

# THE EFFECT OF MODIFIED COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC READING AND VOCABULARY MASTERY ON THE READING COMPETENCY OF THE SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM OF MAHASARASWATI DENPASAR UNIVERSITY

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## Abstract

This study focused on investigating the main effect of MCSR on second semester students' reading competency and the differential affect of MCSR between the students with good vocabulary mastery and with poor vocabulary mastery on students' reading competency in EESP of Unmas Denpasar. The findings show that the students taught using MCSR achieved better reading competency than those who were taught using conventional teaching. *Furthermore*, there is an interactional effect between teaching strategies and vocabulary mastery on students' reading competency. The students with good vocabulary mastery improved their reading competency when being taught using MCSR than using conventional teaching. On the other hand, there is no difference in reading competency between the students who have poor vocabulary mastery taught with MCSR and with conventional study. It can be concluded that this study provides an empirical evidence of the importance of the teaching strategy considering vocabulary mastery in English reading instructions.

**Keywords:** MCSR, vocabulary mastery, reading competency

## INTRODUCTION

Considering the essential of reading, the teaching of reading has to be encouraged. Ironically, the common phenomena happened in EFL reading is instructor's disappointment in students' reading competency. The foreign language (FL) reading process involves the interplay of two language systems. When reading in a foreign language, readers have an access to their first language (L1) and often use their L1 as a reading strategy. But, frequently, it takes time and builds confusion among students. They often encounter many new and difficult words and are not able to catch the main idea of the text. Then, they will be reluctant to continue reading because of unsuccessful comprehension. Consequently, quiet discussion is the common feature in the

reading class. In other words, reading in non-native language requires extra efforts and seems hard for EFL students to understand passages written in foreign languages.

Providing qualified teachers is critical to address the problems that arise in teaching reading in the classroom. Reading which is so important and complex needs teachers who have sufficient reading competences. Teachers are required to have good reading skills so it does not find any difficulty in teaching reading in the classroom. Moreover, teachers are expected to have ability to choose the right strategy in the teaching of reading so as to improve students' reading competence. In conclusion, teachers who are competent in reading and choosing the appropriate strategy of reading are a teacher who is

able to help students improve their reading competence.

Here the importance of the role of teacher education institutions is to provide the qualified teachers who have sufficient reading competences. In the process, the teacher education institutions are expected to educate prospective teachers to become teachers who are able to convey the material as well as to help students achieve the maximum improvement in teaching reading in the classroom. University of Mahasaraswati Denpasar, as a higher education institution, has an English Education Study Program that trains prospective English teachers for all levels of school. During their studies, prospective teachers should go through a four-year study; the first two years usually yield at strengthening their Basic English proficiency that covers the four language skills. In terms of reading skill, reading subject comes as a series of four phases of subjects (i.e. Reading I to Reading IV).

The practice of reading subject, as far as the basic competencies are concerned, did not seem to have a satisfactory output of quality. Based on preliminary observation in Reading II classes in English Education Study Program (here after, EESP) of University of Mahasaraswati Denpasar (here after, Unmas Denpasar), several obstacles were detected during the learning and teaching process in reading class. Standard competency that has been managed in syllabus of EESP Unmas Denpasar expects students to understand and comprehend the text with different type and difficulty. Obviously, most of the learners were found struggling to identify and to communicate main ideas of English written texts. Besides, they skipped unfamiliar words rather than found out the meaning using the dictionary. They did not know how to solve the encountered problems. It happened as they were never exposed to systematic training in reading strategies and to how to apply reading strategies effectively to improve their reading comprehension.

Additionally, several students who had been informally interviewed confessed that reading demands great concentration and extra brain power to comprehend the

whole text. When the reading activity was conducted uninterestingly, they became more uninterested, passive, apathetic, and bored. Moreover, the results of their reading test showed that the average of students' reading competency was under minimum criteria of mastery as high as 75. This fact showed that their ability in reading competency is under minimum criteria. In other words, students' reading competency is low.

