

AN ANALYSIS OF READING STRATEGIES USED BY MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS

Syafarudin

(Mahasiswa Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP Unisma)

Abstract: Reading activity has the main purpose to find information by comprehending the message originated from a written source. As stated by Harmer (2008), reading is an active mental process intended to gain information and comprehend the message in the text. To read effectively, it is necessary for the reader to apply strategies that suit their reading needs. Another aspect that influences reading strategies is gender as gender differs personality of individuals that affects learning strategies (Anantasa, 2016). Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study about the difference between reading comprehension strategies used by males and females. This study used a descriptive qualitative research method and semi-structured interviews as the instrument. The data for this research were collected from 10 students with 5 male and 5 female students of the English department from the University of Islam Malang online with the use of WhatsApp voice notes. The data are analyzed using qualitative analysis that consists of data reduction, grouping, coding, and interpretation to get the data as a whole. In result shows that most of the participants in this study are active readers. with female students tend to be more frequent and consistent while male students tend to be more focused in reading. The study indicated that the reasons for using strategies depend on the characteristic of the text, preference, and reading purposes. The study also indicated many differences in terms of using reading strategies, male students are dominant at previewing, skimming, and predicting, while female students are dominant at text Identification, summarizing, attention to detail, and selecting a strategy. The study suggests the importance of conducting a study on digital reading settings as reading is gradually shifted to the digital setting.

Key Words: *Reading strategies, gender, reading comprehension.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an activity to collect and construct the meaning from the cluster of words by making sense of messages written in printed words (Seyler, 2004). According to Harmer, (2008), reading is an active mental process intended to gain

information and comprehend the message in the text. In gaining knowledge, reading holds a very important place among other skills, it allows the reader to gain access to the knowledge of the world. (Grabe, 1991). The main purpose of reading is understanding contents of the text which depends on the reader's own purpose. According to Roehrig and Guo (2011), people read for many reasons, depending on the readers' motivation, attitude, interest, and habit towards reading. As Nunan (2003) stated that the purpose of reading is to comprehend the content of the text. Reading comprehension refers to personal capacity in understanding written material (Nunan, 2003). Day and Park (2005) noted the levels of comprehension in reading namely or reading taxonomy which consists of literal comprehension, grouping comprehension, inferential comprehension, evaluative comprehension, and appreciative or personal comprehension. Moreover, appreciative comprehension is about gaining emotional or other value from a text which depends on the reader's own personal feelings. Additionally, Ngongare, Samola & Rettob (2020) noted that reading comprehension depends on the reader's contextual understanding, preference, gender, and the information in the text.

Another aspect that influences reading comprehension is gender, as gender determines many aspects such as preference and what strategies are implemented. In case of different treatment from society toward male and female in reading the achievement from different effects of reading comprehension achievement. Moreover, Miles (1995) stated that the reader is a subject to several expansive pressures which lead to particular ways that present interpretation as the most likely to make sense of the text.

There are commonly five components that influence the effectiveness of reading comprehension such as phonological and phonemic responsiveness, word and phonics decoding, fluency, and the word knowledge (Phan, 2006). According to Sheorey & Mokhtari, (2001) the significance of reading strategies especially critical for English language learners, because sufficient levels of English language literacy are important in defining academic achievement at any learning

degree. According to Oxford, (1990) reading strategies are divided into several categories known as SILL or strategy inventory for language learning, which includes cognitive and meta-cognitive strategy, compensatory strategy, memory strategy, social strategy, and affective strategy. In addition, there are several supplementary strategies which support the general reading strategy (Poole, 2005).

Many studies have shown the difference between gender in the way of reading. For instance, the study conducted by Anantasa (2016) indicates different strategies deployed by male and female students after reading activities in the class where boys tend to discuss after reading activities while girls tend to do writing and taking note activity after reading activities. Another study by Arellano (2013) found that female students are better in terms of getting general information and understanding textual features while males are better in getting the specific information and deducing meaning from the context. This indicated that gender determines the way how individuals read and what to read. However, some studies only tried to analyze reading comprehension and tend to find the reading strategy in general but did not find the difference between male and female students. Therefore, the researcher aims to find out the difference in reading comprehension strategies used by male and female readers.

