CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The main findings outlined in Chapter 4 are discussed below. The implications of these findings are also considered, following which a number of suggestions for future research are proposed.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The present study considered the area of reading strategies from several perspectives that are reflected in the research questions posed in the study (refer to 1.5). Three points in particular were reported in the study – Dayak learners’ perception of their reading strategies, the varieties and frequency in the reading strategies that were used by the high and low achievers and the effects of the Strategy Training on the students’ reading comprehension performances.

5.1.1 Dayak Learners’ Perception of Effective Reading Strategies

One of the points discussed in this study was the Dayak learners’ perception of effective reading strategies that they use as they complete reading tasks. The results of this study suggest that there is a slight difference in the strategies applied by the high and low achieving students. It implies that both the HA and LA employ almost the same types of strategies as they read but the HA employ more strategies
compared to LA (refer to 4.1). Furthermore, the result also indicates that
the HA are independent learners because they would apply other
strategies if their first attempt failed and they depended less on bilingual
dictionary or people (teachers, friends), when they encounter unknown
words or when they need clarification. This result confirms the notion
that high achievers are independent learners and they are more flexible in
the strategies that they employ when performing reading tasks.

5.1.2 Differences of Reading Strategies Employed by the High and Low
achievers

The result gathered on the reading questionnaires implies that there are
differences in the strategies employed by the HA and LA. The result
indicates that the HA are more cautious of the approaches that they take
throughout the reading process. The LA on the one hand, are more
dependent on reference materials (bilingual dictionary) or illustrations
(visual aids) to comprehend reading texts.

Findings on the HA and LA reading strategies show that the frequency of
strategies employed by these two groups differs and this confirms the
view done by researchers in the field of reading strategies (Hosenfeld,
1984).
5.1.3 Students’ Performances after Strategy Training

The third point discussed was the effect of strategy training on the Dayak students’ reading comprehension performances. The result shows that students' results on the post test mostly improved after undergoing the Strategy Training. This indicates that strategy training did improve students’ comprehension ability. The data from the learners’ profile (see Appendix 4) validate the strategies applied by individual students when completing reading tasks. The learners’ profile seems to suggest that students did apply some of the strategies learned during the training, for instance, ‘cognitive strategies – analysing and reasoning’ and ‘memory strategies – creating mental linkages and applying images and sounds.’

5.2 Implications and Recommendations

5.2.1 Implications of the Study

The research implies the value of the Dayak students’ perception of effective reading strategies to raise the teachers’ awareness of the strategies that the students employed as they approach reading tasks. Once the teachers are conscious of this, they would be able to tailor lesson plans, to allow students to apply a variety of reading strategies. Students should also be aware of their reading strategies so that they could compare the strategies that they use with their HA friends and also be exposed to an array of strategies that would aid their comprehension.
In addition, the study also suggests that HA are competent readers because they employ more strategies as they complete reading tasks and they are also independent learners. As compared to the LA, the HA are more flexible in the reading strategies that they use and they are determined readers as they would make few attempts to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words.

The result of this study indicates that Strategy Training is necessary as it could create awareness on the importance of reading strategies. It also could be an avenue to expose students on effective reading strategies that would assist them in comprehending complicated reading texts. Other than that, Strategy Training class would be a suitable place to train students with effective reading strategies that would later help improve the students' performance in their reading comprehension.

5.2.2 Recommendations

The encouraging results attained after the training indicates that Strategy Training is effective and should be introduced and conducted in higher learning institutions because students require reading strategies to empower them as they deal with large quantity of English reading material throughout their course. During the post interview that was conducted at the initial part of the data gathering, students suggested that Strategy Training should be introduced as part of the orientation programme which is at the beginning of each semester, so that they could benefit from the training and later be able to apply this knowledge.
once their classes commence. The students added that attendance for Strategy Training should also be made compulsory so that students would value the training.

Teachers play a crucial role in the field of reading strategies. Teachers need to apply appropriate teaching methods in order to help students become better readers. ESL Teachers should experiment and be adventurous in their approaches to suit the students' needs. Moreover, teachers must also be sensible in selecting materials for reading classroom use. As Osman (1986: 9) reiterates:

'It would be wiser to begin with passages having familiar context for ESL learners, culturally familiar material or material with local background because they are relevant to the students' world and easier to comprehend.'

Teachers could incorporate the training of reading strategies in the reading lesson. Teachers should also expose reading strategies employed by the 'better' readers to the 'poor' readers with the purpose that this would help the poor readers improve their reading comprehension. In addition, teachers should be able to help students apply the reading strategies with reading exercises in class.

