



GLOBAL Education Language & Humanity Journal

Alamat : Jalan Lintas Sumbawa – Bima KM 5 Sumbawa Besar, NTB

Website: <https://journal.pcn.ac.id/index.php/global/index> , Email: jurnalglobal13@gmail.com

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TANDA TERIMA NASKAH (MANUSCRIPT / LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE (LOA))

Nomor: 007 /E /Global /2026

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Nama Penulis : Heni Novita Sari, Rezzie Fauziyyah
Email : henisalman.17@gmail.com
Institusi/ Instansi : UHAMKA

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Judul Artikel : METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH READING
COMPREHENSION AMONG EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
Issue : Vol 3 No 2
Waktu Terbit : Februari 2026

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Sumbawa, 4 Februari 2026

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METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION AMONG EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Heni Novita Sari^{1*}, Rezzie Fauziyyah²

^{1,2} English Education Department, Muhammadiyah University of Prof. Dr. Hamka Jakarta, Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received January 10, 2026

Revised January 15, 2026

Accepted January 28, 2026

Keywords:

Students' metacognitive strategies, English reading comprehension

Abstract

The metacognitive skills employed by college students to comprehend written English were the focus of this investigation. This study was to identify the types of metacognitive strategies employed and to understand how these strategies support the university students' reading comprehension. Three primary types of reading strategies—global, problem-solving, and support—were the subject of the study. In this study, a quantitative descriptive approach was used. Collecting data from the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) questionnaire, descriptive statistics were used to uncover reading strategy patterns among college students. The majority of university students use a mix of the three types of strategies when solving problems, according to the findings. The university students often relied on rereading, focusing, and translating as the ways of overcoming the reading difficulties. However, global reading strategies such as planning and previewing were less frequent. These results suggested that university students are more likely to use the immediate and practical strategies rather than reflective or planning-based strategies. The study highlighted the need for greater emphasis on balanced strategy training in EFL reading instruction.

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✉ Corresponding author:*

Email Address: henisalman.17@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

People use English as one of the international languages to communicate with one another in the different parts of the world. English is generally used as an international language that can facilitate communication among individuals from the diverse language backgrounds (2022). Beyond this general context, English is also used in a variety of fields, including education, economics, and politics. English has been introduced in Indonesia since preschool. In Indonesia, the format of curriculum 2013 (K-13), English is made as one of the compulsory subjects at the junior high school to the university level. Related to this, learning English for EFL students is a crucial asset for preparing them for the workforce. They are required to be able to communicate in both oral and written expressions in English.

The four cornerstones of effective English instruction are fluency in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Improving one's reading comprehension is an important step for students of English as a second language (ESL). The ability to correctly interpret the acquired information and draw

inferences from the text is what reading is all about, according to Grabe and Stoller (2013). Reading is, thus, one of the four abilities that pupils should acquire in order to improve their command of the English language. In this case, EFL university students try to learn for reading comprehension which is closely related with their metacognitive strategies.

Additionally, reading English has the potential to enhance vocabulary, to foster creativity, and to encourage students' critical thinking. Thus, in order to comprehend the text and build its complicated and difficult meanings, reading necessitates a set of abilities, strategies, and processes. Therefore, Nunan (2003) strongly comments reading as an essential skill for learners of English in a second language. Importantly, EFL university students requires expertise in learning English reading comprehension.

Referring to the students' reading difficulties, there are two primary factors that influence their difficulties of mastering English reading skills: internal and external factors. Internal factors include physical, psychological, and intellectual aspects, as opposed to the learning environment and family, which are considered external factors (Brewster et al., 1992). It is also strengthened by the other experts' comments that students struggle with comprehending long sentences, using reading strategies, and maintaining focus (Septia, Indrawati, Juriana, et al. 2022)

Furthermore, Idayani (2019) stated that reading comprehension is the process of deciphering and making sense of a text. In this case, the writer concludes that the students will automatically have the word recognition that totally can build their vocabularies and understand the content of the text read. Students, particularly those at the university level who are expected to read scientific papers to gain a comprehensive understanding of their chosen field, require a competent reading strategy to enhance their reading comprehension.

