HOW DO HIGH ACHIEVER STUDENTS APPLY LEARNING STRATEGIES ON READING?

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Abstract

Learning strategies used by the learners to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information and achieve learning goals easily. This research aims at finding how the students apply learning strategies in their reading activity. The goals are to find the kinds and the most frequent learning strategies on reading together with the reason of using those most frequent strategies. This case study was carried out on the high achievers third grade students of English Department University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. The data are collecting using questionnaire ,documentation and interview . The data then analyzed using quantitative data analysis for questionnaire data andquanitative analysis for the rest. There are three points that can be discovered from this research. 1) There are six learning strategies are used by high achievers, 2) Compensation Strategy is the strategy which is the most frequently used by high achievers in solving the problems of reading. 3) High achievers students have different reasons in applying learning strategies when they get problems, it is because of interest and urgent time.Based on three finding above, students should be aware the benefit of having learning strategies during they are learning English, especially in reading.By knowing that Compensation Strategy is the most frequent strategy used, the lecturers or teachers can use teaching strategies that appropriate with this strategy, for example: in reading exercise, students are given two passages with different contexts, but using same words or phrases in some parts of passages. So, students are able to differenciate the meaning of word when they guess it in a passage.

Keywords:Learning Strategies, Reading

Introduction

When learning English, people usually recognize two distributions of English skills. Hirai (2002) distributed them into receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). According to Anderson (2005), reading is classified into receptive skill because people can receive an information by doing it. But the reading complex process also requires the speaking skill, so that people are able to pronounce when they read the words. In this case, reading also can be classified into productive skill in which people are both receiving information and transmitting it (even if only to ourselves). So, by learning reading, it can be said that people learn both receptive and productive skill. There are some opinions about reading. According to Handini (2010) readinginvolvesseveralprocesses usedtoobtain the meaning and ideas fromwritten textrepresentedin writtenorprintedlanguage. Then, Teixeira (2012:1) states that reading is a key language skill that has long had a significant place in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. This skill allows students to have access to ideas communicated by people in different locations and eras, giving them the opportunity to broaden their horizons and deepen their knowledge of the world. Moreover, Dzulqodah (2011) states that the globalization era makes written text even more varying. Texts are not only written in one's native language, but also in other languages, such as English as an international language. So that, it can give readers or students some problems in interpreting printed or written verbal symbols.

Learning reading is not easy, because there are some problems in reading. In Gagen's opinion (2007), students have problems in reading because they lack specific skills necessary for proficient reading. These problems are incorrect approach to reading / not processing print phonetically, gaps in foundational skills & knowledge necessary for proficient phonologic processing, difficulty with complex code, and gaps in advanced skills. While Scholten (1997), stated that common causes of reading problems are divided into decoding problems and comprehension problems.Decoding problems involve visual acuity, eye co-ordination, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome (SSS), difficulty knowing sounds the letters make (especially vowel sounds), and difficulty breaking the words into syllables.Comprehension problems involve poor vocabulary, reading books that are too difficult, problems making visual pictures of material being read, not taking

in the information deeply enough, and not connecting new information with prior knowledge.

Although learning reading is not easy, it cannot be ignored that it is an essential thing for people including students. Harvey (2011) said that reading is one of the most important skills a person may ever acquire.Barth (2012:3-4) states "Reading is both directly and indirectly connected to later educational achievement and it is critically important to a student's growth across all subject areas". Then, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985), regard reading as the basic of a child's success in school and consequently in throughout life. and without the reading well ability, the opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success definitely will be lost. Moreover, Handini (2010:2) states "In the formaleducation, among the four language skills, reading is the most frequently taught,because reading is a means of learning in all subjects".So, reading is a basic life skill a person may ever acquire and person's success or failure in reading affects the opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success, and also for student's academic growth.

From some explanations mentioned above, it should be better if students know the way to help them to master the reading skill. There are many factors affect students' successful in learning reading. According to Rowe (1995), students' reading achievements over time are influenced by factors at the student level (including home background effects, attitudes towards reading, and attentiveness in the classroom), at the teacher level (professional development and teacher affect), and at the school level (including school organization, climate, or school ethos factors). Then, Oxford (2003) stated that language learning strategies is one of the main factors which help to determine how – and how well – our students learn a second or foreign language. It can be concluded that learning strategies influence the students' success in learning something.

Tseng (2005) states that language learning strategies are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during the process of language learning. Fedderholdt (1998) also states that the language learner capable of using a wide variety of language learning strategies appropriately can

improve language skills in a better way. In brief, appropriate language learning strategies used by learner, can improve all language skills, includes reading skill.

