

A Police Academy School: Metacognitive Strategy to Improve Reading Comprehension and Attitudes in EFL Context

Linda Novita

Master of English Education, University of Lampung

Abstract: *The aims of this study to investigate metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension and also students' attitudes towards reading in English. A metacognitive strategy is something that is potentially important in learning a foreign language. In this study, an attempt was made to investigate the effects of metacognitive strategies on increasing reading comprehension in English learners. For this purpose, the total number of students is 23 participants. To see whether there are significant differences between attitudes and metacognitive strategy for reading comprehension before and after treatment, researcher provide pre and post test to find out the results. The study results indicated that there were statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between student score before and after treatment. Likewise, with students' attitudes.*

Keywords: *Metacognitive Strategy, Reading Comprehension, Attitude*

Date of Submission: 17-12-2019

Date of acceptance: 31-12-2019

I. Introduction

The recent development of English in the context of education in Indonesia has called for further investigation of these various language skills. Reading comprehension is considered as an influential activity where students can be exposed to language input (Laufer, 2010). Current understanding of reading strategies, as one of the important aspects of reading skills. Many studies show that reading success does not happen automatically; rather it depends on direct cognitive effort, called metacognitive processing which consists of knowledge about cognition and regulation of cognitive processes (Bazerman, et, al, 1985).

The ability to read and understand efficiently is one of the important factors in achieving advanced levels. This is considered as one of the main goals and objectives of education and the main prerequisites for learning, both in and out of the context of formal education. During reading comprehension, "metacognitive processing is expressed through strategies, which are procedural, directed, with difficulty, deliberate and essential, and facilitative" (Alexander & Jetton 2000). Because reading comprehension plays an important role in the EFL context.

II. Background of Study

Reading is considered to be one of the most important language skills. Through reading, students can develop their other language skills such as writing and speaking in addition to improving their language components, such as vocabulary and grammar. Reading is a basic language ability and a very complicated action that must be master by everyone. This is a process of recognition, interpretation and perception of written or printed material. In fact, people living in the world read where it is difficult to succeed without it (Hollingsworth, 2007).

However, learning reading is not easy especially for Indonesian students. The English is taught as the foreign language in Indonesian becomes one of many factors that make learning reading difficult. Learning to read is one of the most important strategies learners can accomplish in schools because it is the foundation for all academic endeavors. The learner who does not acquire the necessary reading skills is likely to suffer academic failures. Indisputably, for a learner to learn any discipline he has to spend much of his time reading and comprehending information presented in text, (Abu Shamala, 2009).

Reading comprehension is the process of deriving meaning from the text. The goal of all reading instruction is ultimately aimed at assisting a reader to comprehend a given text. Reading comprehension involves decoding the writer's words and then using background knowledge to obtain an approximate understanding of the writer's message (Hosenfeld, 1977).

In order to achieve the objectives in this study, the researcher observed at one of the police academy schools in Indonesia, that is SMA Taruna Tunas Bangsa Baturaja. Based on observations and information from English teacher conducted by researcher at Taruna Tunas Bangsa Baturaja High School, students still have difficulty reading in English. The teacher said that often students were able to read it but did not understand its meaning, even in reading texts. They are difficult to determine the important points contained in the text. They are very weak in

reading comprehension. This is also caused by not being able to focus too much on learning English in depth since Taruna High School is a school that focuses on marching activities, moreover students who take part in their extracurricular activities are more in the field.

However, researcher believe that technique in teaching is very important. Dean (2003) indicates that most EFL learners are unable to comprehend a written text effectively. This is an important issue for school teachers in teaching reading. They should pay attention to the strategies and techniques they apply for the purpose of comprehension in order to avoid the difficulties that learners face in reading comprehension.

The techniques and strategies now used by teachers for teaching reading comprehension are still traditional. Learners are not given the chance to acquire language skills or to use language effectively. So we are in real need for new strategies and techniques that interpret language not only as sentences, vocabulary, or structures, but also as practice of thoughts and culture (Hamouda, 1999).

