

Investigating Undergraduate Students' Strategies in Reading Comprehension
(A Case Study of the English Education Department at Wiralodra University)

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Abstract

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As one of the language skills, students tend to have difficulties in reading as one of the language skills, especially difficulties in comprehending the text. Because of that, this research aims to investigate undergraduate students' strategies in reading comprehension, which focus on global reading strategy (GLOB), problem-solving strategy (PROB), and support reading strategy (SUP) adapted from Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002). This research was conducted using qualitative research with a case study design. A close-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used as the instruments of this research to gain information about students' reading strategies in reading comprehension, especially in academic reading subjects. Twenty students from the fourth semester of one University in Indramayu participated in this research. The finding shows that the students use PROB with 80,62%, followed by GLOB at 77,38%, and SUP at 73,11%. Students stated in the interview that PROB was helpful and made them focus on understanding information from difficult text. In GLOB, the students usually guess the text content and check whether their guessing related to the text is correct or incorrect. While in SUP, the students circled the text and went back and forth to find the relationship among ideas in the text. Eventually, the findings can be useful for those who wish to conduct a study on students' reading strategies. The further researcher can provide tests to determine the student's ability in reading comprehension to obtain the complete data.

Kata Kunci:

Mahasiswa sarjana, Strategi Membaca, Pemahaman Membaca

Abstrak

Membaca merupakan salah satu keterampilan berbahasa, dan siswa cenderung mengalami kesulitan dalam membaca, khususnya dalam memahami teks. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mencari tahu strategi mahasiswa sarjana dalam pemahaman membaca, yang fokus pada Global reading strategy (GLOB), problem-solving strategy (PROB), dan support reading strategy (SUP) yang diadaptasi dari Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002) Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan

menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Kuesioner tertutup dan wawancara semi-terstruktur digunakan sebagai instrumen penelitian ini untuk mendapatkan informasi tentang strategi membaca mahasiswa dalam pemahaman membaca, khususnya dalam mata pelajaran academic reading. Dua puluh mahasiswa semester empat di salah satu Universitas di Indramayu berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa menggunakan PROB sebesar 80,62%, diikuti oleh GLOB sebesar 77,38%, dan SUP sebesar 73,11%. Mahasiswa menyatakan dalam wawancara bahwa PROB sangat membantu dan membuat mereka fokus dalam memahami informasi dari teks yang sulit. Di GLOB, mahasiswa biasanya menebak isi teks dan memeriksa apakah tebakan mereka terkait teks tersebut benar atau salah. Sedangkan pada SUP, mahasiswa melingkari teks dan bolak-balik mencari hubungan antar ide yang terkandung dalam teks. Pada akhirnya, temuan ini dapat bermanfaat bagi mereka yang ingin melakukan studi tentang strategi membaca siswa. Peneliti selanjutnya dapat memberikan tes untuk mengetahui kemampuan siswa dalam pemahaman membaca untuk memperoleh data yang lengkap

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the language skills that should be mastered well by the students because in learning English, the students should be able to read and comprehend the texts. However, students in Indonesia tend to have difficulties comprehending English texts, although they have studied English since they were in junior high school. Schwanenflugel & Ruston (2008) state that the factors that affect students' reading comprehension difficulties can be categorized into two major factors: factors from inside the students and other parties surrounding the students. Factors from inside the students are related to vocabulary, interest, and reading strategies, and those from outside are related to the teaching technique, material, and media.

According to Woolley, (2011) reading comprehension is making meaning from text. Its goal is to understand what is described in the text rather than obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences. In the process of learning reading, students commonly face some problems. The students sometimes are not

interested in reading; they also struggle to find the direction of how they should read the text, and then they also have problems recognizing the words. The problem is related to knowledge of vocabulary, and it can lead to students' lack of understanding of the text. The lack of text understanding indicates a strong relationship between understanding and knowledge of vocabulary. This statement is supported by Jarrah & Ismail (2018) learners who do not understand reading material cannot enjoy reading. Therefore, the students must acquire adequate vocabulary knowledge to comprehend the text.

This phenomenon forced the students to use strategies in reading. The strategy that the students used in reading can help the students continue to read the text and understand the content of the text. According to Hung & Ngan, (2015), when readers encounter comprehending problems, they use strategies to overcome their difficulties. Mokhtari & Sheorey, (2002) stated that there are three categories of reading strategies, namely global reading strategies (GLOB), problem-solving strategies (PROB), and support reading strategies (SUP).

Global reading strategies (GLOB) according to Mokhtari & Sheorey, (2002) involved planning how to read and managing comprehension. Global reading strategies (GLOB) are those intentional, carefully planned techniques by which learners monitor and manage their reading, such as having a purpose in mind, previewing the text's length and organization, or using typographical aids and tables and figures.

Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002) stated that in Problem-solving strategies (PROB), involve using strategies when reading complex text parts. PROB is readers' actions and procedures while working directly with the text. These are localized, focused techniques used when problems develop in understanding textual information, such as adjusting reading speed according to what is being read; they contain eight items that appear to be oriented around strategies for solving problems when the text becomes difficult to read. These strategies provide readers with action plans that allow them to navigate the text skillfully.