There are many possible factors contributing to that fact above. Some of the problems may be due to intrinsic factors to the students, while the others are due to outside factors. From the outside influence, lecturer's teaching and learning strategy is one of the most powerful. In EESP Unmas Denpasar there are ten classes in the second semester that are taught by some different lecturers. The lecturers use the same material in conducting reading class. Based on the observation, generally, the teaching and learning process was conducted through conventional teaching. Good learning time management, easy learning preparation, simple in conducting teaching learning process and assessment, and less effort in managing noise level are the strengths. Unfortunately, it did not give opportunities for the students in enhancing and practicing their skills to comprehend texts. It emphasized on teacher-centered approach where the teachers were the main center of learning sources and worked on transferring the knowledge rather than on guiding and facilitating the students to construct comprehension. As the result, the learning's reliance was on passive learning where the students were the recipients of information.

During the reading activity, the students were asked to read certain passages, translate the passages into Indonesian, and finally answer a paper sheet containing questions related to the passages. It was frequently done in the period of reading which created boredom amongst the students. The students were also not given much chance to cooperate and interact with others during reading. Sort of quiet discussion was common phenomena happened in the class. Moreover, most students feel discouraged

and frustrated to read English texts because the lesson is commonly started off with reading a long passage and followed by answering a series of questions instead of being based on a reading process which aids the readers to construct meaning from the texts. Considering that reading is more than just a receptive skill, the traditional teaching employed in the school is not compatible with training the students' skills to comprehend English texts and the demand of student-centered learning.

A selection of a teaching strategy which underlies student-centered learning is necessitated. There is one which is able to mainly foster comprehension as well as to lead students to be independent constructive reader through working cooperatively, namely Modified Collaborative Strategic Reading (MCSR). It is a modified version of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) which was found and developed by Klingner & Vaughn (Klingner, J. K. & Vaughn, S, 1998). Grabe (2009) claims that CSR is a promising approach to combined-strategies instruction that draws on both reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning, and that has been used with both L1 and L2 students. Rationale beyond the modification of CSR is to offer appropriate reading strategy with regard to university-level students (Zoghi, et.al, 2006). The shift from an instructor-centered approach to a student-centered approach make MCSR as one of the effective strategies that students become responsible for their reading and employ metacognitive reading strategies over cognitive reading strategies.

MCSR is taught metacognitively by principle of planning, self-monitoring, and evaluating (Abidin and Riswanto, 2012). It is supported by Elkaumy (2004) that defines metacognitive strategies in three ways: Planning, self-monitoring and evaluating or think about thinking. Planning is having reading purpose in mind to read the text in order to be more selective and focus the desired information. Self-monitoring is regulating the reading process and using the strategy at the right time. Evaluating is controlling whether the purpose is reached or not. The cognitive reading strategies in

MCSR are in the forms of previewing, fixing up, getting the gist, and wrapping up.

Initially, a teacher models these strategies which followed by giving chance for students to do the strategies independently in group after they are capable. Before practicing the strategies, the teacher must ensure that the students understand and ready to perform these strategies. Because the strategies are followed systematically and inclusively, this kind of teaching leaves opportunities for students to construct meaning and content interpretation which promotes higher level of understanding. It is supported by Doolittle, Hicks, Triplett, Nichols, & Young (2006) that explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies is an effective means for improving reading comprehension.

The underpinning theories of MCSR teaching are interactive, cognitive-constructivist, and the social constructivism perspectives. Knowledge and meaning can only be derived when the reader either interacts with the text alone or constructs its meaning with others. When students interact with texts, they use their prior knowledge, acquire information from the context, and combine disparate elements into a new whole before they arrive at their own idea of meaning. Meanwhile, in the process of interacting with others, the learning takes place in a sociocultural environment (students to student or student to teacher) through dialogue. This is in line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, as stated in Graves, Juel, and Graves (2007), in which learning takes place in an interactive environment. The main point is that without interaction in order to construct meaning and understanding, learning does not take place.

