The Perceptions of English Students’ Reading Strategies at University Level

Ahmad Qusyaeri¹, Rasyidah Nur Aisyah², Ana Ahsana El-Sulukiyyah³
ahmadqusyaer11@gmail.com¹, ocicyah@gmail.com², aahsanais@gmail.com³
PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan¹, PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan², PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan³

Abstract:
Reading needs an appropriate strategy to get out the point of the passage effectively. This research aimed to investigate the English students’ perceptions of their reading strategies at PGRI Wiranegara University. The purpose of this research was to describe the students’ perception about reading strategies and finding the highest and the lowest scores of reading strategies. Type of this research was descriptive quantitative research. The research subjects were English students at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan. In this research, the researcher used modified version of Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) which presented 35 statements of reading strategies, while the method of analyzing data used Likert scale and SPSS. The result of this research showed that most students were accustomed to apply reading strategies presented in the questionnaire form. Besides, this strategy “When text becomes difficult, I read slowly and carefully” was the highest score, and “I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding” was the lowest score.

Keywords: Students’ Perceptions, Reading Strategies, University Level

Introduction
Reading is one of the English skills, like other skills, it is important to learn reading in learning English. Reading is one of the important skills for the students to expand students’ knowledge that can be done anytime and everywhere (Aisah, El-Sulukiyyah, and Aisyah, 2019). Reading is a common activity which done by someone such as reading a story or newspaper and so on. For students, surely they often do reading in their school to get a comprehension of the material or to do their assignments. By reading, we can know the information of written text since reading is a receptive skill.

Students also have to master reading comprehension. According to Wassman and Rinsky (2000), to understand the written text, high reading
ability is important, to understand the information of written text will be comprehended with good reading comprehension. In reading comprehension, the students are not only read the text but the students also should know the intention of the sequence of words in order the students can comprehend the text that they have read. Reading comprehension encourages students to have intense concentration. On the other side, the students are demanded to think critically in reading. Therefore, concentration is totally needed in reading.

There are some problems influence students’ reading skills. First, lack of vocabulary mastery. The rich vocabulary is important to espouse English ability. Vocabulary is greatly related to reading ability because it is a major part of reading comprehension (Yusuf, Yusuf, Yusuf, and Nadya, 2017). All four skills in English are influenced by vocabulary mastery. A good vocabulary mastery improves all areas of communication - listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Miller, 2020). The students cannot speak well when the students have only a few vocabulary items. The students also have bad ability in writing sentences or paragraphs.

In listening activities, though the students can listen to the speaker completely, they will not understand the topic since the students still do not know the meaning of each vocabulary item. It is also happens in reading activities, the students will get difficulties to comprehend the written text because the students do not know the meaning of each vocabulary item. The students are difficult to understand when they meet uncommon words. Surely, it makes the students difficult to understand the text when they read. Second, the students are distracted when reading since their strategies were not appropriate with the teachers’ strategies. There are many strategies to help the students read such as skimming, scanning, predicting, guessing, etc. But, it needs the teachers’ role to espouse the students in reading.

Moreover, the problems are not only appeared from the students but also the selected strategy used by the teacher. Thus, the use of strategy must be appropriate to the students’ choices of strategies. The incorrect selection of strategies in teaching influences the students’ feelings in learning. Accidentally, the students get stuck and unmotivated to learn.

As mentioned above, it is important to solve the problems of
increasing the students’ reading ability. It can be conducted by applying an appropriate strategy which equals with the students’ strategies. Besides, the strategies should be able to overcome the problems such as helping the students to overcome the lack of vocabulary and also being able to arouse the students’ motivation. As we know, motivation in learning is one of the factors that influence the success of learning. According to Jang (2008), the learning environment influences the students’ motivation to learn. Here, the teacher has an important role to decrease anything that makes the students have difficulty in reading.

