



Reading Strategies Employed by Senior High School Students in Understanding Descriptive Texts

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Abstract. Reading is a must-have skill for students, regardless of proficiency level. Reading skills are used in all subjects in school. By using reading, they can understand what they learn and obtain information about subjects that help develop their skills. In this term, reading strategies play an important role in defining the success of reading. Many researchers have found that using strategies can help students read effectively and efficiently. This issue is fascinating because success in reading is supported by the strategies readers use. Therefore, the researcher is interested in finding out what reading strategies high school students use. This study aims to examine the reading strategies used by Senior High School students while comprehending descriptive text and their perception of reading strategies. The research design was a qualitative approach based on the theory of case study. The informant consists of tenth-grade students of the eleventh-grade Senior High School. Observation and individual interviews are instruments used by the researcher to collect data, and then the data is analyzed by triangulation, which consists of reducing data, displaying data, and drawing. The results of this study show that there were 7 strategies used by participants namely repeated reading, taking notes, imagine the content, summarizing, bottom up, guessing, getting the purpose of reading, each participant uses more than one strategy in reading, The result also showed that the strategies the students used while reading greatly helped them understand the text and made the reading process more effective and efficient.

Keywords: Descriptive Text; Qualitative Case Study; Reading Comprehension; Reading Strategies; Senior High School Students.

1. BACKGROUND

Reading constitutes a fundamental component of language acquisition, as it enables learners to access, interpret, and construct meaning from written discourse. It serves a central role in academic achievement by facilitating the acquisition of knowledge across various subjects and promoting overall literacy development. Munjid and Astiyandha (2021) assert that reading should not be viewed as a mere act of decoding written symbols; rather, it is an interactive cognitive process in which readers actively integrate textual information with their existing knowledge to achieve comprehension. Within this context, reading proficiency becomes indispensable in the mastery of English as a foreign language, particularly for senior high school students who are expected to comprehend and interpret diverse text genres.

Despite its importance, reading comprehension continues to pose significant challenges for Indonesian learners. Evidence from national and international literacy assessments, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2018), indicates that the reading proficiency of Indonesian students remains below the global average. (Khalif Rizqon et al.,

2021). Previous studies have revealed that students frequently encounter difficulties in identifying main ideas, interpreting vocabulary, and drawing inferences from English texts (Aini et al., 2023). These challenges are largely attributed to students' limited lexical repertoire, inadequate background knowledge, and insufficient use of effective reading strategies (Hamra & Syatriana, 2010). Consequently, learners often experience difficulty in comprehending descriptive and narrative texts that are integral to the senior high school curriculum.

Reading strategies play an essential role in addressing these comprehension barriers. Brown (2007) defines strategies as systematic techniques or plans designed to achieve particular learning objectives. In the context of reading, such strategies assist learners in managing, monitoring, and evaluating their comprehension processes. Zhang (1992, as cited in Sari, 2017) emphasizes that reading strategies are particularly advantageous for non-native learners, as they help mitigate linguistic limitations and improve performance in comprehension tasks. Empirical studies (Munjid & Astiyandha, 2021) have identified several strategies frequently employed by high school students, including rereading, note-taking, summarizing, inferring meaning from context, and identifying the reading purpose. These approaches have been shown to enhance comprehension efficiency and information retention.

Nevertheless, many students remain unaware of how to employ reading strategies effectively. Some continue to depend on literal translation and demonstrate limited metacognitive awareness in regulating their comprehension processes (Berliana & Anggraini, 2025). This highlights the need for further investigation into the types of reading strategies students employ and their perceptions of their usefulness, particularly in relation to descriptive texts, a genre characterized by factual and detailed information about people, places, and objects, which requires both linguistic and conceptual understanding.

In light of these considerations, the present study aims to examine the reading strategies utilized by senior high school students in comprehending descriptive texts and to explore their perceptions of these strategies. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers in designing pedagogical approaches that foster effective reading strategy use, thereby improving students' comprehension abilities and promoting greater learner autonomy.

