **Data 2**

- R<sub>53</sub> : Kenapa kamu menterjemahkan teks ini secara keseluruhan? (*Why did you translate this text entirety?*)
- S<sub>54</sub> : Mmmm apa miss a... supaya a... supaya saya bisa membuat rangkumannya gitu miss. karna kan miss ini teksnya agak panjang jadi biar lebih mudah memahaminya harus saya rangkum miss. (*So that, I able to make a summary because this text is long so it will be easy to understand if I have to summarize*).
- R<sub>55</sub> : memang apa yang kamu pahami tentang rangkuman? (*What is your understanding about summary?*)
- S<sub>56</sub> : Rangkuman itu miss a... hal-hal yang penting gitu miss miss. Kayak a... apa namanya? A... gagasan utamanya gitu miss. (*Summary consists of important points such as main idea*).

[SU/N/P7-8/L203-209]

In the data above stated, it is shown that student 3 could understand the whole text 2 because she did translating the text into her target language so that she could make summarize of the reading text. Summarizing can help the student 3 to make the meaning of information and store it in her long term memory efficiently. Through summarizing, she must able to relate new ideas with old ones and put in a unique idea.

## **Re-read strategy**

### **Data 3**

- R<sub>21</sub> : Mmm oke. Ada nggak cara lain yang kamu gunakan? (*Do you have any way to understand this text?*)
- S<sub>22</sub> : Mmm apa ya miss? itu aja sih miss, selebihnya hanya membaca berulang-ulanglah miss. (*Just read the text over and over*).
- R<sub>23</sub> : Kenapa kamu membacanya berulang-ulang? (*Why do you do that?*)

S<sub>24</sub> : Karnakan miss, kalo misalnya hanya sekali baca aku belum ngerti gitu miss. Jadi pas aku bacakan miss dan ada kata yang gak aku tahu, aku ulang lagi sampai bisa menyatu dengan kata lain gitu miss. (*Because I could not understand if I read the text once. So, I have to read again and again until a sentence has connection to another sentences*).

[SU/P/P3-4/L75-81]

This data shows that the student 2 applied “re-read” strategy aspect in comprehending the text given. She said that it was just because the texts were too long and there were so many kinds of biological words and if she got once read, she was not sure that she could get its meaning for the whole texts.

### **Look up the word you do not know strategy**

#### **Data 4**

R<sub>9</sub> : Oke. Di dalam proses kamu memahami teks ini, a... ada nggak langkah-langkah yang kamu lakukan? (*Okay, in the process of understanding the text, do you have any steps?*)

S<sub>10</sub> : Ada miss. (*Yes, miss*).

R<sub>11</sub> : Apa itu? (*What is that*).

S<sub>12</sub> : A... pertama saya mentranslet miss. (*First, I am translating*)

R<sub>13</sub> : Apa yang kamu translet? (*What do you translate?*)

S<sub>14</sub> : Kata-kata yang sulit miss. (*The difficult words*).

R<sub>15</sub> : Bagaimana cara kamu mentransletnya? (*How do you do that?*)

S<sub>16</sub> : Membuka kamus miss kadang dari handphone juga miss. (*I am using dictionary and sometimes by phone dictionary*).

R<sub>17</sub> : Misalnya? (*What are they?*)

S<sub>18</sub> : Kata-kata sulitnya itu kayak a... prevention, pressure, elevated, mmm against, fiber, veggies, dan burst, eh satu lagi miss hesitate. (*Like prevention, pressure, elevated, against, fiber, veggies, burst, and hesitate*).

[SU/KS/P2-3/L33-44]

As the data shows that the student 2 used “look up word” strategy aspect in comprehending the texts. It’s because she needed to look for the words that she didn’t know first and after that she translated the difficult words. By looking up the words that she didn’t know she could get to understand the meaning from each sentences and she could draw the context. Finally, she could be easy to comprehend the texts given.

The findings also showed the underlying reasons of each strategies used by the students in reading comprehension and it was different for each strategy as discussed as follows.

### **The Reason for Experience Strategy**

The reason for using the strategy based on the data analysis is the reading comprehension facilitation. The reading comprehension facilitation is the reading text itself. The information from the text make the student remembered her experience directly. It is about vegetable. In the text, vegetable contains of vitamin and mineral. The text also gives information about vegetable can prevent disease which is very important for human being to consume it. That information leads the student to connect her past experience where she was ever judged lack of vitamin. Her experience about ate less vegetable made her lack of vitamin. Therefor it causes her body has weak immune system. That is why she ever got faint. In the process of connecting text information toward vegetable and her experience, it is clearly seen that the text facilitated her to comprehend the reading text.

### **The Reason for Summarize Strategy**

The reason for using this strategy is as indicator of comprehension. The indicator of comprehension can be shown in his retelling about the important part of the text. The student retells to develop and improve his deep comprehension without looking back to the text. The detail information refers to main ideas that can be identified to construct the meaning of the text. That is why the students collected the important point as much as possible to complete his comprehension. All the important point collected is organized in a meaning way, then it can be organized in good summary. It means that retelling as indicator of comprehension made the student comprehend the reading text easily.

### **The Reason for Re-read Strategy**

The reason for using the strategy is cognitive process. The student re-read the text more than once because of cognitive process. This process deals with memory which needs extra time. The students wasted much time when he tried to understand the text. The process of memorizing needs the time to get the text meaning. Human's memory is functioned to retain information offer a period of time. This memory related to how much information can be remembered in mind and this affected the understanding. The student could not memorize the information because of the long text. Long text made the student was difficult to memorize all the information. Memory also related to receiving new information. The new information means biology terms. When the student found biology terms in the text, it is very difficult for him to keep them in his memory and need more time to understand,

### **The Reason for Look up the word you do not know Strategy**

The reason for using this strategy is that lack of vocabulary mastery. Look up the word you do not know strategy is applied by using dictionary. The student used dictionary because she did not master some vocabularies related to the topic. The lack of vocabulary mastery showed when the student claimed that the words are difficult. It proved that student did not have many vocabularies list. These difficulties made student not easy to understand the text. That is why, student must effort to use dictionary for a helping.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### *Conclusion*

Based on research findings, it is concluded that:

There are only 4 strategies out of 16 strategies that students of SMA N 3 Pematangsiantar used in reading comprehension strategies, they are (1) Experience, (2) Summarize, (3) Re-read, (4) Look up the words you do not know.

The underlying reasons for strategy applied by students are different for each strategy. The underlying reason for (1) Experience strategy is as the reading comprehension facilitation, (2) Summary is indicator of comprehension, (3) Re-read is the cognitive process , (4) Look up the word you don't know is the lack of vocabulary mastery.

### *Suggestions*

From the conclusion above, in this study would like to give some suggestion fro the students, the teachers and the researchers:

1. It is suggested that the teacher can develop their knowledge about reading comprehension strategy to make their students more active and creative in reading process.
2. The students can apply the reading comprehension strategies to help them getting the message from the text easily.
3. The writer thinks, this thesis is not complete enough. The writer hopes that there will be further studies analyzing the students' reading comprehension strategies because this study found only 4 strategies out of 16 strategies that students used in comprehending the reading text.



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