



Metacognitive Strategy: How the Students Perceive the Use of Metacognitive Strategy on Their Reading Performance

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Abstract

Metacognitive strategy is one of learning strategies which leads students to be proficient readers. This study aimed to investigate (1) students' perception toward metacognitive strategy on their reading performance. This study employed qualitative research design which involves 19 undergraduates of Lakidende University Kendari. To gain the data, interview and students' self-diary were used. Both the result of students' self-diary and interview were positive. This study concluded that the students supported the use of metacognitive strategy on their reading performance.

Keywords: metacognitive strategy, reading performance, self-diary

A. Introduction

Fundamentally, reading is identified as one of essential skills for learning exposure since the other language skills can be gradually developed by reading lots of references intensively. The core of being able to gain the information and also to produce the outcomes is through reading. Students, therefore, need to realize the importance of reading rather than to claim reading is only a demand of their lecturers.

Reading deals with learners' cognitive domain, in which all the information are processed in brain. Besides, all the gathered information is kept in human's retention. The information is well-saved in long term memory or short term memory. Hence, Human's brain performance considerably has important role in this case.

To comprehend the text, the learners need to do some activities. This is because comprehending the text requires cognitive performance and motivation as well. Reading for decoding or finding specific information which involves skimming, scanning or can be categorized as bottom up and top down processing model will not be complicated for students. Having a long reading text to be understood, however, for students, it is found to be most complex. Snow (2002) found that more of the students find difficulties in comprehending text. Similarly, Eskey (2005) contended that despite the students have adequate language competencies, to some extent they still find difficulties in comprehending academic texts thoroughly.

To cope with the problems, lecturers need to facilitate, managing, directing and controlling students' learning process. These roles acted are also supposed to build interaction in learning a language. As earlier stated, the students' difficulties deal with their understanding on length text specifically when the text is too specific and unrelated to students' learning field.

In processing the information found, students' cognitive device plays a pivotal role. Moreover, Lecturers can trigger students' cognitive performance by teaching them to regulate their thinking process and learning goals, aimed to overcome students' difficulties in comprehending the text. Furthermore, to regulate and enhance their cognitive performance, metacognitive strategy can be applied. For applying the metacognitive strategy, lecturers need to train them in proper way due to this language learning strategy involve high order of students' critical thinking of their own learning and cognitive.

This metacognitive strategy involves three sub-strategies namely planning, monitoring and evaluation which is should be simultaneously applied. Hartman (2011) suggested that to maximize students' efforts in attaining their learning goals, learners should apply metacognitive strategies. In line with this, Eme (2006) argued that the good readers, who apply metacognitive strategies, will keep on tract of their reading process, reread confusing parts of the text and resolve their reading difficulties.

Related to this learning strategy, many studies have been carried out focusing on language acquisition. Karbalaei (2010) investigated the difference between EFL and ESL undergraduate students' metacognitive knowledge and reading strategies. Both two groups were found to hone same patterns of strategy awareness, despite of their different sociocultural and environments (EFL vs. ESL). Temur et al. (2010) investigated the differences among 6th, 7th, and 8th grades in respect of metacognitive awareness in their reading process showed that the difference among 6th, 7th and 8th grades was not statistically significant. Both of these studies were correlational research and their findings suggested that for further research there is a need to examine the effectiveness of metacognitive strategy both in EFL and ESL context in reading. In 2012, Faramarzi, et.al., found metacognitive strategy give significant effect to students' reading comprehension. In the same year, Lian & Seepho (2012) proved metacognitive strategy affects students' reading comprehension, this is because students' reading achievement was found enhance after applying metacognitive strategy. Similarly, Ahour & Mohseni (2014), who investigated the use of metacognitive strategy in students' reading comprehension, concluded this strategy affective to be applied in improving students' reading comprehension performance.

Considering the importance of this strategy, which is supported by some findings of the previous researchers, there is a need to put a lot of emphasize on teaching learning strategy to students. Besides, there is also a need to examined students' perception on metacognitive strategy, how the students perceive this strategy. A better understanding of students' perception will lead to the possibility of more effective teaching learning strategy. Oxford (1990) suggests that students need to write a note about their learning strategy used and to describe their language learning strategies freely. The profit of allowing students clarifying their feeling on the course content are that the students can openly tell what they want, the difficulties they find, and a lot of things generated. The teachers, therefore, can give them feedback or can help students reducing the difficulties found. Interested in applying learning strategies, then it will lead to the employment of learning strategies in their whole learning activities. In this case, however, the previous studies tend to focus on how the strategy can promote students' reading performance and also how this strategy correlate to students' reading performance. Since it is also important to examine students' perception, therefore, this study is conducted to investigate how the students perceive the use of metacognitive strategy.

B. Methodology

1. Research Design

To examine the result of students' self-diary and the interview result aimed to find students' feeling on metacognitive strategy, the qualitative analysis and its interpretation was carried out. There were three steps in analyzing the data qualitatively; Reading, describing and classifying.

2. Participants

To gain the data, there were 19 respondents involved in this study whose names were abbreviated and were recruited purposively. These respondents were received metacognitive strategy training which has been organized in some meetings and then were asked to freely tell their perception on metacognitive strategy.

3. *Technique of Data Collection*

In collecting the data, there were two entries of students' self-diary thus they wrote their response two times. First entry was taken in meeting 4th after the students were informed the process of metacognitive strategy in reading. Second entry was taken in meeting 7th that was the last meeting of the training. As soon after collecting students' self-diary, interview was carried out. It is supposed to gather more in depth data about students' feeling and also to investigate more students' point of view that might be less or not covered in self-diary. To make the students easy in sharing their opinions and ideas about metacognitive strategy, furthermore, they were permitted to use English or mix their language in English with Bahasa.

