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READING STRATEGIES OF INDONESIAN ENGLISH TEACHERS in EFL CONTEXT

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the reading strategies of Indonesian English teachers in East Kalimantan. As a preliminary research, this survey study involved 86 of in-service and pre-service teachers of English teachers in four different districts; Samarinda as the capital city, Balikpapan, Penajam Paser Utara and Sanga-Sanga of Kutai Kartanegara. Using MARSI questionnaires (Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory) Version 1.0 with simple statistical analysis, the results indicate that there are three most widely used strategies by the learners to understand the reading English texts, namely guess the word, use a dictionary, and a confirmation peers. In addition, lack of vocabulary will hinder comprehension therefore guessing difficult words and the use of dictionary are frequently used by the respondents.

Keywords: reading strategy, MARSI, EFL context

INTRODUCTION

The use of strategies in language learning becomes very important as it is needed to make learning process becomes easier, faster, enjoyable, and effective. Previous research has indicated that good language learners may benefit from some strategies to learn and understand English. As specific conscious actions, language learning strategies are utilized by English language learners to develop their competencies and self-awareness (learners' autonomy) for their own learning (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

In addition, there is a positive correlation between the used learning strategies with leaners' language learning success (Macaro, 2006). There is also growing evidence that learners' awareness of the specific cognitive strategies they are utilizing to enhance their L2 learning is correlated with their academic success e.g. (Chamot, 2004; Oxford, 2011; Zhang, 2002). Contemporary educational theory has shown that learner-mediated metacognitive processes lead to increased learning, which can subsequently enhance cognitive efficiency and self-efficacy (Flavell, 1992; Pressley & Block, 2002).

Not only will learners benefit by utilizing their own metacognitive processes, research has also shown that learners also benefit from teachers' strategy-based instructional interventions in both first language (Alexander,

1995; Palincsar & Brown, 1984) and L2 situations (Carrell, Pharis, & Liberto, 1989; Janzen & Stoller, 1998). Strategy-based instruction, where teachers include language learning strategies within their teaching practices, can therefore offer promise for L2 learners, especially if the value of the strategy can be made clear to the student. Considering to this, the power of the teacher's authority can modify student' behaviors, as demonstrated in the use of language learning strategies related to language proficiency (Zhang, 2001, 2003). Despite the fact of the teacher's authority to transfer their knowledge of strategies used in language learning to their students, therefore it is important to set highlight in identifying the language learning strategies that the teachers utilized as learner themselves. Thus, this study explores their metacognitive and language learning strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chamot (2004) defines cognitive strategies include the skills of predicting based on prior or background knowledge, analyzing text organization by looking for specific patterns, self-questioning, making a summary, taking notes by writing down the main idea or specific points, using the first language as a base for understanding or producing second language, inference, using available information found in the text to guess the meaning of new items, predicting outcomes or filling missing information and transferring, i.e. using previous linguistic knowledge or prior skills to assist comprehension or production. Metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learnt.

Both cognitive and metacognitive strategies refer to individual work, while socio-affective strategies refer to group work. They include asking questions, cooperating with others, empathizing with others, control the attitudes and emotions and understand that negative feelings retard learning. As socio-affective strategies are tightly related to working groups that require classroom interaction among students (S-S interaction) and between students and the teacher (T-S interaction), they are not the focus of this study, although they also play an important role in developing students' reading comprehension skill through classroom and group work instructions.

When conducting the reading comprehension tests, students must use one of these strategies which might include individual strategies or group work strategies. When they are working in individual, of course individual strategies such as cognitive and metacognitive strategies are mostly applied than socio-affective ones. Which type or which part of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies students would tend to use, will be the focus of this study.

Metacognitive Strategies

Unlike cognitive strategies, metacognitive gives the learner to coordinate his or her learning by planning the language in an efficient way. When new vocabulary, rules and writing system confuses the learner, it becomes vital for successful language learning. (Chamot, 2004) describe that metacognitive involves thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task and evaluating how well one has learnt.

Oxford (2011) proposes that metacognitive includes centering, arranging and planning as well as evaluating the learning. It is the steps that the learner takes to manage or to regulate his or her learning, such as planning and arranging for learning tasks, setting goals and objectives, monitoring the learning process for errors, and evaluating progress (Wu, 2008). (Chamot, 2004) O'Malley and Chamot (1990) argue that metacognitive strategies are higher order executive skills that may entail planning for monitoring or evaluating success of the learning activities. They are management techniques by which the learner controls his or her learning process via planning, monitoring, evaluating and modifying his or her learning approaches (Zhang and Wu, 2009).

