

# The Influence of Students' Reading Strategies on Comprehending Reading Texts

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**Abstract** : Reading is an essential component of language training at all levels since it promotes a variety of learning methods in addition to being a source of knowledge and fascinating experiences. Strategies in Reading refer to methods used to improve students' reading ability to get the meaning of the text. This study was intended to investigate the reading strategies used by Semarang University Students taking English course in the second semester. This study focused on identifying the influence of reading strategies on comprehending the overall reading texts. Sixty-four undergraduate students acted as the respondents for this study by distributing questionnaires. The data then were tested by using a regression test. The results show that the sig value was  $0.000 < 0.05$  with the conclusion that the ability to manage reading strategies influenced overall reading comprehension abilities. has a positive influence of 30% on overall reading comprehension ability. The regression equation obtained is what can be interpreted as every time the reading strategy management ability increases by 1 unit, the overall reading comprehension ability increases by 0.679 units. This means that the use of reading strategies influences overall reading comprehension. While the most used strategy was I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading (problem solving, the least used was I skim the text first.

**Keywords** : Reading Comprehension, Reading Strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is a key skill in language acquisition since it allows readers to absorb new knowledge and enhance the level of information through the thinking process. Nonetheless, many Indonesian students have problems in reading skill due to a lack of enthusiasm and drive to read extensively, resulting in extremely low comprehension. According to the 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy (PRILS), Indonesia ranks 41st out of 45 nations in terms of reading ability (quoted in Litbang Kemdikbud) suggesting that Indonesian students' reading abilities are still low.

Reading is essential to education since it is a means of acquiring knowledge making it a crucial part of all subject areas. For any formal schooling to advance, this ability is necessary. It makes up a significant portion of students' academic lives. Since reading is the most practical and successful way to acquire a foreign language, it is even more important for language learners, especially those learning English (Dreyer, 1998).

No matter their level of proficiency, students must read. However, the majority of them struggle to understand the text's entire meaning, particularly when it comes to academic

materials, which frequently contain lengthy paragraphs and a large number of unfamiliar words. This is because comprehension is a challenging process that requires prior knowledge from the students. Therefore, comprehension won't just happen if no strategies are used; rather, adopting strategies when reading will aid students in comprehending the material and resolving any issues or knowledge gaps they may have throughout reading activities, thereby improving comprehension. The assertion made by Rong and Xiaome (2006, referenced in Khairiyani 2012, p. 1), according to which, since the late 1970s, reading

Learning strategies can also reveal how a person learns. Furthermore, learning strategy is related to how a person receives and perceives information in learning circumstances. As a result, utilizing a reading technique to comprehend academic materials is essential, especially for lower language learners, because without it, they will struggle to extract the gist of the text. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1989, cited in Jou 2015, p. 181), "the major obstacle for successful language learning due to the fact that learners do not use the learning strategies effectively". As a result, many students fail to learn and lack drive to improve their skills.

For the second semester students of Semarang University taking English Course, reading proficiency is a must, moreover the subject contains many advanced reading text materials. Most of them still did not know how to read effectively. Therefore, the researcher conducted a research entitled "The Influence of Students' Reading Strategies on Their Academic Achievements."

*Reading Comprehension*, "Reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately," state Grabe and Stoller (2002, p. 9). According to Bamford and Day (1998, p. 9), reading is the process of deriving meaning from written or printed materials so that the reader is aware of the text's precise content. Reading helps kids gain language proficiency because it provides them with a wealth of information and critical understanding. Accordingly, Brown (2007, p. 99) said that reading helps children learn a language and that the more they read, the more proficient they become in the language due to the benefits of reading on vocabulary, spelling, and writing.

