

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN READING & THEIR READING COMPREHENSION AT THE SECOND YEAR OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF PADANG**

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**Abstrak**

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi penggunaan strategi belajar *reading* oleh mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris tingkat dua Universitas Negeri Padang dan melihat hubungan penggunaan strategi belajar *reading* tersebut dengan *reading comprehension* mereka. Penelitian ini termasuk penelitian korelasi karena penelitian ini melihat tingkat hubungan antara dua variable yaitu strategi belajar *reading* siswa dengan *reading comprehension* mereka. Populasi penelitian adalah mahasiswa tingkat dua Jurusan Bahasa & Sastra Inggris Universitas Negeri Padang. Teknik pengambilan sample adalah *simple random sampling*. Instrument yang digunakan adalah angket untuk melihat strategi belajar *reading* siswa, dan *reading comprehension test* untuk melihat *reading comprehension* siswa, kemudian dianalisis uji normalitas dan uji hipotesis. Dari hasil penelitian didapat strategi belajar *reading* yang paling banyak dipakai siswa adalah *cognitive strategies* dan *affective strategies*. Sedangkan strategi yang paling sedikit digunakan siswa adalah *memory strategies*. Tingkat hubungan antara strategi belajar *reading* siswa dengan pemahaman *reading* mereka sangat positif.

**Kata Kunci** : *Language Learning Strategies in Reading, Reading Comprehension.*

**A. INTRODUCTION**

Learning strategies are specific action taken by the learners to enhance their own learning. It means that appropriate learning strategies can make the learners learn easier, faster, more enjoyable, more effective, and more transferrable to a new situation. Wenden and Rubin (1987) define learning strategies as “any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information.” It means that learning strategies are

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some ways to do to catch the information from others. It can be some steps, it can be a planning or it can be a daily activity. Not too different with O'Malley and Chamot (1990:1) who illustrate learning strategies as "special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information." O'Malley and Chamot just use "special thoughts or behavior" to draw a way that the learners will do in order to get the information, where Wenden and Rubin are prefer to draw it in details. But both of them have the same purpose to be caught, which is to get the information. Oxford (1990:1) defines language learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations." It is in line with what Cohen said before. However, it emphasizes more on the action that the learners may choose. It also may depend on the learners' age, learning style, gender, background knowledge, etc.

There are four classifications of language learning strategies in reading proposed by the experts; the first one is O'Malley's Classification. O'Malley et al (1985:582-584) divide language learning strategies into three main subcategories; metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socioaffective Strategies which all of them can be applied in reading and other skills. Metacognitive is a term to express executive function, strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Cognitive Strategies is the second classification. They are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, keyword, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing are among the most important cognitive strategies. The last one is Socioaffective Strategies. They involve interaction with another person. They are generally considered to be applicable to various tasks. Questioning for clarification, cooperation with others to solve a problem, rephrasing, and self-talk are some examples of socioaffective strategies.

The second one is Rubin's Classification. Rubin & Wenden (1987:23-27) have classified the language learning strategies into three main types; learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies. *Learning strategies* contributes directly to language learning and consists of two categories; cognitive learning strategies and metacognitive learning strategies. Cognitive learning strategies (CLS) refers to the steps or processes used in learning or problem solving tasks which require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Rubin clarifies six main CLS that contribute directly to language learning; clarification/verification, guessing/inductive, inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice, memorization, and monitoring. Metacognitive learning strategies (MLS) are used to control or supervise language learning. They involve variety of processes as planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and self-management. *Communication Strategies* is the second category of Learning Strategies. They are not directly related to language learning since their focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or

clarifying what the speaker intended. Speakers use communication strategies when misunderstanding happened. The last one is *Social Strategies*. Social strategies are those activities learners engage in which afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge. Although these strategies provide exposure to the target language, they contribute indirectly to learning since they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language.

The third one is Oxford's Classification. Oxford (1990:17) divides language learning strategies into two main categories; direct strategies and indirect strategies, which is further branched into six subcategories, and the last one is Stern's classification. Stern (1992:262-266) proposes five categories of language learning strategies; management and planning strategies, cognitive strategies, communicative-experiential strategies, interpersonal strategies and affective strategies. Direct strategies are those behaviors that directly involve the use of the target language, which directly facilitates language learning. Direct strategies itself have three subcategories; memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. Oxford and Crookall (1989:404) define *Memory Strategies* as "techniques specifically tailored to help the learner store new information in memory and retrieve it later". These strategies are effective use in vocabulary learning since they focus on storage and retrieval the new information. The next type of direct strategies is *Cognitive Strategies*. They are skills that involve manipulation and transformation of the language in some direct ways. The last one from direct strategies is *Compensation Strategies*. These strategies help students either comprehend or produce their target language eventhough there is still limitation in knowledge. They aim to make up students' grammar error and selection of the suitable vocabulary.