4. *Instruments*

There were two instruments used; students' self-diary, interview. The students' self-diary was used to gain the overall picture of students' perceptions toward metacognitive strategy on their reading performance. In addition, interview was meant to retrieve relevant information about students' perceptions.

5. *Technique of Data Analysis*

There were three steps in analyzing the data qualitatively: (1) Reading/ memoing, in which the researcher read and write the memos about all field notes, transcript and respondents' comments to get an initial sense of the data, (2) Describing, it involves developing comprehensive description of participants, the setting and the phenomenon being studied. The descriptions were based on the collected observations, interview result, field notes, or artifacts. The purpose of this step was to provide a narrative picture of the setting of an event that take place in it. (3) Classifying, the purpose of this step was to categorize the data, to organize and to group the data into the theme.

C. **Findings and Discussion**

From the two entries of students- self diary, it revealed the variants of students' responses. At the first entry, in which the students were introduced metacognitive strategy, it is found that the number of students who held positive response increased from entry 1 to entry 2. The students with positive response were Eka, Poppy, April, Anty, DD, Ika, Jumi, Dian, Juwita, Kazoma, Riany, Novy, Iruh, A, Ipul. Conversely, those who held negative responses decreased; Yumi, Lusi, Arnita, Nir. Those students, who have positive responses since the first until the second entry of students' self-diary, supported the application of metacognitive strategy in their reading performance. Moreover, the students, who give negative opinion on the first entry, were found changing their perception from negative to positive on the second entry.

At first entry (1), For 15 students, they reported positive response. As stated by student (DD) "I think metacognitive strategy is very important for me because I can understand the text better". Similarly, (April), who realized the benefit of applying metacognitive strategy, stated "by applying metacognitive strategy, I get easy to understand the text".

Meanwhile, the students, who held negative response, thought metacognitive strategy was difficult to be applied because they have to concurrently apply some processes of metacognitive strategy. Arguing metacognitive strategy quite complex to be applied, student (Arnita) stated "I don't understand how to apply metacognitive strategy in reading". The same response, in which student negatively perceive the use of metacognitive strategy in reading, is gained. Student (Nir) also stated "Because it is difficult, I think metacognitive strategy is not good to be applied in reading". Then, another negative response emerge, student (Lusi) stated "it is difficult to apply metacognitive strategy". Similar to Arnita & Lusi, (Yumi) stated "sometimes, I do not understand how to apply metacognitive strategy in reading comprehension".

Referring to the gathered data, two variant responses, at the first entry, describes that some students were already found the rationale of applying metacognitive strategy, it was indicated by their responses in which they supported the utilization of metacognitive strategy in their reading. Since the first they got exposed such strategy, however, the other students argued that metacognitive strategy is difficult to be applied. In this case, they tend to focus on regulating their cognitive processes rather than on their comprehension.

Furthermore, at the last meeting of the training, after being involved in applying metacognitive strategy, the four students, who previously argued metacognitive strategy is difficult, changed their perception from negative to positive. Then, the researcher found that

since metacognitive strategy requires students' higher capability in regulating their cognitive processes, therefore, the sequential practices are fully needed to deepen students' understanding on how to regulate their cognitive in comprehending the text better. Like the result of students' self-diary, the interview result, focusing on students' perception, clearly described that students had positive perception on metacognitive strategy.

The result revealed that students supported the application of metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension, this was indicated by the result of interview and students' self-diary in which they have positive perceptions. As one of the process of metacognitive strategy which relates to students' self-awareness of their thinking process, interview and students self-diary was also used to enhance students' self-awareness.

Asking their opinions toward the course content, teaching process, motivation, and also learning strategy which they applied, is also can improve their critical thinking. They can criticize and analyze their own learning process hence they will realize their own weaknesses and then will try to solve it. On teacher's side, they can use this result to evaluate and reflect their own teaching process, which aspects should be reorganize, re-explain, and need to be adjusted in order to fulfill their students' needs.

The systematic analyzes of students' interview and students' self-diary also pointed out the fact that due to metacognitive strategy which is known as the higher thinking of students to regulate their learning goal, learning process, and their cognitive process, to make these strategy adhere to students' overall learning process, therefore, the sequential meetings which also involve teachers as a model, practices, and also exercises are convincingly needed. Hence, the psychological factors such as perception, belief, motivation and confidence should be considered when conducting metacognitive strategy training to ensure the effectiveness of teaching such learning strategy.

The finding also provides pedagogical implications for lecturers about the importance of incorporating language learning strategies to promote students' successful in learning therefore the lecturers or even the curriculum developers can insert language learning strategies in designing the syllabus.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrated the episode of students' perception on metacognitive strategy, in which students found the beneficial of applying metacognitive strategy in their reading comprehension, they, therefore, supported the application of this strategy. The positive response will lead to the realization of metacognitive strategy, which means this strategy is appropriate to University level of students. Though at the first entry, four students still had negative response, but then we can draw a comprehensive conclusion that providing and adapting sequential practices will accommodate new chance for students to have better understanding in how to properly apply this strategy and adjust this strategy into their learning process.

However, this study only focus on students' perception without correlating with students' reading score, hence further research need to be carried out. Another thing need to be quantitatively investigated is the total employment of each student's metacognitive strategy. Assessing students' metacognitive strategy is also important in this case. To examine it, the further researcher can use validated inventory specifically for metacognitive strategy. Besides, this study only focuses on reading comprehension. For other research, there is necessity to conduct study in writing, speaking or listening skill.

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