Analyzing the Students' Strategies in Reading
at Different Level of Competency

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Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah (i) untuk menemukan jenis strategi apakah yang paling banyak digunakan oleh siswa. (ii) untuk menemukan strategi apakah yang paling banyak digunakan oleh kelompok pintar dan lemah. Subjek dari penelitian ini adalah 28 siswa kelas tiga SMPN 2 Sungkai Utara. Instrumen dalam penelitian ini adalah Kwesioner dan tes membaca. Hasil dari instrumen tersebut dianalisa melalui *descriptive analysis*. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi metakognitif paling banyak digunakan. Terlebih lagi, baik kelompok pintar dan lemah menggunakan strategi metakognitif. Oleh karena itu, tidak ada perbedaan dalam strategi yang dipakai baik pada kelompok pintar dan lemah. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa lebih sering menggunakan strategi metakognitif.

The aims of the research were (i) to find out what kind of strategy is mostly used by the students, and (ii) to find out what strategies do the good and poor students employ in reading. This research was descriptive study. The subjects of the research were 28 of third grade students in SMPN 2 Sungkai Utara. Reading test and Questionnaire were used as the instrument to collect the data. The data were analyzed by using descriptive analysis. The result of the research showed that the metacognitive strategy is the most used by all students. Furthermore, both of the poor and good level students employ metacognitive strategy. This suggests that metacognitive is the most employed reading strategy by students.

Keywords: students' strategies, reading, level of competency

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of language skills that might be mastered by the learners. It is seen as one of communicative ways to convey information through printed materials. On the other hand, reading is actually a cognitive process where a reader engages in the mental process of knowing, learning, and understanding things (Sutarsyah, 2016). Moreover, reading is usually defined as an activity that involves metacognition activities (Sutarsyah, 2016). Learners should understand the overall meaning of the text instead of the finer points of detail. It means that reading is not only word recognition, but also strategy in comprehending and bringing meaning to them.

Learner strategies are defined as task-specific tactics, or techniques, observable or non-observable, that an individual uses to comprehend, store, retrieve, and use information or to plan, regulate, or assess learning. The comprehension strategies that the readers employed are grouped according to what the readers actually did while they were making sense of the ideas contained in a text, because this classification is more concrete and clearly differentiated than cognitive and metacognitive frames (Suparman, 2001). In other words, the categories in the current study will be developed by looking at the data collected and supported by the literature. The strategies in the current study were classified into six major categories: 1. prediction, guessing and inference, 2. skimming, skipping and topic priority, 3. repeating and note taking, 4. translation, coinage, paraphrases and alternative interpretation, 5. language analysis, 6. dictionary consultation, help-seeking and self-asking (Suparman, 2001). Along with the description above, the writer believed that reading was not only words recognition activity, but also was more concerned with the meaning. In order to get the sense of the text, the language learners should know that the result of reading process was comprehension. Related to reading, it could be said that the good readers should do something to guess, answer or summarize the printed material in front of them. Then, the students faced the same text, but actually the successful reading process depended on the learner themselves.

Reading strategies are the mental processes that readers consciously choose to use in accomplishing reading task (Cohen, 1987). Reading strategies can also indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues that attend to, how they make a sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand (Block, 1986). It identifies what they actually do to solve their reading problems. In other words, this study is focused on investigating wether they have metacognitive strategies when reading. This is done on an assumption that they will apply either bad or good reading strategies. It is believed that when they apply good reading strategies, they can be independent and skilled readers.

Some previous studies proved that need of language learning strategies was important in helping the students to be successful learners. As Oxford (2000) states that language learning are used by learners to complete speaking, reading, vocabulary, listening or writing activities presented in language lessons. In order to investigate whether or not the students had achieved maximum result of reading

comprehension, the researcher conducted pre-observation activities at SMPN 2 Sungkai Utara. It was found that the students had problem in their reading ability. They were not able to acquire reading comprehension. In other word, they found crucial of difficulties in some aspects of reading comprehension, for examples, identify main idea, identify specific information, finding reference, inference, and understanding vocabulary.

From the problems that had been investigated by the previous study, the students should comprehend it successfully. In order hand, they might know how to be success learner in comprehending reading text by themselves. From this point on, the research dealt with the *analyzing the students' strategies in reading at different level of competency*. That is to say, the reader should find out how information was arranged in reading and how a text was organized. Because reading text was stated in School Based Curriculum (KTSP) and it was really important for students' daily life; so the students should comprehend it successfully.

METHOD

This research is a descriptive study. In this study, the researcher identified the reading strategies used by language learners and explored reading strategies used by the good and poor learners. Then, the reading strategies formulation in this research was based on the three categories of reading strategy, namely cognitive, metacognitive and social strategy. The population of this research was SMPN 2 Sungkai Utara Lampung Utara. The subjects of the research were a class of the third grade of junior high school students in academic year 2016/2017. There were four classes of the third grade which consisted of 30 to 35 students in each class.

RESULT

The result showed that the mean score of pre-test result was 58 while in the post test was 67. It could be seen on the table 1.