Another type of Oxford's classification is indirect strategies. These strategies also consist of three main subcategories; metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. *Metacognitive strategies* defined as behaviors used for centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating one's learning. The next type is *Affective strategies*. These techniques help learners gain better control over their emotions, attitudes, and motivations related to the language learning. *Social strategies* are the last one of these subcategories of indirect strategies. As we all agree that language is the most important means of communication. Therefore, they enable to make pupils socialize among them by asking questions, empathizing with others even cooperate one another. Social strategies consist of three points.

The last one is Stern's classification. Stern (1992:262-266) proposes five categories of language learning strategies; management and planning strategies, cognitive strategies, communicative-experiential strategies, interpersonal strategies and affective strategies. The first category is *Management and Planning Strategies*. These strategies are related with students' intention to manage their own learning. The second type is *Cognitive Strategies*. They are steps or operations used in learning or problem solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Some of the cognitive strategies are clarification/verification, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice, memorization, and monitoring. Third, *Communicative-Experiential Strategies* are the third category of Stern's classification. These strategies aim to

avoid interrupting the flow communication in order to make conversation keep going. Communication strategies used are circumlocution, gesturing, paraphrase, or asking for repetition and explanation. Forth is *Interpersonal Strategies*. They should monitor their own development and evaluate their own performance. Learners should contact with native speakers and cooperate with them. Learners must become acquainted with the target language. *Affective Strategies* is the last category of Stern's classification. These strategies are about the feeling of strangeness. It can be evoked by the foreign language. For example, L2 learners may have negative feelings about native speakers of L2. Therefore, the learners are motivated to create associations of positive effect towards the foreign language and its speakers as well as towards the learning activities involved. Learning training can help students to face up to the emotional difficulties and to overcome them by drawing attention to the potential frustrations or pointing them out as they arise.

From the four classifications above, Oxford's classification is the complete and clear ones. Actually, Oxford's classification is not that different with other classification as mentioned. Instead, Oxford's classification overlaps the O'Malley's classification to a great extends. For example, the Cognitive Strategies category in O'Malley's classification seems to cover both Cognitive and Memory Strategies in Oxford's classification. Moreover, while O'Malley puts socioaffective strategies in one category, Oxford deals with them as two separate categories. However, Oxford divides the Language Learning Strategies into two main categories direct and indirect strategies, so that students can clearly recognize the strategy that they prefer to use clearly.

A preliminary study was done regarding language learning strategies. The result showed that students did not know which language learning strategies appropriate with them. It is proved by interviewing and giving a reading comprehension test to the twenty second year students of English Department of the State University of Padang (Taken by the writer at September 20, 2013). The kind of interview used was a half-structured interview, which means that the questions given were designed first, and the other questions were designed by the needs at that time. The result showed that four students did not know what language learning strategies are, seven students admitted that they know what language learning strategies appropriate with them, and the rest admitted that they knew the term "language learning strategies" but did not know what strategies that appropriate with them. It was also seen from the result of reading test that eleven students who did not know much about language learning strategies got mark under 70. In conclusion, language learning strategies did not used yet here.

The purposes of doing this research are; first, to find out the strategies that are mostly used by students in learning reading. Second, to find out whether there is a significant correlation between students' language learning strategies in reading and their reading comprehension, or not.

## **B. RESEARCH METHODS**

This is a correlation research, which has a purpose to see whether there is a significant correlation between students' language learning strategies in reading

and their reading comprehension, or not. Here, the writer applied the questionnaire, which was aimed to get to know the strategies that students used while learning reading. Questionnaire used in this research was adapted from Strategy Inventory of Language Learning created by Rebecca L. Oxford. Then after having the result of the test, the writer needed to find out students' ability in reading by giving them a reading test. Reading test was taken from Reading Comprehension TOEFL test and was matched with the indicators of a good learner of reading comprehension. The population was 150 second year English Department of the State University of Padang, which is divided into six classes. The sample were 26 students from one of six classes. The sample was selected by using simple random sampling technique. Sugiyono (2011: 64) says that it is called simple because the way to take samples from the population are doing randomly without paying any attention to the strata since the population is homogeny.

### C. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this research revealed that cognitive and affective strategies were the major types of strategies used by learners while learning reading, in a point 3,0.

