

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COGNITIVE STRATEGIES TOWARDS STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT SMA NEGERI 1 SAMPAGA

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were; 1) to find out if the use of cognitive strategies is effective to improve students' reading comprehension at SMA Negeri 1 Sampaga or not, and 2) whether or not students are interested in utilizing cognitive strategies in their reading comprehension learning. This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design. The population of this study was students in class X at SMA Negeri 1 Sampaga, and the sample was 16 students in class X at IPS 1. The research data were collected by providing a multiple-choice reading comprehension test on the subject of descriptive text, as well as a questionnaire on a Likert scale to measure students' interest. The t-test and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. According to the Paired Sample T-Test results, the probability value (sig. 2-tailed) = 0.000 which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. The researcher then concluded the use of the cognitive strategies is effective in improving students reading comprehension at SMA Negeri 1 Sampaga. Furthermore, the 'interested' response dominates the questionnaire score of the students' interest. The findings indicated that students are interested in implementing cognitive strategies in their reading comprehension learning.

Keywords— *Cognitive Strategies, Reading Comprehension, Students' Interest, Descriptive Text.*

INTRODUCTION

English is a global language that is utilized for communication all over the world. Along with the growing era of globalization, the awareness of the importance of mastering English as an element of communication between nations is also increasing. Stated by Havifah & Khosiyono (2018), the foreign language education can be used as a solution to improve the quality of self, society, and nation as well as open opportunities for academics to develop their potential for the world stage. Therefore, with students being able to master and understand English texts, it is hoped that this will open up greater opportunities for them to be able to develop a broader understanding that is not limited by barriers between countries, language, and cultures. In the school context, students must be able to properly take in and comprehend English words, comprehend the material, improve their comprehension skills, and achieve academic success.

Learning English typically consists of four major fundamentals, including receptive and productive abilities. Receptive skills that include listening and reading skills, while productive skills include speaking and writing skills. Reading abilities are regarded very significant as part of the receptive skill since they are closely tied to the process of acquiring language and information for EFL students. According to Azizah, Susilohadi, and Sulistyawati (2015), the ability to read in English is considered an important skill, especially for those who are learning English as a school subject, because this reading skill will not only be related to reading courses, but it will also be needed in every other field of activity in studying another course.

However, it cannot be denied that in the process of developing reading skills, especially in reading comprehension, students encounter several obstacles such as them having a hard time understanding the English reading text well. Difficulties in understanding English texts will also affect their success in carrying out English text-based tasks. The inability to understand this English text could be due to a number of factors, including those who are unfamiliar with English texts because English is not their first language, a lack of practice, a lack of interest and motivation, and a lack of understanding of appropriate methods and strategies when dealing with some reading-based text questions.

For that reason, the teacher's task is to provide good and adequate educational facilities, one of it is having the right learning strategy to deal with these problems of students' reading comprehension. Various strategies can be used, and one of them is cognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies can be defined as a strategy that involves critical and cognitive thinking skills which can be used by students to solve their reading problems. These cognitive capacities contribute to distinct thought processes in evaluating, problem solving, and decision making (Sari, 2019).

This study is significant in terms of the utilization of English learning strategies that employ cognitive processes as an alternate solution presented to high school students for understanding and working with English reading texts. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of applying cognitive strategies on students' reading comprehension and whether or not it gets them interested.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Reading Comprehension

Reading may be defined in a variety of ways. Reading, according to Grellet (2004), is a perpetual activity of guessing, predicting, verifying, and questioning oneself. Reading is the process of decoding and understanding written content (Cline et al., 2006). Where comprehension is influenced by the reader's goals for reading, the context, the type of material, and the readers' methods and knowledge. While, decoding is the process of turning the symbols of a writing system into the spoken words that they represent.

