

IDENTIFYING LEARNING STRATEGIES BETWEEN SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL LEARNERS IN READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui strategi belajar antara siswa yang berhasil dan tidak berhasil dalam kemampuan membaca bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan dilaksanakan pada kelas 10 SMA Al-Kautsar yang berjumlah 68 siswa. Untuk mengumpulkan data, peneliti memberikan sebuah kuesioner (LLSQ) dan test membaca. Data dianalisis dengan Independent t-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) sebagian besar siswa menggunakan strategi kognitif (52,96%), metakognitif (23,52%) dan sosial (23,52%), (2) tidak ada perbedaan signifikan antara siswa yang berhasil dalam menggunakan strategi kognitif dan sosial sedangkan strategi metacognitive memiliki perbedaan signifikan. Ada implikasi untuk strategi-strategi belajar bahasa dalam keterampilan membaca. Oleh karena itu, siswa perlu diinformasikan tentang strategi-strategi belajar dan penggunaan yang tepat dalam membaca karena pemilihan strategi belajar adalah salah satu cara siswa dalam meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa.

The research aimed to find out the learning strategy between successful and unsuccessful learners in English reading. This research was a quantitative study and was conducted to 68 learners in first grade of SMA Al-Kautsar. In collecting data, the researcher gave a questionnaire (LLSQ) and reading test. The data was analyzed by using Independent t-test. The results showed that (1) most of students used cognitive strategy (52.96%), metacognitive (23.52%) and social (23.52%), (2) there was no significant difference between successful and unsuccessful learners in using cognitive and social strategy meanwhile metacognitive strategy had significant difference. There was an implication for language learning strategies in reading skill. Thus, the students need to be informed about learning strategies and how to use them appropriately in reading because choosing learning strategies was a students' way in improving their skill in reading.

Keywords: learning strategies, reading comprehension, successful learners

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex cognitive activity that is crucial for adequate functioning and for obtaining information in current society and requires an integration of memory and meaning construction (Alfassi, 2000 in Zare & Othman, 2013). Even though it is quite difficult, reading is also valuable for learners to improve their comprehension in a text and beneficial in developing prior knowledge. However, in practical learning reading, reading has been seen a hard nut to crack all along time.

Basically, there are many English texts which have good content for learners but sometimes there is a misunderstanding between what the writer of book means and what the learners mean. In fact, there are many learners who still do not know how to understand a text properly. Sometimes, they are getting confused and time consuming when the learners try to translate English into Indonesian of the text. It may occur because they use inappropriate learning strategies. Considering the phenomenon, the researcher tried to find out the most learning strategies used by successful and unsuccessful learners in reading achievement.

Learning strategies are specific actions taken by a learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situation (Oxford, 1990: 8). Furthermore, learning strategies also constitute the steps or actions consciously selected by learners either to improve the learning of the second language, the use of it or both (Cohen, 1998:3). They include strategies for identifying the material that needs to be learned; distinguishing from other material if needed, grouping it for easier learning; repeatedly engaging

oneself in contact with the material; and formally committing to memory when it does not seem to be acquired naturally.

Language learning strategies have also been proposed by O'Malley et al. (1985) in Setiyadi (2011), who consider psychologically based issues in their classifications. In O'Malley et al.'s study (1985) the classification consists of three categories, namely: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies (as cited in Setiyadi, 2011, p. 15-16). Another study that uses psychological based consideration similar to O'Malley et al.'s study is Oxford and Nyikos's (1990a:15-47). In their study, language learning strategies are categorized into *direct strategies* and *indirect strategies*. The direct strategies are subdivided into *memory strategies*, *cognitive strategies*, and *compensation strategies*. The indirect strategies are subdivided into *metacognitive strategies*, *affective strategies*, and *social strategies*.

Even though the above classifications can facilitate this research, a more detailed and systematic strategy taxonomy is still needed. The researcher considers to use O'Malley et al.'s language learning strategies classification, namely: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies in this research since their classification seems more detailed and systematic.