However, students' reading competency is not only influenced by how great a teaching strategy but also other factors. Grabe (2009) explains that if students are to become good readers with a wide range of texts, they need to understand in acquiring a great number of vocabulary items. It is supported by Biemiller et al (2007) who said that students need to be able to identify words meaning in order to be successful reader. In other

word, the students will not be able to understand some reading text if they are lack in vocabulary. In other words, the students will not be able to understand some reading text if they are lack in vocabulary. McLaughlin et al (2000) states that the more difficult the word of a passage is the more difficulty the reader will have in making sense of the text.

In the case of relationship between vocabulary and reading, there are two main dimensions of individual's vocabulary knowledge: breadth and dept. Breadth of vocabulary knowledge refers to the size of vocabulary that a person knows and depth of vocabulary knowledge relates to how well the person knows a word. The two factors play an important role for second language learners because learners are more likely to come across words in which they are not familiar. Qian (2002) states "having a larger vocabulary gives the learner a larger database from which to guess the meaning of the unknown words or behavior of newly learned words, having deeper vocabulary knowledge will very likely improve the results of the guessing work".

Based on the above explanation, the writer is interested in knowing whether there is a significant effect of the use of MCSR and students' vocabulary mastery on students' reading competency while they are learning English. In this study, investigation of the significant effect of the use of MCSR and students' vocabulary mastery on students' reading competency is conducted in EESP Unmas Denpasar.

## RESEARCH STRATEGY

This experimental study was restricted on investigating the effect of MCSR on students' reading competency as well as the different effect of MCSR between students with good vocabulary mastery and poor vocabulary mastery which is conducted in EESP of Unmas Denpasar. It was started in the middle of March 2013 and lasted in the middle of April 2013. The research sample was taken from the second semester students in the academic year 2012/2013 by employing cluster random sampling. Posttest only control - group design with 2x2factorial was used in this research.

The instrument that was used in this research was instrument to collect data and instrument to conduct the treatment. Achievement test was used as instrument to collecting data. Achievement test of vocabulary mastery was used to determine sample into good or poor vocabulary mastery before treatment was conducted. Achievement test of reading competency was used to determine students' reading competency. This test was administered for both experimental and control group after treatments was conducted. The test type used in this research was the form of multiple-choice items. Teaching scenario and teaching handout were used as treatment instruments.

The attained data were analyzed through two steps: descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis. First of all, those data were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics in term of central tendency and spread of dispersion. And then the inferential analyses were conducted in the purpose of hypotheses testing. To analyze the data inferentially, two-way Anova was used which was followed by Tukey test. Prior to hypothesis testing, prerequisite tests (normality and homogeneity) were done.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section comprises prerequisite analysis, data description, and hypotheses testing, which are concisely discussed.

Before analyzing the collected data, two major assumptions must be revealed, namely normality testing and homogeneity testing. Normality testing was administered by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov formula while homogeneity testing was administered by using Levene's test of Equality of Error variance. Both of them were calculated by using SPSS 16.0.

Based on data calculated by SPSS 16.0, it was discovered that all the groups of data were normal in distribution which was proven by the value of Kolmogorov-Smirnov in which *Asymp Sig (2-tail)* > 0.05 for all groups of data. Meanwhile, From the result of Levene's statistic analysis, it could be seen that the significant value based on mean was above 0.05. Thus, it was proven

that the reading competency data were entirely homogeneous.

Descriptive statistical include the central tendency (median, mean, and mode) and the spread of dispersion (standard deviation, variance, range, minimum, and maximum) in which the data could be grouped into eight cohorts, such as: 1) A1: the group of the students who were taught by MCSR, 2) A2: the group of students who were taught by conventional teaching, 3) B1: the group of good vocabulary mastery, 4) B2: the group of

poor vocabulary mastery, 5) A1B1: the group of good vocabulary mastery students who were taught by MCSR, 6) A2B1: the group of good vocabulary mastery students who were taught by conventional teaching, 7) A1B2: the group of poor vocabulary mastery students who were taught by MCSR, and 8) A2B2: the group of poor vocabulary mastery students who were taught by conventional teaching. The calculation of central tendency and dispersion was presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of the data description