METHOD

This research was implemented in a descriptive qualitative design to focus on specific detail and explicit on measuring statistics. The qualitative research design was the natural research that purposes conjugate phenomenon which happens and done by involving the various taught method. Through the qualitative descriptive method, it was hoped that the data from the field could be written naturally as the reality. The study was conducted at 8th semester students at the University of Islam Malang or Unisma. The researcher focused the research at Teacher Training and Education faculty have an English Education department as this research focused on the English Education department. The target participants

are 5 male and 5 female students at the 8th semester of the English Education Department in UNISMA consisting of 10 students. Those 10 students were selected because at 8th semester, the students have better knowledge regarding reading strategies and able to utilize more strategy for their reading activities. The instruments used in the study is semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide was developed by the researcher based on the emotional support theory from Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002). 12 questions include 4 items covering aspects of reading activities, 4 questions to cover cognitive strategies, and 4 questions to cover metacognitive strategies.

The data were collected by making agreements with the targeted interviewee consisting of 5 males and 5 females from 8th-semester students. The agreement is the participants should be cooperative during the interviews including follow-up with the interviewer, and the participants was compensated for their cooperation accordingly. the data in this study was collected via online semi-structured interviews through WhatsApp voice note and have been recorded and written into transcripts for the data analysis. The link was distributed via WhatsApp message to make it easier for the participants. Before the interview, the researcher explained about emotional support so the interviewee understands the topic of the interview. Each interview lasted for about 15-30 minutes and some interviewee was contacted by the researcher to gather any additional information from their responses. The researcher allocated the time to interview all the participants in one month.

The data analyzed the data obtained from interview questions shared through an online platform. The data are analyzed by descriptive qualitative data analysis based on Creswell (2009) which organizes the data into whole meaningful data for presentation. there are steps that allow the researchers to interpret the data information more effectively, those are data arrangement, coding, description, and summary. Data arrangement is managing the data which in this study is interview transcripts by eliminating unnecessary data and grouping based on the theme of the research problems. coding the transcript, which

involves labeling parts of the transcript, based on what is required in the study. After the data is organized, the next step is giving the descriptive interpretation of the data as this study focuses on descriptive qualitative, then the researcher arranges the descriptive data to be presented in the finding, this process involves presenting the data in a way that the researcher intended in the descriptive design. After all the required data are interpreted in a meaningful whole to answer the research problems, the researcher confirms or compares the descriptive result with the theories and the common existing literature which is then presented in the conclusion.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The overall data of the study shows that most of the students are active in reading with the percentage of 70% and from their reading frequency it is confirmed that female students are more consistent in reading routines and male students tend to read when they need to. Poole (2009) also discovered a similar phenomenon where female students read more frequently and consistently compared to their male counterparts. In this study, the researcher also revealed that their reading motives are varied such as gaining knowledge, like reading, academic purposes, and improving English skills. The most frequent motive is academic purposes. This is in line with Ulper (2011) who also found that students' reading motivation in university is strongly influenced by academic demand instead of reading for pleasure.

In terms of Previewing strategies, male students are dominant compared to female students. The study confirms that both male and female students have the same reason for using this strategy in terms of comparing prior understanding before and after reading. But the difference between them is male students use this strategy to determine important points in the text that female students do not. According to Poole (2005), previewing strategy is characterized by the activation of prior knowledge to aid reading comprehension. In terms of determining

important points, Arianto (2017) explains that it is possible to use the knowledge that we have known for skimming the text, this method allows the students to activate the knowledge database which aids comprehension in reading.

Previewing strategy in reading according to McEwan (2007) is the strategy used to connect the readers' existing knowledge with the content of the text by creating their own's reading context purpose and context. For skimming strategy, male students are also dominant in terms of strategy use where male students tend to get information based on reading purpose and to save time and energy, as well as gaining focus, while female students used to gain focus and to avoid boredom if reading too much. The strategies are different between male and female students, the only similarity is the use to gain focus in reading. According to McEwan's (2007) theory, skimming is the strategy used to focus on the most important information, or the gist by paying attention on important information based on reading purpose. Moreover, Kamalina (2014) also stated that skimming makes the use of an important part of the text that allows the reader to understand the text quicker. A study by Efnawati and Mukayar (2012) shows that skimming and scanning in the form of cognitive strategy is often used by students to read faster and understand the material without reading the whole body of the text.

In terms of visualizing strategy, the researcher found that female students tend to be more dominant were all female students using visualizing strategies compared to male students that only three confirmed using this strategy. They are also similar in the use of this strategy because pictures are motivating, and make reading more comprehensible. However, the difference in reason is female students make use of pictures and detail to make information in the text easier to memorize. According to McEwan (2007), the visualization technique is the form of reading strategy that involves analyzing embedded pictures, illustrations, and concepts that support the reader to comprehend the text. Almutairi (2018) found that visualizing strategies help the students to grasp the information with image support while also motivating them in reading. Additionally, Muzdizal (2019) also

indicated that the presence of pictures in the text is highly effective in motivating the students to read and enhance their imagination.