In this research, the researcher took the students’ perceptions to be analyzed. The success of teaching-learning is based on the strategy used. The compatibility of strategy should be adjusted with the students’ perceptions of their strategies. For example, when the students are accustomed to use a certain strategy, the teacher should use the same strategy. By gaining the students’ perceptions, the researcher could understand what the students feel and considerate the strategy that suitable to be implemented.

This research was ever conducted by some researchers, first by Nurohman (2018) entitled *Analysis of the Students’ Perceptions toward Reading Strategies (A study of the 4th Semester Students of IAIN Salatiga in the Academic Year of 2017/2018)*. In this research, the researcher used descriptive quantitative as the method. The researcher found out the highest and lowest scores of students’ perceptions toward reading strategies and the reading strategies vary concerning male and female students to be observed. The second thesis by Martinez (2008) entitled *Analysis of ESP University Students’ Reading Strategy Awareness*. In this research, he analyzed the strategy used of Spanish university ESP students and the differences between male and female students in their perceived use of reading strategies while reading academic materials. Those studies above are equal in investigating the reading strategies. But, It is different from my study since my research found the reading strategies used, the highest and the lowest scores of strategies used.

Based on the statement above, the researcher tried to investigate the students’ perceptions of their reading strategies. In reading activities, the students read the text individually to have better understanding. When the students learn independently, they will learn based on what they want and
they will be motivated to learn (Baysinger, 1998). Therefore, the researcher could describe the whole strategies of each student completely.

In the English education study program of Pedagogy and Psychology Faculty at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan, a reading course is given in five lectures. Basic reading skill is learned in the first semester, the students learn about basic skill in reading. Inferential reading is learned in the second semester, the students learnable to conclude. Critical reading is learned in the third semester, the students expand their critical thinking. Academic reading is learned in the fourth semester, the students learn about the theory of reading. Extensive reading is learned in the fifth semester, the students begin learning about analyzing educational journal and English novel.

The researcher chose all of English students at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan to be observed since the researcher wanted to know the strategy used in reading from each English student. Besides, the researcher restricted the research only for English students because reading English text is not as easy as reading Indonesian text. In reading English text needs not only comprehending the text but also knowing the meaning of each word to can understand the sequences of the sentences well. The researcher wanted to gain data about the students’ perceptions of the reading strategies of university students. The data of the study were collected from all of the English students of Pedagogy and Psychology Faculty at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan in the academic year of 2019/2020.

Based on the rationale explained above, the researcher was intended to conduct a descriptive quantitative research by using a survey to investigate the students’ perceptions about their reading strategies at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan. The researcher chose descriptive quantitative research since it presents numerical data which is more valid than just narration. The reasons why did the researcher conduct this research were to know the reading strategies that often used by students and help the teachers or lecturers to determine the appropriate strategy that would be implemented. Therefore, the researcher proposed a research entitled “The Perceptions of English Students’ Reading Strategies at PGRI Wiranegara University (UNIWARA) Pasuruan”.
Review of Literature

The Definition of Reading

Reading belongs to one of the English skills. Reading cannot be separated from other skills such as writing, speaking, and listening. Reading could be said as a receptive skill. In line with Harmer (2007), reading is useful for language acquisition. It means that we can receive a lot of information by reading.

Generally, everyone conducts reading for both pleasure and procuring knowledge. Rayanto (2019) explained that reading means of transferring information from the writer to the reader and as the fundamental skill upon which all formal education depends.

Reading Strategy

The existence of strategy is a must in learning. According to Adler (2020), there are seven strategies to teach reading comprehension that can be applied:

1. Monitoring Comprehension
   
   If the students have good monitoring of their comprehension, they know when they understand or not. They have strategies to overcome the problems in a moment.

2. Metacognition
   
   Good readers often use their mind before reading. Usually, they use the metacognitive strategy to think about and control their reading. Most of the good readers make sure their purpose for reading a text.

3. Graphic and Semantic Organizers
   
   Graphic organizers illustrate concepts and relationships between a text with the graphic or picture. Graphic organizers are shaped by different names, such as maps, webs, graphs, charts, frames, or groups.

