A Narrative Research: A Student's Strategies in Reading Comprehension on TOEFL at the Eighth Semester of English Education Department of Lancang Kuning University

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Abstract: Test of Englsh as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a kind of proficiency test for students to know about their proficiency of English. To measure the students' comprehension of reading, the students were demanded to follow one of the proficiency test of English namely Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The purpose of this research was to find out the student's strategies in reading comprehension on TOEFL at the Eighth Semester of English Education Department of Lancang Kuning University. Design of this research was narrative research. Sample of this research was the student who had the highest score in reading comprehension on TOEFL. Instrument that was used in this research was interview, questionairres and documents. The result of analyzing data shows that the informant got the highest score in reading comprehension on TOEFL because he used several strategies to help him in answering the reading comprehension test on TOEFL such as predicting, skimming and scanning, and re-reading. In conclusion, these strategies as one of variaty may be applied by the students of English Education Departemen of Lancang Kuning University and others students to comprehend or be better on their reading comprehension on TOEFL.

Key Words: TOEFL, Reading Comprehension, Strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a kind of proficiency test for students to know about their proficiency of English. According to Phillips (2001: xiii) the TOEFL test is a test to measure the level of English proficiency of nonnative speakers of English. It is required primarily by English-language colleges and universities. The students got the admission of their English proficiency by having the certificate given after test. TOEFL represented students' proficiency in English in term of listening, written expression, speaking, reading and structure. The TOEFL contains three sections that will be tested; Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension. Firstly is Listening Comprehension. Listening is making sense of what is heard and requires the individual to constantly pay attention, interpret, and remember what is heard. This section tests the students' ability to understand and interpret spoken English. Secondly is Structure and Written Expression. This section tests the ability to recognize

formal written English. Many things that are acceptable in spoken English are not acceptable in formal written English. The last is Reading Comprehension. The reading comprehension section tests the students' ability to understand, interpret, and analyze reading passages on a variety of topics.

In this research, the researcher focused on reading comprehension in TOEFL. According to Takido (2007: 8) the reading section measures the test taker's ability to understand university-level academic texts and passages. It meant this section is designed to measure the ability to read and understand short passages similar in topic and style to those that students were likely to encounter in North American universities and colleges. This section contains reading passages and questions about the passages. TOEFL stresses passages that are typical of those you will read in colleges and universities. Sharpe (2004: 208) also stated that this section also tests your knowledge of English vocabulary. The students must find the synonyms for selected words from the passage among the four answer choices that are given. In order to face this section, students needed extensive practice in reading a variety of material, including newspapers and magazines. It also helped to read a variety of topics-American history, culture, social science, and natural science.

In this TOEFL reading comprehension, the students were also faced with the dilemma of responding to words from a possible vocabulary pool of thousands of words that may appear in context. Context is the field or condition and situation where the passage belongs to. To overcome the dilemma, it helped to read a variety of topics-American history, culture, social science, and natural science. Sharpe (2004) also stated nine problems that appear in reading section of the TOEFL. They are:

a. Previewing
b. Reading for main ideas
c. Using context for vocabulary
d. Scanning for detail
e. Making inference
f. Identifying exception
g. Locating reference
h. Reading faster

However, in University of Lancang Kuning the researcher found 9% of the eighth semester students at English Education failed on TOEFL. Based on the interview (February 24th, 2017) to the instructor of TOEFL preparation at English Education Department of Lancang Kuning University, he said that the student comprehended the test of reading on TOEFL influenced by some factors such as the student's ability itself and the student's strategies that had been used to guide them in comprehending the reading test. Since some of the students got feeling hard in understanding the reading texts which some of them were long and made them bored. Hence, it was important for the students to have the appropriate strategies so they would be easy to answer the questions. From this interview, the researcher found that there was assumption that the appropriate strategies of reading comprehension helped the student to comprehend the reading comprehension on TOEFL to get the best grade.

Moreover there are some previous researchers who have proved their research dealing with analysis in reading comprehension strategies. They conducted the research in order to see the effectiveness of strategies used by the students on reading comprehension. Firstly, a research conducted by Khoshsima and Tiyar (2014) which

entitled "The Effect of Summarizing Strategy on Reading Comprehension of Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners". The research involved sixty-one students who were selected and randomly divided into two control and experimental groups. All students in both groups participated in a reading comprehension test as pretest. The experimental group utilized summarizing strategy three times a week typically 45 minutes in duration for ten weeks. After each two week instruction, an immediate post-test was administered. At the end of the treatment, a post-test was administered to both groups. The findings of the study indicated that summarizing strategy has a significant effect on learners' reading comprehension.

Secondly, there is a research conducted by Wu (2016) entitled "Exploring Effective Reading Strategies that Promote Higher Level Thinking and Comprehension for a Chinese Speaking College Student". In this study involved only one participant named Cathy. Cathy is a Chinese student who studied at college as a regular undergraduate student and had poor performance in her college level literacy class, as indicated by her professors and Cathy herself. Cathy was expected to improve reading comprehension by receiving an intensive one-month reading development intervention, which included seven interventions (strategies in Reading comprehension) related to comprehension and higher-level thinking about text. The results revealed that high-level thinking abilities happened during the strategy lessons that comprised the seven interventions. The results also showed there was a significant improvement in reading comprehension at the end of the one-month period.

