

Metacognitive Strategies of EFL Students in Reading Online Academic Text

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify metacognitive strategies that EFL students may employ when reading online academic text. Seventy-seven seventh-semester students from the English Education Department of a private institution in Malang participated in this mixed-methods study. These students were selected because they were EFL students actively engaged in reading academic texts online, a skill closely related to their thesis-writing process. As the research's instruments, the Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS) and interviews, data were acquired. Microsoft Excel was used to evaluate the questionnaire data, while content analysis was used to examine the interview data. The findings from the questionnaire indicated that problem-solving strategies are the ones that EFL students apply the most when reading academic text online. Moreover, each student uses metacognitive strategies in a distinctive manner, according to the interviews with the three students. The strategies assist EFL students in understanding academic text in online settings and they are useful in online learning environments. The results show how crucial reading strategies are, especially for academic text online. Future research on this topic is anticipated to include an inquiry with a wider range of participants and across competency levels.

Keywords: EFL students, metacognitive strategies, academic text online, online reading

INTRODUCTION

Reading, which is one of the four language skills, is an access to absorb existing every information. This ability, therefore, takes an essential function in learning English, particularly for EFL students. Furthermore, reading entails deriving meaning from written text, which prompts for a complicated coordination of a variety of connected sources of information (Anderson et al., 1985). Hence, students must be able to understand the messages and grasp the texts' ideas. In other words, reading is a crucial part for students, as well as reading academic text. According to Singh (2014), different from reading ordinary text, academic reading requires abilities to understand it because it includes philosophy and advanced vocabulary. Readers must be critical, understand what the author wants to convey, and be able to sort out the feasibility of reading in the academic text (Nhapulo et al., 2017; Sohail, 2016). Moreover, Mohamed (2016) said that it may be simple for someone to read academic text in their mother tongue, but for someone who speaks English as a foreign language, there may be a number of issues that make it difficult for them to comprehend the text.

In higher education, reading for academic purposes is frequently used. Students in higher education will be required to read latest research and to complete academic assignments including academic reading and writing. Especially for university students whose primary language of study is English, students ought to read more to advance in their studies by learning new techniques and approaches for analyzing and responding ingeniously to a variety of academic reading text (Fairbairn & Fairbairn, 2001). Thus, in academic reading, complex abilities are needed to be able to conclude the content presented by the author (Diasti & Mbato, 2020).

Meanwhile, some studies have highlighted students' problems in reading academic text. The need for teacher aid with challenging vocabulary and terminology was stated by students who had trouble grasping the vocabulary (Shen, 2013). Additionally, the same issue with understanding vocabulary was expressed by the students. When students must read long academic texts, another challenge arises (Sultana, 2016). Phakiti & Li (2011) revealed that their postgraduate respondents had trouble identifying and learning academic vocabulary for use, as well as obtaining and synthesizing material from a variety of sources. Besides that, according to Riani (2013) for students in Indonesia, where English as a foreign language (EFL), problems such as low motivation, limited vocabulary, and less fluency in reading are often found. In line with the finding from the research conducted by Sarwo (2013) which shows that majority of Indonesian students still struggle with reading comprehension. The students had difficulties with orientation, complication, resolution, reorientation, and vocabulary.

Hence, to avert those complications, the students entail strategies for their reading skills in academic text. The learning strategy is a learning process that is suitable for students who are chosen by themselves in order to make them understand and master the learning which naturally makes the learning process more effective and easier (Sari et al., 2019). In reading, to assist students comprehend the text's substance and to make the reading time more effective, various strategies are employed (Shehata, 2019). Effective strategies have been proven to improve readers' understanding of reading (Huang et al., 2009). With the use of the right strategy, students can learn the language effectively and efficiently (Ramli et al., 2011). There are many varieties of strategies that be able to use for students' reading process (Afflerbach et al., 2008). But, the choice of reading strategy depends on the readers' knowledge, the level of proficiency of the readers, and the level of familiarity with the reading topic (Song et al., 2020). There are six categories of strategies identified by Oxford (1990) consist of memory, affective, compensation, social, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. However, this study focuses on metacognitive strategies which connote the readers to monitor their reading so that they can absorb the purpose of the reading. Metacognitive strategies include considering the learning process, making preparations for learning, keeping an eye on the learning task, and assessing how well one has learnt (Mistar & Zuhairi, 2022).

