



THE CORRELATION BETWEEN COGNITIVE READING STRATEGIES AND STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST

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Abstract

One of the factors that influence the success of language learning is learning strategy, with language learning strategies learners not only get learning achievement, but also can improve language skills. This study aims to determine whether there is a correlation between cognitive reading strategies and English proficiency test scores. The population of this research was the third year students of the Department of English Education at private University. Quantitative methods were used to collect data. A self-report questionnaire consisting of 25 items was administered to 40 students. The reading strategy was evaluated under three headings: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading in both sections. The data collected from the questionnaire were statistically analyzed using SPSS. The result of this study indicated that there were positive correlation between cognitive reading strategies and English proficiency test scores. Students were usually and sometimes used cognitive reading strategy while reading a text.

Keywords: language learning, learning strategy, language skills

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INTRODUCTION

English as an international language is increasingly important in today's era of globalization, so mastery English is very necessary. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language, and students start to learn English formally from junior high school (Pustika & Wiedarti, 2019). By starting to learn English in school, they will understand English more easily than they will learn English as adults (Pustika, 2015). In university, they prepare their graduates with an English Proficiency Test. Test results are required to demonstrate the student's English proficiency is close to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (B1) level or higher. English Proficiency Test refers to a test that is meant to measure an individual's ability in a language. The main proficiency tests to meet the evaluation reasons for this exam are the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and Cambridge ESOL Exams. All of these proficiency tests, in addition to the TOEIC, have a mix of open and useful sections: listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Hsu, 2010). English proficiency tests not only evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning outcomes, but also in achieving the desired pedagogical changes (Cheng, Andrews & Yu, 2010; Qi, 2007).

To get maximum score in English Proficiency Test, students should use several strategies that are expected to help achieve good English learning outcomes. However, do students use certain strategies in learning English, or do they only study modestly without knowing any language learning strategies? Wahyudin and Rido (2020) stated that every student uses certain strategies and styles. According to Mandasari and Oktaviani (2018), language learning strategies used by most students include affective, memory, social, meta-cognitive, cognitive, and compensation. Lately, the exploration on learning strategies has been a warmed issue in the field of educators and psychologists. The learning strategies allude to the extraordinary considerations or practices that people use to help them understand, learn or hold new data and it very well may be separated into three classifications relying upon the level or sort of preparing included: social / affective strategies, cognitive strategies and meta-cognitive strategies. Most learning strategy investigates in second language securing and learning have been centered on the

identification, description and classification of learning strategies, and a few researchers have attempted to educate or prepare the learning strategy.

Research on cognitive reading strategies has also been carried out by Yesim Ozek and Muharrem Civelek (2006). They found out that there were significant differences in the effective use of cognitive reading strategies in students' gender, age, reading ability, school source, and English learning time. According to Edi Wahyono (2019) he found out that most of students usually use four cognitive reading (1. Quickly scan the text to understand the main points, 2. Guess the meaning of the words based on the context. 3. Take notes on the main points of the text, 4. Combine the text with the subject background Knowledge is linked to remember important information) and cognitive reading strategies are significantly related to students' reading comprehension. Then, study conducted by Sumaira Qanwal and Shahzad Karim (2014). They found out that there was a strong positive relation between reading strategies instruction and learners' proficiency in text comprehension.

On the previous studies above they were all have discussed about one of language learning strategies; cognitive strategy in reading skill, they also used questionnaire to collect the data. The researcher of this study wants to conduct the same discussion and will use questionnaire as the instrument as well. However, what makes this study different is the researcher wants to find out whether there is a correlation between cognitive reading strategies and English proficiency test scores and what are cognitive reading strategies that students mostly use when reading a text.

METHOD

This research based on the data collected in 2021 from the Faculty of Art and Education students of private University. The population of the research was the sixth semester students of English Education study program which consist of one class. The class consisted of 40 students. However, the researcher only has 39 data. The respondents were given questionnaire which consist of 25 Likert-type items (Bezci, 1998) under the headings of pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading phase to investigate the participants' cognitive reading strategy use while reading a text. The questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively. It is to describe the responses of the participants to cognitive and reading strategies and to explain to what extent the correlation between students' cognitive reading strategies and English proficiency test scores. The data that has been collected were analyzed using SPSS for windows.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to determine whether there is a correlation between cognitive reading strategies and English proficiency test scores. The finding of this research was taken from 25 items of questionnaire under the headings of pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading phase. The result can be seen from the data and analysis below.

