

Identifying Reading Difficulties and Strategies Among EFL Learners in Intensive Reading

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Abstract

Intensive reading helps students to understand the meaning of a word and is one of the college courses that is useful in learning. In this study, the researcher identified the difficulties and strategies used by EFL learners in intensive reading. The objective of this research was to identify the difficulties and the strategies used by EFL learners in intensive reading. The research used a qualitative case study that attempted to identifying reading difficulties and strategies among EFL learners in intensive reading. The researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis model adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006). The result of this research showed that the students' difficulties were divided into two types: reading difficulties related to learning goals and psychological barriers. When difficulties arise in the areas of learning objectives that students can use to guide their performance with these objectives, it can hinder students' reading comprehension. Studies also found that students face reading difficulties related to psychological barriers such as attention deficits, poor retention, lack of self-confidence, lack of motivation and shyness. The result of this research is expected to be able to give meaningful contributions for, teachers or lecturers, EFL learners and other researchers.

Keywords: Reading Difficulties; Reading Strategies; Reading Comprehension; Intensive Reading.

Introduction

Reading is one of the important skills that students must master in learning English. Levine, et al., (2000) stated that the ability to read academic texts is considered to be one of the most important skills that EFL learners need to acquire. Learners read texts for various goals from gaining information to enjoyment. Reading helps learners to understand their major subjects and improve their language knowledge (Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016). As stated by

Macaro et al. (2018), although English is taught in schools from elementary and secondary levels, it was found that university students' capacity to understand English is quite limited. Students have difficulty understanding what they are read in English. Reading difficulties may be faced by EFL learners when reading texts, but readers can apply effective reading strategies to overcome these challenges. Reading strategies can be any comprehension-enhancing action taken by the readers, such strategic readers can draw on a variety of strategies to accomplish a purpose in reading (Zoghi, 2010).

Nurhayati et al., (2023) found that students' problems when learning to read are problems in understanding the text itself. Several problems, such as lack of grammar mastery, limited vocabulary, and difficulty in translating texts, low motivation and little interest are problems that students have difficulty learning reading comprehension. Hassan & Dweik (2021) found that reading comprehension problems were caused by various factors related to students, reading comprehension texts, English, curriculum, and resources available to students. The results showed that students had difficulty reading texts due to anxiety and frustration even though participants were motivated to learn. The main language problems were lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, poor performance in the language, and linguistic interference. Suliman (2023) found that EFL students face major challenges in reading comprehension, including limited knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, phonology, and grammar. Then the students' low working memory ability. Also, a lack of awareness of the sociocultural, factual, and contextual aspects of the target language.

In some of the studies above, there are differences such as findings, participants and research design. The similarity of these studies is that they can find in their research about the difficulties faced by students in reading that affect students' reading comprehension. This became the basis for the researcher in this study to decide to examine the difficulties that EFL learners might face. Therefore, researcher intend to conduct a study to examine intensive reading difficulties in EFL learners. According to Paran (2003) intensive reading is effective in developing reading skills because students in the EFL context can understand the text step by step and not as a whole. In conclusion, intensive reading is considered an effective tool for improving reading comprehension. Considering that intensive reading is important in improving reading comprehension skills, the researcher wants to identify what might be the difficulties that hinder EFL learners' reading comprehension in intensive reading.

Based on researcher knowledge, intensive reading is a course taught at the beginning of college. This study was conducted on three EFL learners who had low scores, the low score here is an indication of the students' ability or understanding in reading comprehension that has been carried out in intensive reading. In addition, this study also examined what strategies EFL learners might use to help them overcome difficulties in intensive reading. This study was conducted at a university in Jember, East Java, using a case study design.

Literature Reviews

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a complex process that involves components, processes, and factors with the aim of finding better ways of improving it among learners (Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016). There are aspects that influence it, such as knowledge, reader's ability, and activity. This can determine whether a text is considered easy or difficult for readers. Moreover, other factors, such as content, vocabulary, linguistic structure, also readers' background and practical knowledge also influence reading comprehension. Therefore, the word "comprehension" is associated with reading texts. Reading comprehension is a procedure in which the reader must take out and construct meaning from the text uses attachment and reciprocity with structured sentences.

