

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Reading Theory

Reading is a multifaceted, intentional, and dynamic activity that demands significant time and effort to develop fully. It involves a variety of strategies that make the process flexible, allowing readers to adjust their approach based on the text they are engaging with (Phillips Galloway et al., 2020). Reading is not only vital for expanding one's knowledge but is also a complex process. It begins with decoding written symbols and culminates in the construction of meaning, which is achieved through the active interaction between the writer's ideas and the reader's interpretation. In essence, reading serves as a process of reconstructing an author's thoughts to derive meaning from the text. Reading is a positive activity that has a myriad of benefits to increase knowledge and insight (Hasanah et al., 2023).

Moreover, reading is purpose-driven. As noted by Soeharto (2022), the purpose behind reading dictates how one approaches the comprehension process. For example, when someone is reading a menu to decide whether they can afford a meal, they only need to comprehend the pricing rather than recognizing every item listed. Similarly, reading poetry for enjoyment requires recognizing the language and structure but does not necessarily involve identifying the main ideas or supporting details. In short, reading is an activity that aims to extract specific information based on the reader's objectives.

Reading is also a highly complex process that requires focus and mental engagement. It is a visual activity where printed words form meaningful units of

thought. The reader must not only recognize the symbols but also interpret them in the context of their own experiences and background. This interpretation extends beyond the immediate text, involving ideas, judgments, and conclusions (Hasanah & Habibullah, 2020). Thus, reading is a deeply intricate activity that relies on profound comprehension.

Additionally, reading is an interactive process, where readers actively construct meaning from a text by employing effective reading strategies. These strategies are considered essential, particularly in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. To summarize, reading is a complex and imaginative activity that demands the use of effective strategies to truly engage with the material.

2.1.1 Process of Reading

The reading process focuses on how individuals understand written passages. According to Soeharto (2022), reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text, which ultimately results in comprehension. Texts consist of letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that carry encoded meanings. The Professional Development Services for Teachers (2012) outlines the reading process as a complex, multi-dimensional activity that includes three key stages:

1. Pre-Reading Activities

a) Material Preview

The teacher reviews the reading material, identifies key concepts, and selects specific phrases, images, or words to initiate class discussions.

b) Brainstorming

Students brainstorm everything they know about the topic. This is essential as hearing others' thoughts helps expand their own understanding. Brainstorming also helps teachers assess students' prior knowledge and encourages weaker students by showing that they already know something about the subject.

c) Creating a Master List

The teacher collects student ideas on the board to form a comprehensive list of concepts that will guide further learning.

2. Whilst-Reading Activities

a) Reading for Prediction Verification

Students read the text thoroughly to verify if their initial predictions match the content.

b) Teacher Explanation

After the students have read, the teacher explains the overall meaning of the text to clarify any complex ideas.

c) Summarizing

Students are asked to summarize the text based on their understanding after the teacher's explanation.

d) Analyzing Text Structure

Students write down the structure of the text based on their summary to better understand how the information is organized.

3. Post-Reading Activities

a) Writing Tasks

Students are required to write an article or essay, using the new phrases or vocabulary they encountered in the text.

b) Idea Expression

Students are encouraged to share their thoughts and interpretations of the text, which helps deepen their understanding and engagement with the material.

2.1.2 Kinds of Reading

There are two main types of reading: extensive reading and intensive reading (Pressley et al., 2023).

- a. Extensive reading refers to activities where readers engage in skimming and scanning, aiming to get a general overview of the text. This type of reading is more about understanding the broader meaning rather than focusing on specific details. It is often used to encourage learners to develop their autonomy in learning, especially when they choose texts they find interesting. By selecting their own reading materials, learners are more motivated and can become more effective at understanding the general content of a text.
- b. Intensive reading, on the other hand, is a more focused approach where learners read carefully to gain a deeper understanding of the text. This method emphasizes studying the text in detail to understand its meaning and the strategies used by the writer. Through intensive reading, learners practice key skills such as analyzing sentence structure, grammar, and vocabulary. They also familiarize themselves

with writing techniques, making it beneficial for learning how to structure and organize their own writing. The strategies learned can either be related to how the text is written (text-related) or how the learner processes the information (learner-related).