4. Answering Questions
   
   Giving question as often to students can be an effective way because it will stimulate the students to have better
comprehension in reading.

5. Generating Questions

By generating questions, students become aware of whether they have been aware of their comprehension in reading. The questions make the students focused on the answer that the students find out in the text.

6. Recognizing Story Structure

A story has characters, setting, events, problem, resolution. To know each structure of the story, the students have to know first about the paragraph which belongs to one of the structures.

7. Summarizing

Summarizing provides the students to restate the important point of the content after they read the text into a statement by using their own words.

The Definition of Perception

Generally, perception is a deep insight or thought of someone towards something. Sarkol (2016) stated that perception as an ability to use our sense to see, to hear, to feel about what we think. Moreover, Santoso (2008) also stated that perception is the conscious mental process of attaining, selecting, organizing, and interpreting the information with the help of sensory organs.

The Processes of Perception

Perception does not come apparently. Kenyon and Sen (2015) stated that there are four steps of constructing perception such as selection, organizing, identifying, and interpreting. Based on some sources, it can be concluded that the process of constructing perception as follows:

1. Reception

In this process, someone receives the information through their senses by looking and hearing.

2. Selection

In this process, the receiver will select the information received.

3. Organization
It is the process where the receiver sorts the stimulation received into a meaningful thought.

4. Interpretation

Here, the receiver constructs the information that is sensed, selected, and organized. This process involves the factors of perception such as subjectivity, objectivity, and social value.

Factors of Perception

In this research, the perception must be there since it becomes the data. The perception of students in learning especially in reading class should be known by the teacher. It is because perception indicates the students feeling about learning. Here, Ly (2014) explained the factors that influence someone’s perception as follows:

1. Subjective

Subjectivity makes someone’s perception is not pure as the result it has contaminated by someone’s own opinion.

2. Objective

Objectivity creates pure and factual perception. Perception is a piece of factual information as long as influenced by objectivity.

3. Social

Someone’s perception can be influenced by environmental factors like social value, attitude, stereotype.

Method

Research Design

In this research, the researcher conducted a descriptive quantitative research. The researcher chose quantitative research because it presents numerical data which is more valid than just narration. Here, the researcher described the students’ perceptions of their reading strategies and also finds the highest and the lowest scores of strategies used in reading class. Latief (2017) stated that quantitative research is typically acquired from assessment, students’ scores, questionnaires, and interviews.

The researcher conducted this research by focusing on the students’ perceptions because the researcher wanted to know what deep insight of
students about their reading strategies in reading class are.

**Population**

A population can be defined as a complete number of possible elements or parts included in the study (Gray, 2004). Whereas, Sugiyono (2010) defined that the population is the group zone consisted of an object or subject that carried out by the researcher to be analyzed.

The population of this study were all of English students of Pedagogy and Psychology Faculty at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan in the academic year of 2019/2020. The population is a big horde of individuals or subjects which is the first focus in research (Hassan, 2020). The population of this research consisted of approximately 150 students. The researcher did not take the sample because the researcher wanted to derive the data of the whole English students of PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan in the academic year of 2019/2020.

**Subject and Object of the Study**

To conduct this research, the researcher needed the subject and object to be observed. The researcher chose the subject from all of the English students of Pedagogy and Psychology Faculty at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan in the academic year of 2019/2020. The researcher did not take the sample of this study. In other meaning, the researcher researched the whole populations. The object of this study was to describe the students’ perceptions of reading strategies, the highest and the lowest scores of strategies used in reading class.