In terms of predicting or inferring strategy, there are two aspects focused in this study, those are predicting vocabulary and predicting the content of the text. For predicting vocabulary, the result indicated that male students are dominant than female students. The reason is varied between those three students, male students use this strategy to find vocabulary supported by Google if having doubt. Meanwhile, the female student used this strategy to understand some interesting vocabulary. Ariyanto (2017) stated that inferring strategy is useful for the students to acquire new vocabulary and helps the students to carry out reading progress without being bothered by unknown words. A study by Efnawati and Mukhaiyar (2012) found that inferring unknown words is rarely used by the students as it requires more effort to identify unknown words, but for those who use it, they find this strategy helpful in comprehending the text. Moreover, in content prediction strategy male students are also dominant in terms of strategy use. The study also indicated that there are only two following reasons that differ between male and female students. The male students implement this strategy to guess the content by reading the earliest part of the text, while female students use this strategy to guess and predict the flow of the text. Almutairi (2018) indicated that many participants tend to guess the content of the text just by reading the title and earlier part of the text. Ariyanto (2017) also found that students not only infer vocabulary but also infer the content of the whole text.

In regards to the text identification strategy, it is confirmed that female students are more dominant in the use of this strategy, as it only one male student and four female students who are using this strategy. Furthermore, there are only two reasons for using this strategy that differs between male and female students, for the male student use this strategy to determine the type of the text while the four female students seem to have the common reason for using this strategy to determine the best way to read the text. According to McEwan (2007), identifying the characteristic of the text allows the reader to set up a plan to carry out their

reading effectively. Moreover, Efnawati and Mukhayar (2020) stated that metacognitive strategies are the arrangement of reading activities by setting plan and purposes carefully by identifying textual characteristics, type of text, and context. For summarizing strategy, the result shows that female students are significantly dominant in the use of strategy as all the female students are using this strategy while only one male student does. The difference between male and female students is shown by female students who are using this strategy to save time and make reading easier than the male student does not. According to Uzer (2017), summarizing strategies are used to discern the most important ideas, ignore irrelevant ideas, and integrate the central ideas of the text. Moreover, Oxford (1990) stated that summarizing in reading is done by taking selections of text to make brief restatement that includes the main points and the general idea of the article which is helpful this strategy is to focus on the key details.

Regarding selecting and searching strategies, female students are slightly dominant in using this strategy, and there are four reasons that differ male and female students in using this strategy. For male students, the use of this strategy is to avoid unimportant and less interesting parts of the text and details as well as to understand the main idea easier. Meanwhile, for female students, this strategy is used to determine the flow of reading as well as to enhance reading comprehension. Selecting and searching strategies based on McEwan (2007) is a fast-reading technique that involves searching an important part in a text to select the appropriate way to fulfill reading purposes or gather information, this method is effective to define words and terms, clarify misunderstandings and solve problems. A study by Zhang and Duke (2012) indicated that the majority of internet readers tend to read some information that is relevant with information that they need and tends to ignore other detail.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The result of the study concluded that most of the participants in this study are considered as active readers. Moreover, it is revealed that with female students

tend to be more frequent and consistent in reading compared to male students. Meanwhile male students tend to be more focused in reading compared to female students. The study indicated that the reasons for using strategies for both male and female students depend on the characteristic of the text, students' preference, and reading purposes. The result also indicates several differences in terms of using reading strategies between genders, male students are dominant at previewing, skimming, and predicting strategies while female students are dominant at text Identification, summarizing, attention to detail, and using various strategies. In terms of using reading strategies, male students tend to use strategies avoid supplementary details and less interesting parts of the text to understand the main idea easier and faster. Meanwhile, female students tend to use strategies to determine the flow of reading as well as to enhance reading comprehension.

In the consideration with the problems and result of the current study, the researcher suggest for the students to identify their reading patterns by reading a lot, this way they can understand their own reading preference, and what kinds of reading strategies suitable for them to read more effectively. For the lecturer, it is suggested to observe how male and female students read to teach and directs students which reading strategies they can utilize better for reading and enhance students' reading efficiency and comprehension. It suggested for the next researcher to do more research deeper on digital reading as most students nowadays use more digital text than printed documents, It is also suggested to consider high achiever in studying reading strategies as from their achievement it can be assumed that they implemented more strategies compared to the other students.

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