There are some criterias of a high achiever. Bainbridge (2015) states "High achievers are those who achieve a goal. In school, a high achiever would be a student who gets high marks, good grades". Kingore (2004) mentions many characteristics of a high achiever, and some of them are interested to learn, attentive, responding with interest and opinions, enjoying school often, and getting A's. From those criterias, the researcher found two students who fulfilled it . In third grade of English Departement at University of Nusantara PGRI (UNP) Kediri, there are two students who always get good score in reading starting from first semester until fourth semester. They always get score of reading better than the other students. Both of them also had an experience in joinning national debate in Sarangan. For preparing debate, they read many materials related their debate.

Method

This case study focuses on learning strategies used by the students which make them good at reading. In this study, the researcher became full observer to complete the research,first, researcher did Preliminary Study: researcher looked for the score data of the third grade students, especially the score of reading subject. The data is started from the first semester until fourth semester , it was found two students who gained good score in reading and decided them to be the subjects of this research. Then, three instruments were used to collect the data, such as: questionnaire, students' journal, and interview. So, there were two types of data of this research: quantitative data gained from questionnaire, and qualitative data gained from documentation and interview. The closed ended questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data, by using this instrument, the writer could get the data of the way the students apply learning strategies and what learning strategy the most frequently used by the students. The students' journal was used to get the students' record about their activities when they learn reading. From the journal written by the students, the writer could know how they apply the learning strategies on reading. The last is

semistructured interview was used to get the data about their reasons of most frequent learning strategies used. To analyzed the data there were two techniques used, first for the data gained from the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively, the total score of the students's questionnaire about the language learning strategies was counted , in total there were 18 items. All questions are in multiple choices and each question contains of five options (always is scored 5, often is scored 4, sometimes is scored 3 , seldom is scored 2, and never is scored 1). Then the most frequent strategies was counted using percentage calculation. Secondly, for the qualitative data got from students' journal and interview, Miles and Huberman (1994) qualitative data analysis steps were used, the steps are: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In order to get the valid data , instruments triangulation techniques was used. It was done by using different techniques (questionnaire, documentation, and interview) to get the data.

Research Finding and Discussion

Learning Strategies on Reading

Both students used six learning strategies in reading. Those are memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social. It can be found from questionnaire given to subjects and journal which they wrote. Besides from questionnaire, the kinds of learning strategies that the students' used can be seen from student's journal. For example, she wrote, "Today is the first of April 2015, I start reading novel... I am planning to read the whole story in one month" (Data 4.1). She likes reading novel, and always plans her reading. It can be said that she used cognitive strategy, and metacognitive strategy. From the interview result, she said, "*Ketika saya menemui kata sulit, saya menebaknya berdasarkan konteks* (when I find difficult words, I will guess it based on context)" (Data 4.2). She used compensation strategy by guessing based on context when she gets difficulties in reading novel. Beside that, she also used memory strategy because she review what she read in the novel. She wrote in her journal, "This novel telling about terrifying holiday thriller... This novel is telling about two young teenegers decide to take a road trip across the US" (Data 4.3). The other student explained in her journal" I love it because it is a romantic novel, article is written by Professor, so

the language that being used was really difficult, I underline each difficult vocabulary and then I look for the meaning in the dictionary". She practiced her reading skill by reading novel or article, grouped the difficult words by underlining them, and then looked for the meaning in her dictionary. It means that she used cognitive and memory strategy. In journal, she also wrote, "I try to understand the difficult word by understanding its meaning through context..." (Data 4.5). It can be said that she also used compensation strategy, likes guessing the meaning based on context. The last, she also used metacognitive strategy, she monitors herself when she got difficulties in learning or doing exercises. It can be seen in her jornal, "It really help me in understanding the novel that I read... I found myself really working hard to understand it... I think this way is helping me a lot" (Data 4.6).

The Most Frequent Strategies

From the results of questionnaire, it known that both students used six kinds of learning strategies. Following are the percentage of using each strategy based on the results of questionnaire:

Table 4.1
Percentage of Questionnaire Results

Name of Students	Kinds of Strategies											
	Memory		Cognitive		Compensation		Metacognitive		Affective		Social	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
Student A	9	15%	11	19%	12	20%	8	14%	10	14%	9	15%
Students B	7	9%	13	17%	15	19%	14	18%	14	18%	14	18%

The table above, it is clear that the most frequent strategies used by the students were compensatition strategies, and when there were different results between questionnaire and student's journal, it was confirmed through interview, then the students explained that actually she likes opening dictionary, but because she often forgets to bring dictionary, so that she use guessing more when getting difficult words.