In Support strategies (SUP), Mokhtari & Sheorey, (2002) explained that it consists of using devices and techniques to understand a text. Support reading

strategies (SUP) contain nine items and primarily involve using outside reference materials (such as dictionary use), taking notes, underlining or circling information, and other practical strategies. These strategies provide the support mechanism aimed at sustaining responses to reading.

Researchers have investigated the reading strategies used in facing reading difficulties. Wang, (2016) found that higher students had higher scores on thinking-aloud protocols regarding comprehension questions and better comprehension in performing thinking-aloud reading. The second from Hung & Ngan, (2015) reported that first-year students often used the strategies, and third-year students no longer used those strategies. First-year and third-year students somehow different in EFL learning experience reflectively reported using those strategies at a medium level only. The third research from Dewi & Salmiah, (2019) revealed that most students applied bottom-up strategies in reading comprehension texts.

Although many studies investigate students' strategies in reading comprehension, few studies investigate reading strategies used by undergraduate students. Thus, this research aims to investigate undergraduate students' strategies in reading comprehension, which focus on global reading strategy (GLOB), problem-solving strategy (PROB), and support reading strategy (SUP). These strategies was believed to overcome or at least minimize the undergraduate students' difficulties in reading comprehension. Because of that, the purpose of this research is to investigate the implementation of strategies used by undergraduate students in reading comprehension on the learning process.

METHOD

This research was conducted using qualitative research with a case study design. A close-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used as the instruments of this research to gain information about students' reading strategies in reading comprehension, especially in academic reading subjects. The questionnaire was adapted from Mokhtari & Sheorey, (2002) and consisted of 30 GLOB, PROB, and SUP statements. There are never (1), occasionally (2),

sometimes (3), usually (4), and always (5) as the answer choices. The participants of this research were fourth-semester students of the Department of English Education at Wiralodra University, Indramayu. Twenty students willingly filled out the questionnaire, and eight participated in an interview based on the criteria of a higher score (A) and a medium score (B). Those scores were obtained from the final score of the academic reading subject. The data gathered from the questionnaire was calculated to find the percentage of how often the students use the strategy. The audio-recorded data from the interview was then analyzed using four steps analysis from Creswell, 1998).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Global Reading Strategy (GLOB)

GLOB contains 13 items and represents categories of reading strategies oriented toward a global text analysis.

Table 1: Global Reading Strategies (GLOB)

No.	GLOB	N	O	S	U	A	%
1.	I have a purpose in mind when I read.	0	2	7	4	7	76%
2.	I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.	1	0	4	10	5	78%
3.	I take an overall view of the text to see what it is about before reading it.	0	0	9	4	7	78%
4.	I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.	0	1	8	5	6	76%
5.	I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization.	1	1	6	5	7	76%
6.	When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	2	2	4	8	4	70%
7.	I use the text's tables, figures, and pictures to increase my understanding.	5	4	8	1	2	51%
8.	I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading.	0	1	6	9	4	76%
9.	I use typographical features like boldface and italics to identify key information.	0	3	5	6	6	75%
10.	I critically analyse and evaluate the information presented in the text.	0	3	7	9	1	68%
11.	I check my understanding when I come across new information.	0	0	8	8	4	72%
12.	I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.	0	1	4	7	8	82%
13.	I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.	0	2	3	8	7	80%
Total		9	20	77	84	78	77.4%

Table 1 shows the total percentage is 77,38%, with the highest percentage in Global reading strategy is guessing the content of the text when reading the text, is 82%, followed by checking whether the students' guesses about the text are correct or incorrect 80%. It can be concluded that students tend to use the guessing strategy to help them comprehend the text. The students also supported this finding answer in the interview.

S1: sometimes, before reading the text, I guess what the text is about. Then I found the purpose of the text.

S3: because I want to see how much the text I read, and I want to know the content of the text

Based on the statements above, it can be seen that the students help themselves by guessing the content of the text, and sometimes they think about whether their guess is right or wrong. In addition, the findings revealed students' difficulties with global reading strategy (GLOB). That is when the students do not understand the content of the English text, students try to guess the content. It is supported by Hafner & Jolly (2007), who state that checking the text's approximate content is a person's ability to understand and absorb reason. Moreover, when the students start to get confused about whether the text's content is wrong or right, they check their guesses. It means that the existence of reading guessing talent is useful for explaining the content of the text with mastery of language.

2. Problem-Solving Strategy (PROB)

Problem-solving strategy involves using strategies when reading difficult parts of a text. This strategy provides readers with action plans that allow them to navigate the text skilfully.