Other than that, in modern times like now with the emergence of various kinds of technology and the internet, language learning using an online system is easy to find (Ramli et al., 2011). Study from Kurata et al. (2017) revealed that there has been a huge increasing level in reading from electronic resources during the previous ten years. Studies on the use of electronic reading materials have revealed that students frequently incorporate them into their reading and favor them over printed alternatives. Additionally, it was discovered that different academic areas employ electronic paper differently (Forbes et al., 2016; Liu, 2006; Lopatovska et al., 2014). Since technology has penetrated into our lives, the idea of reading text has altered. Nowadays, reading encompasses more than just reading printed materials like books, magazines, newspaper, and articles journals. But reading also performed through online publications and e-books that can be downloaded. Thus, it is necessary to understand and use technology to read the text in order to adapt to developments (Kellner, 2001).

Yet, reading through technology and reading directly on the paper are certainly different. Reading with technology has its advantages such as reading based on technology and the internet is giving delight or pleasure to the readers, and it has disadvantages such as readers require to adapt (Park & Kim, 2011). This actively demonstrates that language learning is widely studied online, especially in reading. Therefore, determining the appropriate strategy for reading academic text online is important for students now. Afterwards, Mokhtary & Sheorey

(2002) divides metacognitive strategies for online learning into three categories that are global reading strategies, problem-solving reading strategies, and support reading strategies.

To sum up everything that has been stated so far, students should consider exploring more deeply the idea of reading academic text online because libraries have evolved into sources for online articles, e-books, and e-textbooks. It is important for students to be aware about reading online, since doing so will enable them to choose the best strategies for different situations and create meaning from the reading academic text.

The investigations of online reading strategies have encompassed various kinds of foci. The first study, investigating the application of metacognitive strategies to online reading for English student teachers was carried out by Öztürk (2018) from Ghazi University in Turkey. His study looked into how readers use online reading strategies. He conducted a study to determine the types of metacognitive online reading strategies utilized by student teachers, as well as which ones they use most frequently and least frequently. The second previous research was conducted by Tarrayo & De Leon (2014) to learn more about the precise online reading strategies utilized by students in the Philippine State High School. Other research explored online reading strategies employed by senior student teachers and first-year EFL students in Omani universities (Amer et al., 2010).

In short, there have been abundant studies trying to examine online reading strategies. The distinction, however, is that this research examines online reading strategies in the field of academic text. In addition, there are still a few research subjects for college students, especially EFL students. As a result, the researcher is motivated to carry out this study. By examining the online reading strategies in the field of academic text, this research aims to explain the use of metacognitive strategies in the field of reading, especially in online reading activities. Further, this research seeks to explain the students' online reading activities in implementing metacognitive strategies.

RESEARCH METHOD

Through a survey and interview, the metacognitive strategies of EFL students in reading online academic text were identified. The researchers choose the mixed methods because it was suitable to be used in this study to analyze EFL students' metacognitive strategies in reading online academic text.

The subjects of this study were 77 Indonesian EFL students enrolled as undergraduate students majoring in English language at one of a private university in Malang. All participants were in the seventh semester and have taken reading classes in their university education. The participant students were selected because they are EFL learners who read online academic text frequently, since they were completing their thesis.

The instruments for this research are questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire in this study was adopted from Anderson (2003) which is Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS). This survey is an adaptation of the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) that Sheorey & Mokhtari (2001) created. The SORS categorized reading strategies into three sub-constructs which are: global reading strategies (13 items), problem-solving strategies (8 items), and support strategies (9 items). Anderson (2003) modified this survey by adding "online" to each question and adding 8 new items (5 new global reading strategies and 3 new problem-solving strategies items). In other words, the questionnaire contains of 38 question items that must be answered. It is used Likert scale model with the range of 1-5 where 1 for strongly

disagree and 5 for strongly agree. Here are the specific items of Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS).

Table 1
Subcategories of OSORS and Specific Item

Strategy category	Numbers of item	Description
Global reading strategies	1. 2. 3. 5. 6. 8. 10. 14. 17. 18. 20. 23. 24. 26. 27. 30. 32. 33.	The components of global reading strategies are planning the way to read and managing comprehension.
Problem solving strategies	9. 11. 13. 16. 19. 22. 28. 31. 34. 35. 36.	Using methods when reading a text's challenging part is part of applying problem-solving strategies.
Support reading strategies	4. 7. 12. 15. 21. 25. 29. 37. 38.	Support reading strategies involved utilizing tools and approach to comprehend a text.

