STUDENTS' READING STRATEGIES AT ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is one of the skills that students must have to enrich their knowledge, especially university students. There are two kinds of reading strategies: Top - Down strategy and Bottom – Up Strategy. The aim of this research is to find information about students' reading comprehension strategies that were applied by the students when they were given reading comprehension text. The research design was qualitative approach. The informants consisted of ten English educational department students, one reading subject lecturer and the head of English educational department. Interview and observation were the major sources of the data to find out the students' strategies on reading comprehension. Based on those data, it was found that most of the students applied bottom – up strategies in reading comprehension texts.

Pemahaman membaca adalah salah satu keterampilan yang harus dimiliki siswa untuk memperkaya pengetahuan mereka, terutama mahasiswa. Ada dua jenis strategi membaca: strategi Top-Down dan strategi Bottom-Up. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan informasi tentang strategi pemahaman membaca siswa yang diterapkan oleh mahasiswa ketika mereka diberikan teks pemahaman membaca. Desain penelitian adalah pendekatan kualitatif. Informan terdiri dari sepuluh mahasiswa jurusan pendidikan bahasa Inggris, satu dosen mata pelajaran membaca dan ketua program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Wawancara dan observasi adalah sumber utama data untuk mengetahui strategi siswa dalam membaca pemahaman. Berdasarkan data tersebut, ditemukan bahwa sebagian besar siswa menerapkan strategi bottom-up dalam teks pemahaman bacaan.

Key Words: Bottom – Up, Reading Comprehension, Reading Strategies, Top – Down

INTRODUCTION

Understanding of reading texts is of course very necessary for students in studying various subjects, especially students in English major, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, North Sumatra State Islamic University, Medan (PBI FITK UIN SU). This is even more difficult because their reading texts are in the form of foreign languages, especially English. There will be many problems that will arise to master reading skills especially reading English texts. The problems that will be faced by students include the mastery of vocabulary that is still less, the vocabulary that they master is only the vocabulary needed daily rather than academic vocabulary, the difficulty level of reading material is quite difficult to understand so students find it difficult to obtain information from their reading material. It is still a vocabulary problem and the level of difficulty of the text not to mention the composition of reading texts and non-sequential information.

Based on the writer observation, if students have a strategy that is in accordance with the reading text that they must understand, then this of course can help every student to get knowledge or information easily. With the use of appropriate strategies, students can also shorten the time in reading to get the information or knowledge needed. It can be concluded that, the right strategy will produce correct understanding with a short time. Based on the observations on the fourth semester students majoring in PBI FITK UINSU Medan, they have a very low understanding of the reading material they read so that their knowledge results are also low. From the preliminary study data, most of the students argued that they had low score in English Syntax class because they did not understand some material that shared by the lecturer. In order to check if this opinion was true or not, therefore this study was made because this is very disturbing the teaching and learning process. Most of the students only expect lecturers to give them instant knowledge without looking for it through reading. Students give up quickly if they are given a very long reading material or reading material from a book. With this research, it is hoped that strategies that are suitable for the needs of students will be found.

Reading is the third stage of four skills that must be mastered by students in learning languages, as Ermanto said (2008: 1); reading is one of the skills. Students have various strategies for reading as well as their understanding of their reading material. Reading strategies are needed by students to complete various lecture assignments and to obtain knowledge through reading texts provided by lecturers and print and online media. Strategy or technique is a procedure used to achieve a predetermined goal (Tarigan: 1991). According to Agustina (2008)

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reading consists of four processes, namely: observation of reading symbols, catching/ understanding of the meanings of reading material, reacting interpretatively to reading material both positively and negatively, and the final process integrating what is obtained through reading material with life. In applying the four processes, various reading strategies are needed to gain understanding.

Text and readers are two important physical entities for the process of reading. Reading is an interactive process; in the process the reader uses code, context analysis, initial knowledge, language, and executive control strategies to understand the text (Howel and Nolet, 2000: 203). With different expressions but having nuances of meaning that are in line with these constraints, Ji Sheng (2000: 12) states that reading is the process of recognizing, interpreting, and perceiving written or printed material. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand the meaning of written material and includes awareness of strategies towards understanding. The reading strategy used by each student is certainly different according to their comfort and habits. But whether the strategies they use are in accordance with the reading text and they can get the information or understanding they want, of course this may not necessarily be answered without prior research.

This research needs to be done to find out students' understanding of their reading material, what strategies students use when reading material, and the relevance of their reading comprehension with the reading material they read. By knowing the three objectives of the study, it is expected that each student who is given reading material can apply the appropriate strategies so that their understanding of the reading material increases.

