

## READING STRATEGIES IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL: A SMALL SCALE SURVEY

**Arroza Sindiya**

*Islamic University of Indonesia*

[arrozasindi@gmail.com](mailto:arrozasindi@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Reading strategies issues appear in EFL context, not only in formal education but also in informal education including in Islamic boarding schools. The aim of this study is to identify the use of reading strategies by the students of Islamic boarding schools. This study included 71 students at Islamic boarding school from higher education with the different studies in their university as respondents. The researcher used quantitative research with Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) based on Mokhtari and Sheorey's (2002) questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three categories: Global strategies, Problem-solving strategies, and Support strategies. There are 30 items with 5-point Likert scale as the main instrument in data retrieval. To analyze the data, the researcher using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The result showed that the most reading strategies used by the students is problem-solving strategies with mean score = 3,952 followed reading strategies with mean score = 3,663 and the lowest one is support strategies with mean 3,633. The score of each domain indicate in high level of use. It means almost of students believe and use reading strategies while reading academic materials

**Keywords:** Reading Strategies, Foreign Language, Islamic Boarding School

### BACKGROUND

Reading strategies issue appear in EFL context, not only in formal education but also in informal education, for example in Islamic boarding school. Despite that, it is found to be very challenging in finding and reviewing related literature about EFL practices in Islamic boarding school, studies in Islamic schools are still blooming. Although most of them are not specifically about reading strategies in the second language, the presented issue is still in a pedagogical context.

Park & Niyozov (2008) found that the society in South and South East Asia tend to perceive *madrassa* as a negative image and they assume that people in *madrassa* did not implement factual information. The research was conducted in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippine, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. As learners, they need deep reading while delivering good information. The researchers argued that reading practice in Islamic boarding school is only a part of many rituals rather than employing reading strategies activity, it means there is a lack of awareness in reading. In addition, Hui (2012) asserted that if someone does not have good reading strategies, they will be easily swallowed up by extreme issue. Meanwhile, they need to implement reading strategies in order to be more aware of the current negative issue and able to well inform with a careful study from reading.

The previous studies which related to this issue mostly focused on the students' reading strategies and the respondents are mostly university students (Alsheikh, 2011; Vianty, 2007). Alsheikh (2011) focused on the strategic reading of multilingual and multi-literate readers in a Midwestern university in the United State. Vianty (2007) studied the comparison of students' use of metacognitive reading strategies when reading in the two languages in Indonesia. Those researches took the data in university students. Limited research is focus on the use of reading strategies among particular religious communities, such as Islamic boarding school. To fill this empirical void, the researcher intended to study the use of reading strategy when students' Islamic boarding school reading English. Therefore, the researcher interest to find about the strategies when they get difficult in reading English in order to face the challenge of the current issue.

This study is expected to have two impacts those are empirically and practically. Empirically, the study will provide empirical insight into reading strategies that are used by the student of Islamic Boarding School. In practical use, the study will serve the teacher

and the students with a potential strategy in reading English that is used by the students of Islamic Boarding School through reading strategies. Based on the rationale above, the researchers formulate the research problem, what are the reading strategies used by the students of Islamic Boarding School?

### Reading Strategies

Many researchers had been discussed reading strategies. Reading is a cognitive process in which readers use their prior knowledge and reading strategies to grasp a written text (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001). In order to identify the use of reading strategies, the strategies consist of three categories based on Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) such as global reading strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support strategies.

Firstly, global reading strategies which discuss to deliberate, carefully arrange the steps by manage the reading. The reader begins with setting the steps for the act of reading, thinking about the goal of reading, previewing text material, predicting about the content, etc.

Secondly, problem-solving strategies are relate to activities and the readers' ways while face to face with text. When the readers read the text, there is re-reading and checking about the content to make sure that they truly understand. Then, they will think about the procedures when they find a problem while reading such as repairing the strategies.

Thirdly, support strategies are a pack to guide the reader to understand the text such as taking notes, using dictionary, underling, or highlighting the text. In support strategies need equipment in response while reading such as the use of reference materials like dictionaries.