**Research Instrument**

Instruments commonly used in a research are interviews, questionnaires, observation, and tests. The instrument is the basic term that the researcher used as the tool to collect the data in research (Biddix, 2019). This research was conducted to the whole populations which includes large samples. A questionnaire is a popular and fundamental tool for acquiring information on public knowledge and perception of a natural hazard (Bird, 2009).
Questionnaires

The questionnaire is the main instrument to collect the data in quantitative research. According to Latief (2015), questionnaire is the main instrument to collect the data from many samples. Mokhtari and Sheorey’s (2002) SORS was modified to be implemented in this research. It consisted of the 30 statements originally. Meanwhile, in this research, the researcher increased the statements into 35 categorized into “Global Reading Strategies” stands for 16 statements, “Support Reading Strategies” stands for 11 statements, and “Problem Solving Strategies” stands for 8 statements. Likert scale was applied as one of the most fundamental and frequently tools in educational and social sciences research (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, and Pal, 2015). Related with the statement, the researcher utilized a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 as follows: 1 = I never or almost never do this, 2 = I do this only occasionally, 3 = I sometimes do this, 4 = I usually do this, 5 = I always or almost do this.

Data Collection

In this research, survey data collection used by distributing the modified questionnaire adopted from Mokhtari and Sheorey’s (2002) SORS. A survey is the main tool for collecting data from respondents by asking some questions (Fowler and Floyd, 2014). In this case, the researcher researched by utilizing google form.

Questionnaire

In this study, the researcher applied the questionnaire to the students. Besides, the researcher aimed to know what the students’ perceptions about reading strategies in reading class are and what the highest and lowest scores of reading strategies are. After collecting the data of the questionnaire, the researcher found the percentage of each statement and analyzed the data by using Likert scale. After that, the researcher determined the min, max, the mean, and standard deviation of the data. Finally, the researcher made certain the major and minor scores about reading strategies.
Results and Discussions

After finding the data, the researcher analyzed all derived data to give a clear explanation to the reader. For further explanation, the analyzed data can be seen below.

The Students’ Perceptions of Their Reading Strategies at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan

a. Global Reading Strategies (GLOB)

In global reading strategies, there were sixteen statements. These were the list of the statements as follow: (1) I have a purpose in mind when I read; (2) My prior knowledge helps me understand what I read; (3) I take an overall view of the text to see what it is about before I read it; (4) I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose; (5) While reading, I do scanning to find out the topic; (6) When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore; (7) I use tables, figures and pictures in a text to increase my understanding; (8) I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading; (9) I predict the main topic by reading the title; (10) I use typographical features like boldface and italics to identify key information; (11) While reading, I do skimming to find out the topic in a short time; (12) I check my understanding when I come across new information; (13) I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read; (14) I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong; (15) I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization; and (16) I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.

General reading strategies are the strategies commonly used by the students while reading. Based on the findings, the students tended to use these strategies usually. Probably, it was because those strategies had been ever applied by themselves. So, those were not new strategies for them. It was strengthened by the result, the students usually like to use them. But, there was one strategy that the students considered to do sometimes, that was “I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization”. That strategy demands the students must review the text first, in another meaning the students should read the text twice in time. Exactly, it disturbs the students’ reading activities. Besides, that strategy also requires much time to do. Hence, the students are reluctant to use it. Definitely, the students prefer
to use simple strategies but beneficial, and “I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization” is not match for them. This result was equal to the research conducted by Aziz, Rahim, Harun, Adzmi, Ahmat, Bidin, Shaharudin (2011). The result of his research showed that the students preferred to use the strategy sometimes. It was proved by the scores of the questionnaire. From 60 respondents, 41.7% of them or 25 respondents agreed to use the strategy sometimes.

b. Support Reading Strategies (SUPP)

In this part, the students were confronted with eleven statements about support reading strategies. Parrish (2020) stated that reading strategies can help students who can read well but have difficulties understanding in reading. These were the list of statements: (1) I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read; (2) I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it; (3) I use reference materials (e.g., a dictionary) to help me understand when I read; (4) I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it; (5) I ask myself questions related to the text; (6) I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding; (7) When reading, I translate from English into my native language; (8) When reading, I think about information in both English and my mother tongue; and (9) I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read; (10) When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases; and (11) I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.