2. THEORETICAL SUPPORT

Reading Skill Theory

Reading is recognized as one of the fundamental receptive language skills, serving as a crucial means for acquiring, processing, and evaluating information. It is not merely a mechanical process of decoding printed symbols but rather a complex, interactive, and cognitive activity through which readers actively construct meaning by integrating written input with their prior knowledge and experiences (Munjid & Astiyandha, 2021). In this process, readers decode linguistic symbols, interpret grammatical structures, and connect textual information with their background knowledge to achieve comprehension.

Woolley (2011) defines reading comprehension as the process of both extracting and constructing meaning through the interaction between the reader, text, and context (Woolley, 2011). Similarly, Brown (2004) conceptualizes reading as a transactional activity in which readers negotiate meaning between their existing knowledge and textual information (Brown, 1994). This interactional perspective underscores that proficient reading entails the integration of several linguistic and cognitive components, including vocabulary mastery, grammatical competence, text structure awareness, and inferential reasoning (Aini et al., 2023).

Burn et al. (1984) distinguish four levels of comprehension: literal, interpretive, critical, and creative. Skilled readers can navigate across these levels, progressing from understanding explicit information to evaluating, synthesizing, and generating new insights (Burns et al., 1999). Additionally, Gail (2010) identifies micro-skills such as phonological awareness, orthographic knowledge, and decoding ability as the foundational elements of fluent reading. Consequently, effective reading instruction should address both micro-skills (e.g., decoding and word recognition) and macro-skills (e.g., identifying main ideas, predicting, summarizing, and evaluating) to promote a more holistic development of literacy competence.

Reading Strategies Theory

Reading strategies refer to deliberate, goal-oriented actions that readers employ to facilitate comprehension and overcome potential barriers during the reading process (Paris et al., 1991)(Brown, 2007). These strategies function as cognitive mechanisms that help readers process information efficiently and achieve their intended reading purposes.

Scholars generally classify reading strategies into three main categories: a) Cognitive strategies refer to direct operations on the text, including guessing meaning from context, highlighting key information, summarizing, rereading, and taking notes. b) Metacognitive strategies involve higher-order thinking processes such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating comprehension. These strategies allow readers to maintain awareness of their

understanding and to make adjustments when difficulties occur (Baker, L., & Brown, 1984).
c) Socio-affective strategies encompass interpersonal and emotional aspects, such as seeking clarification from others and managing anxiety to sustain motivation and focus.

Empirical findings by Munjid and Astiyandha (2021) revealed seven predominant strategies used by high school students in comprehending descriptive texts: repeated reading, note-taking, visualizing the content, summarizing, employing bottom-up processing, guessing word meanings, and identifying reading purposes. These findings demonstrate that readers benefit from the flexible application of multiple strategies depending on task demands and text complexity. Furthermore, studies by Zhang (1992) and Oxford (1990) confirm that explicit instruction in reading strategies, particularly metacognitive awareness, enhances comprehension performance and promotes greater language proficiency (Zhang et al., 2017).

Therefore, instruction in reading strategies should aim to cultivate learners who are capable of consciously selecting, combining, and evaluating strategies appropriate to their reading goals. Such strategic readers demonstrate higher degrees of autonomy, adaptability, and comprehension efficiency (Aini et al., 2023).

Genre Text Theory

In the field of English language education, texts are categorized into genres, each distinguished by specific communicative purposes, schematic structures, and linguistic characteristics (Hyland, 2007). The genre-based approach, grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), perceives language as a system for making meaning in social contexts. According to Feez and Joyce (2016), understanding genre conventions allows learners to recognize how texts are organized to accomplish communicative goals, thereby improving comprehension and production skills (de Joyce & Feez, 2016).

Each genre adheres to a conventional schematic structure that guides the reader through its stages of meaning. For instance, a narrative text typically follows an orientation–complication–resolution pattern, whereas a descriptive text generally consists of an identification and a description stage (Khalif Rizqon et al., 2021). Awareness of these patterns enables readers to anticipate the flow of ideas, identify key information, and comprehend texts more effectively.