Moreover, Sungatullina *et al* (2016) also conducted a research related to this matter under the title "Metacognitive Awareness of TOEFL Reading Comprehension Strategies". The aim of the study was to determine students' metacognitive awareness of global academic reading strategies, namely the use of context clues, within the framework of preparation for TOEFL reading section. The researchers concentrated on expository texts from TOEFL reading section as a testing material and provided detailed description of single context clues types and double context clues patterns typical for this text structure. The following study is concerned with comparison and interpretation of the results obtained in three focus groups of students, who have accomplished reading comprehension task from TOEFL with and without learning to employ the context clues reading strategy. The finding of this research established the connection between success in reading comprehension and the degree of students' metacognitive awareness of the strategy use.

Another research by Çubukçu (2008) entitled "How to Enhance Reading Comprehension through Metacognitive Strategies" provided evidence for the benefits of metacognitive strategy training. Metacognitive strategies are those strategies that require students to think about their own thinking as they engage in academic tasks. Within this study, students have been taught metacognitive strategies for reading in a five-week program they have joined voluntarily. The experimental group achieved significantly better results than the control group. Systematic explicit instruction about the concept of metacognition and learning strategies helped students of the experimental group

to better comprehend this new approach and how to apply it to different learning tasks on reading. They started to think about the strategies they could use to improve their reading comprehension to become not only better listeners and readers, but also autonomous and strategic learners.

In addition, there was a research done by Assiri (2011) which entitled "Test-Taking Strategy Use on the Reading Section of the TOEFL IBT: A Study of Arab ESL Learners". The research found that high test performance and scoring were characterized by superior skills of both comprehension and test-management as well as high levels of strategic awareness and monitoring. Test takers sequenced strategies such that certain strategies derived from other strategies, endorsed or facilitated functions of other strategies, or acted in sync with other strategies. Aspects of effective strategy use occurred in tandem with logical sequences of strategies. Conversely, low test performance and scoring were associated with poor skills of comprehension and excessive use of test-wiseness.

The last, Herdi (2016) conducted the research entitled "The Students' Reading Ability on Test of English as the Foreign Language (TOEFL)". The research was conducted at the Seventh Semester Students of English Education Department of Lancang Kuning University. In this research, he found that the students' score was 1214, mode was 46, median was 52, variance was 157.35 and standard deviation was 12.54. Mean was 52.78. It was indicated that students' ability in reading texts in TOEFL was categorized into weak.

From all the information above, it can be concluded that reading strategy took a part in students' reading comprehension.

2. METHOD
2.1 Research Design
This research was conducted by using narrative research. Narrative research is the study of how different humans experience the world around them, and it involves a methodology that allows people to tell the stories of their "storied lives". The researcher collected data about individual's lives, such as her/his experiences and constructed a narrative collaboratively with the informant about his/her experiences and discussed the meaning of those experiences for the individual.

2.2 Setting of the Research
The research was conducted on February to March 2017 at English Education Department of Lancang Kuning University.

2.3 Informant
In this research the researcher used purposive sampling and chose one student of English Education Department of University of Lancang Kuning who followed TOEFL test year 2016 with the highest score in reading comprehension on TOEFL. Based on the interview (February 24th, 2017) to one of the instructors of TOEFL preparation class, he said that a student who had the highest score namely Mr. Rahman (pseudonym) was a good representative regarding this matter. So, the researcher selected Mr. Rahman, a student of English Education Department of University of Lancang Kuning, as the informant of this research.

2.4 Instruments
The instruments that used in this research were interviews, questionnaires, and documents. First instrument was an open-ended interview. It was used to get the

data about the informant's stories and experiences in English learning especially in reading comprehension. Second instrument was questionnaires. These questionnaires were given to the informant about his reading comprehension strategies. The first questionnaire consisted 15 items that related the informant's reading experiences habits and attitude. And the second questionnaire consisted 22 items that related the informant's academic reading strategies. Third instrument was documents. They could be TOEFL certificate, KHS or Rapport and other supporting English documents. Collecting personal documents can provide a researcher with rich information. So documents were collected by the researcher to enhance the previous data.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
3.1 Findings

The informant's scores on TOEFL; TOEFL subject and TOEFL test. The first, his TOEFL score which was a subject at the sixth semester. He got A in this subject. The second, his TOEFL score on TOEFL test that was conducted on December 2016. The informant got 620 which was the highest score among the students who followed TOEFL test. With the score in each section as follows:

The informant's TOEFL score

Section of TOEFL	Score	Final Score
Listening	63	
Structure	58	620
Reading	65	

Pertaining to the interview with the informant on February, 28th 2017, the informant shared several reading strategies that he used to support his comprehension in answering the test on TOEFL. He said that *"first I read the*

question first and then I find the details in the text and I predict what the supporting details that could be written in the text ……" Then he also added *"….. I skim and scan it first. And reading it fast. And that if I feel like to understand it more I will read it, reread it"*

The first reading strategy that the researcher found employed by the informant was **predicting strategy**. In this strategy, the informant used information from a text (including titles, headings, pictures, and diagrams) and his own personal experiences to anticipate what he was about to read (or what comes next). The informant involved in making predictions was focused on the text at hand, constantly thinking ahead and also refining, revising, and verifying his predictions. This strategy also helped the informant make connections between his prior knowledge and the text. By ensuring that he had sufficient background knowledge before beginning to read the text, it could also help him successfully making predictions about the text.

The second strategy used by the informant was **skimming and scanning**. Skimming was used by the informant to the process of reading only main ideas within a passage to get an overall impression of the content of a reading selection. Skimming refers to looking *only* for the general or main ideas. With skimming, his overall understanding was reduced because he did not read everything. He read only what was important to his purpose. Skimming took place while reading and allowed him to look for details in addition to the main ideas. By this strategy, the first few paragraphs in detail, he got a good idea of what information was discussed. Once he knew where the reading was headed, he began to read only the first sentence of

each paragraph. Also called as *topic sentence,* the texts gave him the main idea of the paragraph.

While in terms of scanning, scanning is reading strategy used when he wanted to find specific information quickly. In scanning he had a question in his mind and he read a passage only to find the answer, ignoring unrelated information. Scanning is another useful tool for speeding up his reading. Unlike skimming, when scanning, he looked *only* for a specific fact or piece of information without reading everything. For scanning to be successful, he needed to understand how his material was structured as well as comprehended what he read so he could locate the specific information he needed in text on TOEFL. Scanning also allowed him to find details and other information in a hurry.

The third reading strategy was **re-reading**. Here re-reading strategy was a key skill in becoming a good reader. The informant needed acknowledge when he read has not made sense to them. The informant reread the text slowly and paid attention to the words and meanings more carefully. Rereading consisted of on-going and repeated encounters with a text, guided by a particular task so that segments of the text got revisited and rethought. Rereading is the most effective type of reading, especially of language texts, because it offered the informant the opportunity to re-think messages and see features he had not noticed in initial reading. The informant learnt more language and information when he engaged with a text using a guided matrix or other task that encouraged him to peruse the text again. That perusal did not mean that they should be reading the text linearly or translating it, but rather that the

informant needed to use the informant's prior knowledge and what The informant gained in initial reading exercises to become confident about what a text said. At this point, the informant aimed to be sufficiently familiar with a text's information to be able to summarize that information from memory.

3.2 Disscussion

Based on the findings, the researcher discussed data which gotten from the interview, focused Reading Comprehension on TOEFL, the informant got the highest score among his friends. He got the score in reading comprehension on TOEFL was 65. In total score of all indicators were 620. He was the first rank at the time.

In line with the above information, he could improve his skill in English especially in reading because he had high motivation to learn English. Reading motivation was an important factor that had to be mastered by the reader in reading. Reading motivation is an effort to create certain condition in order someone wants and willing to read and gain the meaning from the text. It meant that the student who had reading motivation would want and willing to read and they would try to gain the meaning from the text that they read.

As usual the good strategy used by the informant in learning particularly reading was contextual concepts where he found his formula how to improve his reading comprehension. Learning reading was not only learning to read, but more of it. Comprehending the text was one of the reading's goals. Learning reading could be main as facilitate his performance this in comprehending texts, and provided him with many opportunities for practice were encourage in a number of comprehension

enhancing the best known of which were reciprocal teaching, cooperative learning and reading recovery. During reading process he needed to pay attention about the principles of reading. The principles could be standard to limit him when he read some texts.

Based on the data gotten, the informant had three strategies in reading comprehension that helped him in answering the reading items on TOEFL. The strategies were predicting, skimming and scanning and re-reading. Exactly, the use of reading strategy could greatly increase or decrease a student's success in the classroom. Reading strategies could be used to vary the approach students were given of any given text. By using strategy in reading would be activating student's prior knowledge. Reading strategy occurred before, while, and after the student was introduced to and read reading material. For example, the informant used predicting strategy before he read the text to get the detail that was presented by the text. Then to get more specific detail, he used skimming and scanning strategy. It also used by considering the limited time of TOEFL. The last, the informant used re-reading strategy if he did not catch what the text said, did not get the sense, or only to get more clarification of the meaning gotten. It because re-reading is the most effective type of reading, especially of language texts, because it offered the informant the opportunity to re-think messages and see features he had not noticed in initial reading.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion on the previous chapter, the result of this research can be concluded that the informant has some strategies in

reading comprehension on TOEFL in helping the informant in answering the items test in reading comprehension on TOEFL, the strategies used by the informant are predicting, skimming and scanning, and re-reading.

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