This did not seem like the first part, there were three strategies that the students chose to be done sometimes and indicated that Support Reading Strategies (SUPP) had the lowest score. Related to the research by Chen and Chen (2015), the findings of their research showed that the mean score of Support Reading Strategies (SUPP) was 3.60 which lower than Problem-Solving Reading Strategies (PROB) and Global Reading Strategies (GLOB) which had a score 3.95 and 3.75. Three strategies intended above were: first, “I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read”. This strategy demands the students to do two different things in the same time. Doing that causes the students’ concentration is breached while reading since they have to do another thing, that is taking notes.

Surely, that would make reading is useless. Those reasons make the
students are unwilling to apply that strategy. Second, “I ask myself questions related to the text”. This strategy was rarely used by students because most students read the text only for gaining the topic and to answer the available questions of the text. Thus, asking questions for themselves is occasionally conducted. Besides, doing that makes the students find the questions from the text earlier that would be not easy to do. As a result, the students feel lazy to use this strategy. Third, “I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding”. Similar to the first strategy above, this strategy asks the students to do different things but not at the same time. This strategy enables the students to encourage the texts’ structure first and it would waste much time. As a consequence, the students have only limited time to read.

Support reading strategies are strategies that help the students to read effectively. This category consisted of strategies where three strategies had been chosen by students to do sometimes. These strategies had weaknesses that annoy students when reading. Besides, the other strategies left were selected since those provided an effective process. The students tended to implicate the other strategies left usually but not for whenever they read. Those three strategies above were the biggest number of strategies that students applied sometimes.

c. Problem-Solving Reading Strategies (PROB)

Reading strategies are applied to increase the extent of comprehension, particularly for readers lacking adequate prior knowledge (Sun, Yu, Yu, Cardie, 2020). These were the list of strategies: (1) When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I am reading; (2) When text becomes difficult, I read slowly and carefully; (3) I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading; (4) When text becomes difficult, I pay close attention to what I am reading; (5) I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading; (6) When text becomes difficult, I reread it to increase my understanding; (7) I try to get back on track when I lose concentration; and (8) When I find unknown words, I stop reading to translate it.

Problem-solving reading strategies are the strategies that give solutions to solve the students’ problems in reading. It is consisted of the strategies used to overcome the students’ difficulties in reading. Based on the result of the questionnaire, there were no students who never do those strategies. All of
them agreed that those strategies often used in reading despite not in each reading activity. It was carried out by Magogwe (2013). The result of his research showed the mean score of Problem-Solving Strategies (PROB) was 3.97 and it was being the highest score than others. Thus, it could be said that all the strategies were often used by the students. It was caused the strategies were not complicated.

Those strategies do not demand the students to use additional media but beneficial to overcome the students’ problems in reading. Moreover, Li and Kaur (2014) also proved that Problem-Solving Reading Strategies (PROB) were often applied by students in reading activities. It was verified by the data showed the score 3.5 which included in high level. Besides, Global Reading Strategies (GLOB) was 3.4, and Support Reading Strategies (SUPP) was 2.6 which both of them were included in medium level.

The Highest and Lowest Scores of the Students’ Perceptions of Their Reading Strategies

To determine the highest and lowest scores of the data, the researcher considered it by looking at SPSS calculation and supported by the presented data in the previous sub-chapter. The highest score was “When text becomes difficult, I read slowly and carefully”. The data from the diagram showed 34% of students always do the strategy and 43% of students usually do the strategy. It was calculated by over 50% of the respondents. Besides, the second data from SPSS showed the mean 3.95 which was the highest score than others.