Cognitive reading strategies (such as planning and goal setting, using prior knowledge, asking questions and making predictions, building cores, monitoring, revising meanings, reflecting and associating, and revising meanings) and metacognitive reading strategies (such as problem-solving reading, global reading, and supporting reading) are both engaged in the reading process, which is difficult because it requires a variety of reading strategies. According to the previous explanation, in order to comprehend and improve upon the text, one must employ reading strategies and processes. It is important for students to have a plan that helps them comprehend what they read.

Reading strategies play an important role in assisting students with the reading process, enabling them to acquire knowledge and to enhance their comprehension. In addition to facilitating comprehension of the new material, these tactics enable students to draw connections to what they already know, which in turn fosters a more in-depth comprehension of the text. According to Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001), readers use reading strategies when they consciously work to enhance their comprehension.

Metacognition is a strategy employed in this research. Many previous researchers have investigated the reading strategies, with several focusing on metacognition as a strategy used to understand and to master reading in English. Metacognition is defined as a student's knowledge that focuses on cognitive processes (Do & Phan, 2021). Furthermore, being aware of one's own metacognition

while reading is essential for developing and maintaining the kind of critical thinking abilities that aid in the following areas: planning, motivation, self-evaluation, belief systems, guidance, and personal preferences (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). In simply way, metacognition is an individual's awareness of being responsible for learning activities or tasks by monitoring, regulating, supervising, and evaluating.

There are a number of metacognitive reading strategies, but according to Mokhtari and Reichard (2002), there are primarily three types: global, problem-solving, and support. The truth is that students frequently fail to use reading strategies because they fixate entirely on the text. On the other hand, some students take the time to reread, underline key phrases, and take notes. These three categories serve as the theoretical foundation for the SORS questionnaire that the writer will use in this study.

Metacognition is simply defined as the process of thinking. Often referred to as "thinking about thinking," the capacity to reflect on and control one's own thinking processes was initially defined by Flavell in 1976 when he introduced the term. Metacognition needs to come out the ideas and opinions amid thinking process. Later, Brown (1987) expanded emphasizing the teachability of metacognitive strategies, particularly in reading contexts. Metacognition, in its most basic definition, is "knowing how to learn," or being self-aware and in control of one's own thought processes while learning.

Based on the experts' definitions, students' capacity to self-regulate and control their thought processes through the use of particular strategies is known as metacognition. Therefore, metacognitive strategies in reading are crucial for students to fully comprehend and to extract both information and knowledge from a text.

Students benefit greatly from metacognitive reading strategies, one of many mentioned in the literature on learning and reading. Employing the diverse reading strategies, methods, and techniques can enhance comprehension, attention to textual structure, and overall understanding, while fostering active engagement in the reading process. Another definition is stated by Nilforoushan & Rashtchi (2023). They made the observation that readers' reading abilities, comprehension, and control can all be improved through the use of metacognitive reading strategies, which also allow readers to track their own progress in mastering the material. Thus, in order to improve and become more strategic in their English reading comprehension, students must possess suitable metacognitive strategies.

METHOD

To collect the data, the writer used the descriptive quantitative approach into questionnaire for measuring the respondents' metacognitive strategies by using the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS). It consisted of 30 Likert-scale items representing three types of metacognitive strategies: Support, Problem-Solving, and Global, strategies (Mokhtari et al., 2002).

This study focused on the 35 university students of UHAMKA located in Jakarta. The sampling technique employed to determine the sample is purposive sampling that the category of non-

probability sampling techniques. The students who selected as sample are those completed the reading courses in literal reading, reading for meaning, critical reading, and academic reading.

After gathering information, the writer went over the responses and made sure they were organized. Following this, the responses were classified into three categories based on the metacognitive strategies: Various reading strategies, including those for problem-solving, supporting reading, and global reading. Additionally, the writer computed the scores, ascertained the response percentage, and analyzed the results using quantitative descriptive statistics like the mean and standard deviation. In a related vein, the writer also detailed the results to show how the subjects applied their metacognitive strategies.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Students' Metacognitive Reading Strategies

Global reading strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support reading strategies were the three categories that emerged from the metacognitive reading strategies analysis conducted by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) using the SORS questionnaire.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of the Three types of Metacognitive Strategies

No	Strategy	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	PROB	35	3.81	0.95
2.	SUP	35	3.74	1.04
3.	GLOB	35	3.61	1.02