Genre theory also highlights the importance of *lexicogrammatical* features, such as verb tense, adjective use, and relational verbs, which signal the communicative functions of a text. Consequently, explicit instruction in genre awareness equips learners with strategies to interpret and analyze texts more efficiently by anticipating their organizational and linguistic patterns.

Descriptive Text Theory

A descriptive text is a type of genre that aims to portray a person, place, object, or phenomenon in such detail that readers can visualize it clearly (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). Its social function is to describe a specific entity and to provide a vivid mental image for the reader. Structurally, descriptive texts comprise two primary stages: a) Identification, which introduces the subject being described; and b) Description, which elaborates on the attributes, characteristics, or qualities of the subject.

Linguistically, descriptive texts are characterized by the use of simple present tense, relational verbs (e.g., *is*, *has*), adjectives, and spatial expressions (e.g., *next to*, *in front of*) to present information in an organized and descriptive manner. As noted by Aini et al. (2023), students often encounter challenges in understanding descriptive texts due to the need for extensive vocabulary knowledge, spatial awareness, and inferential interpretation.

In the context of reading instruction, descriptive texts offer rich opportunities for applying varied reading strategies such as scanning for specific details, inferring meaning from context, and visualizing content (Munjid & Astiyandha, 2021). Employing these strategies enables learners to construct precise mental representations of the text and enhance their comprehension.

Thus, integrating explicit reading strategy instruction within a genre-based framework of descriptive text learning can significantly improve students' comprehension skills, vocabulary development, and engagement in reading English texts.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This research employed a qualitative design within the framework of a case study approach. As Creswell & Poth 2026 noted, qualitative research intends to explore and interpret the meanings individuals or groups assign to a social or human phenomenon, producing rich and detailed descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The case study design was selected because it facilitates a comprehensive investigation of students' reading strategies and perceptions within their authentic classroom environment (Yin, 2018). Through this design, the researcher was able to examine a bounded system, specifically, a group of senior high school students, to understand how they apply various strategies to comprehend descriptive texts.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at a public senior high school in Indonesia. This qualitative data was analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The participants were ten eleventh-grade students, selected through a stratified random sampling process that began by categorizing students into three proficiency groups (high, medium, and low) based on their previous reading assessment scores. From each group, several students were randomly chosen to ensure balanced representation across proficiency levels. All selected students agreed to participate voluntarily in the study.

Instrument

To obtain rich and triangulated qualitative data, several research instruments were used, adapted from Munjid and Astiyandha (2021) and Aini and Aisyah (2023). These included: a) Classroom Observation Sheet, employed to record students' observable reading behaviors and strategic actions such as note-taking, rereading, guessing meaning, and summarizing. b) Semi-structured interview Guide, designed to elicit in-depth responses regarding students' perceptions and use of reading strategies. c) Field Notes contained the researcher's written reflections and observations made during reading activities. d) Audio Recordings, used to document interviews for accurate transcription and analysis. e) Student Reading Logs provided individual records of students' reading activities and encountered challenges. f) Question Sheets and Written Tasks consisted of comprehension questions related to descriptive texts to assess understanding. g) Document Analysis Form used to examine students' written responses and identify recurring patterns in reading behaviors. h) Research Journal served as a reflective tool for the researcher to record insights and triangulate findings.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process comprised three sequential stages: a) Pre-reading observation: The researcher observed students before the reading activity, focusing on their preparation, attention, and pre-reading strategies, such as previewing titles or predicting content. b) While reading observation and interview: During the reading phase, the researcher noted behavior, including the use of dictionaries, context-based guessing, rereading, and note-taking. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually to further explore students' cognitive processes and perceptions of their reading strategies. c) Post-reading Reflection and Documentation: After completing the reading tasks, students engaged in comprehension exercises and reflected on their strategy use. The researcher analyzed their responses, reading logs, and observation notes to corroborate and extend the interview data.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (2014) interactive model, which involves three cyclical stages: a) Data reduction: condensing and organizing data through coding and categorization to highlight essential themes, particularly those related to reading strategies and students' perceptions. b) Data Display: arranging data systematically in descriptive and visual formats (e.g., tables, excerpts) to reveal patterns and relationships. c) Conclusion Drawing and Verification: synthesizing and interpreting the findings, relating them to existing theoretical frameworks, and confirming their validity through data triangulation across multiple sources (observation, interview, and document analysis) (Miles et al., 2016).

