

Investigation of Reflecting Reading Comprehension Strategies Through Self-Directed Learning on Higher Education Students

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Abstract

This study aims to: (1) analyze students' difficulties in CEFR B2 reading comprehension, (2) analyze strategies used by students to improve their B2 reading comprehension, and (3) to monitor the students CEFR B2 reading comprehension through self-directed learning. This study utilized a case study method which employed 6 students of the magister program of English Language Education of a university in Jakarta. The study was conducted by observing the written self-reflection weekly data report. Based on the findings, it indicates that most students have difficulties in B2 reading in terms of lack of vocabulary knowledge, finding some detailed information, finding the main idea and finding the text context. Moreover, to solve the difficulties faced, from the findings, it is also identified that the students used their own strategies. They used context clues, using keywords, more reading practice. These are considered that have been helpful in doing the B2 reading activities. The students are able to reflect on, grow, and establish their own techniques for collecting and digesting new knowledge from what they had acquired or experienced during their learning process.

Keywords : Reading Comprehension, CEFR B2 Reading, Reading Strategies, Self-Directed Learning

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INTRODUCTION

Learning is the process of obtaining new information and skills through practice, training, experience, observation, and reflection (Gaudensia Bria & Laos Mbato, 2019). There are a variety of approaches or methods that English language learners can use to improve their ability to communicate in English. Recently, there has been wide interest in increasing the number of individuals enrolled in higher education places on appropriate educational strategies, and naturally, the capacity building of self (Tripon, 2015). New developments in the field of second language teaching and learning such as distance learning,

andragogy or adult learning, continuing education, computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and self-directed learning (SDL) has emphasized the role of the independent learner in the language learning process. Based on andragogy, the concept of art and science that supports adult learning, SDL takes the initiative in diagnosing one's learning needs and setting personal goals, with or without the help of others. It is commonly suggested that self-directed learning is one of which should be taken into account. Learners will have to become very self-directed throughout their lives just to deal with the vast amount of information available to them (Hiemstra, 1994, p.6, as cited in Meskhat & Hassanzade, 2013).

In addition, reaching decisions on resources and learning strategies to assess the value of learning outcomes are essential (Knowles, 1975 as cited in Meskhat & Hassanzade, 2013). Daar and Jemadi (2020) concluded that most students of Nursing Unika Santu Paulus Ruteng 23 (71.9%) implemented medium Self Directed Learning in learning English for Specific Purpose (ESP). In applying Self Directed Learning Gibbons (2002:11) stated five elements that should be taken into account by learners; 1) Learners control over as much of the learning experience as possible, 2) Skill development. The emphasis in Self Directed Learning is on the development of skills and processes that lead the learners to productive activity, 3) Students' learning to challenge themselves to their best possible performance, 4) Student self-management—that is, management of themselves and their learning enterprises, 5) Self-motivation and self-assessment. Nevertheless, few researchers have studied that without the teachers' supervision the students still faced some problems in reading. There has been much research on learning strategies. They found that individual learners may access these strategies in both a training system and through self. This cutting-edge pedagogy is gaining traction in higher education institutions as an alternate educational paradigm that reverses what happens in and out of the classroom. The fact that most students today are familiar with a variety of electronic tools, media and spend the majority of their daily time using one or more of them would be a contributing factor in the endeavour to improve English language instruction (Lai, 2015 as cited in Zainuddin et al., 2019). Zainuddin et al. (2019) found that study indicates that the students' online culture was predominantly formed by the interesting contents posting on the LMS (learning management system), especially the video lectures and an easy way to use and instructors should develop activities in and around the LMS with a number of benefits and rewards.