It was also espoused by Likert scale calculation that showed a percentage 79% located in the fourth interval which means that “The students usually do when text becomes difficult, I read slowly and carefully”. It could be concluded that this strategy was usually done by students in their reading activities. Then, the lowest score was “I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding”. The diagram showed only 2% of students who always do this and 18% of students do it usually. These percentages were the lowest than the others. Furthermore, SPSS data showed the mean 2.80 which was the lowest score. Those data were carried out by Likert scale calculation showed a percentage 56% located in the third interval which means that “The students sometimes do I analyze the structure early to help me in
understanding”. So, it could be said that this strategy was rarely applied by students. Two findings above were related by the research conducted by Aziz, Rahim, Harun, Adzmi, Ahmat, Bidin, Shaharudin (2011) which stated that “When text becomes difficult, I read slowly and carefully” was the highest score with 40% of respondents usually used the strategy and 36.7% of respondents always used the strategy. Meanwhile, his research also stated the statement was similar to “I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding”. The finding showed 25% of respondents usually used the strategy and only 5% of respondents always used the strategy. The respondents tended to use sometimes.

Among the presented strategies, “When text becomes difficult, I read slowly and carefully” was the dominant strategy used by English students at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan. It relates to theory Bartnett (2018), reading is prospected to be slow and the good readers deserve much time to fully understand. For the researcher, this strategy is better than other strategies because this strategy trains the students to read slowly, so the students can focus on the text in detail and they would get a deep comprehension of the text. Besides, when the students read slowly and carefully, they could pay close attention to the text. So, they can read and comprehend the text extremely well.

On the other hand, “I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding” was the strategy which rarely used. It was infrequently used because the strategy demands the reader to analyze the structure of the text first before reading. This strategy forces the students to do two different things at the same time. That needs much time than other strategies and restricts the students’ time for reading. As we know, reading needs much times to gain the topic of the passage and comprehend the entire passage well. But, if the students do “I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding”, they will lose their time for reading.

From the result of the research, the researcher could conclude that the students were accustomed to use all presented strategies although there were only four strategies that students applied sometimes, those were: (1) I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization; (2) I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read; (3) I ask myself questions related to the text;
and (4) I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding. Based on the data, this strategy “When text becomes difficult, I read slowly and carefully” had the highest score which means the students like to use. It is verified by the data which showed over 50% of students used this strategy. Meanwhile, the students were reluctant to use “I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding”. The result showed only 20% of students used this strategy.

Conclusion

After analyzing the derived data, the researcher could conclude the result of the research as below.

The Students’ Perceptions of Their Reading Strategies at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan

Based on the result of the research had been discussed above about students’ reading strategies at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan, the researcher could conclude that most students were accustomed to implement the presented strategies in their reading activities. From 35 strategies presented in the questionnaire, 31 strategies were considered by students to be conducted when reading although not always in their reading activities. The Likert scale calculation of those strategies referred to the score passed 59.99%. It indicated that the students usually practiced all strategies. There were only four strategies that students applied sometimes, those were: (1) I review the text first by noting its characteristics like length and organization; (2) I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read; (3) I ask myself questions related to the text; and (4) I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding.

The Highest and the Lowest Scores of The Students’ Perceptions of Their Reading Strategies

According to the result of the research, dominantly, the students tended to apply the twenty-ninth strategy “When text becomes difficult, I read slowly and carefully”. It was convinced by the data showed that 34% of students always do
the strategy and 43% of students usually do the strategy. It was calculated by over 50% of the respondents. Besides, the second data from SPSS showed the mean 3.95 which was the highest score. It was also espoused by Likert scale calculation that showed a percentage 79% located in the fourth interval which means that “The students usually do when text becomes difficult, I read slowly and carefully”. From the elicited data, it can be concluded that it was the dominant strategy used by students at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan.

Meanwhile, the students were reluctant to apply the twenty-second strategy “I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding”. The data showed only 2% of students who always do this and 18% of students usually do the strategy. These percentages were the lowest than the others. Furthermore, SPSS data showed the mean 2.80 which was the lowest score. Those data were carried out by Likert scale calculation showed a percentage 56% located in the third interval which means that “The students sometimes do I analyze the structure early to help me in understanding”. It can be concluded that it was the lowest score strategy used by students at PGRI Wiranegara University Pasuruan.

References