In order to understand written material effectively, it is important for students to be able to decode what they have read, making connections between what they read and what they already know. According to Hartney (2011), a good reader reads, understands, enjoys, and learns new things from the reading materials. Reading activities are related to readers and written texts. Readers always have a reading goal in mind, for example readers read a few lines to obtain specific information (known as scanning), or to get a general idea of everything readers can quickly read entire paragraphs (known as skimming). In addition, readers may also read with a very specific goal in mind, for example to pass an exam, or to spend their free time reading for pleasure. These reading activities are part of improving reading comprehension.

Intensive Reading

Intensive reading refers to the way of reading very thoroughly and deeply every word in a text from beginning to end. That is how to read short

texts thoroughly and with a clear purpose (Koay, 2015). According to Lampariello (2017), a great deal of mental effort and focus is required in this activity. This type of reading is a class activity that primarily pays attention to texts containing new words and idioms carried out under the supervision of a teacher. This aims to develop students' abilities to understand information in detail.

According to Miftah (2013), intensive reading focuses on understanding a particular text and is useful when reading other texts at a later date. Students still experience difficulties in understanding the content of a written text in the learning process. Therefore, intensive learning of reading skills is needed. Licht and Kistner (1986) stated that pursuing specific learning goals means progress because students can compare their performance with those goals. They are more likely to maintain task motivation and work systematically when they perceive higher learning efficacy, which can result in greater skill acquisition. Macalister (2011) believes there are four learning objectives in intensive reading: (1) Focusing on new language such as vocabulary and grammar. (2) Focusing on ideas such as themes and topics. (3) Learning new skills such as such as skimming, scanning and identifying the main ideas. (4) Paying attention to text features such as genre structure.

Researcher can find that intensive reading aims to make students understand in depth the written context. Intensive reading can train and improve students' understanding of written texts. If teachers can present intensive reading material and guide students well, then students can achieve the expected goals (Macalister, 2011). In this research, learning objectives can be an indication of the difficulties faced in the reading process or activity. If students are unable to achieve these learning objectives, this will have an impact on students' reading comprehension and achievement. Moreover, this review is used to analyze data by identifying reading difficulties in intensive reading based on the learning objectives mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Aspect of Reading Difficulties in Higher Education

In describing the reading process, there are two important factors involved, namely the reader and the text (Alderson, 1984). Among the reader factors, psychological factors play an important role in the reading process. According to Lee and Shute (2010) in the education system, psychological factors that have been recognized by researchers can be seen as important

elements in assessing students' academic failure.

Understanding of a text can vary among readers, because they not only have different motivations, but also different psychological perspectives and reading goals. Yazdanpanah (2007) stated that someone can understand a text successfully if they apply psychological resources correctly. According to Suryabrata (1993), factors that originate from students' physical conditions, and these conditions can influence students' learning processes are called psychological barriers. Psychological barriers are often felt by students, because this is a factor that influences student learning achievement. There are several psychological obstacles that are often found, especially in reading comprehension, such as limited of attention, poor retention, lack of confidence, lack of motivation and shyness.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

Students can become proficient readers so that they can achieve independence is the goal of all reading instruction. In constructing meaning, it is very important to learn to use strategies effectively. Readers face difficulties in reading when they are not strategic (Paris, 1992). Once reading difficulties are identified by the reader, reading strategies are considered important and provide students with skills on how to deal with their reading difficulties effectively. According to the results of a study conducted by Nurhayati, et al., (2023), researchers found that in dealing with reading difficulties such as translating sentences, lack of vocabulary, and identifying texts. EFL learners try to practice reading skills, search on the internet, watch videos, and ask friends and teachers. There are many reading strategies that EFL learners can use when they experience reading difficulties. Zoghi, et al. (2010) said that reading strategies can be any action to increase understanding carried out by the reader, strategic readers can use various strategies to achieve a goal in reading.