METHOD

The design of this research was an inferential statistic analysis, a quantitative study. In collecting the data, the researcher did not apply any treatment or any experiment to subjects. In conducting this research, the researcher used a causal comparative design of ex post facto designs.

To collect the research data, a reading text had been given to the students in order to see the students' reading comprehension achievement. After that, the researcher gave the Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire (LLSQ) of reading skill was used by the researcher to measure learners learning strategies.

The population of this research was the first grade of senior high school students at SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung in 2014/2015 academic year. The sample of this research was two classes that were taken by the researcher by using theoretical sampling (purposive sampling). In constructing the research, the research procedure uses these following steps: 1) Selecting instrument materials. 2) Determining the sample of the research. 3) Determining research instruments. 4) Administering the reading test. 5) Analyzing the data. 6) Making the report of the findings. The hypotheses were analyzed by Independent-sample T-Test at the significant level of 0.05 in which the hypothesis is approved if $\text{Sig.} < \alpha$.

RESULTS

1) Reading Comprehension Test

Having computed the result of reading test, it was found out that the highest score obtained was 94, while the lowest score was 47 out of 68 students. The average score was 69.8. The description of students reading score can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Frequency distribution of students reading score

No.	Class Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	47-56	11	16,17
2.	59-69	12	17,64
3.	72-81	33	48,52
4.	84-94	12	17,64
	Total	68	100

From the table above, it can be seen that there were 33 students or 48.52% got the average score. The students got score 47-69 (33.81%) and the students got score 84-94 (17.64%).

2) Types of Learning Strategies Most Frequently Used by the Learners in Reading

Table 2. The Frequency of Learning Strategies Questionnaire

Learning Strategies					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Cognitive	36	52,96	52,96	52,96
	Metacognitive	16	23,52	23,52	76,48
	Social	16	23,52	23,52	100
	Total	68	100,0	100,0	

Based on Table 4 above, it could be seen that there were 36 students (52,96%) who used cognitive strategy, 16 students (23,52%) used metacognitive strategy, and 16 students (23,52%) used social strategy. Based on Table 2 above, it could be concluded that the type of language learning strategies most frequently used by the learners was cognitive strategy.

3) The Most Effective Learning Strategies in Learners' Reading Ability

In analyzing the result of the learners learning strategies through the questionnaire, the researcher tried to find out the most effective learning strategies used by the learners by looking at mean score and standard deviation from group statistics in Independent T-Test. The result was as follows.

Table 3. The comparison of mean score between successful and unsuccessful learners

Group Statistics					
Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Cognitive	Successful	41	3.46	.591	.089
	Unsuccessful	27	3.53	.407	.076
Metacognitive	Successful	41	3.19	.597	.090
	Unsuccessful	27	3.63	.691	.128
Social	Successful	41	3.20	.548	.083
	Unsuccessful	27	3.57	.683	.127

Based on Table 3 above, it could be seen the result of the three learning strategies in learners' reading skill was as follows.

a) The Result of Cognitive Strategies in Learners' Reading Skill

Based on Table 3 above, mean score of cognitive strategies was the highest mean among three learning strategies of successful learners. It meant that most of successful learners used cognitive strategies in learning reading. Even though, it was stated in the previous statement that cognitive was the strategy that had no significant difference between successful and unsuccessful learners. The reading achievement between two groups is both giving satisfactory result, with insignificant difference.

b) The Result of Metacognitive Strategies in Learners' Reading Skill

As it could be seen in Table 3 above, the result showed that the mean score of the learners who used metacognitive strategies in English reading ability was low if compared to cognitive and social strategies. The result showed that the mean score of successful learners who used metacognitive strategy was 3.19. Meanwhile, the mean score of unsuccessful learners was the highest among them

with the score 3.63. However, metacognitive was the only strategy that had significant difference between successful and unsuccessful learners in reading ability.

c) The Result of Social Strategies in Learners' Reading Skill

As it could be seen in Table 3 above, the result showed that the mean score of the learners who used social strategies in English reading skill in which the mean score of successful learners was 3.20 and the mean score of unsuccessful learners who used social strategy was 3.57. It meant that even though unsuccessful learners in social strategies were considered as a low group, they still had lower mean score than the learners who used metacognitive strategies.