Koda (2005, cited in Grabe 2009, p. 14) suggested that comprehension happens when the reader can extract and blend information from the text with what they already know. Thus, when someone attempts to comprehend the text, she or he combines her or his previous knowledge with the most recent information obtained while reading the text in order to achieve the goal of her or his reading, because one of the purposes of reading comprehension is to obtain the information required or available in text reading. "The reader understands by actively constructing meaning internally from interacting with the material that is read" (Anderson and Pearson 2000, p.52). In short, it can be concluded that the essence of reading comprehension is the readers' ability to interact with the text to get the information needed.

Comprehension is the process by which readers generate meaning from text by combining past knowledge and experience, textual information, and readers' perspectives on the text (Duke and Pearson 2004). Reading broad comprehension refers to the capacity to grasp information from texts and interpret it appropriately and accurately. However, Extensive Reading technique in comprehension abilities are highly complicated and differ in multiple ways based on the tasks, motivation, aim, and language abilities (Erler 2012).

*Reading strategy*, one of the most crucial English language skills that students need to acquire is reading. Reading is one of the language abilities that is most significant because it is a part of our everyday lives. There are numerous advantages to reading for humans. Pratiwi (2017) stated that employing extensive reading tactics is one tactic teachers may take into consideration to improve their pupils' reading abilities. Students' reading comprehension is thought to benefit from the use of reading techniques, which also give them the tools to manage their reading more skillfully. According to research, proficient readers are actively engaged in reading activity (Banditvilai 2020).

Reading strategies types are as follows: 1. Skimming, skimming refers to a speed-reading strategy. The goal of skimming is to acquire an overview of the order of the text and the primary concept from a passage in a book. 2). Scanning is a reading ability that allows the reader to find specific information rapidly. 3). Making Predictions defines prediction as "the use of existing knowledge of a pattern or system to anticipate what is likely in a novel situation." 4). Questioning

allows students to assess their comprehension while remaining engaged and interested in their reading. Readers can ask questions before, during, and after reading (Ghazal, 1997).

The research on reading strategies had been conducted by many researchers like: Jusoh and Abdullah (2015), Wahyudi and Firmansyah (2023), and Fitriana (--). Jusoh and Abdullah (2015) focused their research on Students' Reading Strategies for Online Reading. The findings indicate that all students use strategies, and the field of study has little influence on the type of overall strategy adopted. However, there was a considerable variation in assistance strategies. One result is the necessity for classroom training to raise students' understanding of the importance of using a variety of tactics when reading online information.

Wahyudi and Firmansyah (2023) highlighted their research on the effectiveness of Extensive Reading Strategy on the Students' Ability in Reading Comprehension. They applied quantitative design and used experimental and control group. The data demonstrated that the T-critical (T-c) value on the level 2.024 was greater than the t-table. As a result, the alternative hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis was rejected. The researcher concluded that there was a considerable effect of the extensive reading strategy on the students' comprehension skills.

Fitriana (--) on her research entitled "Students' Reading Strategies in Comprehending Academic Reading: A Case Study in an Indonesian Private Collage" focused on which strategies used by the low level and high-level proficiency students in comprehending academic readings. Data reduction, data visualization, and conclusion drafting were used in the analysis of the data. The study's findings demonstrated that low and high proficiency pupils used distinct tactics.

Additionally, the outcome demonstrated that there are five factors—motivation, linguistic ability, curiosity, text feature, and environment role—that affect students' comprehension of what they read. While this research also discussed on Reading Strategies, the focus was on whether these strategies aid students to get the overall comprehension of the texts and what reading strategies that were commonly used by students in their reading activity.

## METHODS

This research applied both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method was conducted by using regression test (ANOVA) to analyze the data. While qualitative method was applied to discuss the most and least commonly used strategies among students.