Methodology

This research used a qualitative case study as a research design. Qualitative case study research design is best understood as a way of employing a set of procedures within a research paradigm to reveal or generate realities (Cohen et al., 2011). By using a qualitative case study design, researcher can investigate in depth the learning process of students in real situations.

Researcher use this case study design because it reveals the actual conditions of the research context. This means that researcher can take data directly from real situations or conditions in intensive reading classes by interviewing them to find out the difficulties and strategies used by students. In addition, the case study method allows researcher to observe data in a particular context closely. This research was conducted at a university located in Jember, East Java, Indonesia. This university was chosen as the research site because access to obtain data from lecturer and EFL learners is easier.

The researcher selected participants by asking for help from a lecturer who teaches intensive reading at a university in Jember. A low score here means that the learner has a score below the standard score that has been set as an indication of the student's ability or understanding in learning. To obtain rich information, researcher use purposive sampling as a technique for selecting participants. Purposive sampling technique, also known as judgment sampling, is a deliberate choice of a participant because of the qualities possessed by that participant (Etikan et al., 2016). Seven participants from the intensive reading class were selected as participants with low score criteria among the students in the class. In the end only three participants were willing to be interviewed. Three participants, Shany (19 Years old), Inka (19 Years old), and Mila (19 Years old).

In this study, the researcher used interviews to identify the difficulties faced by EFL learners and the strategies they used in intensive reading. Researcher used interviews to obtain data from participants. Departing from concerns about reading difficulties in intensive reading on reading comprehension, the researcher created interview questions based on the learning objectives of intensive reading proposed by Macalister (2011). Apart from that, Rahim (2007, p.3) stated that psychological factors influence students' reading comprehension. Psychological barrier is often felt by the students, because it is the factor that influences the students' achievement. Psychological barriers in reading such as lack of attention, poor retention, loss of confidence, lack of motivation, shyness. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data by interviewing participants directly. The researcher chose semi-structured interviews because it was flexible, with this interview the researcher gets in-depth information from the participants. In this research, the data was analyzed by researcher using thematic analysis to provide relevant information. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Finding and Discussion

The Result of Thematic Analysis

The researcher describes the results of the interviews conducted to determine reading difficulties and strategies among EFL learners in intensive reading. The data collection technique used was a semi-structured interview conducted on July 5-7, 2024. The research participants were three EFL learners in intensive reading. A total of 16 questions were asked to each participant to obtain information. The research findings are described as follows:

Table 1. Reading Difficulties in Intensive Reading

Themes	Coded for	Excerpt
Language goals	Vocabulary	"...when I encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, it can hinder my understanding of the text." (Shany)
		"I often have difficulty understanding reading texts when I encounter unfamiliar vocabulary. I had never studied the word before, so I didn't know the meaning of the word." (Inka)
		"There is some unfamiliar vocabulary that I don't know when reading a text, I think it's difficult because I have to understand the meaning of the word first." (Mila)
	Grammar	"...when reading, I cannot understand grammar with complex structures." (Shany)
		"I think everything is difficult, but there is one thing that I really have difficulty with noun clause material." (Inka)
		"...when reading I have difficulty distinguishing between gerunds and prepositions." (Mila)
Ideas goals	Themes	"I have found it difficult to find texts where the theme is not clearly stated. Because of that, I have to try again to understand what the author of the text wants to convey." (Inka)
		"...In my opinion, it is difficult to understand a reading text if the theme is