DISCUSSION

Relating to the result above, the data analysis indicated that cognitive strategy was the first most frequently used by successful learners in reading comprehension. Meanwhile, social and metacognitive strategies were most frequently used by unsuccessful learners. In language learning, cognitive strategies are used by the learners to transform or manipulate the language.

Language learning strategies are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or encounter the problem during the process of language learning. In other words, language learning strategies gives language teachers valuable clues about how their students assess the situation, plan, select appropriate skills so as to understand, learn, or remember new input presented in the language classroom.

Since the sample of this research was the first grade students in senior high school, it was obvious that the level of their English ability still low. For the

learners who had low English ability, it could be understood of this situation that they used cognitive strategies mostly than the others strategies. A learner uses such strategies all the time, like writing a note to remember an important fact. For some learners, cognitive strategies must be explicitly taught so they will be able to consciously think.

Cognitive strategies include the ways that can help a learner to store, combine, and recall information. These strategies include using background knowledge, prediction, repetition, inference, translation, and organization of learning materials. It seems the learners still have limited ability in mastering reading.

In contrast, metacognitive and social strategies were mostly used by unsuccessful learners. This result was somewhat similar to the results of Afdaleni (2013). In Afdaleni's research showed that the metacognitive and social strategies were the second and first strategies which frequently used by unsuccessful learners.

Based on the data, most of unsuccessful learners were using metacognitive as their strategies. In this strategy, the learners decided to express strategies which required planning what to do in acquiring another language, thinking about the learning process as it was taking place, monitoring of comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity was completed.

Unfortunately, the result showed that unsuccessful learners used metacognitive strategies in which the failure of unsuccessful learners can be attributed more to that they do not know when and where to select which strategy than to that they have less idea of cognitive strategies (Wu, 1994 cited in Gao, 2013). Moreover, Wen (1995) in Gao (2013) points out the unsuccessful learners failed not for lack

of cognitive ability but for language learning ability like self-awareness (metacognitive). Usually, someone who uses metacognitive can be said that they have had enough even good basic in learning language. In the other countries, especially the country which uses English as the first language, metacognitive is mostly used by successful learner since someone who uses this strategy can be assumed that they have had high level in English ability. Therefore, metacognitive strategy was the only strategy that had a significant difference between successful and unsuccessful learners in reading skill. The result was similar with Wen's research on English metacognitive strategies that there was a great difference between successful and unsuccessful English learners in the use of metacognitive strategies (Wen, 2003).

The last but not least, the third strategy mostly used by the students was social strategy. In this strategy, the learners preferred to ask other people than to learn by themselves. It indicated that the students tend to learn with their peers or to consult the teacher when they found some difficulties in comprehending reading text.

In summary, the result of learning process for each learner is different because each learner has different cognitive ability and cognitive ability for each learner is never absolutely the same. Every learner has different internal ability so in processing the information also has the differences. Cognitive strategy has benefit for learners to be independent by using their intellectual skill they have learnt before, they use their background knowledge to deal with the task.

However, there is always the possibility that unsuccessful language learners can also use the same good language learning strategies used by successful learners.

Nevertheless, it should be strongly emphasized that using the same good language learning strategies does not guarantee that unsuccessful learners will also become successful in language learning since other factors may also play role in the success of reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

The present research leads the researcher to come to the final conclusion that there was no significant difference between successful and unsuccessful learners in using cognitive and social strategies. Meanwhile, the only strategy that had a significant difference was metacognitive strategies. Furthermore, Most of successful learners in learning reading comprehension applied cognitive and social learning strategies. Therefore, there was an implication for the language learning strategies in reading comprehension. That was because the learning strategies were considered to be one of the ways in improving the learners' reading comprehension achievement.

In order to help the successful language learners to be more successful learners, the teacher can motivate them to evaluate their weakness in reading comprehension. In addition, it is also suggested to further researchers of learning strategies in reading may conduct deep investigation on the process of learning strategies by adding more than two variables, like motivation, linguistic components, and non-linguistic factors.

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