The Relationship between Field Dependence-Independence and Reading Strategy toward Reading Comprehension

Bita Dwi Rahmani
(bitadwi@gmail.com)

University of Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA (UHAMKA), Jakarta

This study investigated the relationship between learning style (X_1) and reading strategy (X_2) toward reading comprehension (Y). The learning style is categorized into two: field independence (FI) and field dependence (FD). This study was carried out in one of the public senior high schools in Jakarta by using purposive sampling technique; 79 out of 120 students of science class in academic year 2008-2009 were chosen. The quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the data. Questionnaires and one reading comprehension test were distributed to analyze the data quantitatively. The first instrument identified students belonging to FI or FD. The second instrument concerned with identifying the frequency of reading strategy that students mostly used. 20 numbers of reading comprehension test were given to measure the comprehension and strategy that they used. This study found that both learning style (X_1) and reading strategy (X_2) influenced the reading comprehension (Y). In other words, the more independent students are and the more frequent they use strategy, the greater they will comprehend the text. As a consequence, the findings suggest that teachers introduce various kinds of strategy in reading comprehension because every student needs particular strategy.

Keywords: learning style, field-independence, field dependence, reading strategy, reading comprehension

Studi ini mencari hubungan antara tipe belajar (X_1) dan strategi membaca (X_2) terhadap kemampuan membaca (Y). Tipe belajar dibagi menjadi dua: 'field independence' (FI) dan 'field dependence' (FD). Studi ini dilakukan di salah satu SMA di Jakarta dengan menggunakan teknik sampel purposif. 79 dari 120 siswa jurusan IPA tahun akademik 2008-2009 dipilih. Metode kualitatif dan kuantitatif digunakan untuk menganalisa data. Kwestioner dan tes membaca diberikan untuk menganalisa data secara kuantitatif. Instrumen pertama digunakan untuk membagi siswa ke dalam FI dan FD. Instrumen kedua digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi frekuensi strategi membaca yang

paling banyak digunakan siswa. Studi ini menemukan bahwa tipe belajar (X_1) dan strategi belajar (X_2) berpengaruh terhadap kemampuan membaca (Y). Dengan kata lain, semakin mandiri siswa dan semakin sering mereka menggunakan strategi, akan lebih besar kesempatan mereka mengerti suatu teks. Oleh karena itu, studi ini merekomendaikan agar guru memperkenalkan beragam strategi dalam membaca karena setiap siswa memerlukan strategi tertentu.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, English language teaching methodologies have developed very rapidly. An important recent development in the methodology has been the shift of emphasis from the teacher-centered learning to the learner-centered learning. In other words, the main concern activities in the classroom focus more on students than on teachers. So, a teacher needs to help students identify the most appropriate strategies for their own learning styles in order to make them autonomous learners. Unfortunately, what learning styles the students have and what strategies they use to understand the information seem to be mostly unknown by teachers. In addition, students have difficulties dealing with texts. In fact, many researchers believe that the teaching and learning process may be more successful if only a teacher focuses more on the use of appropriate strategies for a particular students' learning style.

Based on a cognitive style, a learning style can be categorized into two: *Field Independence* (FI) and *Field Dependence* (FD). Students with FI learn independently, step-by-step and with sequential instruction. They get the idea of the lesson specifically as well. On the other hand, students with FD can involve in a group and learn most effectively when information is presented in the context. They also get the idea of the lesson generally. Both learning styles have very significant differences and could make a problem for a teacher. The problem mostly appears in the receptive skills (reading and listening) where the FI students could solve a problem by themselves, while FD students couldn't do it. They need to work in group and discuss a problem with others. So, field independent students may show higher achievement in reading rather than field dependent students (Tinajero & Paramo, 1998). Moreover, based on the research conducted by Tedjasuksmana, Veronica & Susana (2004), it shows FI people get significantly better reading comprehension than FD people. This is because the FI used appropriate reading strategies to comprehend reading texts (Tedjasuksmana et al, 2004). However, not all FI students have a better comprehension in

reading. It happens because sometimes they fail to use the strategies. Failure to use reading strategies effectively has been observed in the first language reading of young or unskilled readers when (1) they fail to monitor their comprehension, (2) they believe that strategies will not make a difference in their reading, (3) they lack knowledge about text features, (4) they are uninterested in text and unwilling to use strategies, and (5) they prefer familiar yet primitive strategies over less-familiar but more effective tactics. Furthermore, the use of certain reading strategies does not always lead to successful reading comprehension, while failure to use these strategies or use of other strategies does not always result in unsuccessful reading comprehension. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether there is any relationship between learning style and reading strategy toward students' reading comprehension.