Table 2: Problem-Solving Strategy (PROB)

No.	PROB	N	O	S	U	A	%
14.	I read slowly and carefully to ensure I understand what I read.	0	0	4	6	10	86%
15.	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	0	0	3	7	10	87%
16.	I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading.	1	1	6	7	5	74%

17.	When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I read.	0	1	5	4	10	83%
18.	I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading.	0	1	4	7	8	82%
19.	I try to picture or visualize information to help me remember what I read.	0	0	10	4	6	76%
20.	When text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.	0	1	4	6	9	83%
21.	When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	0	0	10	6	4	74%
Total		1	4	46	47	62	80.6%

In the above table, the total percentage was 80,62%, and the highest percentage was trying to get back on track when I lost concentration at 87%. The second one is to read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I am reading 86%. It was supported by the interview data shown below.

S8: *I will go back to the tract when I get confused in the content, but only sometimes. If I am lazy, I will translate from English to Indonesian.*

Based on the statement above, it has been known that getting back on track when the students lose concentration is the strategies that can help the students understand the text. According to Goodman (1988), when someone reads, it is not only read but also the meaning contained between the lines, even getting the meaning behind the rows. The students also used the strategy of reading slowly and carefully to make sure they understood the reading text. Furthermore, it was supported by the participants in the interview section, who stated that:

S4: *But I see the text first. If the text is difficult to read, I will read slowly because I must understand the text.*

S8: *Because, in my opinion, reading slowly can help us to understand the content of the text*

According to the statement above, students always use slow reading strategies to understand English texts, and slow reading can improve understanding in reading English texts. According to Lipka & Siegal (2011), reading fast does not mean skipping a few words, but setting the speed of reading slowly on each word can improve reading comprehension.

3. Support Reading Strategy (SUP)

Support Reading Strategy provides the support mechanism aimed at sustaining responses to reading.

Table 3: Support Reading Strategies (SUP)

No.	SUP	N	O	S	U	A	%
22.	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	1	2	8	5	4	69%
23.	When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	2	4	6	2	6	66%
24.	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	0	1	6	3	10	82%
25.	I use reference materials (e.g., a dictionary) to help me understand what I read.	1	3	5	4	7	73%
26.	I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read.	0	0	9	7	4	75%
27.	I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among its ideas.	0	0	3	10	7	84%
28.	I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.	2	2	10	4	2	62%
29.	When reading, I translate from English into my native language.	0	2	5	6	7	78%
30	When reading, I think about information in both English and my mother tongue.	0	2	8	8	2	70%
Total		6	16	60	49	49	73.1%

Table 3 shows the total percentage in support reading strategy (SUP) was 73,11%, with the highest percentage in going back and forth to find relationships among ideas in it 84% and underlining or circling information in the text to help me remember it 82%. The finding from the questionnaire is supported by the finding from the interview, which can be seen as follow:

S7: when I am reading, I give a chart underline_and ask my friend who understands the text of the material or ask to lecture

S5: Sometimes, when I read, I only look for the main ideas or points and outline

In support reading strategy (SUP), the students dealing with difficulties in reading text by underline or circle the text that the students find it difficult. It was also supported by students answer in interview that shown above, it indicated that the students implemented underlined or circled information in the text, the

students also go back and forth in the text to find relationships among its ideas. According to Ebbinghaus (1985), underlying the text helped reduce the impact of our memory loss of new information over time. It is in line with the finding from Ozek & Civelek, (2006) who stated that if the students want to remember the text, the students gave underline or circle the text. Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002) also explained that underlining or circling information and other practical strategies belonged to the Support reading strategy (SUP). He added that these strategies provide the support mechanism aimed at sustaining responses to reading. In addition, when the text becomes difficult to understand, students go back and forth to find relationships among ideas.

The results statements above showed that students applied reading strategies in academic reading. Academic reading allows them to read English texts. They considered these strategies to involve their knowledge and improve their reading comprehension. According to Garner (1987), reading strategies show the ways or actions used to draw meaning from the reading text.

However, the students' preference for using reading strategies is problem-solving strategy (PROB), with 80, 62%, Olshavsky (1977) states that effective readers often use problem-solving strategies in the reading process. So far, the researcher can tell that the students prefer problem-solving strategy (PROB) as the most widely used reading strategy because the items in the problem-solving category help the reader overcome the difficulties that arise when the text becomes complicated.

CONCLUSION

This research concluded from the results and discussion that the most widely used strategy is problem-solving (PROB) with a percentage of 80,62%. In facing difficulties in understanding reading, students read slowly and carefully, try to get back on track, pay closer attention to the text, and occasionally stop to think about what they read. The last is to re-read to increase understanding. Then, the students also used a global reading strategy (GLOB) with a percentage of 77,38% by trying to guess the text content and check their guesses about whether the text

was right or wrong. In addition, the students also used the support reading strategy (SUP) with a percentage of 73,11%, by going back on the track to find relationships among ideas and underlining or circling the text.

Eventually, the findings of this research can be useful for those who wish to conduct a survey study on students' reading strategies. Future research can consider broader data for more in-depth analysis by considering other backgrounds such as in class, level of English proficiency, age, and others. Researchers can survey the reading strategies used by students from different backgrounds to determine whether these backgrounds affect the reading process and reading comprehension. In addition, the researcher can provide tests to determine the student's ability in reading comprehension to obtain better complete data.

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