Trustworthiness of the Data

To establish the credibility and dependability of the findings, the study applied several validation techniques as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), including: a) Triangulation: integrating data from various instruments such as observation, interviews, and document analysis. b) Member Checking: verifying the accuracy of interpretations by consulting participants regarding preliminary findings. c) Peer Debriefing: engaging with academic supervisors for critical feedback on methodological and analytical procedures. d) Thick Description: providing rich contextual details and comprehensive accounts of participants' behaviors to enhance the study's transferability (YS Lincoln, EG Guba, Schwandt, 2007).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were carefully maintained throughout the research process. All participants provided informed consent before involvement and were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Pseudonyms were assigned to protect participants' identities, and all collected data were managed responsibly and utilized exclusively for academic and research purposes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Empirical findings by Munjid and Astiyandha (2021) revealed seven predominant strategies used by high school students in comprehending descriptive texts: repeated reading, note-taking, visualizing the content, summarizing, employing bottom-up processing, guessing word meanings, and identifying reading purposes (Munjid & Astiyandha, 2021). The data were gathered through individual interviews and direct classroom observations.

The focus of this research was to identify the reading strategies employed by students during reading comprehension activities, to understand their perceptions of these strategies, and to examine the difficulties they encountered while reading English texts.

Students' Observation

Reading Duration

The first aspect observed was the time each participant spent reading the text. Based on the data, participant *SS-9* was the fastest reader, completing the reading task in 14 minutes, followed by *MA-5* in 16 minutes, then *RA-6* in 16 minutes, *SE-7* in 17 minutes, *WA-10* in 18 minutes, *GN-3* in 26 minutes, *AD-3* in 30 minutes, then *FM-8* in 30 minutes, after that *SK-8* in 30 minutes, the last one is *MF-4* in 30 minutes. all the participants completed the task within 14 to 30 minutes. The researcher did not set a specific time limit for reading, as the focus of this study was to explore how students used their reading strategies rather than how fast they could finish.

Reading Behavior and Confidence

The researcher also observed students' behavior while reading. Six participants, *SS-9*, *SE-5*, *WA-10*, *GN-3*, and *MF-A*, appeared calm, focused, and independent, reading confidently without looking at others' work. While *MA-5* and *SK-8* were rather busy with their cellular phone looked for the unfamiliar word. In contrast, *AD-1* and *FM* frequently turned to other participants during the reading activity to confirm their understanding or check answers. This behavior suggested a lack of confidence in their own comprehension and responses.

Despite being instructed not to ask questions or discuss during the task, both *AD-1* and *FM-2* occasionally broke this rule. This finding supports Kanza (2016), as cited in Akbari & Sahibzada (2020), who emphasized that self-confidence is a crucial trait that enables students to face challenges, take initiative, and persist in learning activities without fear of failure (Sahibzada, 2020).

Reading Technique

A difference in reading technique was also observed. Six participants used silent reading, while two participants, *SK-8* and *MA-5*, did aloud reading. According to Elizabeth (2004, as cited in Warah, 2017), aloud reading involves reading the text audibly, often accompanied by lip movement or vocalization. Simanjuntak (1988, as cited in Hamid & Yunus, 2016) explains that this technique helps readers focus on word pronunciation and articulation, but it can also slow down reading speed.

Surprisingly, *MA-5*, who did aloud reading the longest and fastest among all participants. This finding contradicts the general theory that vocalization slows reading speed. It suggests that other factors, such as familiarity with the topic, vocabulary mastery, or reading confidence, might have influenced *MD*'s performance, and this could be explored in future research.

Meanwhile, the other four participants who practiced silent reading read without vocalization. As noted by Elizabeth (2004, as cited in Warah, 2017), silent reading allows readers to proceed at their own pace and focus more effectively on comprehension. Brown (2000, as quoted in Suryani, 2019) adds that, in silent reading, understanding the text's meaning is more important than decoding each word.