		Statistics							
		A1	A2	B1	B2	A1B1	A2B1	A1B2	A2B2
N	Valid	30	30	30	30	15	15	15	15
	Missing	0	0	0	0	15	15	15	15
Mean		7.91	7.78	8.16	7.53	8.29	8.02	7.53	7.53
Median		7.83	8.00	8.16	7.50	8.00	8.00	7.67	7.67
Mode		7.67	8.00	8.00	7.67	8.00	8.00	7.67	7.67
Variance		0.22	0.11	0.07	0.07	0.10	0.01	0.06	0.09
Std. Deviation		0.47	0.33	0.26	0.26	0.31	0.1	0.24	0.3
Maximum		8.67	8.33	8.67	7.67	8.67	8.33	7.67	8.00
Minimum		7.00	7.00	8.00	7.00	8.00	8.00	7.00	7.00
Range		1.67	1.33	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.33	0.67	1.00

Based on data description above, it can be seen that MCSR group received higher mean score rather than conventional teaching group. Considering the vocabulary mastery, students who have good vocabulary mastery received higher mean score rather than students who have poor vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, students who have good vocabulary mastery in MCSR group achieved higher mean score rather than students who have good vocabulary mastery in conventional teaching group, whereas students who have poor vocabulary mastery in MCSR group achieved the mean score as much as students who have poor vocabulary mastery in conventional teaching group.

Hypothesis testing in this research was accomplished statistically by two-way Anova. It was assisted by SPSS 16.0. If there is an interaction, the hypothesis testing is followed by Tukey test. The criteria to do the hypothesis testing is if  $F_{ob} > F_{cv}$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected.

The first hypothesis states that there is a significant difference in reading competency between the students who are taught by using MCSR and those who are taught by using conventional teaching. Based on the result of two-way Anova testing, it was found that the value of  $F_A$  is 4.819, the value of  $F_{cv}$  is 0.032 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). It means that  $F_{ob} > F_{cv}$ . Consequently,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is received. So, there is a

significant difference in reading competency between the students who were taught by MCSR and those by conventional teaching. In addition, the result of descriptive statistic analysis indicated the mean score of the students' reading competency taught by MCSR teaching was 7.91; while the mean score of the students' reading competency taught by conventional teaching was 7.78. It proved that the students' reading competency taught by MCSR was higher than those who were taught by conventional teaching.

It was due to the students were trained to employ the cognitive reading strategies in the forms of previewing, fixing up, getting the gist, and warming up during discussion in effort to comprehend certain texts. Likewise, Fan (2010) found that CSR had a positive effect on the Taiwanese university learners' reading comprehension.

In addition, fix-up strategy helped students who have poor vocabulary mastery in finding the meaning of difficult words in order to comprehend text. In line with Nohenriady (2011) found collaborative strategic reading strategy can improve the students' reading comprehension in narrative texts in terms of determining the topic of the text, finding the meaning of difficult words, and finding the main idea among the eighth graders' reading comprehension at MTsN Sungai Pandan South Kalimantan. In the first meeting of the real implementation, students who have poor vocabulary mastery remained passive while using fix-up strategy. It was because they did not feel confident with the least amount of vocabulary that they have. Based on the observation that was held in the second meeting, students who have good vocabulary mastery began to realize their role as a helper for students who have poor vocabulary mastery.

Moreover, MCSR as one of cooperative learning is based on interactive, cognitive-constructivist, and the social constructivism perspectives. These perspectives believe that prior knowledge works as a framework in memory to help the reader to understand new information easier and more meaningful and learning takes place in an interactive environment. By learning together in a group discussion,

Students who have good vocabulary mastery could help students who have poor vocabulary mastery.

Compared with MCSR, conventional teaching cannot give positive effect on students reading competency since it is inappropriate with the nature of reading. Conventional teaching which focuses on teacher as the learning sources does not give a positive contribution toward the process and product of reading. It merely focuses on accomplishing the curriculum content. Less comprehension activities of reading process are provided. Further, comprehend is shaped by teacher while discussion or interactive dialogue to construct meaning never applied. It is confirmed by Utami (2010) that in a traditional English class, EFL students are just merely assigned to read the given text followed by answering a series of questions provided individually.