FI and FD Styles

Field Independence-Dependence is one of dimensions of learning style. The term 'learning style' refers to the general approach preferred by the student when learning a subject, acquiring a language, or dealing with a difficult problem (Oxford, 2003). Learning style is an overall pattern that provides broad direction to learning. There are many areas of learning style which are based on sensory (visual/auditory/hands on), social style dimension (extroverted/introverted), and cognitive style dimension. However, this research was limited to the learning style based on cognitive style dimension: a method of how we learn things in general, and the approach we use in overcoming a problem (Brown, 2000), namely the field dependent (FD) style and the field independent (FI) style.

Brown (2000) states that 'field' refers to a set of thoughts, ideas, or feelings from which specific relevant subsets are perceived. The 'field' may be perceptual, or it may be abstract such as a set of ideas, thoughts, or feelings from which the task is to perceive specific subsets. FI concerns on the perceptual skill of "seeing the forest for the trees" (Brown, 2000, p. 115). He give an illustration by explaining that a person who can easily recognize the hidden castle or human face in 3-D posters, or a child who can spot the monkeys camouflaged within the trees and leaves of an exotic forest in coloring books tend to have a field independent style. An FI enables learners to differentiate parts from a whole, to focus on something, and to analyze a variable without being disturbed by other variables. Learners who tend to be autonomous and self-reliant on developing cognitive restructuring abilities are FI learners. When FI learners are language learners, they are more confident and active to speak out in class and to take risks. Witkin (as cited in Reid, 1995) argues that such language

learners are able to monitor grammatical correctness, to learn linguistic rules, to perform on classroom-oriented language tests and to do particularly well on the cloze test. Similarly, Abraham (as cited in Brown, 2000) states that second language learners who are field independent perform better in deductive lessons. The FI learners do better in classroom learning which involves analysis, attention to details, exercises, drills, and other focused activities.

On the other hand, FD students tend to be 'dependent' on the external frame. Brown (2000) argues that field dependence tend to be dependent on the total field and perceive field as a whole. FD learners, unlike FI learners who are able to develop their self-guideness, rely on others for information and approval. In class activities, FD learners depend on the teacher to perform their cognitive abilities. FD learners are more successful with inductive lesson designs. Outside the class, FD learners are good at interacting socially with language acquisition through contextualized practice with native speakers. The FD learners seem to achieve a higher degree of success in everyday language situations and the task which require interpersonal communication skills. So, the language learners who are field dependent perform better in inductive lessons (Brown, 2000). The following table proposed by Wyss (2002) is the principal characteristics of the two cognitive styles and the implications of each for L2 (second language).

Table 1: The differences between Field Independent (FI) - Field Dependent (FD) students

Field Independence(FI)	**Field Dependence(FD)**
1. Impersonal orientation i.e. reliance on internal frame of reference in processing information.	*1. Personal orientation* i.e. reliance on external frame of reference in processing information
2. Analytic i.e. perceives a field in terms of its component parts; parts are distinguished from background	*2. Holistic* i.e. perceives field as a whole; parts are combined with background
3. Independent i.e. sense of separate identity	*3. Dependent* i.e. the self view is derived from others
4. Not so socially aware i.e. less skilled in interpersonal/social relationships	*4. Socially sensitive* i.e. greater skill in interpersonal/ social relationships

Many studies (e.g. Clark & Roof, 1988) have showed that FI students perform better than FD students in any subjects. Marendaz (as cited in Tinajero, 1997) states field-independent subjects follow a more analytical approach. The 'analytical' approach is widely considered to be better suited to academic achievement, and studies have frequently demonstrated that FI subjects perform better than FD subjects on many intellectual tasks. This, however, brings the assumption of neutrality into doubt and gives rise to a long-running debate (Tinajero, Carolina & Paramo, 1998). In short, many studies show that FI students tend to have a better achievement in all subjects and academic fields rather than FD students because of their ability to concentrate and focus and their high confidence.