Table 1. The Mean Scores of Pre-test and Post-test

	Mean	N
Pair 1 Posttest	67	28

Table 2. Reading Scores and Types of Strategies

No	Code	Reading Score	Criteria	Total The Strategies Used
1	MI	90	Good	Cognitive
2	AF	85	Good	Cognitive
3	RT	80	Good	Metacognitive
4	AO	80	Good	Metacognitive
5	WT	80	Good	Social
6	EY	75	Good	Metacognitive
7	TW	75	Good	Cognitive
8	TM	75	Good	Metacognitive
9	RM	75	Good	Social
10	MP	70	Fair	Metacognitive
11	DR	70	Fair	Cognitive
12	MY	70	Fair	Metacognitive
13	DA	65	Fair	Metacognitive
14	RC	65	Fair	Cognitive
15	RS	65	Fair	Social
16	FA	65	Fair	Metacognitive
17	LZ	65	Fair	Metacognitive
18	YP	65	Fair	Metacognitive
19	NM	65	Fair	Cognitive
20	CP	60	Poor	Metacognitive
21	BM	60	Poor	Metacognitive
22	FF	60	Poor	Cognitive
23	AS	55	Poor	Social
24	BS	55	Poor	Cognitive
25	AM	55	Poor	Metacognitive
26	OF	50	Poor	Metacognitive
27	RT	50	Poor	Social
28	LP	50	Poor	Cognitive

In this case the data showed that 9 students applied cognitive strategy, 14 students applied metacognitive strategy and 5 students applied social strategy. Furthermore, both of the poor and good level students employed metacognitive strategy. The writer found out that the students tended to use the metacognitive strategy in reading test, but sometimes they applied more than one strategy in solving a problem in comprehending the text.

DISCUSSION

As it had already been described above, we could notice that the good and poor learners used more than one strategy to improve their reading strategies. The data showed us that the learners tended to use metacognitive strategy more often than

cognitive and social strategy. It reflected that the students had known the way to afford the comprehension of reading activity. Furthermore, other metacognitive strategies stated by Sutarsyah (2000) were found. Sutarsyah asserted four strategies that can be grouped in metacognitive strategy, namely: *stopping and opening dictionary, regressing and opening dictionary, ignoring, and finding similar type of books*. Those all strategies were familiar with the students, so all of metacognitive strategies stated by Sutarsyah were used by all learners (good and poor learners).

The second strategy mostly used by the students was cognitive strategy. Theories of reading from cognitive perspectives, which became the basis for the current study have been reviewed. The cognitive perspective of reading comprehension is mainly used because it is more suitable for the purpose of the study which put the emphasis on what is going on in the minds of the readers while they are making sense of the ideas in the text (Suparman, 2001). In many studies about learners' strategies, it was found that cognitive strategies was the best stragies in understanding reading. Althought, in my research, the best strategies used by the students in understanding the text was metacognitive strategy. It did not mean that the students were lack in cognitive , they still used cognitive, but the quantity was lower than the students who used metacognitive to understanding reading.

The last strategy engaged by learners were having a discussion with a friend or asking to the teacher, these kinds of strategies called social strategy. This term similar with strategy stated by Sutarsyah (2000), he settled one strategy that was *asking someone as social strategy.* Although it was familiar strategy for the students, in a fact we found that the good students used these kinds of strategy more often than the poor ones. So, it indicated that the good students did many efforts than the poor ones do. Then, some other strategies categorized into social strategies were discovered in this research too. The strategy was *findings other articles or reading test in English to improve comprehension.* It was done by the students, but once again, the group which used this strategy was most of good learners and few of poor learners.

Reading strategies can also indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues that attend to, how they make a sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand (Block, 1986). On the other hand, the efficient reader always tries to find the most effective strategies that can be used; the information is analyzed only to the depth necesary to meet current needs. According to (Brown 1980), these activities involve metacognition, that is conscious deliberate attempts to understand one's efforts at being strategies. In this study, reading strategy is actually not the main focus of the study, but rather the strategies used by readers when they encounter problems when they read English texts. It identifies what they actually do to solve their reading problems. In other words, this study is focused on investigating whether they have metacognitive strategies when reading. It is believed that when they apply good reading strategies, they can be independent and skilled readers.

Along the description above, it can be conluded that good learners use dissimilar types of learning strategies more often than the poor ones. In this case Fedderholdt (1998) stated similar opinion; he said that *successful language learners make use of different types of learning strategies*. The fact tells us that in order to be a good learner the students should be creative in combining some efforts to solve the problem faced in learning. Basically all the strategies are good since it could help the learners to be success in learning process. The problem is that how the students will utilize those strategies in helping themselves learning English especially in reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

In line with the results of the data analysis and discussion, the writer made two conclussions. The first conclusion, it has been found that all of the students employed more than one of the three strategies system formulated in this research (metacognitive, cognitive and social strategy). The good and poor learners used the similar strategies. The difference is stated in the sequances of frequency in using the strategies. Secondly, the result of reading test scores from the good and poor students showed that reading test is a difficult task. The text given by the researcher is hard to understand, because many difficult of words that they do not know. The students tended to use metacognitive strategy in reading test. Sometimes they applied more than one strategy in solving a problem in comprehending the text. Basically all the strategies are good since it could help the learners to be success in learning process.

SUGGESTIONS

Referring to the conclusion above, the researcher provides some suggestions. The first suggestion is for the students. The students should find their strategies that are suitable for themselves. However, they are not supposed to be satisfied with what they have achieved. They have to keep on studying and never stop. Besides that, they should open their mind related with what strategies that other learners employ in order to make them more successful. The second suggestion is for the teacher. The teacher should introduce the strategy application used by good learners to the poor ones; and train them those strategies. The teacher should try to find other teaching methods that will make the students practice the reading strategy automatically while they faced their text. So, hopefully, all the students can practice the reading strategies more often rather than listening to their teachers' explanation. And the last, for the other researchers, they could try to find other problems not only about reading strategies, but also about all components of reading. So, the researchers could find more problems faced by the students in learning reading strategies.

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