Table 1. Survey of Reading Strategies by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002)

Categories	Strategies
Global Reading Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Well arrange of reading management</li> <li>2. Setting the steps of the reading act</li> <li>3. Purposeful</li> <li>4. Skimming the text</li> <li>5. Guessing about the content</li> </ol>
Problem-solving Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Action or techniques while reading</li> <li>2. Re-reading for better understanding</li> <li>3. Changing strategies to face the proble</li> </ol>
Support Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Applying a set of support tools</li> <li>2. The use of reference materials</li> </ol>

The involvement of pre-reading also needed in reading strategies (Nordin, Rashid, Zubir, & Sadjirin, 2013). It means as a reader is necessary to have background knowledge before reading in the written text and use reading strategies. In addition, reading strategies not only focus with written text, but also related with the use of deep understanding (Carell, 1998). In order to make sure that they understand what they are reading, they are found to use monitoring strategies (Samuels, Ediger, Willcutt, & Palumbo, 2005). These include confirming and recheck for understanding, asking questions and pausing. From the studies that have been discussed, reading strategies involve the use of strategies, background knowledge, and deep understanding. Thus, it is important parts in the reading process and as a reader must be aware of the use of reading strategies.

There are previous studies that are relevant to this research. Nisbet & Huang (2015) conducted the relationship between reading strategy use and reading proficiency of EFL students in Chinese University. The respondents of this research were 241 students from

two universities in northwest China. This research used quantitative based on Mokhtari and Sheorey's (2002) 'Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS)' instrument. The result of this research indicated that a significant relationship exists between reading strategy use and reading proficiency. In addition, the students showed that they use all of three types of reading strategies measured by the SORS, with the most preferred is problem-solving strategies, and the lowest preferred is support strategies.

Furthermore, Lien (2011) examined the use of reading strategies in relation between reading anxiety and gender of EFL learners' in extensive reading. The respondents are 108 EFL college freshmen from English Department at University in northern Taiwan. Primary data were collected using a questionnaire, the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) designed by Saito et al. (1999), and the Survey of Reading Strategies designed by Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001). The result between reading anxiety and reading strategies indicate a negative correlation. Therefore high-anxiety level readers were more use reading strategies than the readers with low anxiety level. In reading, females showed that they are more anxious than males.

In this study, the researcher chooses Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) questionnaire designed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) as an instrument which is the design of this study to measure metacognitive perception of reading strategies of adolescent and adult students who had English as their second or foreign language. The researcher collect SORS instrument that modified from Metacognitive Awareness Reading Strategies Inventory (MARS) based on Mokhtari and Richard (2002) with Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0,93$ . It means that the instrument was valid to be used in order to measure the reading strategies among ESL context and EFL context.

The different between this research and the previous research is this study explores on the students report in reading strategies in EFL context, especially in Islamic boarding school students which is the researcher translates the questionnaire into Indonesian language. Therefore, the researcher needs to find new validity and reliability to measure this instrument was valid to be use or not. This is needed to find in order to make the questionnaire is more contextual to Islamic boarding school students than the original version.

### **Reading Strategies in Islamic Boarding School Context**

Based on research findings before, reading strategies in Islamic boarding school is very exclusive, thus in the searching previous empirical studies of reading strategies in Islamic boarding school context is considered to be challenging by the researcher. However, there are still many empirical studies of reading strategies not specifically in Islamic boarding school but in Islamic environment context.

Yousefian (2016) explored the reading strategies used by EFL learners about nature and frequency while reading academic texts from English language learners at the university in Iran. The researcher of this study SORS questionnaire from Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002). The researcher found that the most used of reading strategies by the learners is global reading strategies. The second is problem-solving strategies and thirdly is support strategies.

Mahdavi and Mehrabi (2014) explored metacognitive awareness of reading strategies among Iranian EFL learners in an "Input-poor" environment at Islamic university in Iran. The aim of this study is to investigate the frequency of the use and types of reading strategies employed by them and they use SORS as a questionnaire. The result of this study is almost the learners moderately aware of reading strategies. Therefore, the most frequently used Problem-solving strategies, followed Global reading strategies, and Support strategies.

The researcher chooses the study in Islamic boarding school because it is rarely to find out the previous studies, although there are similar studies, but not specifically in Islamic boarding school context. The studies that used Islamic boarding school as a context not only about reading strategies, but also about extreme issues such as the previous research that mentioned in this research. This research is very important for the students in order to know suitable strategies and decrease the level of difficulty while reading. In

Indonesia, some of Islamic boarding school especially in the higher education level use English as a process of learning. It means they have English reading practice. Moreover, the learners have a reading practice since primary high school, because English is a compulsory subject in the curriculum. However, Park & Niyozov (2008) argued that practice of reading in Islamic boarding school is only a part of many rituals rather than employing reading strategies activity, it means there is lack of awareness in reading. In conclusion, reading strategies in English for Islamic boarding school is very challenging. Therefore the learners have to use reading strategies and be aware of the current issues while reading.