According to Caldwell (2008), reading comprehension is the process of gaining meaning from written text through involvement and engagement. In order to establish the meaning of the text with intention and consideration, reading comprehension is a challenging cognitive process that draws on the reader's prior understanding of the text (Munjid & Astiyandha, 2021). Basic cognitive and intellectual talents, prior information, such as familiarity with vocabulary, ideas or concepts and linguistic capabilities, such as morphology, syntax, and grammar, all have an impact on a student's ability to comprehend reading (Hamra & Syatriana, 2010). The researcher can then draw the conclusion that Reading Comprehension is concerned with the relationship of meanings to word symbols, the ability to understand interpretations of phrases, sentences, words, or lengthy choices; the choice of the appropriate meaning based on context; the organization, and preservation of meaning.

Heilman et al. (1981) then classified comprehension into four level of skills, they are literal, interpretive, critical, and creative competence levels. These degrees of comprehension are consistent with the levels of comprehension noted by DaCosta and Gutierrez (2020), which stated that there are three stages of analysis, they are: literal, inferential, and critical level.

As stated by Nuttal (1982), students need to recognize five aspects of reading in order to successfully understand what they are reading. These are further subdivided into the following points: determining main idea, finding specific information, reference, making inference, and vocabulary.

2. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies were described by Oxford (1990) as the mental process that employed by students in order to help them make understanding of the material they are studying. Dole, Nokes, and Drits (2009) characterized cognitive strategies as psychological techniques or procedures used to accomplish cognitive objectives including problem solving, test preparation, or reading comprehension. Furthermore, according to Carlo (2017), cognitive strategies are acts that students execute consciously (or potentially consciously), somewhat deliberately, and in order to maximize the integration, internalizing, constructing, reorganization, and transference of their information and language skills. Simply said, cognitive strategy is a set of approaches or methods for processing data or information from reading by leveraging the capacity to think and process information.

Lyke and Young (2006) then separated the cognitive strategies into two different types, they are surface strategies which are useful for selecting and paying attention to information in short periods of time, and deep strategies which are particularly useful for merging new information with previous understanding. Surface strategies are classified as rehearsal strategy, which often include reading by repeating concepts several times. Deep strategies, on the other hand, are classified into elaboration strategy and organizational strategy. Moreover, Elihami (2017), in his study classified cognitive strategies into three types: rehearsal strategy, organizational strategy, and elaboration strategy.

Students employ the rehearsal strategy to improve their fluency and understanding. This approach entails repeatedly repeating information so that their reading is fluent and error-free, as well as until the knowledge can be kept in short-term memory. This rehearsal approach involves learning vital ideas or concepts by revisiting a sentence or a document to correct errors.

According to Elihami (2017), organizational strategies can be done by putting materials into frame order, which is a collection of words that learners can recall and are arranged into useful categories. This strategy can be applied by separating the main idea from the supporting ideas or by showing the relationships among information in the form of a table or list.

The elaboration approach involves the learner expanding on components of what is to be taught. Elaboration strategy include substantially discussing the facts or intricacies of text material. Examples of this approach include drawing conclusions and relating the material to the reader's previous knowledge of the subject.

3. Students' Interest

According to Krapp (2002), most people think of interest as a phenomenon that arises from a person's connection with his or her surroundings. Paul (2013), described interest as a psychological state of involvement experienced in the present moment, as well as a proclivity to engage with specific ideas, events, or things again across time. Furthermore, Muhira (2020) defines interest as a circumstance in which a person feels drawn to or interested in an object or activity that meets their goals or requirements. If students are engaged in the learning process, they will exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors in the classroom. Then it can be inferred that interest is a certain preference possessed in each individual that may arise from interactions that individuals experience with the environment that includes ideas, events, or certain objects that caused feelings biased towards a particular thing. There are many important benefits for students when they are interested.

Springer et al. (2017) list some of the benefits of students' reading interest as increased comprehension, deeper understanding, reading more strategically, keeping what is read longer, and putting more cognitive effort into what they are reading. Furthermore, if students are interested in the learning process, they will exhibit positive attitudes and behavior in the classroom. Motivating kids to learn may be more challenging when they are disinterested.

Students who read less have less time to develop their reading abilities. Because of the great effect of curiosity, student mentality might become positive in the learning process.