One of strategy that used to develop students' reading comprehension skills is metacognitive strategy. Metacognitive strategy is "thinking about thinking" with three main components, there are planning, monitoring and evaluation. Metacognition plays an important role in reading comprehension and self-control fields and hence highlights the relationship between reading comprehension and metacognition (Flavel, 1979).

Metacognition has received a considerable attention by language teaching theoreticians and researchers alike for three main reasons. The first reason is that metacognitive knowledge develops good thinkers and life long learners who can cope with new situations in this rapidly changing world, (Eggen and Kauchak , 1995 ; Tobias et al., 1999). The second reason is that integrating metacognitive knowledge into language instruction develops learners who can take charge of their own learning. The final reason is that metacognitive knowledge (Abdelhafez, 2006).

Many researchers had done studies related to metacognitive strategies to improve reading comprehension. For instance, Abdelhafez (2006) studied the effect of training in metacognitive language learning strategies on Developing Listening and Writing of university EFL Students. The present study aimed at investigating the effects of a suggested training program in some Metacognitive Language Learning Strategies (MLLS) on developing listening and Writing of first year EFL students. The findings revealed that the experimental group surpassed the control.

Secondly, Senay Sen, (2009) aimed at detecting the differences (in terms of finding the main idea, guessing the end of the text, achievement scores) between the reading comprehension skills of students who learnt how to use metacognitive strategies and those who continued using traditional educational methods. According to the results of the t-test used to compare the pretest scores of students, no statistically significant difference was found between the pretest scores of the experimental group and the control group students. A statistically significant increase was recorded in the reading comprehension achievement scores of the experimental group students who learned how to find the main idea and to guess the end of the text with the help of metacognitive strategies when compared with those of the control group students who continued with traditional training.

Thirdly, Bozkurt (2013) conducted a research which aims at investigating the relationship between metacognitive awareness, reading motivations, reading levels and reading comprehension success of fifth grade students using comparative relative scan model. In the result of the research, there was not a differentiation in distribution according to sex and independent readers had the highest reading comprehension scores. There is a moderately significant relation between reading comprehension and metacognitive reading comprehension, internal-external motivation and reading level.

Concerning the objectives of the previous studies, all revolve in the same circle aiming to investigate the impact of utilizing metacognitive on achieving progress in reading comprehension. All of them highlight the importance of utilizing metacognitive strategies as supporting strategies helping monitoring and problem solving. This behavior of the upper mentioned researchers has incited the present researcher to adopt this strategy (utilizing metacognitive strategies on achieving progress in reading comprehension) in an attempt to develop the target students' reading comprehension skills.

Only few studies explored briefly the relationship between metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension skills. However, no one has investigated the impact of using metacognitive strategies training on reading comprehension and students' attitude towards reading in English. Even though, learning a language is closely related to attitudes towards reading in English (Starks &Paltridge, 1996).

Students' attitudes significantly influence their level of engagement with reading. Attitude has been described as "a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions that make reading more or less probable" (Kush & Watkins, 2001). Students' attitudes are perceived to be a function of the effect associated with the beliefs a person holds about the object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1972).

Attitude is crucial thing in learning language because in foreign language learning context, there are several different factors that influence the learning process such as motivation, attitudes, anxiety, learning achievements, aptitudes, intelligence, age, personalities, (Gardner, 1960; Lehmann, 2006, cited in Shams (2008).

Attitudes play an important role in determining ones' behavior, as the attitude has an impetus which stimulates the behavior and directs it in a particular direction (Tahaineh and Danna, 2013, cited in Rastegar, 2016). Reid (2003) advocates that "Attitudes are important to us because they cannot be neatly separated from study". Attitude is considered as basic factor affecting language performance (Visser, 2008, cited in Jafre 2012). Achievement in a target language depends not only on intellectual capacity, but also on the learners' attitudes towards language learning. Students' attitudes towards their language learning and their teacher can significantly influence their passion to learn and their classroom cooperation; their dispositions towards the language itself (Richards 1998, cited in Laos, 2018).