		not stated clearly. I had to read the entire text again carefully to find the theme of the text." (Mila)
Skill goals	Skimming	"...I'm not used to reading long and complex texts, it's different from high school. As a result, I lost focus on getting information from the text that had to be taken." (Inka)
	Identifying the Main Idea	"Determining the main idea of a paragraph is difficult for me. That's because I also sometimes have difficulty determining the relationship between sentences in a paragraph when I want to determine the main idea. (Inka)
Text goals	Genre structure	"Genres usually have similar characteristics which are sometimes confusing for me." (Shany)
		"I have difficulty if the genres in a text are mixed, for example narrative text mixed with persuasive text which makes me confused to differentiate between them. (Mila)
Psychological Barriers	Limited of Attention	"Usually the reading text is not interesting enough to read so I cannot retain it." (Shany)
		"I have difficulty focusing when reading because of various distractions, such as the sound of people talking loudly, cellphone notification sounds, not feeling well, or the reading is not interesting." (Inka)
		"While reading I could not focus because there were notifications from friends. I focus more on chatting with my friends, not my reading." (Mila)
	Poor Retention	"...if the topic is interesting I can quickly remember information from a text, but if the topic is boring it is difficult for me." (Shany)
"In my opinion, my ability to remember important information from what I read still needs to be improved. I often forget		

		important information that I have read, so I have to reread the text. (Inka)
		"I am the type of person who finds it difficult to remember things for a long time, so I often study to remember material that I have studied before." (Mila)
	Lack of Confident	"Because I am afraid of making mistakes and having difficulty understanding complex texts." (Shany)
	Lack of Motivation	"My motivation level when reading is medium because I do not really like reading, besides that the topic of the text is also the focus which influences my motivation to read." (Shany)
		"I think my motivation level is moderate when reading. I sometimes feel motivated to read, especially if I find interesting reading material." (Inka)
		"My level of motivation is different at certain times, for example when studying from material given by the lecturer it is medium. But if there is a midterm or final exam, my motivation to read is high." (Mila)
	Shyness	"I usually feel shy because of the fear of making mistakes when reading in front of other people. There is always pressure to read perfectly in front of other people who may have better reading skills." (Shany)

Table 2. Reading Comprehension Strategies

Themes	Coded for	Excerpt
	Strategies in vocabulary and grammar	"I reread the material, then ask friends who already understand or also watch videos on YouTube about the material." (Shany)
		"I reread it and try to understand it again, if I still don't understand I usually search on the internet, ask a friend who I think can understand it,

Strategies in learning goals		<p>or sometimes I also ask the lecturer during class." (Inka)</p> <p>"I opened YouTube to understand the material in a reading material, then I opened Google to look for questions related to that material and then worked on the questions provided." (Mila)</p>
	Strategies in themes	<p>"...I wrote down things that I thought were important for me to conclude in order to understand the theme and topic of the reading text." (Inka)</p> <p>"...I usually re-read the reading text, then I highlight the topic and theme." (Mila)</p>
	Strategies in skimming and identifying the main ide	<p>"I think skimming and identifying the main idea is the most difficult, because if it is not stated explicitly it will be difficult to find it. To overcome this, I usually read carefully and look for keywords in the text that I think might refer to the idea." (Inka)</p>
	Strategies in genre structure	<p>"I read everything until it is finished, then I can immediately see the characteristics of the genre." (Shany)</p> <p>"I searched on Google about the characteristics of the genre, then I tried to understand it and then I memorized it." (Mila)</p>
Psychological Barriers	Improve Reading skills	<p>"I use a skimming strategy, by skimming I can get a general idea of the text and understand the important points of information." (Shany)</p> <p>"Studying with my friends is really effective for me." (Inka)</p> <p>"To overcome psychological barriers when reading, I improve my reading skills, for example by using Google to help find the meaning of words and how they are pronounced." (Mila)</p>

Reading Difficulties in Intensive Reading

Vocabulary

In the reading process, vocabulary can become difficult when students do not know the meaning of the words in a text. This vocabulary is usually referred to as unfamiliar vocabulary, this difficulty can hinder students in reading comprehension. From the results of interviews with three participants who took part in the intensive reading class, they stated that:

"...when I encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, it can hinder my understanding of the text." (Shany)

" I often have difficulty understanding reading texts when I encounter unfamiliar vocabulary..." (Inka)

"There is some unfamiliar vocabulary that I don't know when reading a text..." (Mila).