The participants of this study were 64 students at second semester majoring in Information Technology. Based on preliminary research, it was discovered that this class was mixed ability level in English proficiency. The data were collected by distributing the questionnaires.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data were tested by using tests of Normality, ANOVA, Model Summary, and Coefficients. The results were as follows:

Table 1. Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Read Strategies	.100	64	.183	.969	64	.112
Global	.094	64	.200*	.980	64	.376

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 2. Anova

		ANOVA <sup>a</sup>				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	793.479	1	793.479	26.535	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1854.006	62	29.903		

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total	2647.484	63			

a. Dependent Variable: global

b. Predictors: (Constant), read strategies

Table 3. Model Summary

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.547 <sup>a</sup>	.300	.288	5.46839

a. Predictors: (Constant), read strategies

b. Dependent Variable: global

Table 4. Coefficients

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	27.621	3.868		7.140	.000
1	Read Strategies	.679	.132	.547	5.151	.000

a. Dependent Variable: global

Based on Table 1, the reading strategy management ability data has a sig value of  $0.183 > 0.05$  so the data is normally distributed. Comprehensive reading comprehension ability has a sig value of  $0.200 > 0.05$  so the data has a normal distribution. Both data are normally distributed, so data analysis can be continued using parametric statistical tests.

The influence of the ability to manage reading strategies on comprehensive reading comprehension abilities was tested using a regression test with the output results shown in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4. Based on Table 2, the sig value is  $0.000 < 0.05$  with the conclusion that the ability to manage reading strategies influences reading comprehension abilities. comprehensive. Based on Table 3 and Table 4, the ability to manage reading strategies has a positive influence of 30% on overall reading comprehension abilities. The regression equation obtained is what can be interpreted as every time the reading strategy management ability increases by 1 unit, the overall reading comprehension ability increases by 0.679 units.

The results of this research are supported by previous research that students use their skills in utilizing reading strategies to improve reading comprehension (Deliany & Cahyono, 2020). Reading ability is due to the use of appropriate reading strategies and techniques (Annisa et al., 2023). The use and selection of appropriate reading strategies for students shows that there is intervention in the reading process. This reading intervention has a big impact on the reading comprehension process (Filderman et al., 2022).

In terms of individual strategies, Table 5 describes the top seven and the bottom seven strategies chosen by the participants. It can be seen that among the top seven strategies, three are from problem solving and global while only one belongs to support reading strategies. This shows that both problem solving and global strategies are the most commonly used strategies while the least used are support strategies. The most popularly used strategy was 'stopping from time to time to think about what I'm reading' while the least used was 'I skim the text first'.

**Table 5** Top seven and bottom seven reading strategies

No	Top seven strategies	Bottom seven strategies
1	I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading. (PROB)	I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading (PROB)
2	I think about what I know to help me understand what I read (GLOB)	When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.(SUP)
3	I preview the text to see what I read (GLOB)	I take notes when reading to help me understand what I read. (SUP)
4	I use Typographical aids like bold and italics to identify key information. (GLOB)	I paraphrase to better understand what I read.(SUP)
5	I read slowly but carefully to be sure, I understand what I'm reading (PROB)	I ask myself questions as I read and I like to find the answer in the text.(GLOB)
6	When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading (PROB)	I think about whether the of the texts fits my reading purpose(GLOB)
7	I use reference materials such as dictionaries to help me understand what I read (SUP)	I skim the text first by noting the characteristics like length and organization(GLOB)

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that reading strategies are very essential to improve student's ability in comprehending the overall reading texts. The research has also indicated that students are all frequent users of strategies. This was supported by with other studies (Anderson, 2003; Pookchareon, 2009) which indicated that all second language learners use strategies to help them with reading comprehension. However, an interesting finding of the most popular group of strategies was problem solving and global which mostly concerning that they need time to understand and whether the texts suit their purpose. While the least used strategy was skimming. This might due to the fact that they are not students majoring in English, therefore they were not used to reading fast to get the overall idea of the text.

To get more valid results this research might need to completed with interviews to the students as well as to conduct this research in a broader scale and longer period of time.

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Finally, I realize that this research is still far from prefect. Therefore, comments, critiques, and suggestions from the readers are greatly appreciated for the improvement of this research.

Somehow, I hope that this research could become a positive contribution to the educational development, to the readers, and to those who want to accomplish further research.

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