Anderson (2003) claimed that OSORS has an overall Cronbach's alpha of .92, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency. In addition, regarding to reliability of each category, global reading strategies is .77, problem-solving strategies is .64, and support strategies is .69. Because of their high accuracy or constant coefficient ratings, these statistics demonstrate that the OSORS is a reliable method for assessing EFL students' strategies in reading online academic text. The researchers then categorizes the results in accordance with Oxford's classification of language acquisition strategies (Oxford, 1990).

Table 2
Language Learning Strategies Level (LLS Level) (Oxford, 1990)

Level	Interpretation	Score
High	Always true of me	4.5-5.0
	Frequently true of me	3.4-4.4
Medium	Occasionally true of me	2.5-3.4
Low	Seldom true of me	1.5-2.4
	Never true of me	1.0-.1.4

The second instrument is an interview. The interview is a guide used to follow up on the results of the questionnaire and provide more detailed information. The interviews are carried out personally and face-to-face with the students. The researchers interviewed the students who used different strategies for reading online academic text. The interview questions were checked and validated by an expert in English language teaching. After collecting the data, the data of questionnaire was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and a spreadsheet for rating the metacognitive strategies employed. For the interview, the analysis follows the suggestion of Renz et al. (2018) which includes the following steps: (a) the interview results were transcribed

to prepare the data; (b) the transcription was read and examined; (c) important information from the transcript was taken into notes; (d) the unit of the analysis process was built through the use of themes representing expressions of major concepts or an issue; (e) scheme is coded so that the data can be organized relatively; (f) all texts are coded; (g) the coded data were concluded; and (h) the findings were explained and presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researchers present the results of the study on metacognitive strategies of EFL students in reading online academic texts. The data presented include the types of metacognitive strategies used by students. For the questionnaire, the researchers used OSORS (Online Survey of Reading Strategies) which adopted from Anderson (2003). The results of the questionnaire were shown in the following table:

Table 3
 Frequency of the Learning Strategies Group

Category of Metacognitive Strategy	Mean	Level	Rank
Global Reading Strategies	3.65	High	3
Problem-solving Reading Strategies	3.77	High	1
Support Reading Strategies	3.72	High	2
Overall Strategies	3.71	High	

According to the table 3, overall strategy use intensity was at a high level ($M=3.71$), implying that all of the strategies reported were frequently used by EFL students in an Indonesian context, according to further analysis of how each strategy category was used. Besides that, table 3 reveal that students' most popular strategy applied is problem-solving reading strategies, which is followed by support reading strategies, and global reading strategies took the last place.

Subsequently, the problem-solving reading strategies, which has an average score of 3.77 and is in the high category, is the language learning technique that students apply the most consistently, as shown in the table. It means that, EFL students at one of private university in Malang tend to seeking solutions when the text become difficult during reading online academic text.

It could be concluded that while reading online academic text, EFL students prefer to interact with the text to solve difficulties including varying reading pace, figuring out the meaning of terms they are unfamiliar with, and rereading the passages.

The research results from the interview are presented in this part. Regarding students' viewpoint, they revealed using strategy in reading academic text online is essential. The students tend to use strategies to support their understanding of the academic text. They think that without strategies, they find it difficult to comprehend the academic text online.

"For me using strategy is important... because the use of strategy helps me understand the contents of the text more easily." (P1)

"In my opinion...using strategies in reading academic text online is important...basically reading strategies will affect my online academic text reading results." (P2)

"Using strategies is crucial because it facilitates my comprehending...of course." (P3)

In the stage of electronic devices, they stated that they use their cellphones or laptop as the electronic tools to read academic text online, but one student asserts that cellphone as the second option because she felt that she couldn't focus and was distracted while reading on her cellphone.

"I prefer to read academic text online with my laptop...because I easily lose my focus with notification or messages...if I use my cellphone." (P3)

In terms of the implementation of the strategy used, first of all the EFL students prepare their electronic devices in advance by connecting to the internet. Then, the third students interviewed expressed different strategies. The first student said she type the keywords for the academic online text that she is looking for in the website. Afterward, she looks for the main ideas or keywords in the text to understand what will be discussed from the academic text online. Then, she undertakes scrolling down the text to directly find the information she needs in the online academic text.

