

SOLVING THE DIFFICULTIES OF READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss some theories and previous study on metacognitive reading strategies to solve the difficulties in reading comprehension. Reading becomes a critical skill because through reading students can improve other language skills. In fact, many students feel difficult in understanding written text. Student's problems in reading comprehension is often caused by lack of awareness of reading strategy. Therefore, it is important to determine which effective reading strategy that can be used to comprehend the reading text. According to Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), strategy is classified into six parts; Cognitive, Metacognitive, Compensation, Affective, Memory and Social strategies. The strategy considered effective in reading is metacognitive. Therefore, this paper will generally discuss the implementation of metacognitive strategies in reading. Specifically it will elucidates definition of reading comprehension, types of reading, problems in reading, definition of learning strategy, types of reading strategies and metacognitive strategies. Finally, it explains how to teach metacognitive reading strategy. Some previous researchers have found that implementing metacognitive strategies play a significant role in improving student's reading comprehension. Having completed literature review, this paper finally presents conclusion and pedagogical implication as the closing remarks.

Keywords- reading skill, reading strategy, Metacognitive Strategy.

Introduction

Reading is regarded as one of critical skills in English as foreign language (EFL) learning. Having solid reading skill is very necessary for EFL students to improve other language skills. Usman et.al.(2017) argue that with good reading skills, another skill such as writing and speaking skill can also be increased. Not only that, another crucial component in languages for instance grammar and vocabulary can also be developed. In fact, reading comprehension becomes complicated because according to Jayanti (2016) there are several factors that can cause difficulties in reading and strategy that used by the students is one of the major factors. This research shows that the strategies used greatly influence the students' reading comprehension. In fact, not many students apply the correct strategy when reading a text. Therefore, teacher's awareness in providing the correct reading strategy for students is very important. Many researchers have found that metacognitive is considered to be one of strategies to solve this problem. It is in line with Mijuskovic and Simovic (2015), who point out that one effective way to approach reading and

understand a text is to use metacognitive strategy. Through this paper, it is expected that students can easily improve reading comprehension through the metacognitive reading strategy.

Definition of Reading

There are several definitions of reading that are presented by the experts. According to Grabe and Stoller (as cited in Talebi, 2015) who claimed that reading is the ability to read from readers to get the meaning of printed text and interpret the information in a text correctly. Jayanti (2016) states that reading is an activity that related to complex active mentality with the aim of knowing the meaning of written text. Another definition about reading also given by Celik (2018) who claimed that reading is a way of understanding words and their spelling, and relationship between those words and another words in a sentence. From the expert's explanation above, it can be concluded that reading is a complex activity with the aim of getting information that is in accordance with text being read.

Definition of Reading Comprehension

Some experts have provided some definitions of reading comprehension. According to Kasim and Raisha (2017) reading comprehension is understanding text which involves the interaction between the text and the background knowledge of the reader to get information from the text. Alowalid, Mujiyanto and Bharati (2018) states that reading comprehension is a capability to comprehend the information of the text and interpret the meaning of the text correctly. Fitriani (as cited in Kasim and Raisha 2017) proposes that "reading comprehension is also simply known as a kind of thinking which requires the reader to make inferences from the text. Without using her thinking process, the reader may not attain any or all the information and may not wholly understand the text" (p.311). From the definition, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is an activity carried out to obtain information in a text so that the content of text can be understood properly.

Types of Reading

According to Celik (2018) reading has an important role in the learning process of the target language and naturally it can be divided into two types. They are extensive and intensive reading.

1. Extensive reading

Extensive reading has been defined in a number of different ways by various experts. Do (2017) claims that extensive reading is a reading activity with the aim of understanding text in general rather than specifically. According to Bamford (as cited in Chien and Yu, 2015) “extensive reading refers to reading longer passages with content written with simpler language and the purpose of reading is to understand overall meaning of a text rather than study of linguistics component (p.4)”. It means extensive reading is understanding the text as a whole and choosing the text that are in accordance with the abilities which students have. In intensive reading, the reader is not required to read texts that they do not like. Readers tend to be allowed to choose the type of reading they like. This is a distinct advantage for students because the abilities of each student are different. Therefore, the teacher cannot emphasize students to read based on what the teacher wanted or according to the curriculum. It is worried that students cannot understand the text well. It means that by applying Extensive Reading, it is expected that students can further increase their reading comprehension skills.