Dictionary Use

All participants used a dictionary during reading, mainly through the *Google Translate* application on their smartphones. However, the frequency of use varied: a) *SS-9, MA-5, GN-3 and SE-7* rarely used the dictionary, b) *WA-10 and RA-6* used it moderately, and c) *AD-, MF-4, SK-8 and FM-2* used it frequently.

From the observation and interview results, *SS-9, MA-5, GN-3, and SE-7* stated that they preferred to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from context, whereas the others tended to translate each difficult word they encountered. This indicates that six of the participants used a contextual inferencing strategy, which reflects a more advanced reading approach.

Confidence and Answer Revision

Six participants (Six participants *SS-9, SE-5, WA-10, GN-3, and MF-A*) showed high self-confidence in answering comprehension questions. They did not revise or erase their initial answers. On the other side, *SK-8 and RA-6* demonstrated less confidence, as they showed, pointing out the text and repeating the word many times. The other side, *AD-1 and FM-2*, showed they lack confidence by their tendency to ask others and revise their answers multiple times. Kanza (2016, as cited in Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020) asserts that learners with strong self-confidence are more goal-oriented, persistent, and less anxious about making mistakes, which aligns with the behavior of confident participants in this study (Sahibzada, 2020).

Repeated Reading

Another behavior observed was repeated reading. Four participants (*SS-9, SE-5, WA-10, GN-3, and MF-A*) reread a section of the text rarely. Two participant (*SK-8 and RA-6*) reread sections of the text to confirm their answers and ensure comprehension moderately. On the other side, *AD-1 and FM-2* showed that they did not do anything to confirm their answers. This aligns with Harrison (2004, as cited in Fitriana, 2018), who stated that repeated reading is an effective strategy for improving students' reading comprehension, particularly for lower-proficiency learners.

Annotation and Note-Taking

Three participants also made scribbles or markings on the reading text. These marks included underlining important sentences, highlighting key information, and writing small notes in the margins. Participant *SS-9* marked essential details to aid understanding, while *SE-9*, *GN-3*, *WA-10* wrote translations and brief notes about key ideas. *SK-8* and *RA-6* underlined keywords in the question section to clarify what was being asked. According to Bell and Limber (2009, as cited in Marzouk, 2018), highlighting and underlining are effective strategies to help readers focus on main ideas and key concepts. Similarly, Nist and Hogrebe (1987, as cited in Marzouk, 2018) argue that marked text is more likely to be remembered because attention is directed toward significant information. Furthermore, Oxford (1990, as cited in Fitriana, 2018) notes that note-taking is a valuable strategy for retaining information, as it promotes understanding and long-term memory rather than rote memorization. The findings of this study confirm that marking and note-taking assist readers in managing information and comprehending texts more effectively

Summary of Observation Findings

From the classroom observation, it was found that students used a variety of reading strategies, including: a) Using dictionaries (both frequently and selectively), b) Making contextual guesses, c) Repeated reading for verification, d) Annotating or marking the text, and e) Demonstrating different levels of reading confidence.

These findings reveal that while all participants engaged in strategic reading behaviors, the type, frequency, and confidence in using these strategies varied across individuals. Such variation highlights the importance of teaching students to consciously select and apply effective reading strategies to improve their comprehension.

Interview Data

The interview data in this study aimed to identify the reading strategies used by participants, their perceptions of those strategies, and the difficulties they encountered while reading English texts. Five participants were interviewed using ten semi-structured questions. The findings are presented and discussed as follows:

Question 1: Do you like English? Why?

All participants stated that they liked English, each giving different personal reasons. This finding indicates that most participants had a positive attitude toward English learning, but one student's negative perception suggests the need for greater motivation and engaging teaching strategies. Enhancing students' interest is important so they can view English as an enjoyable and manageable subject.

Question 2: Do you think reading ability is important in learning English?