According to Hidi (2006), there are two categories of interests that indicate separate regions of study emphasis, and they are as follows: situational interest which is impacted by external or external factors such as surroundings, obligation as a student, or following the hypes of a topic and the individual interests that include things like being intrigued, being surprised, or being passionate about something (Kurniawati, 2021). Having an interest in something can include feeling startled, interested, or passionate about it. A study by Renninger (2000) showed that individual interest only develops when a person has sufficient knowledge to organize unfamiliar knowledge and, to others as an outcome, grows capable of addressing curiosity-inspiring thoughts.

Carl Safran, as reported by (Kurniawati, 2021), then divided interest into four categories: 1) Expressed Interest, this sort of interest is expressed vocally and indicates if a person likes or dislikes a certain thing or activity, 2) Manifest Interest, this is a sort of interest that stems from personal involvement in a given activity, 3) Tested Interest is an interest that stems from a test or skill in a certain activity, and 4) Inventoried Interest, which is an interest indicated by an interest inventory or activity list, and activity related to personal declaration.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This research study was quantitative research. This study used a single group pre-test and post-test with a pre-experimental design. Subjects of this study have received the treatment, namely the use of cognitive strategy. The paradigm of this research can be described as below:

The paradigm of one-shot study research

Subject	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Group 1	T1	X	T2

Where:

T1: Test that is conducted before treatment (Pre-test).

X: Treatment using cognitive strategies

T2: Test after being given treatment (Post-test).

2. Research Variables and Operational Definition

This study has two variables, they are the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is the cognitive strategies, namely rehearsal, organizing, and elaboration. While, the dependent variable is the students' reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is a complex process that attempts to comprehend the information in the text, which includes having the ability to fully understand the main idea, find additional details in the text, understand references, can make an inference, and have a proper vocabulary collection. Cognitive strategies are the series of problem's solving method that involve mental processes in the form of thinking processes and processing information from English reading context. The three cognitive strategies in this research consist of rehearsal, organization, and elaboration strategies.

3. Population, Sample, and Sampling

The population of this study was the tenth-grade students' of SMA Negeri 1 Sampaga in the academic year 2022/2023. There were 50 students who divided into 3 different classes as the total population of this research. This research has been used the classroom random sampling technique because there are no certain characteristics that must be fulfilled by students to become the research samples. Therefore, the researcher only used class X IPS 1 as one group of treatment among the three existing tenth grade classes in SMA Negeri 1 Sampaga.

4. Time and Location

This study conducted from March 30 to May 30, 2023. The research consisted of six meetings, four for the treatment class and two for each Pretest and Posttest. This study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2022/2023 at SMA Negeri 1 Sampaga located in Sampaga, Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi.

5. Research Instruments

In this study, the researcher employed two instruments, they are: 1) The reading comprehension test with 25 multiple-choice questions, and 2) The questionnaire items in the Likert scale responses such as strongly disagree, disagree, undecided/neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

6. Procedures of Data Collection

This study's data gathering procedures comprised a pre-test, treatment, post-test, and questionnaire distribution. The Pre-test was performed before to administering the treatment to the research sample. Following that, the therapy procedures were carried out in four meetings in which the students were taught to cognitive strategies such as rehearsal, organizational, and elaboration. The last procedure was the Post-test, which was used to gather data and assess the student's capacity or knowledge of reading comprehension following treatment. The researcher also gave the questionnaire to the students on the same day as the post-test.

7. Technique of Data Analysis

The data for this study came from pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire item scores. Using the SPSS statistic 25 Program, the researcher determined the mean score and standard deviation, N-Gain Test, Normality Test, and T-Test.

RESULTS

a. Students Reading Comprehension Score

1) The frequency and Rate Percentage of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Students' Reading Comprehension Test

No.	Classification	Score	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
			F	P (%)	F	P (%)
1.	Very Good	88-100	0	0	1	6
2.	Good	74 - 87	0	0	3	19
3.	Fair	60 - 73	1	6.2	5	31
4.	Poor	<60	15	93.8	7	44
Total			16	100	16	100

Table 4. 1 Classification and rate percentage of students' scoring in pre-test and post-test

According to Table 4.1, none of the students scored in the very good or good categories during the pre-test. Then, there was only one student who scored fairly (6.2%), while the other 15 students were in the poor category (93.8%).