Based on those explanation, reading definition must be defined firstly. Reading is a term that contains different meanings for everyone. Some think that reading is merely voicing written symbols without questioning whether the sentences or words that are spoken are understood or not (Mujiyanto, et al., 2000: 46). Reading is the most important goal from the beginning of education. Reading is an activity of understanding a reading material so that the reader gets information from the reading material they read so that the reader can decide whether the reading material is suitable or not with the purpose of their reading.

Hirsch (2003) states that the reader must use the knowledge he already has as a reference material to find out the meaning or the most important information from the reading material. Linguists suggest that understanding is the ability to read and understand writing (Palawija, 2008: 1). Goodman, et al. in Slamet (2003: 78) reveals that reading comprehension is a process of reconstructing messages contained in text that are read in which the process of reconstructing the message

is layered, interactive, and there are processes of forming and Textting hypotheses.

Devine in Nurhadi, (2004: 1) provides a definition of reading comprehension is the process of using syntax, semantic, and rhetorical information contained in written texts arranged in the reader's mind by using common knowledge, cognitive abilities, and reasoning. Furthermore, the reader formulaText a hypothesis as an embodiment of the message written from the text.

Agustinus Suyoto (2008: 1) argues that reading comprehension or comprehension is the ability to read to understand the main ideas, important details, and all understanding. This understanding is closely related to the ability to remember the material they read. Baker and Boonkit (2004: 32) state that the reading strategy is the techniques and methods used by the reader so that the reading is ready quickly and precisely. Janzen (2003) also has similar definition; reading is defined as a plan and a habit to solve problems when dealing with meaning arrangements. This means that reading is an activity that has its own techniques and methods to obtain information from reading material.

Brown (2001) staText that the bottom-up reading process first knows various linguistic signs, such as letters, morphemes, syllables, phrase words, grammatical instructions and discourse signs, then uses a reasonable, coherent and meaningful processing mechanism. Brown (2001) staText that the bottom-up reading process first knows various linguistic signs, such as letters, morphemes, syllables, phrase words, grammatical instructions and discourse and discourse signs, then uses a reasonable, coherent and meaningful processing mechanism.

Based on the research of Siti Fauziah (2013), students do indeed need a literal understanding of understanding words per word contained in texts or discourses. This is the basis of a bottom-up strategy. Furthermore, Rukni Setyawati's research states that reading comprehension is important so it is necessary to find the right method to improve students' reading comprehension abilities.

Falina Noor Amalia stated that from the results of her research, students slow down the speed of reading to better understand the reading material. This can be seen from the observation that there are two informants, namely EM and PS. Both of these informants asked for more time to solve the questions given even though the time given was more than enough.

Research related to reading comprehension was carried out by Aan Kahsanah and Isah Cahyani from the Indonesian University of Education Bandung. This study also provides advice so that readers can apply QAR to improve reading comprehension. Describe observational data: use of time, use of dictionaries, scribbles in the question sheet and answers, attitudes in answering

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questions and writing in answering questions. Based on the observations of the researchers, the five things will be described based on each researcher.

METHOD

A qualitative approach is a research process and understanding that is based on methodology that investigate social phenomena and human problems. In this approach, the researcher makes a complex picture, examines the words, detailed reports from the respondents' views, and conducts studies on natural situations (Creswell, 1998: 15). Bogdan and Taylor (Moleong, 2007: 3) suggest that qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written and oral words from people and observed behavior.

The type of research used in this study is qualitative research. This research was chosen to find problems in depth so that understanding of students' reading strategies is more clearly obtained. This is needed to find a good solution for students so that they can find appropriate reading strategies for them to improve their reading comprehension. The location of this study was carried out in the English Language Education Study Program at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. The time of this study was carried out for three months starting from June to August 2018. The design of the research schedule was adjusted to the time and ability of funds owned by the author. Data sources were 10 English Language Education Study Program students as primary data sources. These ten students were chosen because from the preliminary research, they gave interesting answer in the interview part that they had problems in reading comprehension.

In collecting data in the field, the author uses data collection techniques, namely, observation, interviews, and documentation. In this case, the author made a direct observation of the activities during the reading carried out by the students of Medan ITU FITK PBI. The things observed were: first, what activities the students did before reading. Second, what is done by students during reading activities. Third, what the students do after reading? In this case, the writer conducted an interview with all the students of PBI FITK UIN SU Medan who were the subjects of the study. The things interviewed included activities carried out before, during and after the reading process. After that, ask them what things are the obstacles in applying their reading strategies and how they understand after they use their reading strategies. The researcher collected photos during the research process. In addition, documentation also comes from books they read and class conditions.