Metacognitive strategies go beyond the cognitive mechanism and give learners to coordinate their learning. This helps them to plan language learning in an efficiency way. When new vocabulary, rules and writing system confuse the learners, these strategies become vital for successful language learning (Samida, 2012). According to Chamot and Kupper (1989) metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned. Oxford (1990) proposes that metacognitive strategies included three strategies sets: centering, arranging and planning, as well as evaluating the learning. Metacognitive strategies are steps that learners take to manage or regulate their learning, such as planning and arranging for learning tasks, setting goals and objectives, monitoring the learning process for errors, and evaluating progress (Wu, 2008).

METHOD

Initially the distributed questionnaires were 123 but the returned were only 86 of in-service and pre-service teachers of English teachers in four different districts; Samarinda as the capital city, Balikpapan, Penajam Paser Utara and Sanga-Sanga of Kutai Kertanegara, in East Kalimantan. The participants responded the given MARSI questionnaires (Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory) Version 1.0 by Mokhtari dan Reichard (2002). The participants were required to complete for about 90 minutes for both questionnaires. The focus of questionnaires was to investigate metacognitive awareness and language learning strategies of the

teachers in order to provide the preliminary data of teacher skills and strategies of reading comprehension for training mapping.

The MARSI questionnaires are five points of Likert type scale that has five-option scale which is used to allow the respondents to show their view or degree of liking or disliking with particular statement. It does not restrict the respondents to remain between yes or no but allows them for showing the degree of opinion the scale is divided in five options; the first is not true, the second is usually not true, the third is somewhat true, the fourth is usually true of me and the last is always true of me. The responses of the questionnaires were analyzed descriptively in terms of frequency and percentage.

Table 1. Organization of MARCI statements

Kinds of MARCI	Items number
Global Strategies	1,3,4,7,10,14,17,19, 22,23,25,26,29
Problem Solving Strategies	2,5,6,9,12,15,20,24,28
Support Strategies	8,11,13,16,18,21,27,30

There are thirteen (13) items for global strategies that are items number 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, and 29. For problem solving strategies, nine (9) items are addressed. They are 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 15, 20, 24, and 28. And for support strategies, eight (8) items, namely 8, 11, 13, 16, 18, 21, 27, and 30.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Global strategy

Questionnaire Items	Total Agree		Total Disagree		Total Undecided	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. I have a purpose in mind when I read	51	59.30	5	5.81	30	34.88
3. I think about what I know to help me understand what I read	51	59.30	2	2.33	33	38.37
4. I preview the text to see what it's about before reading it	60	69.77	12	13.95	14	16.28
7. I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose	56	65.12	0	0.0	30	34.88
10. I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization	30	34.88	16	18.60	40	46.51
14. I decide what to read closely and what to	44	51.16	7	8.14	35	40.70

ignore						
17. I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding	35	40.70	23	26.74	28	32.56
19. I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading	45	52.33	5	5.81	36	41.86
22. I use typographical aids like bold face and italics to identify key information	48	55.81	11	12.79	27	31.40
23. I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text	22	25.58	17	19.77	47	54.65
25. I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information	45	52.33	6	6.98	35	40.70
26. I try to guess what the material is about when I read	71	82.56	5	5.81	10	11.63
29. I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.	66	76.74	2	2.33	18	20.93

Statements 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, and 29, which are summarized in the table 2 above, present the global strategy in which the learners utilize to manage their reading. It refers to pre-reading activities such as having a purpose in mind before reading and thinking about what the reading material will about (pre-information). For item 1 "I have a purpose in mind when I read' the majority of respondents 59.3% gave response either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' choices to this statement. It is in line with the response for item 3, 4, and 7, majority of respondents gave response 'strongly agree' or 'agree' , respectively 59.3%, 69.8%, and 65.1%. This is similar to having setting up the thinking before reading or self-questioning. By doing self-questioning, the learners were able to identify and recall important information through the utilization their background knowledge to make inferences what the text will be about (Gajria, Jitendra, Sood, & Sacks, 2007). Learners are able to monitor their own comprehension by asking themselves a series of self-generated before reading a passage (Rouse, Alber-Morgan, Cullen, & Sawyer, 2014).