In investigating the interactional effect between the implement teaching strategy and vocabulary mastery toward the students' reading competency, the second hypothesis was tested. The result of two-way Anova testing shows value of  $F_{AB}$  is 4.732 and the value of  $F_{cv}$  is 0.34 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). It means that  $F_{ob} > F_{cv}$ . Consequently,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. It means that there is a significant interactional effect between teaching strategies and vocabulary mastery upon the students' reading competency.

The significant correlation between vocabulary and reading had long been accepted. Ediger (1999, p.1) that states *"One reason that learners do not read well is that they do not possess a functional vocabulary for reading"*. In line with Biemiller et al (2007) that said students need to be able to identify words meaning in order to be successful reader. In other word, the more words a reader known, the better the comprehension in reading. Vocabulary instruction in reading activities also supports the correlation between vocabulary and reading. Fix-up strategies is one of the four strategies in the MCSR role as vocabulary instruction. In the process, students are not only required to search for the meaning of new words or difficult words but also all matters relating to these words.

For example, students are asked to look for the root, affixes, synonyms, antonyms, and even find other meanings in different contexts. As a result of the activities in this strategy, students can understand the words well so that students can understand the reading well too. Views of the process, fix-up strategy favors increasing depth dimension of students' vocabulary knowledge. This is great for students who have poor vocabulary mastery. They get additional new vocabulary so that they would be easier if they found these words in a different context in another text. For students who have good vocabulary mastery, it is very profitable. Besides they've mastered a lot of vocabulary, they also came to know well the words that they know it. Because as said by Qian (2002) that the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge dimension very important in relation to reading.

The hypothesis testing was followed with investigating of whether or not there was a significant difference between students who have good vocabulary mastery who were taught by MCSR and those taught by conventional teaching. Based on the result of Tukey test, it was found that the value  $Q_{ob}$  is 4.090 which is higher than the value of  $Q_{cv}$  that is 2.898,  $\alpha = .05$  ( $Q_{ob} > Q_{cv}$ ,  $\alpha = .05$ ). Consequently,  $H_0$  is rejected. It was also supported by the data of descriptive statistic analysis which estimated that the mean score of the students' reading competency taught by MCSR ( $\bar{X}_{A1B1} = 8.29$ ) was higher than the mean score of the students' reading competency taught by conventional teaching ( $\bar{X}_{A2B1} = 8.02$ ). The students with good vocabulary mastery achieved significantly better in reading competency when they were treated by MCSR than by conventional teaching.

MCSR has a direct vocabulary instruction called fix-up strategy. In this strategy, students are not only required to search for the meaning of new words or difficult words but also all matters relating to these words. For example, students are asked to look for the root, affixes, synonyms, antonyms, and even find other meanings in different contexts. As a result

of the activities in this strategy, students can understand the words well so that students can understand the reading well too. Views of the process, fix-up strategy favors increasing depth dimension of students' vocabulary knowledge. For students who have good vocabulary mastery, it is very profitable. Besides they've mastered a lot of vocabulary, they also came to know well the words that they know it. Because as said by Qian (2002) that the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge dimension very important in relation to reading.

In conjunction with conventional teaching that have not specific direct vocabulary instruction leads students with good vocabulary mastery come to the wrong meaning when they find the word with various meaning. Students with good vocabulary mastery are students with good breadth dimension of vocabulary knowledge. In fact, students who are good in breadth dimension not necessarily good in the depth dimension. As we know that the vocabulary in English is very spacious and has a variety of meanings. They could just have a lot of vocabulary but not necessarily all of them know the meaning of the word when applied to a different context.

However, the reversed phenomenon happened to the students who have poor vocabulary mastery who were taught by MCSR and those taught by conventional teaching. There is no a significance difference in reading competency of the students with poor vocabulary mastery who were taught by MCSR and conventional teaching. It can be seen from the result of Tukey test that was found the value of  $Q_{ob}$  is 0 which is lower than the value of  $Q_{cv}$  that is of 2.898,  $\alpha = .05$  ( $Q_{ob} > Q_{cv}$ ,  $\alpha = .05$ ). Consequently,  $H_0$  is accepted. It was also supported by the data of descriptive statistic analysis which estimated that the mean score of the students' reading competency taught by MCSR ( $\bar{X}_{A1B1} = 7.53$ ) was same as the mean score of the students' reading competency taught by conventional teaching ( $\bar{X}_{A2B1} = 7.53$ ).