According to Miles and Huberman (2011), the process of data analysis was carried out continuously along with data collection and then continued after data collection was completed. In conducting data analysis, researchers refer to the stages described by Miles and Huberman which consist of three stages, namely: Data reduction (data reduction), presenting data (data display) and drawing conclusions, commonly known as interactive analysis models.

According to Sugiyono (2014) in Textting the validity of data, qualitative research methods use validity interrelations (credibility) on aspects of truth values, on their application in terms of external validity (transferability), and reliability (dependability) on aspects of consistency, and confirmability on naturalist aspects (Sugiyono, 2014). In qualitative research, the level of validity is more emphasized in the data obtained. Seeing this, the trustworthiness of research data can be said to have a significant influence on the success of a study. Valid data can be obtained with methodology. Bogdan and Taylor (Moleong, 2007: 3) suggest that qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written and oral words from people and observed behavior.

The type of research used in this study is qualitative while the approach used is a case study. This approach was chosen to find problems in students' understanding of reading and reading strategies were more clearly obtained. This is a good solution for students to improve their reading comprehension. The location of this study was carried out in the English Language Education Study Program at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. The time of this study was carried out for three months starting from June to August 2018. The design of the research was adjusted to the time and ability of owned by the author. Ten data sources were English Language Education Study Program primary data sources and 2 people, department heads and lecturer, as secondary data sources.

In collecting data in the field, the author uses data collection techniques, namely, observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation was done in PBI FITK UIN SU Medan. The things observed were: first, students did activities before reading. Second, what is done by students during reading activities? Third, what the students did after reading. The writer was conducted in an interview with all the students of the FITK PBI SU Medan who were the subjects of the study. The things interviewed were carried out before, during and after the reading process. After that asked what the obstacles in applying their reading strategies were and how they understand after they used their reading strategies. The researcher collected photos during the research process. In addition, documentation also comes from books they read and class conditions.

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FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This research used two levels of text. First text was consisted a lot of scientific vocabularies and in the second text consisted of general vocabularies that usually used in dailiy conversation. The second text were applied because the first text result were below the target. Most of the students only could answer 1 correct question. Therefore, the second text applied to the student. From the results of the students' reading comprehension text, data were obtained shows that students answered more questions in the second comprehension text. In this second text, the researcher changes the question to be easier. Perhaps this is the reason why students can get more correct answers than the first text. This could be seen from table 1.

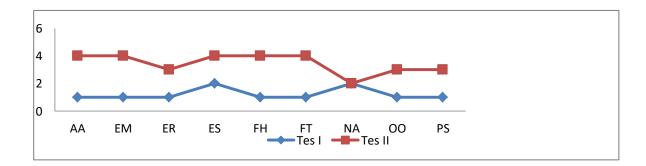
No	Students' Initial	Text I	Text II
1	AA	1	4
2	EM	1	4
3	ER	1	3
4	ES	2	4
5	FH	1	4
6	FT	1	4
7	MK	1	3
8	NA	2	2
9	00	1	3
10	PS	1	3
_	Total	12	34

Table 1. The Comparison of Students' Reading Comprehension Text

Table 1 above showed that students' correct answers increased in the reading comprehension Text II. The increase in the true number was very significant from the number of correct only one to four, this was obtained by students AA, EM, FH, and FT. While the ER, MK, OO and PS of the correct

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number one in the first comprehension text increased to three correct answers in the two comprehension texts. Increasing the results of the informant's understanding could be seen from graph 1 this below:



Graph 2. Comparison of Text I and II result

ES and NA which initially got the same correct number, namely two in the first text, the second text they got different results. ES got an increasing number of values, which were four while the NA number was still fixed in the second text, namely two. This result is very different from the previous eight informants.

Based on the description above, it could be concluded that the informants experienced an increase in the correct number when the type of text was changed to become easier although there was one informant who did not experience any improvement at all. The informant is NA. He has the same correct number in the first and second comprehension text, which were only getting two correct numbers. In addition to increasing understanding in reading if the text is changed, it can also be concluded that the type of text or discourse also has a big influence on the answer. The informant who initially knew in the first text that it was very low to increase when the text or discourse was changed.

After getting the results about understanding reading informants, the researcher continued by identifying the strategies used by the informants in answering reading comprehension questions. Identification is seen from the answers of informants in answering interview questions conducted by researchers to informants. Most of the students used similar strategy.