In reply to the statement " I skim the text first by noting characteristic like length and organization" respondents reported 'undecided ' ones 45.6%, and 'agree' 34.9%. It is noticed that respondents are not always skim the text before they read it. Even skimming is one of the two most useful strategies used in reading, many of them do not really know or unsure how and when to do it (Pammu, Amir, & Maasum, 2014).

While respondents were not always doing skimming when they read, they claimed that they did not read in detail but only to get the general ideas

and focused on the interesting information, as it was seen in statement item 14, "I decide what to read closely and what to ignore, 51.2% respondents agree to do it. It is also supported by the statements, item 17 "I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding" with response agree 40.7% , and item 19 "I use context cues to help me better understanding what I'm reading" with the highest "agree" response 52.3%, and item 22 "I use typographical aids like bold face and italics to identify key information" more positive response 55.8%. From those statements, it is concluded that majority respondents utilize scanning strategy when they read the text. When to look for a particular word, phrase, or information, this strategy is able to locate and select information based on the selected key information.

Interestingly, when it comes to the statement leading to the issue of critical thinking, item 23 "I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text", respondents reported 'undecided' 54.7%, and only 25.6% respondents always criticize and evaluate the information they read. It becomes a crucial issue because the respondents are teachers who are expected to make their students comprehend their English texts. Through thinking critically, the students are able to read in-between lines and to think critically (Tabačkováa, 2015).

Critical thinking has significant role in reading comprehension ability, (Paul & Elder, 2004) emphasized the relationship between critical thinking and reading comprehension. As he claimed that reading is a reflection of thinking about how to read. A study by Kamgar & Jadidi (2016) indicated that that there was a significant relationship between learners' critical thinking and their reading comprehension ability. This study also implied that learners with less critical thinking have poor comprehension.

Despite of criticizing the text, the respondents favored to use guessing strategy. For item 26 "I try to guess what the material is about when I read", the majority of respondents, 82.6% gave positive response either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' choices to this statement. This choice is supported with the statement item 25 "I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information" and 29 "I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong", in which, the responses 'totally agree' 52.3% and 76.7% respectively were chosen. Guessing word meaning from context is one of the most favored vocabulary learning strategies among second language learners. While inferring the meaning of an unfamiliar word, language learners use different types of clues including contextual ones (T. S. Paribakht & Wesche, 1999).

As Paribakht (2005) points out that when language learners encounter lexical gaps while reading, the sentence is the primary source of cues that they rely on. The learners tended to focus on sentence level cues

particularly sentence meaning. It is believed that rich context has enabled the language learners to guess word meaning from context correctly.

Table 3. Support strategy

Questionnaire Items	Total Agree		Total Disagree		Total Undecided	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
2. I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read	51	59.30	19	22.09	16	18.60
5. When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read	46	53.49	19	22.09	21	24.42
6. I summarize what I read to reflect on important information in the text	43	50.00	12	13.95	31	36.05
9. I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding	51	59.30	19	22.09	16	18.60
12. I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it	58	67.44	7	8.14	21	24.42
15. I use reference materials such as dictionaries to help me understand what I read	65	75.58	8	9.30	13	15.12
20. I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read	36	41.86	20	23.26	30	34.88
24. I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it	38	44.19	6	6.98	42	48.84
28. I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text	52	60.47	15	17.44	19	22.09

Support strategy refers to the utilization of aids (dictionaries, note taking, and other practical strategies) to assist the language learners in comprehending the text. Table above shown that majority of respondents, 51%, agree to take notes while reading as it is shown in the item questionnaire 2 " I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read". When the language learners are taking notes, they could review what they have read and tried to define, measure and evaluate the text. By doing this, the language learners were able to underline and map the concepts, so it would affect on detailed learning, synthesis tasking and critical reviewing of

a text. For underlining technique, item 12 " I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it" has been chosen by the majority of respondent, 58% respondents "Agree" to do this techniques. The hierarchical position of concepts that the learners made while taking notes would direct their attention and retention of content.

Furthermore, underlining improved both detailed learning and synthesis tasking (Lonka, Lindblom-YlÄnne, & Maury, 1994; Slotte & Lonka, 1999). Note taking also helped the language learners to distinguish different layers of texts and interrelationship between Reading aloud difficult words also becomes one of aids to help the language learners understand the text. Item 5 " when text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read" , 41 % of respondents "Agree' to implement this strategy. For this statement, 21% respondents committed to not always utilize this strategy, whereas 19% respondents did not utilize this strategy to help their understanding to the text. For summarizing the text, 43% respondents agree to use this strategy to help them to reflect the important information in the text, while 31% respondents did not always make a summary to extract the important information and about 12% respondents "Disagree" to apply this strategy.