Tabel 1.1: Characteristics of respondents based on gender

Gender	N	%
Male	12	30,8%
Female	27	69,2%
Total	39	100%

It can be seen from the tabel 1.1 that the total of the respondents were 39. It consisted of 12 male (30,8%) and 27 female (69,2%). All respondents were English Education student's batch 2018 and the data above was taken from questionnaire that has been distributed to them before.

Tabel 1.2: The reability of instrument

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,939	25

From the tabel 1.2 it can be seen that there were 25 N of items (number of item/question) and the value of the Cronbach's Alpha was 0,939. It can be conclude that 25 or all question of this research was **reliable or consisten** because the value of the Cronbach's Alpha was >0,60.

Tabel 1.3: The result of students GPA ans EPT

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
GPA	39	2,00	2,00	4,00	3,4685	,45021	,203
EPT	39	240,00	313,00	553,00	451,0000	55,34343	3062,895
Valid N (listwise)	39						

The tabel 1.3 showed the result of students GPA and EPT. The maximum score of GPA was 4,00, the minimum score was 2,00 with mean was 3,46. Meanwhile in students EPT, the maximum score was 553 and the minimum score was 313 with mean 451.

Tabel 1.4: Cognitive Strategy Use of the Students for the **Pre-reading** Phase

No.	Statement	N		
			Mean	SD
Q1	Reading the title and imagining what the text might be about	39	3,69	1,06
Q2	Looking at illustration/pictures and trying to guess how they are related to the text	39	3,79	1,08
Q3	Skimming the text quickly to get the gist	39	3,72	1,07
Q4	Reading the first line of every paragraph to understand what the text is about	39	3,85	1,06
Q5	Thinking about previous knowledge on the topic of the text	39	3,49	1,05
	Mean:	39	3,71	1,06

The questionnaire items in this part were related to activating background knowledge and understanding what the text was mainly about. The results of the pre-reading strategies part can be seen in Table 1 above. As shown in the tabel, mean in Q1 is 3,69 it meant that in this phase the students was usually reading the title and imagining what the text might be about and standard deviation value was 1,06, it showed that the variation of the data was constant or reliable. It goes same to Q2, the variation of the data was constant because mean: 3,79 SD: 1,08, and also in this phase they're *usually* looking at illustration/pictures and trying to guess how they're related to the text. In Q3 mean: 3,72 SD: 1,07 this showed that the variation of the data was constant and they're in this phase was *usually* skimming the text quickly to get the gist. In Q4 and Q5, it didn't differ much from the previous Qs. Q4 mean: 3,85 SD: 1,06 and Q5 mean: 3,49 SD: 1,05. So, it indicated that the variation of the data was constant and they're *usually* reading the first line of every paragraph to understand what the text was about and sometimes thinking about previous knowledge on the topic of the text. The strategy most often used by students in pre-reading phase was in the Q2 with the mean value 3,85, and the least strategy used by students was in Q5 with the mean value 3,49.

Tabel 1.5: Cognitive Strategy Use of the Students for the **While-reading** Phase

No.	Statement	N		
			Mean	SD
Q6	Reading without looking up every unknown word in the dictionary	39	3,03	0,84
Q7	Using a dictionary for the important words	39	3,72	1,10
Q8	Guessing the meaning of a word from the context	39	3,72	1,12
Q9	Guessing the meaning of a word from the grammatical category	39	3,51	0,97
Q10	Remembering a new word by thinking of a situation in which the word might be used	39	3,62	1,07
Q11	Skipping some of the unknown words	39	3,41	0,82
Q12	Rereading a sentence	39	3,79	0,92
Q13	Considering the other sentences in the paragraph to figure out the meaning of a sentence	39	3,72	0,83
Q14	Reading without translating word-for-word	39	3,33	1,01
Q15	Having a picture of the events in the text in mind	39	3,64	0,87

Q16	Thinking aloud during the reading	39	3,36	0,74
Q17	Paying attention to words or phrases that show how the text is organized	39	3,38	0,94
Q18	Taking notes on the important points of the text	39	3,36	1,01
Q19	Making guesses about what will come next based on the information already given in the text	39	3,41	0,88
Q20	Relating the text to background knowledge about the topic to remember important information	39	3,49	0,97
Mean:		39	3,50	0,94

Table 1.5 above showed the result of while-reading strategies part. In this phase, strategy most often used by students was in Q12, they're *usually* rereading a sentence with mean value was 3,79 and the least strategy used by students was in Q6, they're *sometimes* reading without looking up every unknown word in the dictionary with mean value was 3,03. In Q7, Q8 and Q 13 showed the same mean with value 3,72, it meant that students *usually* using a dictionary for the important words, guessing the meaning of a word from the context and considering the other sentences in the paragraph to figure out the meaning of a sentence in this while-reading phase. The mean value in Q16 and Q18 also the same, it indicated 3,36 so it meant students were *sometimes* thinking aloud during the reading and taking notes on the important points of the text. The rest of questions indicated that students were *usually* or *sometimes* use the cognitive reading strategy in while reading phase. As shown in the table above that all standard deviation values were less than mean value which meant that all the variation of the data was constant or reliable.