Referring to the previous table, with a mean score of approximately 3.8, the problem-solving strategies (PROB) were ranked highest. In order to solve problems, the majority of participants read English texts. After moving on to the second SUP column, the average score was approximately 3.74. In this case, while reading English texts, the typical participant made use of support reading strategies. As a last point, the average score for global reading strategies was 3.61. This strategy was used, but it's not as often as the other two reading strategies.

a. Global Reading Strategies (GLOB)

GLOB referred to carefully intentional planned techniques that students used to manage and to monitor their reading comprehension. The analysis of 13 items were related to GLOB. It found that people used these tactics moderately to a high degree. Findings from a descriptive analysis of global reading strategies, including sample size, response rates, mean and standard deviation scores, and overall participant counts, are presented in the table below:

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Global Reading Strategies

	Statements	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	I have a specific goal in mind when I read scholarly articles.	35	122	3.49	0.887
Q3	I make an effort to draw connections between what I already know and what I read.	35	133	3.8	0.994
Q4	Before reading it, I try to get a feel for the big picture to get a sense of the text's subject matter.	35	128	3.66	1.11
Q6	I consider whether the text's content is appropriate for my reading objective.	35	130	3.71	0.825
Q8	Before doing anything else, I make mental notes of the text's length and organization.	35	113	3.23	1.165
Q12	When reading, I prioritize key information and skim or skip less relevant details.	35	127	3.63	1.003
Q15	I use tables, figures, and pictures in the text to deepen my knowledge.	35	119	3.4	1.193
Q17	To get a better grasp of what I'm reading, I look for context clues.	35	130	3.71	0.825
Q20	Bold and italicized text helps to highlight important details.	35	117	3.34	1.434
Q21	The data given in the text is examined and assessed with a critical eye.	35	130	3.71	0.86
Q23	For every new piece of information, I make sure I have fully grasped the concept.	35	139	3.97	1.014
Q24	Whenever I read, I make an effort to infer its meaning.	35	130	3.71	0.926

Q27	Every so often, I'll look at the text and see if my assumptions were correct.	35	127	3.63	1.087
TOTAL		N=35		3.61	1.02

Based on the interrelated table, with a mean score of approximately 3.97, statement Q23 topped the global reading strategies. When these participants read English texts that introduced them to new information, such as new words or concepts, they would make sure they understood what was being said by checking the text for definitions.

Then, the statement Q3 referred to the second-highest mean score of 3.80. By making connections as they read, the participants would grasp the text's content. This strategy could help them understand the text more quickly and deeply. The student's engagement in the use of global strategies such as knowledge activation and comprehension checking was very helpful in achieving reading comprehension in a foreign language (Akhmetova et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, the statement Q8 had the lowest mean score for this type of strategy around 3.23. The participants also failed to take into account the length and structure of the text they were going to read. Nonetheless, this tactic is essential during reading preparation since it is a component of the previewing technique. Global strategies such as reviewing text structure was still not consistently applied, although the students frequently used both support and problem-solving strategies (Hervina et al., 2022).

b. Problem Solving Strategies (PROB)

PROB were focused and immediate strategies used when the participants face difficulties. The following table showed the descriptive analysis results of PROB, including the total number of participants, the number of responses for each statement, the average score, and the standard deviation score as follows:

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Problem Solving Strategies

	Statements	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q7	I read carefully and take my time to make sure I fully understand the text.	35	139	3.97	0.857
Q9	When I lose concentration while reading, I make an effort to refocus and return to the task.	35	126	3.6	1.09
Q11	The level of difficulty and the text's intended use dictate how quickly I read it.	35	129	3.69	1.022

Q14	When I'm having trouble understanding the material, I focus more and go back over it until I get it.	35	142	4.06	0.906
Q16	Every now and then I pause what I'm reading to give some thought to it.	35	124	3.54	0.919
Q19	In order to retain more of what I read, I often find it helpful to mentally picture the material.	35	134	3.83	0.891
Q25	When I'm having trouble understanding a piece of text, I find that rereading it helps.	35	139	3.97	0.985
Q28	I make educated guesses about the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases as I read.	35	134	3.83	0.891
TOTAL		N=35		3.81	0.95

From the table above, the statement Q14 got the highest mean score of problem-solving strategies around 4.06. When the participants encountered the difficult English text, they would reread it for the multiple times and focus on understanding the meaning and grasp it more deeply.