Discuss what have been reading with others is believed to be useful to check understanding of a text. Most of majority, 51% respondents "Agree" to use this strategy, while 16 % respondents did not always use this to check their understanding, and 19 % respondents did not agree that discussing with other can help them to get the understanding of texts. Most of respondents, 65%, agree to use dictionaries as referencing material to help them understand the English word, either they seek for the meaning of each word or they seek for the explanation of the concepts, item 15 " I use reference materials such as dictionaries to help me understand what I read". Not only using referencing materials to aid the respondents in comprehending the text, they also utilize self-question. For item 28 "I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text ", 52% respondents 'Agree' to ask a question with their own expected answers as they read the text. However, among other strategies used in support strategy, paraphrasing and inferencing are not so favorite to be implemented, it is about 36% and 38% respondents 'Agree' respectively.

Table 4. Problem solving strategy

Questionnaire Items	Total Agree		Total Disagree		Total Undecided	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
8. I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading	65	75.58	1	1.16	20	23.26
11. I try to get back on track when I lose concentration	65	75.58	3	3.49	18	20.93
13. I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading	42	48.84	5	5.81	39	45.35
16. When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I'm reading	78	90.70	3	3.49	5	5.81
18. I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading	43	50.00	17	19.77	26	30.23
21. I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read	34	39.53	14	16.28	38	44.19
27. When text becomes difficult, I re-read to increase my understanding	73	84.88	0	0.00	13	15.12
30. I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	58	67.44	1	1.16	27	31.40

Problem solving strategy refers to strategy for solving problems when text becomes difficult to read consisting of eight items. Regarding to challenges to comprehend the text, most of respondents "Agree" to read slowly, pay attention to difficult texts, and even re-read again when it is necessary to understand the text. It shown with 66%, 65%, 78%, and 73% respectively to item 8 "I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading", item 11 "I try to get back on track when I lose concentration", item 16 "When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I'm reading", item 27 "When text becomes difficult, I re-read to increase my understanding". Related to difficult texts or words, 58% respondents 'Agree' to do guessing, item 30 "I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases".

Adjusting to speed reading rate and pausing reading are utilized the respondents to focus on the text they read. Item 13 "I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading" and item 18 "I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading, 42% and 43% respondents 'Agree' respectively. However, the respondents are not really sure that picturing and visualizing information can help them to understand the text, 38% respondents chose scale "Undecided" whereas only 34% respondents 'Agree', and 14% respondents 'Disagree'.

CONCLUSION

From these results it can be concluded that the three most widely used strategies learners to understand the text reading English, namely guess the word, use a dictionary, and a confirmation peers. Guessing difficult words using context reading is one of the most widely used strategy of respondents in this study. For learners who do not have enough vocabulary ability to comprehend reading text, using keyword is used as a clue words such as marking the words used repeatedly is an effective strategy and facilitative.

However, it is not easy to understand the vocabulary directly from the reading text if learners are not familiar with the vocabulary they read. Plus, if the reading text does not provide enough information for learners to guess and understand the text based on the context of the passage. The use of media such as a dictionary can help understanding the reading text as respondents in this study is adult learners who are no longer 'learning to read' but 'read to learn'. Deciphering the difficult words can use monolingual or bilingual dictionary. Discussions with peers on reading a difficult text content is also a strategy that is widely used by the learner. With discussion, the learners can interact and exchange ideas. In this case, the learners with the mastery of vocabulary that is less able to learn from those who have a better mastery of vocabulary.

SUGGESTION

The results of this study prove that the majority of respondents apply the strategy of charades through context, use of dictionaries, and discuss. But guess the word by using the context is not always able to help respondents understand the text as a whole, especially if the end result of the purpose of reading is not only answered questions but also to analyze and criticize the text. The use of the dictionary also has several shortcomings including make learners feel depends to interpret word for word between words in a first language and a second language. The use of a dictionary to define difficult words, making reading becomes very ineffective. This is because the learners will spend a longer time to read. Therefore, it is advisable to teach reading text comprehension strategies that encourage the formation of the ability to analyze and criticize the text.

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