## METHOD

The design of this research is to find the reading strategies, which are the students of Islamic boarding school used. In this research, the sample were 71 respondents. Obtained from a total population of 84 students in private university. This study consists of various majors and age from university students at Islamic boarding school. The researcher use descriptive research which describe all of the students' strategy while reading by using an online platform. This study applied quantitative research, mainly on survey study. The researcher uses SPSS and Microsoft Excel as a statistical package to analyze the data from the questionnaire.

### Data Collection Technique

In this study, the researcher chooses Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) questionnaire as the main instrument in data. This study explores on the students report in reading strategies while reading English materials. The writer gains SORS instrument based on the Metacognitive Awareness Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI). It is originally developed by Mokhtari and Richard (2002) and consulted with expert judgment. The researcher adapted the questionnaire by translated into Bahasa Indonesia. In the use of questionnaire, there are 30 main questions about what strategies that the students used while reading English materials. Then, they have to answer it with Likert scale from level 1 (never) and level 5 (always). The questionnaire consists of three domain strategies, there are Global Strategies (13 items), Problem-solving Strategies (8 items), and Support Strategies (9 items).

Table 3. Questionnaire of Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) (Bahasa Indonesia version).

Category		Statement	Scale				
GLOB	1	Saya memiliki tujuan ketika membaca.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	2	Saya mencatat saat membaca untuk membantu saya memahami apa yang saya baca.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	3	Saya memikirkan apa yang saya tahu untuk membantu saya memahami apa yang saya baca.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	4	Saya membaca keseluruhan tampilan teks untuk melihat isinya sebelum membacanya.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	5	Saat teks menjadi sulit, saya membacakan dengan keras untuk membantu saya memahami apa yang saya baca.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	6	Saya memikirkan apakah isi teks sesuai dengan tujuan membaca saya.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	7	Saya membaca dengan perlahan dan hati-hati untuk memastikan bahwa saya mengerti apa yang saya	1	2	3	4	5

		baca.							
GLOB	8	Saya meninjau teks terlebih dahulu dengan mencatat karakteristiknya seperti panjang teks dan organisasi teks.	1	2	3	4	5		
PROB	9	Saya mencoba kembali fokus saat kehilangan konsentrasi.	1	2	3	4	5		
SUP	10	Saya menggaris bawahi atau melingkari informasi dalam teks untuk membantu saya mengingatnya.	1	2	3	4	5		
PROB	11	Saya menyesuaikan kecepatan membaca saya sesuai dengan apa yang saya baca.	1	2	3	4	5		
GLOB	12	Saat membaca, saya memutuskan untuk membaca dengan cermat dan apa yang harus saya abaikan.	1	2	3	4	5		
SUP	13	Saya menggunakan bahan referensi (Kamus) untuk membantu saya memahami apa yang saya baca.	1	2	3	4	5		
PROB	14	Bila teks menjadi sulit, saya lebih dalam memperhatikan apa yang sedang saya baca.	1	2	3	4	5		
GLOB	15	Saya menggunakan tabel, gambar, dan gambar dalam teks untuk meningkatkan pemahaman saya.	1	2	3	4	5		
PROB	16	Saya sesekali berhenti dan memikirkan kembali tentang isi bacaan sebelumnya.	1	2	3	4	5		
GLOB	17	Saya menggunakan petunjuk secara kontekstual untuk membantu saya lebih memahami apa yang sedang saya baca (contohnya mengartikan kata berdasarkan keseluruhan kalimat).	1	2	3	4	5		
SUP	18	Saya parafrase (mengemukakan kembali gagasan dengan kata-kata saya sendiri) untuk lebih memahami apa yang saya baca.	1	2	3	4	5		
PROB	19	Saya mencoba membayangkan atau memvisualisasikan informasi untuk membantu mengingat apa yang saya baca.	1	2	3	4	5		
GLOB	20	Saya menggunakan fitur tipografi seperti huruf tebal dan huruf miring untuk mengidentifikasi informasi penting.	1	2	3	4	5		
GLOB	21	Saya menganalisis dan mengevaluasi secara kritis informasi yang disajikan dalam teks.	1	2	3	4	5		
SUP	22	Saya bolak-balik dalam teks untuk menemukan hubungan antar ide di dalamnya.	1	2	3	4	5		
GLOB	23	Saya memeriksa pemahaman saya saat menemukan informasi baru.	1	2	3	4	5		
GLOB	24	Saya mencoba menebak isi teks yang saya baca saat membaca.	1	2	3	4	5		