From the statements of the three participants, it can be seen that they had difficulty in vocabulary. All participants said that they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary, they had difficulty in understanding the meaning of the vocabulary. It can be concluded that these difficulties can hinder their understanding of the text, it takes extra time and effort for students to find the meaning of words in order to understand the text.

Grammar

Grammar is a basic skill in English that must be mastered by learners. Lack of grammar can make it difficult for students to understand a text in reading. To find out more about these difficulties in intensive reading, researcher asked students about grammar difficulties through an interview. Three participants said that:

".....when reading I cannot understand grammar with complex structures." (Shany)

"I think everything is difficult, but there is one thing that I really have difficulty with noun clause material." (Inka)

"...when reading I have difficulty distinguishing between gerunds and

prepositions.” (Mila)

From the three participants' statements above, they experienced difficulties in grammar when reading. Participants experienced difficulties in grammar, such as difficulties in complex sentences, noun clauses, gerunds and prepositions. From this statement it can be concluded that the participants have different difficulties in grammar, each difficulty they face can affect their reading comprehension.

Themes

Theme is related to understanding the message the author wants to convey to the reader. Difficulty in themes can hinder students' reading comprehension, this is because students cannot capture the message or information they need to know when reading. In this study, two participants stated that they had difficulty determining theme when reading:

“I have found it difficult to find texts where the theme is not clearly stated. Because of that, I have to try again to understand what the author of the text wants to convey.” (Inka)

“...In my opinion, it is difficult to understand a reading text if the theme is not stated clearly. I had to read the entire text again carefully to find the theme of the text.” (Mila)

From the statements above, it can be seen that both participants found it difficult to determine themes that were not clearly stated in the text. This difficulty makes students have to read more carefully and repeatedly to be able to determine the theme of a reading. It can be concluded that difficulties in themes when reading can hinder students in reading comprehension, it takes effort by reading more carefully and repeatedly to be able to overcome difficulties in themes.

Skimming

Skimming in reading is finding key words that help students deduce the general meaning to interpret the text more quickly. In the process, students can experience difficulties which are usually related to understanding to get an idea of the content of a text. This difficulty was experienced by a participant in this research, the participant stated:

"...I'm not used to reading long and complex texts, it's different from high school. As a result, I lost focus on getting information from the text that had to be taken." (Inka)

This statement revealed that the participant found it difficult to skim a text. The participant experienced difficulties because she was not used to reading long and complicated texts like when she was in high school. It can be concluded that difficulties in skimming are caused by texts that are too long and complicated, which makes it easy for participant to lose focus in finding the information needed.

Identifying the Main Idea

Identifying the main idea is obtaining information or increasing knowledge from a text that is read. If students have difficulty identifying the main idea, then they will have difficulty understanding the content of a text and will not gain anything from their reading. In this research, difficulty in identifying the main idea was experienced by participant, in the interview the participant said:

"Determining the main idea of a paragraph is difficult for me. That's because I also sometimes have difficulty determining the relationship between sentences in a paragraph when I want to determine the main idea. (Inka)

The researcher interpreted this as participant being confused in determining the sentences in the text as the main ideas that participant needed to look for. It can be concluded that the confusion experienced by student can be identified as reading difficulties which can hinder reading comprehension.

Genre Structure

Genre consists of many different types of patterns and structures in a text. Students can experience difficulty in determining the type of genre when reading. In this study, two participants revealed that they experienced difficulty in genres. The following is the participant's statement:

"Genres usually have similar characteristics which are sometimes confusing for me." (Shany)

"I have difficulty if the genres in a text are mixed, for example narrative text mixed with persuasive text which makes me confused to differentiate

between them.” (Mila).

Two participants experienced difficulty in determining the genre. According to them, it is difficult to distinguish between genres which sometimes have the same characteristics. It can be concluded that determining genre structure is identified as a difficulty faced by students which can hinder reading comprehension.

