

## Language Learning Strategies Used By EFL Students In Reading Comprehension

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**Abstract:** Reading comprehension becomes very crucial for English language learners in Indonesia since national exam applied for graduation prerequisite. So, the study is investigated to find out the strategies most frequently used by successful and unsuccessful second year EFL learners in SMAN 1 Trimurjo, Center Lampung. The strategies consisted of metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies. The method of this study is quantitative research. The researcher has chosen one class of second year student of SMA Negeri 1 Trimurjo as the sample; that was from one class which consisted of 28 students. Research data was collected by using a reading comprehension test and language learning strategies questionnaire (LLSQ). The data were analyzed by Independent-sample T-Test at the significant level of 0.05 in which is approved if  $\text{Sig.} < \alpha$ . The result shows that the most students used metacognitive strategies (3.12), and then followed by cognitive strategies (2.88) and social strategies (2.76). Based on the result of the research, it can be deduced that there is no significant difference among the three learning strategies that used by the students in reading achievement in terms of successful and unsuccessful students. For further research, it could possibly discuss the results of a test conducted to investigate the strategy most frequently used based on gender variables, and motivation.

**Keywords:** Metacognitive Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, Social Strategies

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### I. INTRODUCTION

In the era in which information can be easily gained, the ability to read is important. According to Eskey (2005) in Zang & Seepho (2013), many EFL students may not need to speak English in their daily lives but they need to read it to access the richness of information in English. In particular for EFL college or university students, Levine, Ferenz, and Reves (2000) in Zang & Seepho (2013) mentioned that the ability to read academic text is one of the most important skills.

In accordance with Levine et al, as we know that the emphasize of teaching learning at school in Indonesia is on reading. It is supported by the student's national exam test which consist of reading comprehension questions have more portion than other skills. Besides, reading also dominates all textbook or module used by senior high school students.

Haris and Sipay (1985) stated that reading is a complicated process in understanding meaning of written symbols which are influenced by the reader's perceptual skills, decoding skills, experiential backgrounds, mind sets, and reasoning abilities as they anticipate meaning on the basis of what they have read. Meanwhile comprehension is the applying of prior knowledge to produce new knowledge (Adams and Bruce in Haris, 1985). The written materials would be meaningless if the use of prior knowledge is not available. Furthermore, reading comprehension is depend on three factors. They are linguistics mastery of the text, the reader's ability to exercise metacognitive control over the content being read to monitor and to reflect on his own level of understanding while reading the material, and the reader's own background in the content and vocabulary being presented (Karen Tankersley, 2003). In sum, reading comprehension is the act to look for the information put in by the writer in the text or written language, then the readers understand the total meaning of the text.

In addition, since the amount of information to be processed by language learners is high in language classroom, learners use different language learning strategies in performing the tasks and processing the new input they face. Language learning strategies are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during the process of language learning especially in comprehending a text. In other words, language learning strategies give 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.

In recent years, there have been many researchers who paid attention much in learning strategies on the cognitive process of second language learning (e.g. Anderson, 1991; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1993, 2002). They defined the strategies as essential techniques intentionally and consciously used by language learners for effective understanding, remembering, and using information. In line with them, Weinstein & Mayer (1986) stated that learning strategies are "behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning and that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process". As a result, a number of researchers have focused on the strategic process of learning and the types of strategies most frequently used by successful language learners.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classified learning strategies into three subcategories. They are cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and social strategies. According to O'Malley and Chamot metacognitive is strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Meanwhile, cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing are among the most important cognitive strategies. And the social strategies, related to social-mediating activity and transacting with others. Cooperation and question for clarification are the main social strategies

Previously, there are some research related to this study. First, Mohammad Hossein Gerami Shiva Madani Ghareh Baighlou (2011). The students often used metacognitive strategies while the latter tended to use surface level cognitive strategies. The results of this study can be beneficial for Iranian language teachers in terms of raising their awareness on narrowing the gap between the students' language learning strategies and their teaching methodologies preferences. Second, Mina Rastegar, Ehsan Mehrabi Kermani, Massoud Khabir (2017) The findings of this study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between the use of overall metacognitive reading strategies by the participants and their reading comprehension achievement. Third, Narjes Ghafournia (2014) conducted research about language learning strategy use and reading achievement. The findings of this study manifested that more successful language learners utilized cognitive, metacognitive, memory, and compensation strategies more frequently than did less successful learners. The last one is Jahanbakhsh Nikoopour et. All (2011), the results showed that Iranian EFL learners preferred to use metacognitive as the most frequently used language learning strategy and memory as the least frequently one.

The present study was designed to investigate what strategies used by second year students based on their achievement. The study also explored the strategies applied more frequently by successful and less successful learners to assist language teachers in improving teaching approaches to bridge the gap between more successful and less successful learners. The following research questions are addressed in this study:

- 1) What strategies are most frequently used by successful second year EFL learners?
- 2) What strategies are most frequently used by unsuccessful second year EFL learners?

## **II. METHOD**

### **2.1 Research Design .**

This study was quantitative research. In conducting this research, the researcher used ex post facto designs. the study is investigated to find out the strategies most frequently used by successful and unsuccessful second year EFL learners.

### **2.2 Research Sample**

The participants of this study were the second year of SMAN 1 Trimurjo, Center Lampung. The researcher took one class as the sample which consisted of 28 students. The students were selected by random sampling.

