TEACHING SKIMMING ARTICLES IN AN ESP CONTEXT BY USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY TO INCREASE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstrak

Untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang baik pada bacaan, mahasiswa dapat menggunakan skimming, membaca cepat tanpa meninggalkan poin-poin penting. Namun, beberapa mahasiswa masih belum mengetahui cara melakukan skimming dengan efektif, bahkan dalam konteks ESP (Bahasa Inggris untuk Tujuan Khusus). Tulisan ini mendiskusikan tentang strategi skimming metakognitif untuk meningkatkan pemahaman mahasiswa membaca artikel yang panjang. Langkah-langkahnya adalah: 1) sediakan artikel yang berhalaman 10 lembar dan mintalah mereka untuk membacanya, 2) hentikan mereka membaca sebentar ketika masih membaca dua atau tiga halaman, 3) ambil kesempatan dalam kebingungan mereka untuk menjelaskan tentang mengapa mereka membacanya,4) lakukan diskusi untuk menunjukkan bagaimana mereka membaca saling berhubungan dengan mengapa membaca. 5) mintalah mereka berspekulasi dalam membaca teks tentang ilmu pengetahuan, dan 6) diskusikan bagaimana skimming dapat digunakan dalam konteks penelitian. Diharapkan dengan menggunakan strategi ini mahasiswa dapat membaca teks yang panjang dengan mempertimbangkan tujuan dari membaca itu sendiri khususnya dalam konteks Bahasa Inggris untuk tujuan khusus.

**Kata Kunci: Skimming, Articles,
Metacognitive**

Abstract

To get good understanding of reading, the students can use skimming, reading quickly without missing important points. However, some students still do not know how to do skimming effectively, even in ESP context, because they still use the tradional one. This paper discussed about metacognitive skimming strategy to increase students understanding towards long articles. The steps of the strategy are (1). provide them with ten pages articles and ask them to read, (2). Stop them while just reading two or three paragraphs, (3). Take opportunity of their confussions to explain about why they read this, (4). Extend the discussion to show that how people read is closely connected to why they read, (5). Then ask them to speculate on the purposes of reading texts in science and how these purposes may influence the way they approach the technical reading material, and (6). Discuss how skimming can be used in the research context. It hopes that by using this strategy the students could read long text by considering the purpose of reading itself especially in ESP context.

**Key Word: Skimming, Articles,
Metacognitive**

Introduction

Reading is an important activity in life. It has become a part of daily routines for people. By reading they get information, knowledge, idea and inspirations. It has been well stated in the Holy Qu'ran (Surah Al Alaq,1-5) that knowledge is first got from reading.[1]

اَلَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِٱلۡقَلَمِ ۝ عَلَّمَ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ مَا لَمۡ يَعۡلَمۡ ۝ ٱقۡرَأۡ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلۡأَكۡرَمُ ۝ ٱقۡرَأۡ بِٱسۡمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ۝ خَلَقَ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ مِنۡ عَلَقٍ ۝

Meaning:

" (1). 1. Read: In the name of your Lord who created, (2). Created man from a clot, (3). Read: And your Lord is the Most Generous, (4). Who taught by the pen, (5). Taught man that which he knew not." (Surah Al Alaq,1-5)

This verse of Al Quran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) to refer to the primacy of science which ordered Him to read as a key of science and called *qalam* (pen) as a means of transportation of science. It is clear that Allah SWT says that reading is the key of science, and for those who cannot read, they will not get good position besides Him. That is why in Islam educated people will be put in a higher level.

Moreover, according to Grabe and Stoller in Celce-Muria (2001) in academic setting, reading is assumed to be the central means for learning new information and gaining access to alternative explanation and interpretation. So by reading people open up their mind up to accept new information and explanation toward something. They may find answer or solution for something they ask.

There is no reading without understanding. People do not usually begin reading with empty mind. They already have some ideas of what topics they are going to read. In other word, before reading they have some background knowledge in their minds. This background becomes their preparations to get the understanding of the reading depending on their purposes for example reading for information, enjoyment, or to complete a task[2].

To get good understanding of reading we may use some techniques. They are skimming and scanning. Skimming is often used by people when they have lots of material to read in limited time. Skimming is quick reading for the general ideas of the reading passage / the organization of the text. It is used to identify the main ideas of a text quickly.