Reading Strategy

In approaching a learning task, learners employ various strategies. Chamot (2005) states that strategies are a set of productions which are compiled and fine-tuned until they become procedural knowledge. Strategies are quite intentional on the part of the learners when they are in the process of learning. Learners use their strategies to select, acquire, organize or integrate new knowledge. On the other hand, Allen (2003) states the term 'strategy' means a step or action that is designed to enhance learning. That is not automatic, but it is intentionally chosen by the learner and is applied to a learning task. She argues that a student must have alternatives from which to choose, must be deliberate about the advantages and disadvantages of each relative to the task at hand, and select the strategy because it is judged to be more effective for meeting goals than its alternatives.

Second language reading researchers began to focus on reading strategies in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Reading strategies can be defined as a flexible plan that readers apply to a variety of texts and tasks. Reading strategies have much in common with learning strategies, but readers deliberately use them to understand and remember what they read. By using reading strategies, all students, including L1 and L2 students, can learn to read independently (Allen, 2003). Moreover, Cohen (1983) states that reading strategies are the mental processes that readers consciously choose to comprehend a text. These strategies also refer to the readers' approach to make sense of what they read effectively. These opinions are rather closely related to the notion stated by Chamot (2005). According to her, reading strategies which are conscious and goal-driven, are procedures that facilitate a reading task. Reading strategies which are related to other cognitive strategies enhancing attention, memory, communication, and learning allow readers to elaborate, organize, and evaluate information derived from a text. Because strategies are controllable by readers, they are

personal cognitive tools that can be used selectively and flexibly. Reading strategies are also considered as the fundamental factors that promote students' comprehension improvement in reading. In short, reading strategies can be simply defined as strategic procedures consciously used by a reader in comprehend a text.

There are some strategies typically used by language learners to develop their cognitive category for reading comprehension. Chamot (2005) lists some strategies, among others: repeating names to be remembered, grouping and classifying words or concepts, inferencing to guess meaning, and summarizing.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a complex intellectual process involving a number of abilities. The two major abilities involve word meanings and reasoning with verbal concepts. Reading comprehension can be categorized into a hierarchy of four levels: literal comprehension, interpretation, critical reading, and creative reading.

Literal comprehension represents the ability to obtain a low-level type of understanding by using only information explicitly stated. This category requires a lower level of thinking skills than the other three levels. Answers to literal questions simply demand that the pupil recall from memory what the book says.

Interpretation category demands a higher level of thinking ability because the questions in the category of interpretation are concerned with the answers that are not directly stated in the text but are suggested or implied. To answer questions at the interpretative level, readers must have problem-solving ability and be able to work at various levels of abstraction. Obviously, children who are slow learners will have difficulty working at this level.

Critical reading is at the higher level than the other two categories because it involves evaluation, the making of a personal judgment on the accuracy, value, and truthfulness of what is read. To be able to make judgments, a reader must be able to collect, interpret, apply, analyze, and synthesize the information. Critical reading includes such skills as the ability to differentiate between fantasy and reality and the ability to discern propaganda techniques. Critical reading is related to critical listening because they both require critical thinking.

Creative reading uses divergent thinking skills to go beyond the literal comprehension, interpretation, and critical-reading levels. In creative reading, the reader tries to come up with new or alternate solutions to those presented by the writer.

The interpretation category such as finding main idea of a paragraph probably spends most of the teachers' time (Rubin, 1982). Furthermore, the last two categories, creative and critical reading comprehension, are often neglected by teachers because of their own insecurities in those areas. It does happen in a syllabus of English lesson in senior high schools. It is written that in reading comprehension, the students should find out the main-idea, specific information explicitly and implicitly from the text. Thus, on this research, the writer was concerned with using the interpretation category as the basis of measuring reading comprehension.

METHODS

Research Design

This study aims at investigating the problem of reading strategy for Field Independence (FI) students and Field Dependence (FD) students and their relationship with reading strategy toward reading comprehension. There were two variables: variable X_1 as the first independent variables (FI & FD students) and variable X_2 as the second independent variables (reading strategy) which had interconnected and influenced the variable Y as the dependent variable (reading comprehension). So, the research focused on a quantitative approach to discover the relationship among variables. The multiple regression is used to analyze the data. Furthermore, the qualitative approach was used to elaborate the reading strategy used by each learning style.