Meanwhile, at the post-test score, students seem to have made quite good and improvement progress. It can be seen that 1 (6%) student scored in the very good category. Then, in the good category there are 2 (19%) students, in the average category there are 5 (31%) students who get scores. Meanwhile, in the poor category there were 7 (44%) students.

2) Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre_test	16	576	36.00	10.733
Post_test	16	998	62.38	14.555
Valid N (listwise)	16			

Table 4. 2 Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Students' Pre-Test and Post-Test

According to Table 4.2, the total score for the Pre-test is 576, whereas the total score for the Post-test is 998. Then it indicates that the mean Pre-test score is 36, which is categorized as "Poor." meanwhile, the mean of the post-test is 62, which is higher than the mean of the pre-test and categorized as "Fair." The Post-test Standard Deviation score was 14.5, which also higher than the Pre-test Standard Deviation score of 10.7.

The results of both mean scores and standard deviation reveal that students have to made an improvement in the post-test after the treatment has given.

3) N-Gain Test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NGain_Score	16	.19	.70	.4258	.17048
NGain_Percent	16	19	70	42.58	17.048
Valid N (listwise)	16				

Table 4. 3 N-Gain Score Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.3 above shows that in the pre-test and post-test learning outcomes after using the N-Gain test, the result is 0.42 where $0.3 > 0.47 > 0.7$, indicating that the pre-test and post-test learning outcomes are in the medium category.

4) Normality Text

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df.	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre_Test	.188	16	.136	.913	16	.129
Post_Test	.183	16	.154	.940	16	.347

Table 4. 4 Test of Normality

Due to the number of samples less than 50 students, the researchers used Saphiro-Wilk data. Table 4.5 shows that the significant value in the pre-test is $0.129 > 0.05$, whereas it is 0.347

> 0.05 in the post-test findings. As a result, both Pre-test and Post-test data are regularly distributed.

5) Paired Sample T-Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre_Test – Post_Test	-26.375	9.885	2.471	-31.642	-21.108	10.67	15	.000

Table 4. 5 Paired Samples T-test

Based on table above, it shows that the probability value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000, which is lower than the significant level 0.05. The results shows that *Hypothesis null (H0)* is rejected while *the alternative hypothesis (H1)* is accepted. It means that there is a significant effect and improvement on students’ reading comprehension after being taught by using cognitive strategies.

a. Students’ Interest

1) Frequency and Rate Percentage Distribution

No.	Interval	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	31-35	Highly Interested	7	44
2.	25-30	Interested	8	50
3.	19-24	Moderated	1	6
4.	13-18	Uninterested	0	0
5.	7-12	Very Low Interested	0	0
Total			16	100

Table 4. 6 The Frequency & Rate Percentage of Students’ Interest

According to the data categorization above, students are most interested in gaining Reading Comprehension through the use of Cognitive Strategies. It is proven by the aggregate percentage of the students from the questionnaire items. Table 4.7 above shows that among 16 students, 7 (44%) students were ‘Highly Interested’, 8 (50%) students were ‘Interested’, 1 (6%) student is ‘Moderated’, while none of the students were ‘Uninterested’ as well as ‘Very Low Interested’.

2) Mean Score of Students’ Interest

	N	Sum	Mean	Percentage
Score	16	477	29.81	29.81%
Valid N (listwise)	16			

According to the data classification, the mean score 29.81 is categorized as interested. Result shows that most of the students are feel interested in the using of cognitive strategies on the reading comprehension learning.

DISCUSSION

a. The Effectiveness of Cognitive Strategies Towards Reading Comprehension

Based on the result of findings, it can be seen that the students' mean score improved following the treatment. The post-test mean score is 62 which can be classified as fair, while the pretest mean score is 36, which may be classified as poor. Then, the higher scores of students' post-test than the mean scores of students' pre-test can indicated that there was an improvement on students learning outcomes after the treatment, even if the improvement could not achieve the good and very good scores.