### **2.3 Research Instrument and Procedure**

A questionnaire was an adapted learning strategies questionnaire created by Setiyadi (2006) consisted 20 items and divided into 3 categories of learning strategy which includes cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies. This research used a Likert scale. In addition, the researcher also gave the test of reading

comprehension to know and get the data for their achievement. The test for reading was about 30 questions and the kind of test was used in this research is multiple choice. The research procedure used these following steps: 1) Observing 2) Determining the sample of the research. 3) Determining research instruments. 4) Selecting instrument. 5) Administering the reading test and questionnaire. 6) Analyzing the data. 7) Making the report of the findings. The data were analyzed by Independent-sample T-Test at the significant level of 0.05 in which the hypothesis is approved if  $\text{Sig.} < \alpha$ .

**2.4 Data Analysis**

In this research, the writer used cronbach alpha in SPSS 16.0 to measure reliability of the questionnaire because the questionnaire is formed in likert scale and the questionnaire had high coeficient, that is, the reliability coeficient of questionnaire was 0.767. The questionnaire is considered as reliable if  $\alpha > 0.600$ . It means that all items in the questionnaire are reliable to be applied. Further, for the reliability of the LLSQ the researcher comparing r value and r table. After comparing it, the result showed that r value bigger than r table, so it can be assumed that most of the items are valid. Meanwhile to measure validity of reading comprehension test, the researcher used content and construct validity. And for reliability of the test, the researcher used inter-rater. The researcher used inter-rater to measure the validity of reading test. The researcher used two teachers to give judgement. After that, the researcher inputted and calculated the data into SPSS verse 17.0 (**Cohen’s Kappa**).

**III. RESULT**

**1) Reading Comprehension Test**

After computing the result of reading comprehension test, the writer found that the highest score was 78, while the lowest score was 54 of 28 students. The average score was 66. 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.	54-57	4	14%
2	58-61	6	21%
3.	62-65	1	4%
4.	66-69	4	14%
5.	70-73	8	29%
6.	74-77	4	14%
7.	78-81	1	4%

The table above shows that since the average score was 66, the students got the score  $\geq 66$  means they were belong to the students who had high score. On the other hand, the students who got the score  $< 66$  means they were belong to the students who had low score. It could be seen in the table that there were 61% students got high score and 39% students got low score.

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

**Table 2  
Group Statistics**

	Student	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
COGNITIVE	High Score	17	<b>2.88</b>	.332	.081
	Low Score	11	<b>2.45</b>	.820	.247
METACOGNITIVE	High Score	17	<b>3.12</b>	.697	.169
	Low Score	11	<b>3.00</b>	.775	.234
SOCIAL	High Score	17	<b>2.76</b>	.437	.106
	Low Score	11	<b>2.64</b>	.809	.244

From the table, it can be seen that the use of language learning strategy in English reading comprehension of successful (high score) and unsuccessful (low score) learners are different in the use in its category. The table above shows that the mean score of metacognitive strategies have the highest mean (3.12) among the three learning strategies used by the students who have high or low score. It means that the most students who gained high or low score used metacognitive strategies in learning reading. Furthermore, if the three strategies are compared in term of the mean score of the students who gained high score, metacognitive strategies (3.12) have the highest score then followed by cognitive (2.88) and social strategies (2.76). Meanwhile. If those are compared in term of the mean score of the students who gained low score, the result shows that metacognitive strategies (3.00) still became the highest score, then followed by social (2.64) and cognitive strategies (2.45).

**Table 3**  
**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test For Equality Of Variances		T-Test For Equality Of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval Of The Difference	
									Lower	Upper
COGNITIVE	Equal Variances Assumed	12.105	.002	.935	26	.064	.428	.221	-.027	.882
	Equal Variances Not Assumed			.645	12.149	.126	.428	.260	-.138	.994
METACOGNITIVE	Equal Variances Assumed	.021	.887	.418	26	.679	.118	.282	-.461	.696
	Equal Variances Not Assumed			.408	19.814	.688	.118	.288	-.484	.719
SOCIAL	Equal Variances Assumed	9.237	.005	.546	26	.590	.128	.235	-.355	.612
	Equal Variances Not Assumed			.483	13.828	.637	.128	.266	-.443	.699

See column t value and Sig. (2-tailed) in the table above. It shows that there was not any significant difference between students who gained high and low score in mastering English especially in reading comprehension. Based on the result above, the data analysis indicates that metacognitive strategies are most frequently used by senior high school students in reading comprehension, then followed by cognitive strategies and social strategies.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

From the result above, the researcher assumed that since the sample of this research was the second year students of senior high school in EFL setting, the level of their English ability was good enough because they have been learning English since elementary school until now. In this case, the students who have good ability in English, it could be understandable that they mostly used metacognitive strategies to answer the questions more than other strategies. It is supported by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) statement that metacognitive is strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place,

monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. It means that metacognitive strategies mostly used by those who had enough basic in English.

Furthermore, the result of this study indicated that that the strategies most frequently used by the students who gained good score in reading comprehension are metacognitive strategies then followed by cognitive and social strategies. In accordance with the previous study from Mohammad Hossein Gerami Shiva Madani Ghareh Baighlou (2011) and Jahanbakhsh Nikoopour et. All (2011) which revealed that learners preferred to use metacognitive as the most frequently used language learning strategy than others strategies. However, whatever the types of learning strategies used by the students, the most important is it could help the students answering the question in reading test.

## **V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

In sum, it can be deduced that learning strategies used by the students can affect their achievement. In this case, their achievement was especially in reading comprehension. The result of the research showed that the strategies most frequently used by the students who gained good score in reading comprehension are metacognitive strategies then followed by cognitive and social strategies. Then, for futher researcher, it is suggested to conduct research more deeply to get more reliable data by adding other variables like motivation to be correlated by learning strategies and achievement.

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