The statement Q19 obtained the mean score of 3.83. Many students frequently used the visualisation strategies when reading. This strategy helped them imagine or visualize the content of the text in their minds, making the easier information to remember and to understand. This indicated that students do not merely read passively, but they also actively strove to comprehend the text by forming the mental images. This finding aligned with the opinion of Nilfroushan & Rashtchi (2023:3). According to their findings, visual aids can captivate readers and enhance their comprehension of the text. This strategy is quite effective in helping students understand English texts, especially academic texts that tend to be complex.

Meanwhile, statement Q16 referred to the lowest mean score around 3.54. This statement indicated that the comprehension monitoring strategy in which the participants consciously paused the reading process to reflect on and to understand the text content was not widely practised. The relatively low mean score did not tend to actively practise self-monitoring when they read the English texts. However, this strategy is very important to help readers identify the parts of the text that are difficult to understand and to adjust their reading strategies effectively (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002:4).

c. Support Reading Strategies (SUP)

SUP involved the tools such as dictionaries and translators. The following table was related with the results of descriptive analysis of support reading strategies including the total number of

participants, the number of responses to each statement, the average score, and the standard deviation score as follows:

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of Support Reading Strategies

	Statements	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q2	Taking notes while reading is a common strategy for me to better comprehend what I read.	35	129	3.69	0.9
Q5	I find that reading aloud helps me understand the material when I'm having trouble reading it on my own.	35	135	3.86	1.115
Q10	I highlight or circle the important details in the text to aid memory and understanding.	35	124	3.54	1.172
Q13	When I come across words or phrases that I don't know, I use reference materials like dictionaries or thesauruses to help me understand them better.	35	129	3.69	1.105
Q18	If I want to get a better grasp of what I read, I paraphrase it.	35	120	3.43	1.195
Q22	I keep going back and forth through the book in search of connections between different concepts.	35	134	3.83	1.043
Q26	There are some questions I have that I would prefer to have addressed in the text.	35	120	3.43	1.008
Q29	When reading English text, I sometimes translate unfamiliar words or phrases into Bahasa.	35	143	4.09	0.919

Q30	I use my English and Indonesian reading comprehension skills simultaneously.	35	144	4.11	0.932
TOTAL		N=35		3.74	1.04

Referring to the SUP, the statement with the highest mean score was Q30 in the level of mean score of 4.11. This showed that the participants often processed the reading information by using the two languages to aid their comprehension. This strategy was very commonly used by EFL students dealing with the difficult academic texts. Additional evidence from the same study corroborated the students' use of comprehension-enhancing tactics like translating and reading aloud (Hervina et al., 2022) and DIANTI (2021:3).

The Statement Q29 also showed a high mean score of 4.09. This is closely related with the evidence that translation is one of the primary techniques used. Students still relied on the translation as a way of overcoming the vocabulary difficulties. This was also strongly mentioned by Nilforoushan & Rashtchi (2023). They made note of how the reader's needs and the type of text dictated the use of support strategies.

The strategy of reading aloud was also quite frequently used as seen in the statement Q5 with the mean score of 3.86. Reading aloud helped students focus better and clarify their understanding of sentence structure. According to Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002:4), the strategies were highly useful in managing comprehension when reading foreign texts.

However, the two strategies with the lowest scores were Q18 (paraphrasing) and Q26 (asking oneself questions). Both mean scores were 3.43. This indicated that students still rarely used the strategies that encouraged themselves for the active processing and critical thinking. However, paraphrasing could help understand the content of the text more deeply (Erlam et al., 2021). Additionally, the strategy of asking oneself questions was a good way of guiding and understanding of the text content, but it was still underutilised. The students also more frequently used the direct strategies such as translation than reflective strategies (Hervina et al., 2022). Overall, while the support reading strategies like translation and reading aloud were commonly used, strategies that encouraged deeper thinking still needed to be improved through training and practice in the reading learning process

DISCUSSION

The results showed that students in the English Education Department at UHAMKA used support reading strategies (SUP), problem solving strategies (PROB), and global reading strategies (GLOB) at different frequencies. Following support strategies with a mean score of 3.74 and global strategies with a mean score of 3.61 in the descriptive analysis, problem solving strategies came out on top. These results indicated that students tend to apply more reactive or situational strategies when encountering difficulties in understanding English texts.