Therefore, based on the problem, as well as the above explanations, the researcher thought that teaching reading comprehension using metacognitive strategies could get better reading comprehension results. In this study, the researcher concern with teaching reading comprehension by using metacognitive strategies, which may contribute alleviating the problems encountered by students and help them to be able to understand of reading comprehension. Then, investigate attitudes towards reading in English to improve their performance in reading comprehension.

The purpose of study

This study aims to find out whether there is an effect of metacognitive reading strategy training on the students' reading comprehension. Then, to know the difference between learners' attitude before and after the application of metacognitive strategies towards reading in English.

As mentioned earlier, a considerable amount of research has focused on the relationship between reading comprehension and metacognitive strategy application and its role in academic achievement. This research is conducted to find out answers to the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference in reading comprehension score between pre and post test of students who are taught using metacognitive strategies?
2. Is there statistically significant differences between the pre and the post application of attitudes towards reading?

Method

The research design is as follows:

T1 X T2

Remarks:

- T1 : Pre-test measurement
- X : Treatment of the Training
- T2 : Post-test measurement

Participant

The participants of this study were the students of twelfth grade (XIIa) of Senior High School of Taruna Tunas Bangsa Baturaja (A Police Academic School). There were twenty three students. All the students of this class were the subjects of this research.

Instrument

1. Reading Comprehension Test

This study used reading comprehension test to collect the data for the students' reading comprehension ability. The test was given as pre-test and post-test with the topic "Goes to School" as pre-test and "Holiday" as post-test.

The questions were meant to test the participants understanding of the main idea, inferences, specific details, and their ability to organize or interpret their own idea based on the information from the text.

2. Attitude on reading questionnaire

Attitude on questionnaire is used to see the students reading attitude before and after the training. The researcher adopted questionnaire from Samia Mahdi totally questionnaire are 29 questions. The teacher asked the students to answer the twenty nine items on following 5 point likert scale:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

The questionnaire consist with four domain as follows:

1. Interest in reading English
2. Behavior towards reading English
3. Feeling towards reading the English language
4. Opinion about reading English

III. Result and Discussion

The data gained through the administration of tests as well as the data of the questionnaire were analyzed by SPSS program. The raw data obtained from the pre/post tests were given to SPSS program to process the information and the subsequent computation was made. Hence the following information based on each research questions obtained as follow:

1. The result of the first question

Q1. Is there any significant difference in reading comprehension score between pre and post test of students who are taught using metacognitive strategies?

In order to test the above question, students' score obtained through reading comprehension test. The following table clarifies both descriptive statistics on pre-post test.

Statistics

pre_reading		
N	Valid	23
	Missing	0
Mean		58.00
Std. Deviation		2.220

*Student's score of pre-reading comprehension

Statistics

post_reading		
N	Valid	23
	Missing	0
Mean		74.94
Std. Deviation		1.678

*Student's score of post-reading comprehension

The two of tables above show that there is the difference in the average score in reading comprehension. From these results, it appears that there is an increase in scores in the post test.

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 pre_reading - post_reading	-26.938	2.508	.793	-28.731	-25.144	33.968	9	.002

*Table. 3 comparing between pre-test and post-test reading comprehension

2. The result of the second question

Q2. Is there statistically significant differences between the pre and the post application of attitudes towards reading?

To test the second question, researcher do it the same way. Firstly, the researcher were given the students questionnaire related to attitude towards reading in English. As function to know their opinion before the

treatment. Then, the researchers did the same thing after treatment. A detail description of the results of student questioner answers after calculated by the SPSS program is as follows:

Table.4 Score on pre application and post application of attitude scale.

Domains	Test	Mean	Std. deviation	t value	Sig level
Interest in reading English	Pre-test	25.60	3.87	10.103	Sig at 0.01
	Post-test	33.00	3.35		
Behavior toward reading English	Pre-test	23.57	3.48	7.69	Sig at 0.01
	Post-test	29.91	4.38		
Feelings towards reading English language	Pre-test	27.74	3.87	7.79	Sig at 0.01
	Post-test	33.74	3.82		
Opinion about reading English	Pre-test	27.86	4.15	7.835	Sig at 0.01
	Post-test	35.03	3.40		
Total		104.77	11.62	11.277	Sig at 0.01

Source of domain: Samia M. A. *Attitude Scale towards Reading in English*: (p.182)

Based on the "paired sample test" output table above (table.3), the sig value is known. Sig. (2 tailed) is $0,002 < 0.05$, it means that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. So, it can be concluded that there is an average difference between pre-test and post-test learning outcomes which means that there is an influence of the use of metacognitive strategies to improve reading comprehension. The findings in this study prove the statement by Flavel (1979). He said that metacognition plays an important role in reading comprehension and self-control fields and hence highlights the relationship between reading comprehension and metacognition.