Limited of Attention

Based on interviews conducted by researcher, it was discovered that three participants stated that limited attention was one of the difficulties they faced when reading. They stated that:

“Usually the reading text is not interesting enough to read so I cannot retain it.” (Shany)

“I have difficulty focusing when reading because of various distractions, such as the sound of people talking loudly, cellphone notification sounds, not feeling well, or the reading is not interesting.” (Inka)

“...while reading I could not focus because there were notifications from friends. I focus more on chatting with my friends, not my reading.” (Mila)

All participants stated that they had limited attention when reading. The three participants were often distracted by several different things, such as uninteresting reading material, loud voices from other people, notifications from cellphones and physical conditions when reading. It can be concluded that their loss of focus is caused by several things that can affect their reading comprehension.

Poor Retention

In this study, it was found that three participants stated that poor retention was one of the difficulties they faced in intensive reading, they stated that:

“...if the topic is interesting I can quickly remember information from a text, but if the topic is boring it is difficult for me.” (Shany)

“...I often forget important information that I have read, so I have to reread the text. (Inka). “I am the type of person who finds it difficult to

remember things for a long time, so I often study to remember material that I have studied before.” (Mila)

Participants with poor retention have difficulty remembering information because the topic is less interesting, and have to re-read or study the reading material again. Students with poor retention can affect their reading ability because to understand a text, readers must be able to remember what information they get while reading.

Lack of Confidence

Interviews conducted by researcher found that one participant stated that lack of confidence was one of the difficulties they had to face in intensive reading. In the interview the participant stated:

“Because I am afraid of making mistakes and having difficulty understanding complex texts.” (Shany)

From this statement it can be seen that the lack of confidence in students arises from fear of making mistakes when having to read complicated texts. It can be concluded that students' lack of confidence when encountering complicated texts can affect their reading comprehension abilities.

Lack of Motivation

Based on interviews, it was found that three people said that motivation had an influence on their reading activities. The following are statements from the three participants:

“...I do not really like reading, besides that the topic of the text is also the focus which influences my motivation to read.” (Shany)

“...I sometimes feel motivated to read, especially if I find interesting reading material.” (Inka)

“My level of motivation is different at certain times, for example when studying from material given by the lecturer it is medium. But if there is a midterm or final exam, my motivation to read is high.” (Mila)

Participants stated that their motivation was influenced by the topic or material they read, they would be more motivated if they read an interesting

topic. Apart from that, the purpose of reading also influences students' motivation to read, for example if the purpose of reading is to pass an exam, then student motivation will be high.

Shyness

One participant stated in the interview that shyness arose when reading, the participant stated:

"I usually feel shy because of the fear of making mistakes when reading in front of other people. There is always pressure to read perfectly in front of other people who may have better reading skills." (Shany)

According to participant, the fear of making mistakes when reading was the strongest reason for feeling shy. Apart from that, the demand to read perfectly in front of other people also causes feelings of shyness when reading.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

Reading Strategies in Vocabulary and Grammar

Participants used various strategies to overcome the reading vocabulary and grammar difficulties they faced, as they said:

"I reread the material, then ask friends who already understand or also watch videos on YouTube about the material." (Shany)

"I reread it and try to understand it again, if I still don't understand I usually search on the internet, ask a friend who I think can understand it, or sometimes I also ask the lecturer during class." (Inka)

"I opened YouTube to understand the material in a reading material, then I opened Google to look for questions related to that material and then worked on the questions provided." (Mila)

The way participants overcome difficulties when encountering difficult vocabulary and grammar by rereading what they find difficult. If they still don't understand, they will ask friends or lecturers in class or search on the internet such as using Google and YouTube. Participants use various strategies to overcome the difficulties they face in order to improve their reading comprehension.