Although skimming has been taught in the classroom, lot of students cannot apply this technique directly to their reading. They still ask more time to read and even they ask to bring it home so they will have much time to review it over and over. They think that skimming may miss important points that should be read. According to this phenomenon, the writer did an observation. In her observation she found that some lecturers did not teach skimming practically in the class. They just explained skimming subject theoretically without practicing together with the students in the class. Therefore the students are not sure whether they use it correctly and also they do not have courage to use it next since they had less experience in doing that.

Therefore, a good lecturer must handle this problem. She/he must find some strategies in improving skimming teaching technique. In fact, there are lots of strategies that can be done, one of them is using metacognitive strategy. So that this small paper will discuss about how to teach skimming by using metacognitive strategy.

Strategy is a part of teaching method that gives way to the learners to achieve what have been aimed in the beginning of the course. Learning strategies are characteristics we want to stimulate in students to enable them to become more proficient language learners. Here we are not talking about something that is interested to do, but more than that to look at the characteristics of tasks that foreign language learners must do and purposely teaching students the behaviors that will help them to be successful learners. We have to identify the strategy first to the students as important task and then they are purposely taught.

According to Nunan language strategies are mental processes which learners employ to learn and use the target language. It means that the strategies are used as tools to get the knowledge of the target language. There are many different kinds of learning strategies. It depends on context and the tasks. Typically, language learning strategies are divided into three main categories: Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Socio-affective strategies.[3]

Metacognitive is a term used in information-processing theory to indicate an "executive" function, strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. These strategies can be valuable instructional tools, especially for the reading skill, because many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers find that there is insufficient practice time for students who are required to cope with studying a New language and to read for content. The need is heightened because at the post-

secondary level, and particularly at the graduate and post-graduate levels, English suddenly becomes increasingly important for students who must take English for Special Purposes (ESP) courses and read technical subject matter in English. In some subjects English is the medium of instruction and a vehicle of content information. Although there are clear prescriptions from syllabus designers and curriculum developers to encourage activities that require the use of strategies such as scanning (reading a text quickly for specific details), and skimming (reading or previewing a text to find the main idea), in many EFL classrooms these terms are no more than clichés, and very little training is provided on how to actually use these strategies. As a result, students experience difficulties when reading research articles in subjects related to science and technology. In this context, where being able to read efficiently and effectively is essential for academic success, training students to use learning strategies can have a significant effect.

Since the goal of metacognitive learning strategies is to strengthen students' awareness of what makes their language learning successful, it is especially important for the reading teacher to understand how to use such strategies. This paper will review some metacognitive strategies on how to use them to teach skimming for reading specialized texts in an ESP class.

Discussion

Teaching foreign language cannot be done at one moment. We need a strategy to teach students to get their skills of English improved. Sometimes the cause of student failure in learning new language is that they have no courage to express themselves. One way to help them to express their feeling, ideas and confidence to learn foreign language is by using metacognitive strategy.

Metacognitive development involves direct teaching of strategies that help students plan what and how they want to learn by monitoring, managing, motivating them while they are learning and then evaluating what they have learned and how they did so. According to Anderson metacognition is the ability to think about your thinking—to make your thinking visible. It means that by using metacognitive the students will be aware of being themselves and how they do by themselves. [4]

Besides that, Grabe and Stoller indicate that reading long selections of text quickly for general comprehension is difficult to achieve and may not be a skill that is readily

transferable to their foreign language. In the EFL classroom, many readers tend to rely on the slow and careful reading of texts from start to finish, and they have difficulties with reading activities requiring the use of strategies for reading quickly and efficiently, such as skimming a lengthy article for main ideas. As many practitioners have found, metacognitive strategies are one way to overcome these problems. [5]

Moreover according to Chamot metacognitive strategic learning is based on extensive research on learning strategies in which data were collected on the strategy use of effective foreign and foreign language learners ranging from elementary to university level.[6] According to O'Malley the metacognitive strategy can be stated as a term to express executive function, strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Among the main metacognitive strategies, it is possible to include advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, functional planning, self-monitoring, delayed production, self-evaluation.