2. Intensive reading

According to Long and Richards (as cited in Thanh Do (2017) “intensive reading is a detailed in-class analysis, led by the teacher, of vocabulary and grammar points, in a short passage” (p.55). Detailed studies of vocabulary, grammar and accuracy or smoothness of reading are the focus of intensive reading (Mart, 2015). Meanwhile Celik (2015) states that intensive reading is reading with the guidance of teachers for the progress of students' language. In other words, intensive reading is the reading activities provided by the teacher to understand the reading in detail with the aim of improving reading skills. In intensive reading students are not allowed to choose the reading they like, they are given text according to what the teacher has prepared. It is very difficult because the ability to understand the text is different for each student.

From the definition above, the writer concludes that extensive reading and intensive reading are two types of reading which have different ways. Extensive

reading emphasizes comprehension in general and its reading depends on the desire and ability of the reader, while intensive reading emphasizes comprehension in specific and the type of reading depends on the material provided by the teacher.

Problems in reading

Based on some researchers, there are several problems that hinder the students in the process of reading. Kasim and Raisha (2017) propose that one of problems in reading is lack of background knowledge so students cannot understand what they are reading. Background knowledge plays an important role in understanding reading passage. Having good background knowledge, students will find it easier to understand and obtain information from the text. Students can connect between text and background knowledge they have. Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2015) claim that lack of vocabulary affect reading comprehension of the students. The limited vocabulary that students have makes them not understand the meaning of words, so they find it difficult to understand the whole text.

Besides having good background knowledge and mastering vocabulary, there are several others problems in reading. Other problems which mentioned by Suryanto (2018) are classified into three main problems. The problems are cultural-based issues, English teaching and learning problems, and social contextual obstacles. The problems in cultural based issue in reading comprehension are spoken and written culture and common customs of students-teacher relation. These two problems are relate to student understanding in reading. The habit of students reading in Indonesian makes them understand a text in Indonesian. While reading in English students must really understand the text in the language itself. Besides, the example given by a teacher sometimes does not relate to what is being discussed. While the teacher explains some of them do not know how to teach with fun and can make students easily understand the lesson. The last problem is the time given to understand a reading text. To understand the text, the students relatively need long time. Therefore, time constraints make students unable to comprehend the reading perfectly. The last problem in reading is social-cultural obstacles. There are several social-contextual problems. Firstly, in Indonesian context English is as a foreign language. This makes students not accustomed to understand English-language text. The second, there is little chance

that students have in learning English. Students only learn English in class and during the reading class.

Several factors in reading that make students difficult to comprehend the text are mentioned by Jayanti (2016) “Those factors are vocabulary knowledge, syntactic and semantic analysis of the text, making inferential meaning, strategy use and students’ feeling during reading” (p.300). Vocabulary knowledge becomes the first factor. Lack of vocabulary knowledge makes students difficult to understand a text. Students often depend on the dictionary when they are finding words that are difficult to understand. Syntactic and semantic analysis of the text becomes the next factors. Students often misunderstand the function of a word so they misinterpret the meaning of a sentence in a text. The use of strategy will be the last and the focus of the problems that are presented. While reading activity given by the teacher, students tend to read all the readings in the text – rarely read using strategy. This makes students waste a long time in understanding a reading and this makes them unable to understand the text properly. From these problems, knowing and understanding various strategies that can be used to solve the problem is crucial.

Reading Strategy

According to Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), Oxford (as cited in Kara, 2015) strategy is classified into two parts; direct and indirect strategy. Memory, Cognitive and Compensation strategies are included in direct strategy while metacognitive, affective and social strategies are indirect strategies. The first strategy is memory strategy. Memory strategy is a strategy that students use to store and receive information. The next strategy is cognitive strategy. Cognitive strategy is a method that used to know the meaning of a text by utilizing existing resources such as a dictionary. The last strategy is compensation strategy. Compensation strategy is a strategy that helps students to understand a reading through the background knowledge that the students have. Besides, Metacognitive strategy is a strategy carried out in controlling the speed of reading. In addition, affective strategy is strategy that relates to students’ self-confidence. While social strategy is a strategy related to the social environment such as asking for correction or feedback.

Metacognitive Strategy

From the reading strategies above metacognitive strategy is considered the most effective one. It is in line with Mijuskovic and Simovic (2015), who point out that one effective way to approach reading and understand a text is to use metacognitive strategy. Iftikhar (2014) claimed that metacognitive strategy began to be taught to students so students could gain broad insight during the 80s and 90s. This strategy could solve the student problem in understanding the text.