Reading Strategies in Themes

Participants used various strategies to overcome the reading themes difficulties they faced, as they said:

"...I wrote down things that I thought were important for me to conclude in order to understand the theme and topic of the reading text." (Inka)

"...I usually re-read the reading text, then I highlight the topic and theme." (Mila)

Participants use strategies by setting goals to stay focused, then making notes and summarizing. This strategy helps to stay focused on the most important and relevant information. Another strategy is to reread and mark important information with a highlighter. This strategy is useful for understanding reading more deeply and finding important information more effectively.

Reading Strategies in Skimming and Identifying Main Ideas

The participant who had difficulty skimming and identifying main ideas used strategies that helped her overcome these problems. Participant stated that:

"I think skimming and identifying the main idea is the most difficult, because if it is not stated explicitly it will be difficult to find it. To overcome this, I usually read carefully and look for keywords in the text that I think might refer to the idea."(Inka)

To overcome the difficulty of skimming and identifying the main idea, participant used the method of reading repeatedly and looking for keywords. With this method she can find the important information she needs and find the main ideas she is looking for in the text.

Reading Strategies in Genre Structure

Two participants experienced difficulties in genre structure, in their interview they said:

"I read everything until it is finished, then I can immediately see the characteristics of the genre." (Shany)

"I searched on Google about the characteristics of the genre, then I tried to understand it and then I memorized it." (Mila)

The first participant said she had to read the entire text to be able to determine the genre, the second participant used Google to get information about the characteristics of the genre and then tried to understand and memorize it. These strategies help them to determine the genre easily. It can be concluded that they must understand various genres in order to understand the characteristics of each genre in reading.

Reading Strategies in Psychology of Reading Barriers

According to the interviews, it was discovered that all participants used strategies to overcome psychological barriers in reading, they said that:

"I use a skimming strategy, by skimming I can get a general idea of the text and understand the important points of information." (Shany)

"Studying with my friends is really effective for me." (Inka)

"...I improve my reading skills, for example by using Google to help find the meaning of words and how they are pronounced." (Mila)

To overcome difficulties related to psychological barriers in reading they must practice their reading skills. The reading strategies they use include skimming, studying with friends, and using Google. These strategies are useful for participants to obtain a general overview, important points, and provide an effective influence on improving reading skills.

Discussion

In this section the researcher discusses the results of the difficulties faced by EFL learners and the strategies used to overcome them in intensive reading. In this discussion section, the researcher discusses important aspects of the findings. To answer the research question, the researcher divided this discussion into two areas based on the research question. The first discussion is about the reading difficulties faced by EFL learners in intensive reading.

In this study, researcher found difficulties faced by students in reading comprehension which were related to the learning objectives in intensive reading, such as difficulties in vocabulary, grammar, themes, skimming, identifying main ideas and genre structure. Students face difficulties when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary while reading which hinders their reading comprehension. This is in line with previous research that students need many

words in their vocabulary to get the meaning of what they read (Osborn & Hieber, 2004). Students experienced difficulties in grammar, such as difficulties in complex sentences, noun clauses, gerunds, and prepositions. This is in line with previous research regarding the grammatical knowledge and reading comprehension which is associated with the reader's ability to produce connections in the text and monitor the acquisition of meaning during the reading process (Fender, 2001; Imamyartha et al., 2019).

Students said that had difficulty determining themes that were not clearly stated in the text. This relates to themes often implied rather than explicitly stated, readers need to use their background knowledge to understand more than the explicit information provided (Graesser et al., 2002). Student said the cause of difficulty in skimming was because she was not used to reading long and complicated texts. This is related to skimming according to Maxwell (in Diaz and Laguado, 2013: 138), skimming can help students find key words that allow them to infer the general meaning of a text to interpret the text more quickly and advance the reading process.

Student being confused in determining the sentences in the text as the main ideas. This is connected to a misunderstanding of the definition between the main idea and the topic sentence of a paragraph, which will make it difficult for readers to determine the main idea of a paragraph (Nasri, 2022; Wibowo, et.al., 2020). Students stated that it was difficult to determine the genre of a text if it had similar characteristics. This is in line with previous research which in the field of teaching reading genres has shown positive results from teaching genre structures on comprehension (Carrell, 1985).