**Table 1. Strategies that Mostly Used in Learning Reading**

	Strategies					
	Direct Strategies			Indirect Strategies		
	Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
<b>Total</b>	62,2	76,9	73	73,1	77	76
<b>N</b>	7	7	3	7	3	3
<b>Mean</b>	2,4	<b>3,0</b>	2,8	2,8	<b>3,0</b>	2,9

Both strategies cannot be claimed developing well in learning reading even they got the highest point in this research, since the point is just 3,0. 3,0 is in the range 2,9 – 3,5, which means the students usually used the strategies in learning reading. In other words, there is still one level upper than the “usually used” level, that is the “always used” level in the range 3,6 – 4,0. This following table will explain more:

**Table 2. Index of Language Learning Strategies in Reading**

No	Index LLS in Reading	Detail	Classification
1	3,6 – 4,0	Always or almost always used	Very High
2	2,9 – 3,5	Usually used	High

3	2,2 – 2,8	Sometimes used	Moderate
4	1,5 – 2,1	Generally not used	Low
5	1,0 – 1,4	Never or almost never used	Too Low

*Adapted from Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (Oxford: 1990)*

From the six strategies of language learning strategies in reading, memory strategies were the least one used by learners. Memory strategies are strategies that dealing with vocabulary. Therefore, it can be inferred that one of the factors of lack of vocabulary is, memory strategies are not developed well while learning reading. People think vocabulary learning is easy, but language learners have a serious problem remembering the target amounts of vocabulary necessary to achieve fluency.

According to Stahl (2003), readability indexes include vocabulary as a major component, recommending that word difficulty has an effect on text comprehension. He emphasizes that, studies from readability formulae have found that the most important factor in determining the difficulty of a text is the difficulty of the words. Thus, vocabulary size is a reliable predictor of reading comprehension.

The result was different with the research done by Zare & Noordin (2011). They explored language learning strategies to 148 of Iranian undergraduate EFL learners who selected through cluster random sampling to participate in the study. The instruments used in their study were questionnaire based on Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL). They found that metacognitive strategies were those strategies that students were mostly used in learning reading, and social strategies were the least strategies used in learning reading. According to Zare & Noordin (2011) the frequent use of language learning strategies can generally contribute to improve language proficiency. They also claim that metacognitive strategies really helped the learners to improve their reading comprehension.

Kafipour (2011) in his research also found the same result with Zare & Noordin (2011) about strategies that were mostly used by students. His research was done through 164 of EFL learners in Kerman Province, Iran. The instruments used was also the questionnaire. He arranged the strategies used by learners, those were metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, memory strategies, determination strategies, and social strategies. It means that metacognitive strategies were the majoring strategies used in learning and social strategies were the least one. Therefore, it was the same with Zare & Noordin (2011) findings. But, even memory strategies were the third of five strategies that students' used in learning reading, thus that strategies still got less point. According to Kafipour (2011) teachers should try to encourage students to use more strategies to improve their reading comprehension.

Next, Correlation coefficient testing was done by using Pearson Product Moment based on Z-score. It was used because both variables have a different far distance. The result showed that there was a significant correlation between language learning strategies in reading and reading comprehension. Irianto (2009):

142) says that if both variables have far distance of range, the Pearson Product Moment based on Z-score was used. Each item of both variables was converted to Z-score. The table below will draw the result of correlation coefficient testing.

**Table 3. Correlation Coefficient Testing Used Z-score Pearson Product Moment**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>t-calculated</b>	<b>t-table</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Language Learning Strategies in Reading & Reading Comprehension	0,891	0,388	Positive Correlation

The decision was determined at the level of significance of 0,05. The research hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted if t-calculated is greater than t-table. Meanwhile, the research hypothesis is rejected if t-table is greater than t-observed and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted. Since  $0,891 > 0,388$ , therefore the  $H_1$  is accepted. It means that there is a positive correlation between language learning strategies in reading and reading comprehension. In other words, as the frequency of language learning strategies in reading increases, the reading comprehension scores increase as well, and vice versa. Based on the results, those language learners who have employed language learning strategies in reading more frequently got better result in reading comprehension test.

Finally, the coefficient determination of language learning strategies toward reading comprehension were also counted. The result showed that the contribution attained 79,4% and 20,6% was influenced by other factors, as Oxford (1990) says that it can be the environment, gender, learning style, age, etc. It can be said that the more students' use and develop their learning strategies in reading, the more they comprehend the reading materials.

#### **D. CONCLUSSIONS & SUGGESTIONS**

There are some learning strategies in reading that are mostly used by students. There are cognitive and affective strategies that students are mostly used in learning reading. And then, memory strategies are the least used one by the learners.

Second, there is a significant correlation between language learning strategies in reading and reading comprehension, which language learning strategies in reading contribute 79,4% toward reading comprehension.

There are some numbers of suggestion; first, it is suggested that the lecturers can incorporate language learning strategies into their teaching methods and approaches and make the learners use learning strategies as frequently as possible and apply them in language learning. By doing so, the learning process inside and outside of the classroom can be increased.

Second, The learners need to increase their level of learning strategies in the level of "always used" in order to get a better impact in language learning. It can be realized by the cooperation of the lecturers and students in learning process.

Third, it is suggested for the next researchers to do the research in other skills; listening, speaking, and writing and correlate it with the result of reading. Also, do the research by considering some factors that influence language learning strategies, such as age, gender, environment, learning style, etc.

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