According to Pressley et al. (2023), several specific types of reading are frequently mentioned in the literature:

- a. Skimming is a technique used to quickly read a text to understand the main ideas without focusing on every detail. The goal of skimming is to get an overall sense of the text, making it useful when a reader wants to know the general topic or key points without spending much time.
- b. Scanning is a more selective type of reading where the reader searches for specific information, such as names, dates, or numbers. In this process, the reader skips over irrelevant content and focuses solely on locating the required information. This is particularly useful when looking for specific data in a text without the need to fully comprehend other parts of it.
- c. Search reading is similar to scanning but with a more defined purpose. In search reading, the reader looks for information related to specific questions or topics. The difference from scanning is that search reading involves finding key ideas or concepts rather than just isolated facts. Unlike skimming, where the reader seeks an overall understanding, search reading focuses on retrieving information for specific goals.

- d. Careful reading involves a thorough and detailed examination of a text. It is often used in academic settings where the reader needs to fully understand the content, typically in textbooks or research articles. Educationists and psychologists commonly recommend careful reading for in-depth learning since it helps readers retain information and comprehend complex concepts.
- e. Browsing is an informal type of reading where the reader moves through a text without a clear goal. Parts of the text might be skipped, and there is little effort to connect the information into a broader understanding. Browsing is often used when readers are casually looking for interesting content without any specific questions or objectives in mind.

2.2 Kind of Reading Strategies

Oxford (2013) in Nguyen & Bich (2023) defines reading strategies as conscious, goal-directed efforts that learners use to regulate their reading process and improve comprehension. These strategies help readers become more independent and efficient, especially in learning a second language. Oxford's Self-Strategic Regulation (S2R) model categorizes reading strategies into four major groups:

1. Metastrategies

Metastrategies are higher-order thinking strategies that guide how a person controls and regulates their reading process. These strategies ensure that reading is

structured, intentional, and goal-oriented (Oxford, 2013). Types of Metastrategies are:

a) Paying Attention

This involves focusing on key details within the text while minimizing distractions. Skilled readers can identify important parts of the text, such as main ideas, keywords, and supporting details, rather than reading everything with equal attention. For example, a student underlines only topic sentences in a reading passage during group work.

b) Planning

Before reading, effective readers set objectives and determine which strategies will be most useful. For example, they might skim the headings, make predictions, or decide to focus on specific sections for deeper understanding. For example, before reading, students look at titles and subheadings to decide what to focus on.

c) Obtaining and Using Resources

This strategy involves using external aids like dictionaries, glossaries, online references, or even asking a teacher for clarification. It is particularly helpful for understanding new vocabulary or complex ideas. For example, a student uses an online dictionary to check the meaning of a difficult word.

d) Organizing

Structuring the information logically enhances comprehension. Readers might use techniques such as outlining, summarizing, or creating mind

maps to arrange information in a meaningful way. For example, after reading, a student creates a flowchart to summarize steps in a process.

e) Implementing Plans

After planning, readers put their strategies into action. This may involve setting a reading schedule, breaking down the text into sections, or applying different reading techniques (e.g., skimming for an overview or scanning for specific information). For example, a student breaks a long article into three parts to read over three study sessions.

f) Orchestrating Strategy Use

Skilled readers combine different strategies to optimize comprehension. For example, they might use skimming to get a general idea, then reread key sections for deeper understanding. For example, a student skims a news article, then rereads the most important paragraphs carefully.

g) Monitoring

While reading, readers constantly check their own comprehension. If they encounter confusion, they might reread a sentence, slow down their reading pace, or take notes to clarify understanding. For example, while reading, a student notices confusion and goes back to reread the paragraph more slowly.

h) Evaluating

After reading, good readers assess their comprehension and strategy use. For example, after reading, a student asks, “*Did I understand the writer’s opinion?*” and rechecks the last section.

2. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies focus on active engagement with the text to construct, transform, and retain knowledge. These strategies help learners decode meaning, make connections, and apply logic in understanding a text (Oxford, 2013). Types of Cognitive Strategies are:

a) Using the Senses to Understand and Remember

Some readers use visualization, auditory associations, or even gestures to reinforce comprehension. For example, a student imagines the setting of a short story while reading.

b) Activating Knowledge

Readers draw on prior knowledge and experiences to make sense of new material. For example, while reading about the solar system, the student connects the content to what they learned in science class.

c) Reasoning

Logical thinking helps readers analyze text structure, recognize cause-effect relationships, and predict outcomes. For example, after reading that *“rainforest loss increases carbon,”* the student infers it worsens climate change.

d) Conceptualizing with Details

This strategy involves breaking down complex ideas into smaller parts for better understanding. For example, a student writes short notes beside each paragraph to understand technical content.

e) Conceptualizing Broadly

Instead of focusing on small details, this strategy helps readers grasp the overall meaning of the text. Readers summarize, generalize, or look for patterns that connect different parts of the text. For example, a student summarizes a long article into three main points on the board.

f) **Going Beyond the Immediate Data**

Skilled readers infer meanings and make predictions beyond what is explicitly stated. For example, a student predicts the ending of a mystery story based on small clues.

3. Affective Strategies

Affective strategies help learners stay engaged, manage anxiety, and maintain a positive attitude toward reading. These strategies are crucial because emotions can either help or hinder learning (Oxford, 2013). Types of Affective Strategies are:

a) **Activating Supportive Emotions, Beliefs, and Attitudes**

Readers build self-confidence and a positive mindset while reading difficult texts. For example, a student tells themselves, *“It’s okay if I don’t get it right away”* when reading a hard text.

b) **Generating and Maintaining Motivation**

This strategy involves setting personal reading goals and finding intrinsic motivation to read. Some readers reward themselves after completing a challenging article, while others stay engaged by reading topics they enjoy. For example, a student sets a goal to read one English article per week and marks progress on a planner.

4. Sociocultural-Interactive Strategies

These strategies emphasize learning through interaction and cultural awareness. They are especially useful for second-language learners who must navigate different communication styles and cultural perspectives in reading (Oxford, 2013). Types of Sociocultural-Interactive Strategies are:

a) Interacting to Learn and Communicate

Readers engage in discussions, debates, or study groups to deepen their understanding of a text. For example, after reading a dialogue, students role-play the conversation in pairs.

b) Overcoming Knowledge Gaps in Communication

When encountering difficult concepts, readers actively ask questions, rephrase sentences, or seek clarification. This strategy helps them fill gaps in comprehension rather than ignoring confusing parts. For example, a student asks, “*What does this sentence mean?*” during class discussion.

c) Dealing with Sociocultural Contexts and Identities

Readers consider how cultural background, language, and social norms affect their understanding of a text. For example, while reading about Thanksgiving, a student compares it with their own family traditions.

2.3 Gender

Gender is a term used to distinguish between men and women based on sociocultural aspects. Initially developed by Deegan (2024), the concept of gender has since been recognized as an effective tool for analyzing the discrimination women face in society. According to Oakley, gender refers to the social and

cultural roles assigned to men and women. This distinction is not biologically inherent but socially constructed. Engel suggests that the differences between men and women, defined by gender, emerge from a long process of socialization, reinforcement, and social, cultural, and even religious construction, often supported by state power. Over time, these socially constructed distinctions have come to be perceived as immutable or divinely ordained. Umar elaborates that gender is a concept used to identify the social and cultural differences between men and women, emphasizing non-biological aspects. In this context, gender defines the social expectations and roles that vary across time and location. For example, as Lips (2020), cultural expectations often portray women as gentle, emotional, and nurturing, while men are seen as strong, rational, and assertive. However, these characteristics are not fixed; men can exhibit gentleness, and women can demonstrate strength and rationality. Such traits are fluid, subject to change over time and across different cultural contexts.

Expanding on this, the concept of gender is crucial in understanding how society constructs and perpetuates roles based on perceived differences between men and women. Gender, unlike biological sex, is shaped by social norms and values that evolve across various historical, geographical, and cultural contexts. It serves as a lens through which inequalities, particularly in power dynamics, are reinforced, legitimizing discrimination and marginalization. This sociocultural construction of gender not only dictates behaviors and expectations but also influences access to resources, opportunities, and rights. By critically analyzing gender, scholars and activists can uncover the deep-rooted structures of patriarchy

and other forms of systemic inequality. Therefore, gender is not just a static label but a dynamic, evolving concept that intersects with various other social categories such as race, class, and ethnicity, shaping the lived experiences of individuals and communities.