As mentioned earlier, the main objective of this study is to find out whether the application of metacognitive strategies can have a positive effect on the reading comprehension of EFL students. Reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a text that comes from the interaction between written words and how they trigger knowledge outside the text. It will be difficult to learn a foreign language without learning this skill. The role of this skill is very important so that among other teaching methodologies you can find the method of reading as one of the topics of debate for some time. All EFL teachers recognize that reading comprehension is an inseparable part of language learning and teaching.

Reading comprehension involves coding the author's words and then using background knowledge to obtain an approximate understanding of the author's message (Hosenfeld, 1977). The more background knowledge a student has, the better he understands the essence of the text. T-test between pre and post test scores, revealed that there were significant differences between participants who were exposed to metacognitive strategy training. That is, metacognitive strategies have a positive influence on reading comprehension. Another conclusion can be said that by applying this strategy students' knowledge in reading comprehension can be increased.

The second research question focuses on the attitude of participants towards reading in English. The results showed that there are significant differences in participants' attitudes towards reading in English (before and after treatment). They changed their opinions during the treatment phase. It can be seen on (table.4) above. This also supports the statement by (Visser 2008, cited in Jafre 2012) which says that Attitude is considered as basic factor affecting language performance, it is indeed true. We can see that there is a significant difference between pre and post test score.

Attitudes play an important role in determining ones' behavior, as the attitude has an impetus which stimulates the behavior and directs it in a particular direction (Tahaineh and Danna, 2013, cited in Rastegar, 2016). We can say that improving the positive attitude of the students towards a particular academic subject may increase their desire to learn the subject and to develop the ability to apply what they have been taught, as well as leading to an improvement in remembrance.

Students' attitudes towards language learning and their teachers can significantly influence their desire to learn in their classwork; their disposition to the language itself (Richards 1998, cited in Laos, 2018). It means, with a positive attitude students will be motivated in their learning process. Furthermore, based on the findings in this study, it can be concluded that the ability of students to master a second language is not only influenced by their mental competence or language skills but also by students' attitudes and perceptions about the target language, Gardner (1985). Another conclusion can be drawn from the results that strategy training can change students' responses to be more positive towards reading in English.

This result agrees with the result of Temura, Kargin, Bayar, & Bayar, (2010), who found that the students' attitudes towards English reading were positive due to the effectiveness of using a program based on activating prior knowledge of a given topic among learners to improve their reading comprehension skills, and with that of Mehrdad, Ahghar, & Ahghar, (2012), who proved that the students' attitudes towards English

reading comprehension changed before and after using the strategy of increasing motivation to improve their reading achievements.

The figures above show that students' attitudes towards reading in English improved a lot as a result of the intervention, which means that teaching the subjects reading comprehension texts using Metacognitive strategies caused students to develop a liking towards reading in English.

IV. Conclusion

The aim of this study is to look at the effects of metacognitive strategies on reading comprehension. Furthermore, to investigate students' attitudes towards reading in English before and after treatment. According to insights from previous studies, researchers assume that the use of metacognitive strategies leads to better understanding and more successful reading.

It is inevitable that the importance of students' reading comprehension will be beneficial if they are introduced to metacognitive strategies to help them improve their reading comprehension. They can help themselves improve their reading comprehension skills more easily. The findings of this study support this assumption. Students get higher reading comprehension test scores than before training. So, based on the findings in this study, metacognitive strategies provide effects that can enhance reading comprehension. and also the attitude of students has changed to be more positive about reading in English.