All participants agreed that reading is a crucial skill in learning English. They mentioned that through reading, they could understand the text better and gain new knowledge. This aligns with Yukselir (2014, as cited in Kasim & Raisha, 2017), who stated that reading is one of the most valuable and central skills for learners, as it enables them to acquire new information, compare interpretations, and develop critical thinking skills. Similarly, Hung and Ngan (2015, as cited in Kasim & Raisha, 2017) emphasized that reading enhances students' vocabulary, fluency, speaking, and writing skills, which are essential for mastering the target language.

Question 3: What is the first thing you do when trying to understand a text?

Eight participants reported that they began by reading the title text to understand its meaning, while one participant (*SK-8*) stated that he first read the questions before reading the text. The other side one participant (*FM-2*) mention that he reading the first paragraph and the last paragraph, the reason to do that he want to know what is the first thing he want to know and he read the last paragraph he want to know about the conclusion. the last paragraph. This approach helps him identify the type of information he needs to find. The strategy used by (*FM-2*) reflects purposeful reading, where readers determine their goal before reading. As supported by Knutson (1997, as cited in Adib, 2006), setting a purpose for reading enhances motivation and helps readers focus on relevant information, leading to more effective comprehension.

Question 4: When you read the title, do you imagine the content of the text? Why?

All the participants said they imagined the content of the text based on the title, while one participant (*SS-9*) said he tried to visualize the content when reading the title and accompanying illustration. This indicates that *SS-9* used imaginative or predictive reading, a strategy that helps readers connect the title with possible content. Jennings (2006, as cited in Fitriana, 2018) explains that using imagination while reading encourages students to interact more deeply with the text and enhances comprehension.

Question 5: What steps do you follow while reading?

All participants reported that they tried to guess what content in the text by pointing to the title first, hence they guessed the content. To understand the meaning of each word, but their steps varied. 9 of our participants read and interpreted the text first, then answered the questions, while one (*SK-8*) read the questions before reading the text. One participant also summarized the passage after reading it.

According to Adler (2001), summarizing requires readers to identify key information, eliminate less important details, and express the main ideas in their own words. This process helps students distinguish between major and minor points, promoting deeper understanding. Summarizing is therefore an effective strategy for organizing information and improving comprehension of longer or more complex texts.

Question 6: Do you read word by word or the whole text?

All participants stated that they read word by word, showing a reliance on bottom-up processing. Brown (2001, as cited in Alfarisy, 2014) defines the bottom-up strategy as reading that begins with recognizing linguistic elements such as letters, syllables, words, and grammatical patterns to construct meaning.

However, six participants mentioned that they sometimes read entire sentences or paragraphs when the text was easier. One participant (*SS-9*) stated that if she found a long sentence and the word was not familiar, she read it word by word. She is demonstrating a shift toward top-down processing. As Brown (2002, as cited in Alfarisy, 2014) explains, the top-down approach starts with the reader's background knowledge and predictions about the text, confirming meaning through context. Thus, *SS-9* alternated between bottom-up and top-down strategies depending on the text's difficulty level.

Question 7: Do you translate every unfamiliar word?

Four participants admitted that they translated every unfamiliar word using a dictionary or translation app. This practice, however, can be time-consuming, especially for readers with limited vocabulary. Hosenfield (1977, as cited in Fitriana, 2018) found that less successful readers often translate every unfamiliar word, even those that are not essential to understanding the text.

In contrast, *SS-9* preferred to guess word meaning from context rather than translating each word. Thornbury (2002, as cited in Siregar, 2019) describes guessing from context as one of the most valuable skills for language learners, as it helps them deduce meaning efficiently and maintain reading fluency without overreliance on dictionaries.

Question 8: What is your strategy while reading?

Most participants said they interpreted texts word by word just if they found a long sentence, they reported that he reread the text multiple times to ensure understanding. Repeated reading, according to Harrison (2004, as cited in Fitriana, 2018), is particularly beneficial for lower-proficiency learners, as it improves comprehension and fluency.

SS-9 mentioned that he wrote down translations of difficult words in the text, and GN-3 explained that he read the questions first to identify the purpose of reading. Overall, besides word-by-word interpretation (bottom-up strategy), participants also used note-taking, repeated reading, and goal-setting as supporting strategies.