"For the strategy implementation...I connect my electronic device to the internet...then, I opened the website by typing the keywords I was looking for...after that, I read online academic text by scrolling my reading screen which led directly to the points I was looking for." (P1)

Furthermore, the second student revealed that she first reads academic text online, and if she comes across a word she does not understand, she opens an online dictionary and looks it up in her native language. Also, she tends to highlight words she is not capable to understand.

"At first...I read the academic text online...and then if there are words that I don't understand...I copy the words and look up their meaning in online language dictionaries... then I also highlight a few words that I don't think I get the meaning." (P2)

Whereas the third student stated that when she reads academic text online, she kept rereading the text until she understood the contents of the text. She also deduces the meaning of unfamiliar words by examining the words before and following them. Besides that, she prefer to read slowly as she read difficult text.

"In reading academic text online...I definitely found unfamiliar words...so I will guess what it means by reading the word before and after it...then I also read over and over again until I understand...and my speed slows down when I have something I don't understand." (P3)

Regarding the use of strategies that help EFL students understand the context of online academic text, they revealed that using these strategies helped them and proved effective for understanding the context of academic text online.

"Of course the use of strategy really helps me...because it makes it easier for me to get the core points that I aim for... from reading academic text online." (P1)

"In my opinion...these strategies were very helpful and effective for me...because I could easily understand the context of the online academic text." (P2)

"Obviously very beneficial for me." (P3)

In conclusion, data from interviews indicates that they responded with a variety of answers. In addition, they concurred that it is crucial and beneficial to adopt strategies when reading academic text online.

Related to previous research, several previous studies have similarities with this research. The result of this study has shown that most of students applied problem-solving reading strategies for their online academic text reading activities. This means that when reading academic text online, EFL students actively engage with the text to solve problems. It is similar to Roomy & Alhawsawi (2019) that stated problem-solving strategies received the highest strategy use from their participants. This result are in line with the research conducted by Öztürk (2018) which found that first-year English student teachers at two sizable public universities in Turkey tended to employ problem-solving strategies more often than support and global reading strategies while reading online. This result also incorporates with the result of Tarrayo & De Leon (2014) which claimed that students in the Philippine Public High School used problem-solving strategies the most frequently, followed by global reading strategies and support reading strategies, when reading online. Other research found that Turkish university students are accustomed to use academic reading strategies especially in using problem-solving strategies (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2012).

However, this result contrasts with previous research of Ramli et al. (2011) which revealed that most of adult learners of an ESL course at one of university in Malaysia use global reading strategies for their online reading activity. This may be because the different types of learners being studied, where Ramli et al. (2011) studied ESL students while this study examined EFL students. This finding also differs from the finding of Amer et al. (2010) which stated that first-year students favor using support strategies whereas senior student teachers favor using global strategies. This may be due to their participants have diverse majors and semester levels, which could account the varied results. Whereas Huang et al. (2009) research differs because they mentioned that support strategies dominate the strategy use of their participants. The different results from this research might be because the different types of online texts studied, in which they presented authentic online texts to their participants, while online academic text were researched in this study.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, this study has revealed that EFL students applying high level frequency in using metacognitive strategies to help them succeed in their online academic text reading activities. Based on the findings that has been stated so far, the researchers would like to give some suggestions. Even though, EFL students frequently used metacognitive reading strategies which is classified into high level, it would be preferable if they increased the amount of their reading in order to develop good reading habits, as employing strategies alone without reading habits cannot support their comprehension of materials, especially academic text. Reading habits can influence performance, thus developing good reading habits can assist them in better comprehending. Meanwhile, for future researchers, it is hoped that this study will encourage them to conduct more in-depth and critical research in order to uncover the use of reading online academic text on each item from each category mentioned. And it is also advisable for next researchers to investigate in various fields of majors so that the participants are more diverse, in order to expand the scope of the research findings. Another suggestion for other researchers is, it would be worthwhile to explore the use of academic text online strategies across English proficiency levels of students, in order to establish which approach is more successful. And for

the last, hopefully, all of the results and suggestions from this study would be a useful contribution for the readers.

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