As a receptive skill, reading is used to receive a language and it is how the readers or learners unpack the information given. Reading has been considered as the basic competence in this information-driven world (Meshkat &

Hassanzade, 2013). It has been investigated that students have difficulty reading a text, they are more concerned with getting the right answer than with a larger process of getting the answer (Seyedi et al., 2012). Martina et al., (2020) found that students of English education programs had numerous problems when practicing extensive reading outside the classroom without the lecture's supervision. In addition, observation by Haider et al., (2012) stressed that a combination of initiatives such as teacher training, awareness raising, curriculum reform and changing existing assessment format can promote the practices of extensive reading activities among the young learners. Moreover, it is argued that there was a mismatch between teacher perception and activities of self-directed learning assigned to students in online learning (Setia Wahyudi et al., 2021). Unfortunately, learners often need to act independently to improve their information needs, especially in reading. That is why self-directed learning is needed to improve their reading comprehension.

In spite of those early observations, the use of self-learning to improve the students' reading comprehension has remained unclear. Hence, additional studies of the use of self-directed learning are needed. With a focus on student self-direction and efficacy, the teachers teach and engage students in specific tactics that allow them to make decisions and solve issues on their own without always being told what to do (Seyedi et al., 2012). It means the teachers provide them with strategies designed to help them process information effectively and to be self-confident, believing that they have the abilities to succeed.

The objective of this study is to enhance the students of the magister program of English language education proficiency in reading comprehension through self-directed learning by using web sources. This study focuses on the strategy on enhancing the students of English Proficiency for Teachers course in reading comprehension. As a result, they might be provided specific tactics such as encouraging students to create their own personal development and instructional improvement goals, as well as developing approaches to reach the goals. Students

can also benefit from studying a variety of problem-solving skills in order to achieve their goals. They were instructed and practiced in SDL reading strategies, ideally metacognitive strategies, to achieve this goal. The following sections describe some major concepts related to the subject. The study's objective is to find an answer to the following questions:

1. What are the difficulties faced by the higher students in reading B2 comprehension?
2. How are the students' strategies to improve their ability in reading B2 comprehension?
3. To what extent does the self-directed learning used in reading B2 comprehension in the higher education?

This research provides teachers with information on how to effectively teach reading comprehension of texts while also motivating students to improve their reading comprehension. This study is also aimed to inspire students to use independent learning practices in everyday life to improve their reading comprehension in learning English or other foreign languages.

METHODS

In order to obtain the objective of the research, this research uses descriptive qualitative interpretative. This research was conducted at the magister program of English language education of a state university. The data source of this study includes the 6 of 14 students in the second semester of the magister program of English language education of A class of 2021 batch from English Proficiency for Teachers course of 2021/2022 academic year. The consideration of choosing 6 of 14 students is the author only could find that 6 students made a complete report of reading B2 of CEFR by passing some steps shown in a figure below while the other 8 were not included.



Figure 1. Stages in Self-Reflection of B2 Reading Comprehension

The students are assigned to report their reading B2 result of a test from a website. The website provide some reading B2 texts. They do the exercise based on the instructions given. There are four kinds of B2 reading activities provided. The first part is about matching different sentences with each of provided texts. The second activity is about filling the gaps. The next is answering the provided questions by choosing the provided options. Lastly, it is about choosing the best word to fill the spaces.

When the students did the exercise, they need to report the difficulties found and how to solve those difficulties as their strategies. Figure 1 identifies that the process of self-learning of reading comprehension. Directed by the lecturer, the students are the readers. Then, they found some difficulties when they do the reading B2 activities. Next stage is finding some strategies to solve the problems of difficulties found. Lastly, they use the strategies to increase their reading comprehension.

In collecting the data, the writer used observation by analysing the collection of the students' weekly report of self-reflection on reading skill from the course. The data sources are the students' self-reflection data and their task reports.

Furthermore, in analysing the data, any information collected from the results of data collection of students' self-reflection has been retrieved according to what the researcher understands.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data from the observation of students' self-reflection report used the characteristics of students' abilities or difficulties and was determined their problems and strategies used in reading B2 comprehension activities.

The research writes a sample identifying the students' self-learning report in the form of this table.