Tabel 1.6: Cognitive Strategy Use of the Students for the **Post-Reading** Phase

No.	Statement	N		
			Mean	SD
Q21	Classifying the words according to their meanings	39	3,31	1,03
Q22	Classifying the words according to their grammatical categories	39	3,38	1,02
Q23	Summarizing the main ideas	39	2,72	1,19
Q24	Rereading the text to remedy comprehension failures	39	2,92	0,98
Q25	Rereading the text to remember the important points	39	3,69	0,92
Mean:		39	3,21	1,03

This part of the questionnaire was designed to understand what cognitive reading strategies the students were most using during the post-reading phase, and the results of this part were shown in Table 1.6. the strategy most often used by students was in Q25 with mean value 3,69 which meant students *usually* rereading the text to remember the important points in post reading phase. The least strategy used by students was in Q23, the students *sometimes* summarizing the main ideas during this phase that shown by mean value 2,72. Mean in Q21 was 3,31 which meant the students were *sometimes* Classifying the words according to their meanings. In Q22 with value 3,38, students *sometimes* classifying the words according to their grammatical categories during this phase. The last (Q24) with mean 2,92, it showed that students were *sometimes* rereading the text to remedy comprehension failures. It can be seen in the table above that all standard deviation values were less than mean value which meant that all the variation of the data was constant or reliable.

Tabel 1.7: correlation between cognitive reading strategies and EPT scores

		EPT	Reading Strategy
EPT	Pearson Correlation	1	,029
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,860
	N	39	39
Reading Strategy	Pearson Correlation	,029	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,860	
	N	39	39

The first question was “is there any correlation between cognitive reading strategies and English proficiency test scores?” The researcher computed the correlation by using SPSS v 20.0. at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result was shown in Table 1.7 above. After analyzing the data from cognitive reading strategy questionnaires and students' English proficiency scores, the results of the table above showed a **positive correlation** as indicated by the value (.029) or 0.029. In other words, the higher a person's EPT score, the more likely that person was to use or like the cognitive reading strategy. But, **the correlation was very low** because the result was (.029) which was close to 0 (zero).

Williams & Burden (1997) pointed out that cognitive strategies are seen as mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information in order to learn for obtaining, storage, retrieval or use of information. According to Brown (1994) they are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Cognitive strategies enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways, for example, through reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structure), practice in naturalistic settings, and practice structuring and sound formally (Oxford L. R., 2003).

Pre-reading phase

One of the strategies in this phase was using the title to anticipate the text content. Similarly, relating the pictures/illustrations to the text content allows the readers to have an idea about what the text was about (Bezci, 1998). From the data above it can be seen that students *usually* used those strategies in this phase. Another strategy which help the students to understand what the text is about and to activate their schemata is skimming the text to get the gist (Anderson, 1991; Barnett, 1988) and this strategy is considered critical, because it is important for readers to relate their background knowledge to the text and form some expectations about the topic in order for full comprehension to take place (Anderson, 1991). This strategy was *usually* used by students in this phase.

While-reading

In this phase to the strategies of reading without looking up every unknown word in the dictionary, consulting the dictionary for important words, guessing the meaning of a word from the context and from the grammatical category, skipping some unknown words, reading without translating word-for-word, thinking-aloud during reading, which can be seen in the questionnaire results and used usually by students. However, Anderson (1991) pointed out that actually the use of a balanced dictionary is recommended because the essential words must be searched for and the rest that does not seem to hinder comprehension must be skipped.

Post-Reading

As stated in the questionnaire that students *sometimes* use strategies to classify words according to grammatical meanings and categories, summarize the main ideas, reread texts to correct comprehension failures. In fact, Carrel (1998) stated that classifying words according to their meanings or grammatical categories after reading a text are considered to be important strategies especially for delayed retention. Meanwhile, the strategy of rereading the text to remember the important points at *usually* level.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the result of this research based on the data and analysis above showed that 39 respondents answer were usually and sometimes more than always, rarely or never. It means that the used of cognitive reading strategies while reading a text was usually or sometimes. In line with the aim of this research, the result of the relationship between cognitive reading strategies and English proficiency test scores was that there was a positive relationship but it's very low. In other words, the higher a person's EPT score, the more likely that person was to use or like the cognitive reading strategy.

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