Population and Sample

The research was conducted at Public Senior High School (SMAN) 9 in East Jakarta. The population of the research was all students of the third grade majoring in science program. Out of 120 students, the researcher took 79 (65%) students based on a random purposive sampling. This allowed the researcher to hand-pick respondents for a study and make judgment to choose participants for the specific qualities. The number of samples was quite representative for the whole population.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research was conducted to test three hypotheses. Furthermore, the tests of hypotheses were done for each variable. The first hypothesis was tested to find the relationship between learning Style (X_1) and reading comprehension (Y). The second hypothesis was tested to

identify the relationship between reading strategy (X_2) and reading comprehension (Y). The third hypotheses was tested to find the relationship between learning style(X_1) and reading strategy (X_2) altogether toward reading comprehension (Y).

The Relationship between Learning Styles (X_1) and Reading Comprehension(Y)

The first hypothesis (H_i) states that there is a positive relationship between learning style (X_1) and reading comprehension (Y). After calculating the data, it is obtained that the prediction equation or regression formula was $\hat{Y} = -1.976 + 0.394X_1$. The formula indicates that every increase of learning style score affect the raise of 0.394 point of reading comprehension score in -1.976 of constants. The strength of the relationship between learning style (X_1) and reading comprehension (Y) is illustrated by coefficient correlation $ryx_1 = 0.410$. The significance test of coefficient correlation can be seen in the following table.

Table 2: The significant test of coefficient correlation between learning style (X_1) and reading comprehension (Y)

The correlation of	Coefficient Correlation	Determination Correlation	t_o	t_{table}	
				$\alpha = 0.05$	$\alpha = 0.01$
X_1 and Y	**0.939**	0.882	24.001**	1.63	2.35

** The coefficient correlation is very significant ($t_h = 24.001 > t_t = 1.63$)

Based on the result of significant test of coefficient correlation between learning style (X_1) and reading comprehension (Y), it is found that there is a positive relationship between them. In other words, the higher the score of learning style is, the higher the students' reading comprehension will be. For example, the student who had a score 48 for learning style could answer correctly 19 numbers out of 20 numbers in reading comprehension test. Meanwhile, the student who had a score below 30 for learning style could answer not more than 12 numbers out of 20 numbers in reading comprehension test. Moreover, the further analysis of the relationship between learning style, FI and FD, proves that the higher the score of learning style, the higher their reading comprehension will be. It happened because FI students have the ability to analyze, focus more on something and cannot be easily disturbed

by other variables such as the noisy environment, mood, etc. So, it can be concluded that the more independent someone's personality is, the higher their reading comprehension will be.

The Relationship between Reading Strategy (X_2) and Reading Comprehension(Y)

The second hypothesis states that there is a positive relationship between reading strategy (X_2) and reading comprehension (Y). However, before analyzing the relationship between X_2 and Y variables, the researcher identified the frequency of using reading strategy by FD and FI students, as shown in the following table.

Table 3: The frequency of using strategy by FD students in reading comprehension

No	Total	Percent	Rank	Strategy
1	92	9.4 %	1	Reasoning deductively
2	85	8.7 %	5	Analyzing expression / inferencing
3	85	8.7 %	6	Recognizing formula
4	53	5.4 %	12	Summarizing
5	91	9.3 %	3	Repeating
6	86	8.8 %	7	Skimming
7	92	9.4 %	2	Scanning
8	68	6.9 %	11	Taking Note
9	84	8.6 %	8	Highlighting
10	90	9.2 %	4	Guessing intelligently
11	78	7.9 %	9	Using synonym
12	77	7.8 %	10	Linguistic guessing
Total	981	100 %		

The above table shows that FD students use the strategy in reading. The *reasoning deductively* strategy is the most frequent strategy used, meaning that they read the specific detail first followed by the whole text to get general meaning of the text. This strategy is in line with the nature of the field dependence criteria which perceives everything globally. They rarely use *summarizing* in the end of their reading task because they have already caught the general idea of the text in the beginning of reading process.

On the other hand, FI students use the different strategy. *Guessing intelligently* is the most frequent strategy used in reading for them. This strategy is in line with the nature of FI students stating that they have more ability in analyzing or analytical perception.