Importance of language learning strategies in language learning and teaching is that since the amount of information to be processed by language learners is high in language classroom, learners use different language learning strategies in performing the tasks and processing the new input they face. Language learning strategies are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during the process of language learning. In other words, language learning strategies, while nonobservable or unconsciously used in some cases, give language teachers valuable clues about how their students assess the situation, plan, select appropriate skills so as to understand, learn, or remember new input presented in the language classroom. [7]

Even though students' reading ability can be improved when they discover and use specific learning strategies, research indicates that it is not sufficient to present discrete lists of strategies and suggests that setting up contexts where the reasons for strategy use are made explicit may help readers better appreciate strategies and use them more effectively . In other words, even if students receive lectures on strategies and are provided with lists and descriptions, this does not mean that they will incorporate them into the task of learning a foreign language. A mistake to assume that learners come into the language classroom with a sophisticated knowledge of pedagogy, or with a natural ability to make informed choices about their own learning processes. However, with strategy training, readers can make

concrete gains in their reading, for example, strategy training should include explicit instructions on when and how to use a particular strategy, and should incorporate metacognitive elements of planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation into the task. When this is accomplished, metacognitive strategy improves ESP students' efficiency in reading research articles, particularly with tasks requiring fast, selective reading such as skimming in order to promote ESL/EFL.

Students who identify and solve problems at the vocabulary, clause, and text levels are utilizing the metacognitive strategy for reading. They possess the ability to evaluate their own progress in relation to the goals they have set and to adjust subsequent behavior in light of those self-evaluations. Several studies establish that the best readers are those who engage in such active, conscious reading. Information processing is a theory that hypothesizes how metacognition makes learning strategies an automatic part of one's cognitive makeup. According to this theory, metacognition is divided into declarative and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge refers to knowing what something is but not necessarily knowing how to use the knowledge, while procedural knowledge refers to knowing how to do something or putting the knowledge into action. The transfer of declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge is accomplished by first ensuring that students have a solid knowledge about pertinent learning strategies and then applying metacognition so students reflect on what they know and use planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating to make the strategies a part of their long-term learning processes. This idea suggests that it is possible to develop declarative knowledge of the type {I know what X is}, and then to develop procedural knowledge by applying strategy training to guide students' behavior when reading {I know how to do Y}. As declarative knowledge becomes procedural, students will find that first language reading strategies will transfer to the foreign language more easily.

Metacognitive Strategy for Skimming Article

This strategy is for an ESP classroom with graduate level students who read scientific texts. The objective of this lesson is to instruct students in how to use skimming when reading technical material. The presentation and discussion of the framework takes one ninety minute session, and the guided practice takes another ninety minutes.[8]

There are some steps that a teacher must pass to apply the strategy:

1. To begin the course the teacher brings several research articles of about ten pages to the classroom and asks students to select and read an article and to report on the main ideas.

2. After students have been reading for two or three minutes the teacher stops the students and asks for possible answers. Students are likely to show surprise and shock: How could they possibly find correct answers after having read just the first three paragraphs from the ten-page article? Because the students were using their traditional reading technique, which was a slow, linear reading of the text, they had barely begun the article.

3. The teacher uses this moment of confusion to start a discussion on why people read, whether it is for the main idea, for specific details, or to find supporting ideas.

4. The teacher extends the discussion to show that how people read is closely connected to why they read. Contrasting the reading of a train schedule with reading the local newspaper reinforces this point, and the discussion creates an awareness of the different purposes for reading.

5. The students are then asked to speculate on the purposes of reading texts in science and how these purposes may influence the way they approach the technical reading material. At this point, the teacher explains that skimming is reading quickly to discover the main idea of a text. The class looks at how skimming would be productive for reading in general, such as when working online and needing to decide quickly whether it is worthwhile to download a document.

6. The class discusses how skimming can be used in the research context, such as reading the headings, introduction, and conclusion and gleaning information from any non-textual cues, such as pictures and diagrams.

Those are the process of skimming by using metacognitive strategy. To increase reading skill ability the students should have known what the purpose of reading the material. Once again, the teacher's duty is to guide students to be aware of the nature of reading so that it is easy to catch the point and the English proficiency especially their reading comprehension will be more increased. [9]

Conclusion

Learning strategies are used as tools to get the knowledge of the target language. There are many different kinds of learning strategies, one of them is metacognitive Strategy.

The metacognitive strategy requires planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Language learning strategies are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during the process of language learning. In other words, language learning strategies give language teachers valuable clues about how their students assess the situation, plan, select appropriate skills so as to understand, learn, or remember new input presented in the language classroom. There are some steps that the teacher must do to help the students; asking students to read the articles, asking them questions related to the article and discussing how important it is metacognitive to skim article. We hope that the students will carry out doing these steps, because it will be helpful for them during their lives in reading long text without missing the important points in the text especially reading English for specific purposes.

Endnote

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[1] Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, Surah al Alaq 1-5. 2010

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[6] *Op. Cit*

[7] Nunan, David. 2000. *Language Teaching Methodology* . Hal. 11

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