However, researcher also found difficulties related to psychological barriers, such as limited of attention, poor retention, lack of confidence, lack of motivation and shyness. Students said that their attention was often distracted due to several things, such as uninteresting reading material, loud voices from other people, notifications from cellphones and physical conditions when reading. This causes students to lose focus which affects their reading comprehension. This is related to previous research which states that attention is one of the psychological factors that can help students to interact in reading comprehension, but this can be a big problem when students lose their attention (Ramayulis, 1994). Students have difficulty remembering information because the topic is less interesting, and have to reread or study the reading material again. This is in line with previous research where working memory resources

were related to reading comprehension, working memory capacity will be burdened in inefficient readers, whereas efficient readers have sufficient working memory resources to store reading products (Daneman, 1980).

Students' lack of confidence when facing complex texts can affect their reading comprehension abilities. This relates to research which has found that students who have confidence in their reading abilities are more motivated readers and are more likely to improve their reading skills by building on their current level of learning (Imamyartha et al., 2021; Katzir, Lesaux, and Kim 2009; McGeown et al. 2015). Students stated that their motivation was influenced by the topic or material they read and the purpose of reading was to pass the exam. This is in line with research where to achieve certain goals a person needs motivation where behavior is directed by desire, driven and maintained by the possibility of achieving extraordinary results (Bandura, 1986). According to students, the fear of making mistakes and the demand to read perfectly when reading in front of other people are reasons for feeling shy. As in research which reveals that shyness is seen as an obstacle that hinders their educational attainment and is usually considered a trait that inhibits learners (Salmasi, 2012).

The second discussion is about the strategies used by EFL learners in intensive reading. First, students overcome difficulties when they encounter difficult vocabulary and grammar is by re-reading, asking friends or lecturers in class or searching on the internet such as using Google and YouTube. Second, students overcome difficulties when they encounter difficulty in theme by setting goals to stay focused, then taking notes, summarizing, reread text and mark important information with a highlighter which is useful for more deeply and effectively understanding of the text.

Third, Students use the method of reading repeatedly and looking for key words to overcome skimming difficulties and identify the main idea. With this method students can find the important information they need. Fourth, students read the entire text to be able to determine the genre and use Google to get information about the characteristics of the genre then try to understand and memorize it. The strategies above relate to students' difficulties with learning objectives. This is in line with research results about readers who have goals in reading and adapt these goals to each reading task. Strategic readers use a variety of strategies and skills as they construct meaning (Okasha, 2009).

Reading strategies that students use to overcome difficulties related to

psychological barriers include skimming, studying with friends, and using Google to obtain a general overview, important points, and provide an effective influence on improving reading comprehension. The strategies used by the students are related to research which found that in facing reading difficulties EFL learners try to practice reading skills, search on the internet, watch videos, and ask friends and teachers (Nurhayati, et al., 2023). Learning to use strategies effectively is essential to constructing meaning. Readers who are not strategic face difficulties in reading (Paris, 1992).

CONCLUSION

Based on research findings and discussion in the previous chapter, it was found that reading difficulties were faced by EFL learners in intensive reading. Students faced two types of reading difficulties in intensive reading: reading difficulties related to learning goals and psychological barriers. It is known that reading difficulties related to learning objectives are faced by students in the areas of vocabulary, grammar, themes, skimming, identifying main ideas and genre structure. Learning objectives can be used by students to guide their performance with these objectives, but when difficulties arise in this area it can hinder students' reading comprehension. On the other hand, research also found that students face reading difficulties related to psychological barriers such as limited of attention, poor retention, lack of confidence, lack of motivation and shyness. These difficulties are related to psychological resources as a factor in students' reading comprehension. Moreover, students use a variety of strategies to overcome these difficulties in intensive reading to improve their reading comprehension skills.

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