Furthermore, using problem-solving strategies like reading over challenging parts of the Q14 (mean score: 4.06) and visualizing information from the Q19 (mean score: 3.83) were greatly preferred. Related to this, the students should actively engage with the text when comprehension breaks down. This is consistent with Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002) who emphasized the importance of these strategies for overcoming the reading barriers. Additionally, the frequent use of rereading and visualizing aligned with the findings of Nilforoushan & Rashtchi (2023) who highlighted the role of mental imagery in enhancing comprehension and retention in the academic reading.

Meanwhile, support reading strategies, particularly bilingual processing of the Q30 in the level of mean score of 4.11 and translation of unfamiliar words of the Q29 in the level of mean score of 4.09 were also widely used. This indicated that students often relied on translating between English and Indonesian to support their understanding. Such strategies were common among EFL learners as transitional aids, especially when relating with complex vocabulary or sentence structures (DIANTI, 2021) and (Hervina et al., 2022).

Less frequent use of strategies such as paraphrasing of the Q18 in the level of mean score of 3.43 and self-questioning of the Q26 in the level of mean score of 3.43 suggested that students may not yet fully engage in deeper cognitive processing during reading.

The last was global reading strategies. It involved pre-reading techniques and setting purposes of the Q23 (checking understanding of new information) in the level of mean score of 3.97 were the least used overall. This reflected the potential gap in the students' reading habits, as they appear to be less inclined to plan or to predict the content before reading.

Particularly, the low mean score of 3.23 for the use of reviewing text structure before reading of the Q8 indicated the insufficient strategic preparation. This finding was related to the study of Akhmetova et al. (2022) who noted that global strategies were even essential for building comprehensive understanding, EFL learners often underutilize them.

Students at UHAMKA showed an awareness of multiple metacognitive reading strategies, but they continued to rely significantly on problem-solving and support reading strategies, particularly those that helped them cope with immediate reading challenges. The lower usage of global reading strategies suggested that training in pre-reading techniques and reflective reading should be emphasized more in EFL instruction to foster independent and strategic readers. Encouraging students to engage in active self-questioning, paraphrasing, and previewing would support a more holistic reading comprehension process.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to identify the metacognitive reading strategies employed by UHAMKA English Education students in order to deeper understand the English text they were reading. Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) divided the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) into three categories: Global Reading Strategies, Problem Solving Strategies, and Support Reading Strategies. The writer utilized these categories to gather data.

All three of the students' tactics were found to be effective at different levels, according to the results. With a mean score of 3.81, problem-solving strategies were the most popular of the three categories of strategies. This result was connected with the frequency scale table of the mean score from Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002) around 3.81. The mean score proved that it had a high frequency. Additionally, the students often used strategies such as rereading difficult parts, focusing more carefully, and trying to understand the text when they faced problems while reading.

Support reading strategies were also commonly used in the level of mean score of 3.74. There was no change in the frequency of problem-solving strategies as demonstrated by this tactic. Results showed that participants made good use of the strategies while reading, particularly when processing information into two languages and translating into Indonesian. Conversely, with a mean score of 3.61, global reading strategies were the ones that were used the least.

Even this strategy had the lowest amid three strategies, it was also interpreted into the high frequency scale based on the Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002). Related to this, it showed that students did not often use strategies like previewing the text or setting a purpose before reading.

Ultimately, students demonstrate a strong understanding of the importance of employing metacognitive strategies, particularly when it comes to problem solving and support strategies. Their use of global strategies, such as making plans and making sure they understand what they're reading, could use some improvement, though. Therefore, it is important for teachers to give more practice and guidance on how to use all types of strategies effectively. This will assist students in developing stronger reading skills and enhancing their ability to understand what they read in English

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Untuk : Melakukan Penulian Jurnal penelitian yang berjudul Students' Metacognitive Strategies Used in English Reading Comprehension dan diterbitkan pada bulan Februari 2026 di GLOBAL: Journal of Language and Humanity Education. pada Tanggal Februari 2026 di GLOBAL: Journal of Language and Humanity Education

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Jakarta, 2 Januari 2026

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