Definition of metacognitive strategy

Several researchers show that metacognitive strategy is the important role in comprehending the text. Some definitions about metacognitive strategy will be given below by some experts. Djudin (2017) states that metacognitive strategy is a way of thinking to manage the mind and know what is known and unknown. Zarra et.al. (As cited in Sari, 2016) states that metacognitive strategy is strategy that students use to monitor their use of cognitive strategy. Beside, Channa et.al. (2015) argue that metacognitive is a way of understanding a lesson using several different strategies through the reader's awareness. Iftikhar (2014) also gives the definition about metacognitive strategy which is the process of thinking in learning that involves control of the skills of higher-order thinking.

From these definitions, it can be concluded that metacognitive strategy is a strategy used to find out unknown information through reading and control awareness of high-level skills. By using metacognitive strategies, readers are expected to be more flexible in choosing strategies that can be used in understanding a text. Metacognitive is also proven to be a problem solving that exists in reading comprehension because through metacognitive strategy students can be more flexible in using their thinking. It is important for students to know how to implement metacognitive strategies to improve reading comprehension.

The types of Metacognitive strategy and its implementation

There are some steps the previous researchers give to implement metacognitive strategies. According to Zhang and Sheepo (as cited in Usman et al, 2017) there are three main categories of metacognitive strategy. They are planning, monitoring and evaluating. These steps will be discussed below.

Planning

According to Palinscar and Brown (as cited in Channa et.al. 2015) students need good strategy planning when they are learning. Planning is part of pre-reading activity in metacognitive strategy. Before reading text as a whole, students

will think about what topics will be discussed in the text they will read. Students can guess by connecting pictures and reading the titles or subtitle to understand the whole of the text. The role of the teacher is very important in this matter. The teacher can guide students in guessing the contents of the text. In this pre reading, students are expected to guess the text correctly so that it will make them easier to understand to move on the next step.

Monitoring

Anderson and Therriault (as cited in Usman et.al. 2017) claim that students need to monitor their reading comprehension while reading correctly and precisely because this can affect reading comprehension as a whole. In this monitoring process, students must really monitor the extent of their understanding of the text which they read. In this step, students can monitor reading comprehension by combining understanding of one paragraph in a text to the next paragraphs. Students also can mark the phrase or word which having a relationship in each paragraph.

Evaluating

Evaluating becomes last step of metacognitive strategy in comprehending the text. The evaluation process means the activity of assessing what has been done in learning. In the evaluation process there are many things that can be obtained as we know the extent to which we have gained understanding. In this step, teachers can ask the students to make paraphrase of a text then teacher will give feedback. Through this activity, teacher or student can find out how far the students comprehend the text. By carrying out the evaluation process, it is expected that students can find out what errors or shortcomings are made during the reading process.

Previous Study

The following is the discussion about some previous studies related to the implementation of metacognitive strategy in reading comprehension.

1. The first study is conducted by Usman, Aziz and Absida (2017) is aimed to discovering metacognitive strategy's effect in reading comprehension. The research entitled "*Improving reading comprehension using Metacognitive strategy*" was carried out in 2017. The researchers used experimental group and control group method with total seventy five students to find the effect of metacognitive strategy. The data is collected

from the test and questionnaire. The result from this research is reading comprehension of students' experience a significant increase when implemented this strategy.

2. The next study entitled "*Metacognitive strategy as points in teaching reading comprehension*". is carried out by Zhussupova and Kazbekova. The participants of this research are sixty random students. The study is conducted in 2016 and use control group and experimental group as a method. The data is collected from pre-investigation test, implementation task and post investigation task. Based on the result, students who applied metacognitive strategy experienced an increase in reading comprehension compared to students who did not apply that strategy.

Conclusion

The final conclusion of this review is the use of metacognitive strategy has an important role in the learning process, especially in the reading process. Through metacognitive strategy, the students become aware to use several strategies when they read a text. A number of strategies can be used by the teachers to enhance students' metacognitive skills, such as planning, monitoring and evaluating. In addition, metacognitive strategy can improve thinking to solve the problem in reading comprehension. Based on previous studies, it is easy to understand that the application of metacognitive strategy strongly can improve the students' reading comprehension. To implement this strategy, it needs to have collaboration between teachers and students. Students can improve their reading comprehension if the teacher really appropriately applies this strategy to students.

Suggestion

From the result of this review about metacognitive strategy, to help students improve their reading comprehension, the teachers need to implement metacognitive strategy intensively in class. This strategy gives a better atmosphere in class because the teacher will give feedback to students on their task in comprehending the text.

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