References

- [1]. Abdelhafez. (2006). The effect of training in metacognitive language learning strategies on Developing Listening and Writing of university EFL Students. *US- China Foreign Language*, ISSN 1539-8080, Vol.10, p. 933-943.
- [2]. Abu Shamla, K. (2009). The Effectiveness of a Suggested Program Based on Prior Knowledge to Develop Eighth Grader English Reading comprehension Skills. Unpublished M. ed Dissertation, the Islamic University of Gaza.
- [3]. Alexander, P. A., & Jetton, T. L. (2000). Learning from text: A multi dimensional and developmental perspective. In M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, P.D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (3,285–310). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- [4]. Bazerman, C. (1985). Physicist reading physics: Schema-laden purposes. *Written Communication*, 3-23. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0741088385002001001>
- [5]. Dean, G. (2003). *Teaching reading in secondary schools* (2nd ed). London: David Fulton Publishers.
- [6]. Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1972). Attitudes and opinions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 23, 487-545.
- [7]. Flavell, J.H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring. *American Psychologist*, 34 (10), 906-911. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.906>
- [8]. Flavell, J.H. (1976). Metacognitive aspects of problem solving. In L.B. Resnick (Ed.), *the nature of intelligence* (pp.231-235).
- [9]. Flavell, J. H. (1979b). Speculations about the nature and development of metacognition.
- [10]. Gardner, R.C and Lehman. (1960). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers
- [11]. Hamouda, Z. (1999). Specific Instructional Competencies for English Language Teachers at the Secondary Stage in Gaza Governorates. Unpublished M.A. dissertation, Gaza: Al- Azher University.
- [12]. Hollingsworth, A. (2007). *Increasing Reading Comprehension in First and Second Graders through Cooperative learning*. Chicago, Illinois: Saint
- [13]. Hosenfeld. (1977). The Role of Metacognition in Teaching Reading Comprehension to Primary Students. In Hacker. D.J, Duniosky. J and Graesser. A. C.(Eds.), *Handbook of Metacognition in Education*. New York. Taylor & Francis.
- [14]. Jafre, Z. A. (2012). Efl Students' Attitudes towards Learning English Language: The Case of Libiyan Secondary School Students. *Asian Social Sciences*. Vol. 8, No. 2. February 2012, 121.
- [15]. Kush, J. C., & Watkins, M. W. (2001). Construct validity of the WISC-III for white and black students from the WISC-III standardization sample and for black students referred for psychological evaluation. *School Psychology Review*, 30(1), 70-89.
- [16]. Laos, C. M and Kurniasari, D. M. (2018). Indonesian students' Language Attitudes towards Indonesian and English Through Education and Working Frame. *A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 70.
- [17]. Laufer. (2010). *Reading Inventory Manual*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- [18]. Mehrdad, A. G., Ahghar, M. R., & Ahghar, M. (2012). The effect of teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies on EFL students' reading comprehension across proficiency levels. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 3757 – 3763.
- [19]. Neumann, V. (2008). *Increasing Reading Comprehension of Elementary Students Through Fluency-based Interventions*. Chicago, Illinois: Saint Xavier University and Pearson Achievement Solutions.
- [20]. Rastegar, M. And Sadat. S.(2016). Communication Strategies, Attitudes, and Oral Output of EFL Learners: A study of Relation. *International Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 407.
- [21]. Samia M. A (2016). Attitude Scale towards Reading in English Language. *Departement of Curricula and Teaching Method*: (182-184)
- [22]. Senay Sen, H. (2009). The relationship between the use of metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension. Elsevier Ltd. ,2301–2305.
- [23]. Starks, D. and Paltridge, B. (1996). A note on using sociolinguistic methods to study non- native attitudes towards English, *World English*, 15 (2), pp.217-224.
- [24]. Temura, T., Bayar, S. A., & Bayar, V. (2010). Metacognitive awareness of grades 6, 7 and 8 students in reading process. Elsevier Ltd. , 4193–4199.

Linda Novita. " A Police Academy School: Metacognitive Strategy to Improve Reading Comprehension and Attitudes in EFL Context." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, vol. 9, no. 6, 2019, pp. 52-57.