The description of the interview could also be seen in the previous discussion regarding the description of the interview data I and II. The conclusion from the interview results could be seen in the table. 2

No	Inisial	Reading Strategy	Reading Strategy	
	Informan	Text I	Text II	
1	AA	Bottom – up	Bottom – up	
2	EM	Bottom – up	Bottom – up	
3	ER	Bottom – up	Bottom – up	
4	ES	Top-down	Top-down	
5	FH	Bottom – up	Bottom – up	
6	FT	Bottom – up	Bottom – up	
7	MK	Bottom – up	Bottom – up	
8	NA	Top-down	Top-down	
9	OO	Bottom – up	Bottom – up	
10	PS	Bottom – up	Bottom – up	

Table 3. Reading Strategies in Text I and II

Table 2 above shows the reading strategy that the informants did when working on reading comprehension text I and II. From the table above, it can be seen that ES and NA use a top-down strategy while eight other students, namely AA, EM, ER, FH, FT, MK, OO, and PS use bottom-up.

Informants who use the top-down strategy from the results of the interview answers seemed to emphasize a lot of the translation of each difficult word found in a text or discourse, for example, an AA answer when asked what was first done when getting comprehension reading, the answer is "I read the word per words in the reading text ". If asked about the difficulties encountered while reading, the answer is also related to difficult words. In accordance with the top-down theory, if the reader starts reading by searching or translating difficult words first, it can be concluded that the reader uses a top-down strategy.

If it is seen from table 2, only two people used the bottom-up strategy. This strategy starts with reading the text or discourse as a whole first then try to take the main ideas of reading material and relate it to the experience of the reader. If the answers are examined from ES and NA during the interview session, it can be concluded that their answers are that they use a bottom-up strategy. When ES was asked what he did the first time when he got a problem reading, ES's answer: "I read the question, first Miss"

From the description above it can be concluded that the informants still applied the same strategy even though they were given different types of texts or discourses. In the first and second reading comprehension texts, two informants used a bottom-up strategy and eight people used top-down. All informants still used the same strategy to read different texts or discourses.

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When viewed from the description above, it appears there is no relationship between understanding reading informants and their reading strategies, but differences in understanding are clearly seen when texts or discourses are changed from many who use scientific words to become discourses or texts that used words daily. This can be seen from table 3 below:

No	Inisial Informan	Text I	Strategi	Text II	Strategi
1	AA	1	Bottom – up	4	Bottom – up
2	EM	1	Bottom – up	4	Bottom – up
3	ER	1	Bottom – up	3	Bottom – up
4	ES	2	Top – down	4	Top – down
5	FH	1	Bottom – up	4	Bottom – up
6	FT	1	Bottom – up	4	Bottom – up
7	МК	1	Bottom – up	3	Bottom – up
8	NA	2	Top – down	2	Top – down
9	00	1	Bottom – up	3	Bottom – up
10	PS	1	Bottom – up	3	Bottom – up

Table 4. The Reading Strategies and Text

The table above showed that the informants' results increased in the next text because different text was given. However, the strategy that the informants' used was the similar. So, it was clear that a bottom-up strategy greatly helped readers understand if it was used for texts with low vocabulary difficulties, therefore the reader was easily translate the text or discourse but if applied to texts or discourses with high vocabulary difficulties, this will result in time is wasted because you have to translate every difficult word found in a discourse or text.

The top-down strategy looks more appropriate if applied to all levels of text or discourse difficulties, this can be seen in the first comprehension text, the informants who apply this strategy get more correct numbers than those using bottom-up. However, this still needs further research.

Strategies in reading comprehension were indeed needed to get a deep understanding of a text or discourse. However, from the results of the above research, it turns out that the strategies used by students remain the same even though the type of text or discourse is different. The strategy that is widely used by informants is a bottom-up strategy. This is because informants feel the need to know the meaning of each word that is difficult to translate. For informants, by

knowing each vocabulary in a discourse or text they can find out the contents of the text or discourse.

The observation of AA informants, from the results of the use of time, AA completed the problem of reading comprehension based on the time provided, which is fifteen minuText. Whereas in terms of the use of dictionaries, AA asks permission from the researcher to use the dictionary contained in his smartphone. As long as AA works on the problem, there are no scribbles in the questions or answer sheets and in working on the questions, AA looks nervous, this makes AA seem to have no confidence in answering questions so that AA asks many researchers. In writing an answer, AA only wriText the letter of choice in each answer.