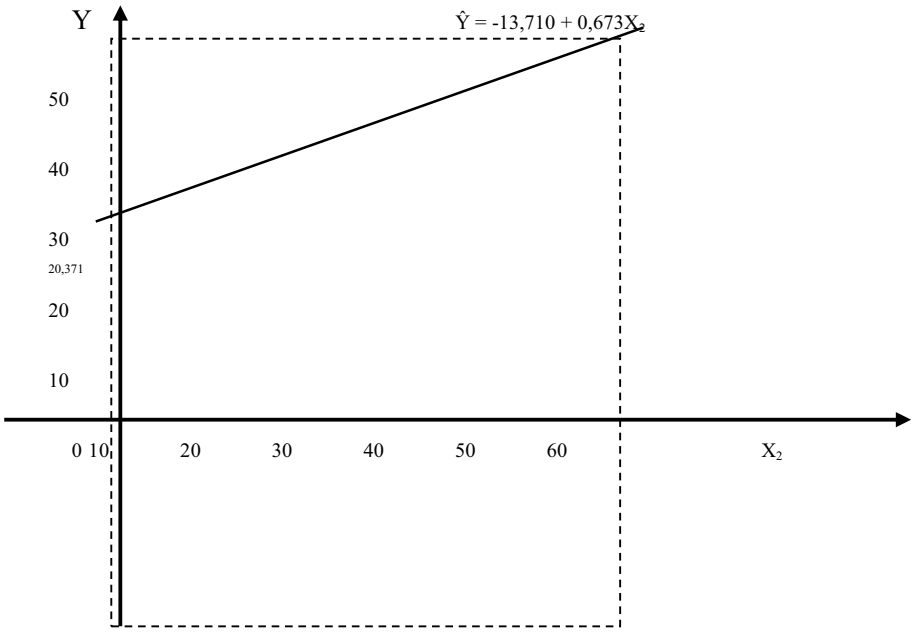
Furthermore, FI students have higher self-confidence than FD students. They bravely take a risk to guess the meaning of the words in the text, as can be seen in the following table.

Table 4: The frequency of using strategy by FI students in reading comprehension

No	Total	Percent	Rank	Strategy
1	199	9.2 %	2	Reasoning deductively
2	197	9.1 %	3	Analyzing expression / inferencing
3	182	8.4 %	9	Recognizing formula
4	136	6.3 %	12	Summarizing
5	193	8.9 %	4	Repeating
6	188	8.7 %	5	Skimming
7	188	8.7 %	6	Scanning
8	143	6.6 %	11	Taking Note
9	185	8.5 %	8	Highlighting
10	199	9.2 %	1	Guessing intelligently
11	167	7.7 %	10	Using synonym
12	186	8.6 %	7	Linguistic guessing
Total	2163	100%		

In short, field independent and field dependent students use different strategy in reading. In other words, the learning styles affect the determination of reading strategy in their reading comprehension. The reading strategies determine the reading comprehension too. The second hypothesis states that there is a positive relationship between reading strategy (X_2) and reading comprehension (Y). Based on the calculation using the regression formula $\hat{Y} = -13{,}710 + 0{,}673X_2$, it indicates that the increase of reading strategy score or the more frequent in using the strategy causes the increase 0.673 point of reading comprehension in the constants -13.710, as can be seen in the following figure.

Figure 1: The graph of regression formula $\hat{Y} = -13,710 + 0,673X_2$



The strength of the relationship between reading strategy (X_2) and reading comprehension (Y) is illustrated in a coefficient correlation $ryx_2 = 0.974$. The significance of coefficient correlation can be seen in the following table.

Table 5: The significance of coefficient correlation between reading strategy (X_2) and reading comprehension (Y)

The correlation of	Coefficient Correlation	Determination Correlation	t_o	t_{tabel}	
				$\alpha = 0.05$	$\alpha = 0.01$
X_2dan Y	0.974	0.949	2.62**	1.63	2.35

** The coefficient correlation is very significance ($t_h = 37,950 > t_t = 1,63$)

Based on the result of significant test of coefficient correlation between reading strategy (X_2) and reading comprehension (Y), reading strategy analysis shows that there is a positive relationship between reading strategy (X_2) and reading comprehension (Y). In other words, the more frequently the participant uses strategy, the better their reading comprehension will be.

The Relationship between Learning Style (X_1) and Reading Strategy (X_2) toward Reading Comprehension (Y)

The third hypothesis states that there is a positive relationship between learning style (X_1) and reading strategy (X_2) toward reading comprehension (Y). The multiple regression formula was used to determine the correlation between the criterion or dependent variable and the best combination of two predictors or independent variables. Based on the statistical calculation, the multiple regression formula obtained was $\hat{Y} = -10.782 + 0.145X_1 + 0.460X_2$.

The strength of the relationship between learning style (X_1), and reading strategy (X_2) toward reading comprehension (Y) are shown by $Ry_{.12} = 0.987$. The significance of coefficient correlation can be seen in the following table.