Table 1. Difficulties Faced by the Students on B2 Reading Activities

Students	Difficulties Faced
Student A	Vocabulary knowledge, detailed information
Student B	Vocabulary knowledge
Student C	Finding main idea, detailed information
Student D	Finding the text context, vocabulary knowledge
Student E	Vocabulary knowledge
Student F	Finding main idea, detailed information

The students wrote their self-reflection report that they have found some difficulties in reading B2 activities. Table 1 explains that most of them found that vocabulary knowledge is the main problems faced. Besides that, it also can be found that the text length is the reason why they got difficulties in getting the main idea or topic of the text. Moreover, they also found that some specific information being asked is quite hard to find because of the unstated detailed information. To sum up, the difficulties found by the students are vocabulary knowledge, the text detailed information, finding main ideas and finding text context.

CEFR B2 READING DIFFICULTIES

■ Vocabulary Knowledge ■ Detailed Information
■ Finding Main Ideas ■ Finding Text Context

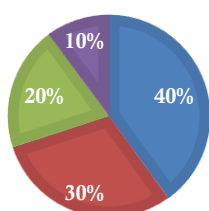


Figure 2. Percentage of B2 Reading Difficulties

Figure 2 identifies that the most difficulties faced by the students is vocabulary knowledge. According to a study by Rohmatillah (2014), there are some factors causing difficulties in learning vocabulary (1) the difference between the written form and the spoken form in English, (2) the large number of words of students have to master, (3) the limited knowledge about words, (4) the complexity

of word knowledge, (5) lack of understanding of grammatical of the words, (6) the incorrect pronunciation of words due to culture. From the third point it is clearly stated that knowledge of vocabulary is really important in the process of mastering vocabulary.

In addition, besides finding the difficulties, the students also reported their strategies in doing reading B2 activities. The strategies are stated in this following table.

Table 2. Strategies Used by the Students on B2 Reading Activities

Problems	Strategies
Vocabulary Knowledge	Context clues used
Detailed Information	Key words used
Finding Main Ideas	Finding the thesis statement
Finding Text Context	Finding the main idea

From the table 2 above, it can be seen that the conclusion of students strategies to solve the problem. The students used context clues used to solve vocabulary knowledge problems. One of the stated that According to Eric Jensen (2020), author of Brain-Based Learning, there are three basic ways the brain constructs meaning. When learning a new word, you need to use: (1) relevance, (2) emotion, and (3) patterns and connections. The students' progress of the four types of B2 reading activities after using their own strategies is shown as the following figure.

Percentage of Students' Correct Numbers

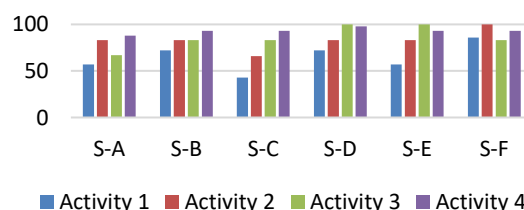


Figure 3. Percentage of Students' Correct Numbers Improvement on Each B2 Reading Activities

As presented in figure 3, almost all of the students show their development of B2 reading activities after implementing the strategies. Student E is the only one who got decreased percentage

from the previous activities. Additionally, among the four activities, the forth B2 reading activities showed the greatest percentage.

The current study's findings highlight the importance of self-study books in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language reading in tertiary educational settings, particularly in the higher education. Moreover, it is critical for teachers to explore how to provide learning opportunities for students in reading classes so that students take greater responsibility for their own learning, develop a greater interest in reading, and actively participate in experiencing a variety of reading materials. Teachers must also direct students' weekly study schedules to guarantee that students' self-study tasks are completed. This finding is in line with those from other studies which addressed the importance of self-study in reading comprehension (Nguyen et al., 2021).

Participating students valued self-directed learning in reading classes; as a result, they were able to reflect on their reading habits, cultivate reading habits, and establish their own methods for obtaining and digesting new knowledge from what they had learned or experienced during their learning process. To put it another way, students should investigate the tactics and abilities they could use to improve their reading ability in response to any difficulties they may have had in comprehending a reading book. To combat a lack of vocabulary, they should learn to guess new terms in context rather than searching up every new word in the dictionary straight away when they read.

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