Unlike AA, EM informants asked for additional time in moving the answers they have chosen to the answer sheet. EM asks for about one minute. Apart from differences in the use of time, in the use of dictionaries, they also have differences; if AA uses a dictionary then EM does not use the dictionary at all whether it is a dictionary in a cellular phone or a dictionary in printed form. Then, if AA looked nervous, then EM just relaxes in working on the problem. EM only works on the question without any questions to the researcher. The last aspect is how to write an answer, AA and EM have similarities, both of which only write the letters of the answer.

The third informant was the ER student, based on the results of the observation; the ER students also spent fifteen minuText in answering questions about reading the understanding given by the researcher. Just like AA, the ER also uses dictionaries in answering questions and there are no scribbles in either the answer sheet or questions. During the process of answering reading comprehension questions, ER also looks relaxed and there are only letter choices in answering questions.

ES also spent fifteen minuetes answering questions. ES did not use dictionaries at all in answering reading comprehension questions and there are no scribbles in the answer paper or questions. During the reading comprehension process, ES looked confused or thinking; this is deduced from the attitude of ES who liked to look the other way instead of going to the question paper and the answer sheet. ES was different from the previous informant, he answered the question not only writing letters but also writing the answers in the form of words or sentences.

FH informants, based on observations, FH also spent fifteen minuetes in answering questions about reading comprehension given by the researcher. FH also uses dictionaries in answering questions and there is no scribbling in either the answer sheet or the questions. During the process of answering reading

comprehension questions, FH also looked relaxed and there were only letter choices in answering questions.

The results of FT informants observation, from the results of the use of time, the FT completed the problem of reading comprehension based on the time provided which is fifteen minutes. Whereas in terms of the use of dictionaries, the FT requested permission from the researcher to use the dictionary contained in his smartphone. During the FT was working on the questions, there were no scribbles in the questions or answer sheets and in working on the questions, the FT looked nervous, this made the FT appeared to have no confidence in answering questions so that the FT asked many researchers. In writing an answer, FT only wrote the chosen letters in each answer.

The observation of the MK informant, from the results of the use of time, the Constitutional Court resolved the matter of reading comprehension based on the time provided which is fifteen minutes. While in terms of the use of dictionaries, the Constitutional Court requested permission from the researcher to use the dictionary contained in his smartphone. As long as the Constitutional Court works on the questions, there are no scribbles in the questions or answer sheets and in working on the questions, the Court looked nervous, this made the Constitutional Court seemed not to have the confidence in answering questions so that the Court asked many researchers. In writing an answer, the Court only wrote the letter of choice in each answer.

NA also spent fifteen minuetes answering questions. NA did not use dictionaries at all in answering reading comprehension questions and there are no scribbles in the answer paper or questions. During the reading comprehension process, NA looked confused or thinking, this is concluded from NA's attitude who liked to look at other directions instead of questions and answer sheets. NA was different from the previous informant, he answered the question not only writing letters but also writing the answers in the form of words or sentences.

OO informants, based on observations, OO students also spent fifteen minutes answering questions about reading the understanding given by the researcher. OO also used dictionaries to answer questions and there was no scribbling either in the answer sheet or in the questions. During the process of answering reading comprehension questions, OO also looked relaxed and there were only letter choices in answering questions.

PS informants asked for additional time in moving the answers they have chosen to the answer sheet. PS asked for about one minute. PS did not use a dictionary at all whether it is a dictionary in a cellular phone or a dictionary in print. Then, PS was just relaxed in working on the problem. PS only worked on

the questions without any questions to the researcher. PS hadsimilarities, both of which only write the letters of the answer.

From some of the above data, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is important. Many things can be done to improve the ability to read comprehension. Among of them by applying various reading methods even though in terms of time, reading comprehension requires more time to apply.

CONCLUSION

From the explanations in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that the reading comprehension of students is initially very low when reading texts with very high vocabulary difficulties but the results of reading comprehension increase when given texts or discourses with lower vocabulary difficulties. The strategy that was used by the students were similar, though they were given different types of text. Each students had their own strategy in reading comprehension but most of the students used bottom – up strategy. A bottom-up strategy will greatly help the reader understand if it is used for texts with low vocabulary difficulties so that the reader will easily translate text or discourse but if applied to texts or discourses with high vocabulary difficulties, this will result in time running out wasted because it has to translate every difficult word that is found in discourse or text. The top-down strategy looks more appropriate if applied to all levels of text or discourse difficulties, this can be seen in the first comprehension text, the informants who apply this strategy get more correct numbers than those using bottom-up. However, this still needs further research.

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