The results of the N-Gain test show a value 0.42 which is based on the guideline of decision making, $0.3 > 0.4 > 0.7$ and can be categorized as medium. This result of the N-Gain test then indicates that there is a medium effect of the treatment that has been given. Additionally, the results of the normality test reveal that the data was normally distributed both in the pretest and the posttest. The Paired Sample T-test was then applied by the researcher to verify the hypothesis. In this test, the probability value of (Sig. 2-tailed) obtained is $0.000 < 0.05$. This outcome proved that *hypothesis null* (**H₀**) is rejected while the *alternative hypothesis* (**H₁**) is accepted. As a result, H₁, which states that cognitive techniques are effective in improving students reading comprehension, could be accepted.

On the first meeting, the researcher offered an example of a descriptive text and instructed the students to read it several times in order to comprehend its content, recognize its key concepts and supporting details, and analyze their impressions of it. In the second meeting, the researcher put more of an emphasis on organizational cognitive methods as she examined students' capacity to recognize texts. In this meeting, students identified text structures in the form of note-taking which enabled them to more actively organize information from the text and improve their reading comprehension. Students were challenged to expand on their thoughts and comprehension of a specific text topic during the third and fourth meetings. Students made improvement at the fourth meeting in terms of outlining their thoughts and deepening their comprehension of the subjects covered.

This demonstrates that the strategies implemented seem to be very helpful in helping students in fully comprehending the reading material, particularly when working on comprehension tasks. It has been believed there is a positive association between students' reading comprehension and the cognitive strategies (Nabilah, 2021). According to Suyitno (2017), students would be able to solve their own difficulties and communicate ideas while reading if they use cognitive reading strategies. There is great significance when employing cognitive strategies to enhance students reading comprehension in descriptive literature (Sari, 2019). These cognitive techniques include elaboration, organizing, and rehearsal.

The findings indicate that this research supports the previous findings that the implementation of cognitive strategies are effectives for improving students reading comprehension. One of the most efficient ways to enhance students' learning in educational settings and help them become proficient readers is through the implementation of learning strategies especially for those students with the reading comprehension challenge. Thus, cognitive strategies are seen as particularly important when there is an issue at any level of comprehension (Marzuki, Alim, & Wekke (2018).

b. The Students' Interest on Using Cognitive Strategies in Their Reading Comprehension Learning

Based on the research, researchers found that most students in the positively way are interested in using cognitive strategies in their reading comprehension. The percentage score results for the statement items are dominated in the category of Interested (50%) and Highly Interested (44%), while there are only (6%) in the moderated category and none in the Uninterested (0%) as well as Very Low Interested (0%) category. These results indicate that most of the students are interested in using cognitive strategies on their reading comprehension learning.

These results enable the researcher to interpret that using cognitive strategies can help to make students' interest in learning. They feel convenient using this kind of strategy in completing their reading comprehension task. Additionally, the students have a solid knowledge of how to utilize it and feel that applying cognitive methods would benefit their learning of reading comprehension. Students are also curious to learn more about additional cognitive techniques they might use to improve their reading comprehension, and they believe that these techniques can help them improve other aspects of their English language proficiency as well.

Sesmiyanti (2016), claimed that one of the benefits of implementing cognitive strategies was because by involving the cognitive processes in the student learning process, it can help in influencing student activeness in classroom learning and students can be motivated, interested, and interactive in participating in classroom learning.

The utilization of correct and appropriate learning strategies helps students to take a good interest in learning, which in this case is reading comprehension. The majority of students want to use this cognitive strategy in their reading comprehension learning because they think it will help them to improve their reading comprehension, which then also sparks a greater interest in similar strategies and their application in the development of their other English language skills. This conclusion can be drawn based on the findings and some related theories discussed above. This statement is also supported by Dorofeeva & Gubaydullina (2019), which stated that when a person feels interested in something, they will develop a feeling of wanting to pay attention to it or want to discover more about that thing.

CONCLUSION

The researcher has drawn conclusions as a result of the findings and discussion in the previous chapter as follows; 1) The implementation of cognitive strategies such as rehearsal, organization, and elaboration are effective for improving students' reading comprehension at SMA Negeri 1 Sampaga and 2) The students at SMA Negeri 1 Sampaga are feel interested on using cognitive strategies in their reading comprehension learning.

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