Table 6: The significant of coefficient correlation between learning strategy (X_1) and reading strategy (X_2) toward reading comprehension (Y)

The correlation of	Coefficient Correlation	Determination Correlation	F_o	F_{table}	
				$\alpha = 0.05$	$\alpha = 0.01$
X_1 and X_2 toward Y	**0.987**	0.974	1439.59**	3.91	6.90

** The coefficient correlation is very significance ($F_o = 1439.59 > F_t = 3.91$)

Based on the multiple significant of coefficient correlation test, the result is F_o (1439.59) $>F_{tabel} = 3.91$). It can be concluded that the regression of Y to X_1 and X_2 is significant. Furthermore, the determination correlation was $R^2_{y.12} = 0.974$, meaning that 97.40% of reading comprehension variance (Y) was influenced by the learning Style (X_1) and the reading strategy (X_2). The strength of two variables; learning style (X_1) and reading strategy (X_2) toward Reading comprehension (Y), can be illustrated in the following table.

Table 7: The rank of partial coefficient correlation

The Partial Relation	Partial Coefficient Correlation	Rank
Y and X_1	$r_{y1} = 0.939$	Second
Y and X_2	$r_{y2} = 0.974$	First

The above table explains that the highest of the partial coefficient correlation is reading strategy (X_2) with ryx.1 = 0.974. Then, the second partial of coefficient correlation is learning style (X_1) with $ry_{x.1}$= 0.939. The relationship among variables with X_1 and X_2 as independent variable and Y as a dependent variable in 5% significant level with the sample 79 have some following results. First, the relationship between Y variable (reading comprehension) and X_1 (learning style) is 0.939 as correlation coefficient in 0.000 significant levels, meaning that there is almost perfectly significant relationship between those variables. Second, the relationship between Y variable (reading comprehension) and X_2 (reading strategy) is 0.974 as correlation coefficient in 0.000 significant level. In other word, there is positive and significant relationship between those variables. Third, based on the statistic calculation, both independent variables (learning style and reading strategy) indicate a strong and almost perfectly significant relationship to dependent variable (reading comprehension) which by the number of coefficient of multiple correlation (R) is 0.987. Reading strategy, however, has stronger relation to affect reading comprehension than learning strategy.

In short, FI students got significantly better reading comprehension than FD students because FI students used the appropriate reading strategies to comprehend the reading text. In the finding, FI students tended to manipulate all sentences and relation between sentences through the context clues in order to guess the meaning than FD students. As a result, the more independent people are and the more frequent strategy they use, the higher the reading comprehension skill will be.

Based on the analysis, it can be inferred that there is a positive significant relationship between learning style (X_1) and reading strategy (X_2) toward reading comprehension (Y). The result is supported by the number of coefficient correlation of X_1 to Y ($rx_1.y$) =0.939. The number reaching almost +1 means that the number is in the perfect relationship. Meanwhile, the coefficient correlation between X_2 to Y ($rx_2.y$) is 0.974, meaning there is a positive relationship between the variables, too. Moreover, by using the result of the two tests, the multiple regressions is tested to predict the relationship between X_1 (learning style) and X_2 (reading strategy) variable toward Y (Reading comprehension) variable. The result of the test shows that the multiple coefficient correlation (R) is 0.987. Because of the result is almost 1.00, it can be inferred that there is a positive and significant relationship between learning style, reading strategy, and reading comprehension. Moreover, the partial coefficient correlation is tested to get the result about which independent variables most influence the dependent variable. As a result, the reading strategy (X_1) with r_{y2} = 0.974 is more influential than learning style (X_2) with 0.939.

CONCLUSIONS

The learning style and strategy in reading are important in reading comprehension. Two factors are influential and cannot be ignorant. However, the strategy takes more important place than the learning style to make the reader comprehend the text. In other words, all students with field independent or field dependent learning style can comprehend the text well if only they know the most appropriate strategy that they use in comprehending the reading text.

Furthermore, the result of this research is expected to be beneficial for all English teachers who teach reading course. The result shows that learning styles and strategies the learners use are important in comprehending texts. However, introducing kinds of strategy in reading are preferable to make readers become aware of their appropriate strategy in comprehending the texts. Finally, they can use the most appropriate reading strategies to comprehend the reading text. So, this research is hoped to be an ideas for the readers to identify their most appropriate reading strategies based on their own learning style.

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