To be able to produce 'strategic readers', the initial step that teachers should take is to be conscious of their students reading strategies and the types that they employ in completing reading tasks. Students must also be made aware of the reading strategies that they employ with the
intention that they could understand themselves better. Once the students are conscious of their reading process, they would be able to select strategies that would help them to improve their reading comprehension performances.

Furthermore, students should be informed of the effectiveness of the strategies that they use as they complete a reading task in order that they could reflect on the strategies that they use and they can also adopt strategies employed by competent readers.

To sum up, the teachers' role is basically to let students be in charge of their own learning. In other words, teachers should assist students to become autonomous readers by allowing them to discover the strategies that suit them most. In this way, these students would become 'empowered' readers, able to use strategies efficiently and independently.

5.3 Limitations of Study

This study, nevertheless, has some drawbacks. The researcher began as a novice; without experience on conducting Strategy Training class. The Strategy Training should only be conducted by teachers who have been trained to provide strategies-based instructions as they could come up with a more appropriate module for the training.
The time devoted for the Strategy Training was inadequate to emerge truly substantive results, though the results that were obtained would speak against that concern. As the students were not given sufficient training on the Think aloud, they were not able to think aloud as they read the given text. The researcher needs to prompt the students as they find answers to the comprehension questions to discover the students’ reading process and strategies.

A limited sample size in this study meant that certain kinds of investigation were not possible. One was that of determining whether the Strategy Training did affect students’ performance in reading comprehension. So there is a need to conduct a similar but larger study to be able to run analyses according to the students’ proficiency level and other factors.

Students’ irresponsible attitude throughout the data collection process affected the findings of the study because most students took the Strategy Training class for granted and a number of the students did not give full co-operation when filling the questionnaire on reading strategies and SILL. Due to this, some data were incomplete.

Another concern was whether such a short period would suggest that the respondents might have been using the strategies in this time frame only but not after the Strategy Training class. This would call for follow-up research to determine the extent to which the experimented students continued to use their insights from the Strategy Training class.
5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

As a follow-up to the study, programmes that aim to raise teachers' awareness on the importance of reading strategies and how to teach students to become strategic readers could be conducted. Teachers should also equip themselves with the knowledge on reading strategies, as it is fundamental for students to know about them. Cohen (1998:93) makes the assertion that:

'In order to conduct spontaneous strategy training in the classroom, the language teachers need to undergo some forms of in-service training to ensure that they have received appropriate and sufficient preparation for this kind of strategy instruction.'

Another area of investigation would be to document through videotape and other means of the nature of the treatment. It would be useful to clarify what strategies-based instruction looks like in the same classroom over time and in different classrooms throughout the language course. In this study the researcher relied on written observation and retrospective interviews with the students.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to find out whether students who are equipped with effective reading strategies perform better academically than less strategic readers. These are some of the proposals that can be assigned for future research.
5.5 Conclusion

This study has helped to shed some light in the field of reading strategies employed by Dayak learners in a higher learning institution in Sarawak. Furthermore, studies on Dayak students particularly in the area of reading strategies have not been widely studied at the moment.

Positive results on students’ improvement following the Strategy Training illustrate that Strategy Training is vital. The data collected from the post interview showed students believed that Strategy Training is essential because of its ability to help aid comprehension. They found that, as they are exposed to strategies that assist reading comprehension, they would try to apply the strategies learned through reading activities during the Strategy Training. The researcher also trusts that students should be equipped with reading strategies as early as possible, as they proceed to a higher level and deal with more complex reading texts.

Results drawn from the background survey and pre interview showed that Dayak students have very little knowledge of reading strategies or language learning strategies in general. Students could only identify few strategies that they generally use when doing a reading task. This indicates that students are not conscious of the reading strategies that they employed and effective reading strategies that would help their learning.

In addition, based on the findings from the background survey the researcher observed that good students are more motivated to learn English, employs
positive attitude and read more English materials. These students also showed that they are more aware of strategies that they can use to improve their English language ability. The students suggested listening to English radio programmes, watching English movies and reading English novels as ways to improve proficiency in the language. Apart from that, they are also not shy to make mistakes in the process of acquiring the language. These students also indicate that they enjoy English classroom activities, like, drama, role-plays and language games.

Furthermore, results from this study indicates that there are several differences in the reading strategies employed by the HA and the LA. These findings are helpful for curriculum developers, teacher trainers and ESL teachers, especially in the area of understanding learners’ differences in reading strategies.