Reason of Using the Most Frequent Strategies

There are three questions in questionnaire related to Compensation Strategy. The first is about guessing some difficult words without opening dictionary. The

second is guessing meaning based on the context to interpret the words, phrase, idiom, or expression. The last is using some clues (examples: title, topic, theme, etc.) to undertsand the text. Based on the questionnaire results, followings are the reason why the students used the indicators of Compensation Strategy more than others. From interview, it is known that even though the students often brings dictionary, she prefer guessing the meaning of difficult words than opening dictionary. When she was asked about the reason, she answered "*Karena di dalam kamus itu terkadang artinya tidak cocok dengan apa yang dimaksudkan dalam teks atau bacaan tersebut. Bahkan terkadang ada beberapa kata yang tidak ada di dalam kamus* (Because in dictionary, the meaning is sometimes not appropriate with the word in the text. Even, there are some words that cannot be found in the dictionary)". It can be said that according her, the words in dictionary are sometimes not appropriate with the meaning that should be. There are also some words that cannot be found in dictionary. The topic of reading is also important in guessing the meaning of difficult words. She always pays attention the topic when she guesses the words. Different from the first student, the second student guesses the meaning if she does not bring dictionary or she is forbidden to open dictionary. It was gained from her journal and interviewing her. In her journal, she wrote, "We are not allowed to use handphone or even dictionary... So, I try to understand the difficult word by understanding its meaning through context..." . She also often forgets to bring dictionary, so that she chose to guess when she gets difficulties in reading. It can be seen from her answer in interview, "*Tapi kalau membawa kamus sih, saya sering lupa. Jadi kalau dalam keadaan terpepet, ya saya mencoba menebak walaupun tanpa kamus* (I often forget to bring dictionary. So that, I will try to guess without dictionary if I am in trapped condition" (Data 4.12). Nevertheless, she guesses the difficult words by paying attention the context of text. According to her, each word has different meaning based on the context. She also uses some clues, such as title and theme.

Interpretation and Discussion

Based on the result of data, the researcher interprets that there are six learning strategies on reading used by both high achievers students. They are Memory Strategy, Cognitive Strategy, Compensation Strategy, Metacognitive

Strategy, Affective Strategy, and Social Strategy. Memory Strategy is enable the learner to store and retrieve information in an orderly string. Cognitive Strategy is enable the learner to understand and produce new language. Compensation Strategy is enable the learner to communicate despite deficiencies in their language knowledge or help the learner make up for missing knowledge. Metacognitive Strategy is enable the learner to control their own learning through organizing, planning and evaluation and are employed for managing the learning process overall. Affective Strategy is enable the learner to gain control over their emotions, attitudes, motivations and values. Social Strategy is enable the learner to work with and interact with other people. It is the same with opinion by Oxford (1990) that mentioned those six learning strategies can be used and applied on reading. And Tseng (2005) also stated that all language learners use language learning strategies in the learning process, so they can achieve the goal.Based on the research, both students used Compensation Strategy as the most frequent strategy. It is same with Dhanapala (2007), who got the result that in Japan which English is taught and learned as an foreign language, the learners used compensation as the most frequent strategies.

In reading, both students have same problem that is often faced. That is about the vocabulary. They often find some difficult words. It is same with statement from Gagen (2007) and Scholten (1997) who mentioned one of problems in reading is difficulties in comprehending the content of reading itself. Based on the results, they used compensation strategy more than other strategies to solve the comprehending problem in reading. The reasons of using this strategy are varies. It depend on theirselves. Sometimes, they use compensation strategy because they like this strategy. But the other reason is because of compulsion, such as they forget to bring dictionary or forbidden to open dictionary in certain situation. Nevertheless, this strategy can solve their problem in reading. Rajabi, Rezaei, and Afshari (2013) also stated that Compensation strategy can improve comprehension as well as efficiency in reading. By using compensation strategies, students will improve their reading performance and will be better readers. Moreover, related to compensation strategies, Rokni and Niknaqsh (2013) said that clues can be regarded as a working factor in the way that a learner

comprehends a reading passage and context clues can greatly influences reading comprehension of EFL learners.

Conclusion and Suggestion

It can be concluded that memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy are applied by the high achiever students in reading. So, it can be concluded that these strategies are good and effective to be used by students in reading with compensation Strategy to be the most frequent strategy used by high achievers in reading. The reasons of choosing this strategy are different, it means each high achiever student has different way to get success in reading. Although their strategies are same, they have varies reasons in applying it, for example because of their fond of it or compulsory.

So it is suggested for the students to be aware of the benefit of having learning strategies during they are learning English, especially in reading. Students should have learning strategies on reading, so they can be high achievers. They should not learn without learning strategies because this research show that learning strategies used by students influence their achievement. Secondly, the most frequent strategy is compensation strategy. So, it can be said that this strategy is used by high achievers more than the others. By knowing this fact, the lecturers or teachers can use teaching strategies that appropriate with compensation strategy.For example: in reading exercise, students are given two passages with different contexts, but using same words or phrases in some parts of passages. So, students are able to differenciate the meaning of word when they guess it in a passage. The last, for other researchers, it is hoped that this research can give information and contribution for the further research in conducting similar topic.

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