Based on previous explanation, vocabulary mastery plays the important role

in reading. The more words a reader known, the better the comprehension in reading. It can be seen when the students in experimental and control group were given a reading test, students who have good vocabulary mastery still have higher scores than students who have poor vocabulary mastery. This is because the fix-up strategy only helps students to interpret a word they do not know in the text they are reading so that when they read another text they may have difficulty with the new vocabulary. In other words, this strategy just helps students improve the depth dimension of vocabulary knowledge of the difficult words that they face in the text that they read.

Tannenbaum, et al (2006) states breadth is more robust than depth/fluency in its relationship to reading comprehension. It is based on the study that was conducted to evaluate the relationship between each dimension of word knowledge and reading comprehension to determine which dimension of word knowledge is most highly related to performance on measures of comprehension for text. These results provide evidence that breadth of word knowledge is most highly related to performance on a reading comprehension dimension composed of scores from the FCAT-SSS scoring system and the SAT-9 scoring system. Structural equation modeling revealed that reading comprehension increased the most as breadth increased.

The other research using Collaborative Strategic Reading conducted by Fan (2010) found the similar result with this study. With regard to dealing with unknown vocabulary words, the results of a One-Way ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference between the control and experimental groups, but they did outperform their counterparts in getting the main idea and finding the supporting details. Fan (2010) argues "This may be due to the fact that it is difficult to investigate the effect of vocabulary strategy training by a quantitative measure. As Huckin & Bloch (1993) suggest, gains in vocabulary learning from contextual clues or other vocabulary strategies "tend to be gradual and are therefore often difficult to

measure empirically in a controlled experiment" (p. 156).

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that: first, there is a significant effect of the implementation of MCSR on students' reading competency; second, there is an interactional effect of implementation strategy and vocabulary mastery upon students' reading competency; third, there is a significant difference in reading competency between the students with good vocabulary mastery who were taught by using MCSR and those who were taught by using conventional teaching (the students with good vocabulary mastery were best treated by using MCSR in increasing reading competency); finally, there is no significant difference in reading competency between the students with poor vocabulary mastery who are taught by using MCSR and those who are taught by using conventional teaching. This study gives empirical evidence of the significant effect of MCSR as well as vocabulary mastery upon students' reading competency. Therefore, the teachers' decision of choosing appropriate teaching strategies involving vocabulary instruction in conducting the reading class is very crucial.

Thus, there are some suggestions which can be given for the readers. It is recommended for EFL teachers to conduct direct vocabulary instruction in reading class. MCSR can be used as an alternative teaching strategy in conducting reading class. It is suggested for other researchers to conduct other studies with participants from different levels of learning such as students from primary or junior-high schools, gifted students, students at risk of academic failure, and disabled students. It would be interesting to investigate whether MCSR would still be beneficial to these other groups and how vocabulary mastery works in them. Moreover, it is suggested for other researchers to compare MCSR to other teaching strategies in order to consider which one provides more gains for the improvement of the English reading comprehension of students. This study focused on the skill of reading. It would be worth in exploring if MCSR could be



successfully applied to other language skills such as listening, writing, and speaking.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer would like to acknowledge her deep gratitude to her thesis supervisors, Prof. Dr. DewaKomangTantra, Dip.,App.,M.Sc, and Dra. L. P. Artini, MA., Ph.D., who consistently motivate, encourage, and advise the writer in finishing this thesis. High appreciation is also addressed to the dean of FKIP Unmas Denpasar, Prof. Dr. I WayanMaba, the head of the English Study Program of FKIP Unmas Denpasar, I KomangBudiarta, S.Pd., and all the students in semester two for their participation and cooperation during the research. She also wants to express her sincere thank to her parents, Ir. NgurahDharmayana and Ir. Ni PutuPandawani, M.Si for their never ending supports, love, and blessing.

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