2.4 Reading Based on Gender Theory

Reading based on gender theory examines how gender roles, identities, and social constructs influence the way texts are interpreted and understood. Gender theory, rooted in feminist and queer studies, challenges traditional binary views of male and female by exploring how literature reflects and perpetuates societal norms regarding gender Butler (1990) in Jule (2022). This perspective highlights how gender dynamics shape narratives, characters, and themes, as well as readers' interpretations.

One of the foundational concepts in gender theory is Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity. Posits that gender is not an inherent trait but a performance shaped by cultural expectations and repeated behaviors. Applying this concept to reading, texts often depict characters enacting socially constructed gender roles. For instance, classical literature frequently portrays women as passive, nurturing figures, while men are often shown as dominant and heroic (Jule, 2022). These representations reinforce stereotypes and offer insights into the cultural norms of the time.

Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work, *The Second Sex* (1949) in Bullock & Henry-Tierney (2023), also contributes to gender theory by arguing that women are historically positioned as "the Other" in a male-dominated society. This lens

helps readers analyze texts where women are marginalized or objectified, as seen in many literary works from patriarchal societies. Reading through this framework enables a critical examination of power imbalances and the implications for gender identity.

Gender theory also intersects with queer theory, which challenges heteronormativity and explores fluidity in gender and sexual identities (Regan & Meyer, 2021). This approach broadens the scope of reading by questioning binary oppositions such as masculine/feminine and heterosexual/homosexual. For example, queer readings of texts uncover hidden subtexts or ambiguities in characters' gender and sexual identities, which may not conform to traditional expectations.

Moreover, gender theory considers the impact of readers' identities on interpretation. Wolfgang Iser's *reader-response theory* supports the idea that readers bring their own experiences, including gender identities, to the act of reading. A male reader, for instance, may interpret a female protagonist's struggles differently than a female reader due to differing social experiences. In contemporary contexts, gender theory examines representation in diverse genres, including modern media and digital narratives. It questions whether these texts challenge or perpetuate stereotypes and explores how evolving gender norms influence storytelling (Brown, 2023).

In conclusion, reading based on gender theory provides a lens for analyzing literature and media, focusing on how gender shapes narratives and societal values. By incorporating insights from theorists like Butler, readers can

uncover deeper meanings and critique the structures that influence representation and interpretation. This approach enriches our understanding of texts by emphasizing the fluid and constructed nature of gender.

2.5 Previous Study

The previous studies of this research are:

No	Name	Title	Result
1	Yulandari (2024)	Gender Differences in Applying Reading Strategies Outside The Classroom at English Education Program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu	The study found that both male and female students employed Global Reading Strategies, Problem-Solving Strategies, and Support Reading Strategies outside the classroom. However, female students showed a higher percentage of usage compared to males, though the difference was minimal, around twenty points per strategy.
2	Efnawati (2021)	Exploring the Reading Strategies Used by Male and Female Students	The study revealed significant differences in reading strategy use between male and female EFL learners. Male students used memory, cognitive, and compensatory strategies more frequently, while female students favored social-affective and metacognitive strategies. These findings suggest adapting teaching methods to address these differences.
3	Rianto (2021)	Examining Gender Differences in Reading Strategies, Reading Skills, and English proficiency of EFL University students.	The study revealed significant gender differences in metacognitive strategy use among Indonesian EFL students during online reading. Female students scored higher in overall, problem-solving, and support strategies, but no gender differences were found in online reading ability or English proficiency. These findings highlight female dominance in EFL online reading.

The research gap in exploring gender-based differences in reading comprehension strategies is evident in existing literature, with studies by Yulandari (2024), Efnawati (2021), and Rianto (2021) providing valuable insights. Yulandari's study highlighted a minimal gender difference in the use of reading strategies outside the classroom, while Efnawati's research identified distinct preferences, with males using memory and cognitive strategies and females favoring social-affective and metacognitive strategies. Rianto's study further emphasized females' dominance in metacognitive strategy use during online reading. However, none of these studies have specifically examined gender differences in reading comprehension strategies at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. This research aims to bridge the gap by exploring how male and female university students employ different strategies to comprehend reading materials and how these differences may impact EFL teaching practices. By providing deeper insights into gender-specific strategies, this study plays a crucial role in enhancing reading comprehension.