Question 9: Do you think your reading strategies help you comprehend the text?

All participants agreed that their reading strategies were helpful. 1) SS-9, SE-7, WA-10, and GN-3 stated that rereading improved their memory of the text. 2) SE-7 said that his strategy enhanced his vocabulary. 3) MF-4 explained that identifying the purpose before reading helped him focus on relevant information.

These findings align with Knutson (1997, as cited in Adib, 2006), who noted that having a purpose when reading provides motivation and direction, and Brown (2000, as cited in Shadiqatunnisa, 2020), who emphasized that identifying purpose allows readers to eliminate distractions and focus on essential information.

Question 10: What difficulties do you face while reading?

All participants reported that their limited vocabulary made reading difficult. They also noted that many English words have multiple meanings depending on the context, making comprehension challenging.

This finding supports earlier studies that highlight common difficulties among EFL learners, such as insufficient vocabulary, grammatical complexity, limited linguistic access, poor reading skills, and lack of background knowledge (Grabe, 1991; Birch, 2002; Alyousef, 2006; Kasim & Raisha, 2017). These issues make it difficult for learners to interpret idiomatic expressions or phrases accurately without contextual understanding (Hakim & Pravianti Tanuatmadja, 2022).

Preferred Reading Strategy

When asked which strategy they considered the most effective for senior high school students, the guessing strategy emerged as the most beneficial. Aebersold and Field (as cited in Rahayu, 2015) describe guessing as a strategy that helps readers infer the meaning of unknown words using prior knowledge and textual clues, allowing them to read more quickly and naturally.

Guessing also involves prediction and verification processes during reading, and it minimizes interruptions caused by frequent dictionary use (Fitaloka et al., 2015). This aligns with the findings of this study, where MD, who used guessing and aloud reading, was the fastest reader, demonstrating that contextual guessing can effectively compensate for potential disadvantages of vocalized reading.

Summary of Interview Findings

The interview findings reveal that students use a combination of reading strategies, including: a) Translating unfamiliar words, b) Guessing meanings from context, c) Rereading for comprehension, d) Note-taking and highlighting, and e) Setting reading goals by previewing questions.

Overall, participants agreed that applying these strategies significantly improved their reading comprehension. However, limited vocabulary and context-dependent meanings remain major obstacles to full understanding. The results also suggest that guessing from context is the most effective strategy for improving both reading efficiency and comprehension among the students studied.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the previous discussion about the reading strategies used by tenth-grade senior high school students, it can be concluded that reading strategies are specific techniques that help students approach a task, solve a problem, and achieve a learning goal. These strategies function as planned methods to manage and process information.

To identify the strategies used by students, the researcher applied three steps: preliminary reading, observation, and interviews. Preliminary reading was used to help participants recall and recognize their reading habits. To collect data, the researcher used both direct and indirect methods. The direct method involved individual interviews in which students explained how they read and understood a text. The indirect method took place during preliminary reading, where the researcher observed student behavior and analyzed answer sheets and worksheets.

Based on the data collected from observations and interviews, several reading strategies were identified. From the observations, the researcher found that students used strategies such as repeated reading and taking notes. From the interviews, the researcher found additional strategies, including imagining the content, summarizing, bottom-up processing, guessing meaning, and identifying the purpose of reading.

In total, seven strategies were used by the participants: repeated reading, taking notes, imagining the content, summarizing, bottom-up processing, guessing, and identifying the reading purpose. Each participant used more than one strategy. When asked about their perception, all participants stated that their strategies helped them understand the text better.

The researcher selected guessing as the most effective strategy in this study because it helped students read faster and more efficiently. This is supported by five participants, who were able to complete the reading test the fastest by applying the guessing strategy, even though they also used other strategies

The researcher also explored difficulties students experienced while reading. All participants stated that their main challenge was encountering unknown or unfamiliar vocabulary. This difficulty was linked to their limited vocabulary knowledge, and the need to translate many difficult words made the reading process longer.

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