PROB	25	Bila teks menjadi sulit, saya membacanya kembali untuk meningkatkan pemahaman saya.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	26	Saya bertanya kepada saya sendiri mengenai hal tertentu yang jawabannya terdapat di teks.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	27	Saya memeriksa apakah tebakan saya tentang teks itu benar atau salah.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	28	Ketika saya membaca, saya menebak arti kata-kata atau kelompok kata yang tidak diketahui.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	29	Saat membaca, saya menerjemahkan dari bahasa Inggris ke bahasa asli.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	30	Saat membaca, saya memikirkan informasi dalam bahasa Inggris dan bahasa ibu saya.	1	2	3	4	5

The original Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) was validated (Cronbach's alpha= 0.93). It means that the instrument was valid to be used in order to measure the reading strategies. Based on Cohen et al (2007), this is the table of Cronbach' alpha coefficient that can be used:

Table 4. The criteria of Cronbach' alpha

Cronbach' alpha	Criteria
>0.90	Very highly reliable
0.80-0.90	Highly reliable
0.70-0.79	Reliable
0.60-0.69	Minimally reliable
<0.60	Unacceptability low reliability

This survey was tested in the United States at two universities (N=147) with interval of Cronbach' Alpha of SORS questionnaire is 0.93. It indicates that the items of the questionnaire were very highly reliable and this instrument can be used to measure reading strategies use among adolescent adult.

The researcher found new validity and reliability with  $\alpha$  0.915 after adapted the questionnaire by translating it into Bahasa Indonesia. It means the instrument was valid to be used to measure reading strategies among non-native learners.

Table 5. Case Processing Summary

		N	%
s	Case Valid	71	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0

Total	71	100.0
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a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 6. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.915	.920	30

Table 7. Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
1.1194 E2	225.9 40	15.03129	30

### Data Analysis Technique

The researcher take the same steps in accordance with this study.

- The researcher makes literature reviews and chooses Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) as instrument.
- The researcher adapted SORS instrument by translating it into Bahasa Indonesia to collect the data.
- Previewing and checking the items of questionnaire to make the respondents easy to understand.
- Using Google form web for the data collection. Then, simply links into bit.ly.
- Distribute the link to students of Islamic boarding school in their social media's group.
- After the data received from Google form, the researcher using SPSS and Microsoft Excel to analyze the data descriptively.
- After the data collected, the researcher determines the Standard Deviation (SD) and Mean by using formula = STDEVA and =AVERAGE.

## FINDINGS

### Survey Results

There are 71 students from different age and majors in university as respondents who finished the questionnaire. Mostly, the age of the students between 21-23 years old. Many of them study in the Faculty of Islamic Sciences and journal is the most popular reading materials than the others. Based on the chart below, the number of participants are relatively balance.

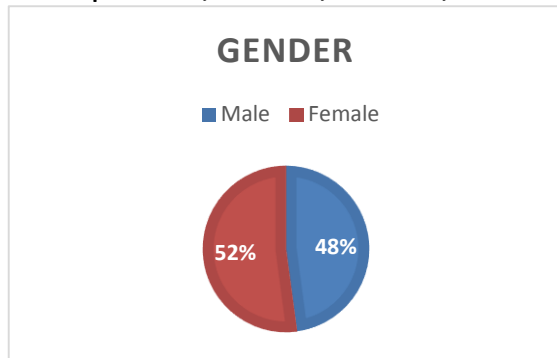


Figure 1. Respondent's information about gender

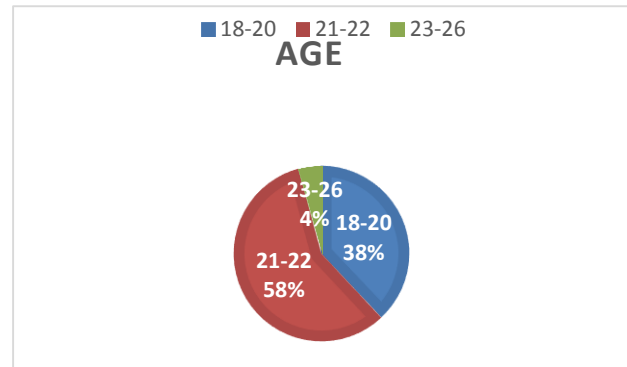


Figure 2. Respondent's information about age



Figure 4. Types of the reading materials

After the researcher analyzes the data through Microsoft Excel, the findings of reading

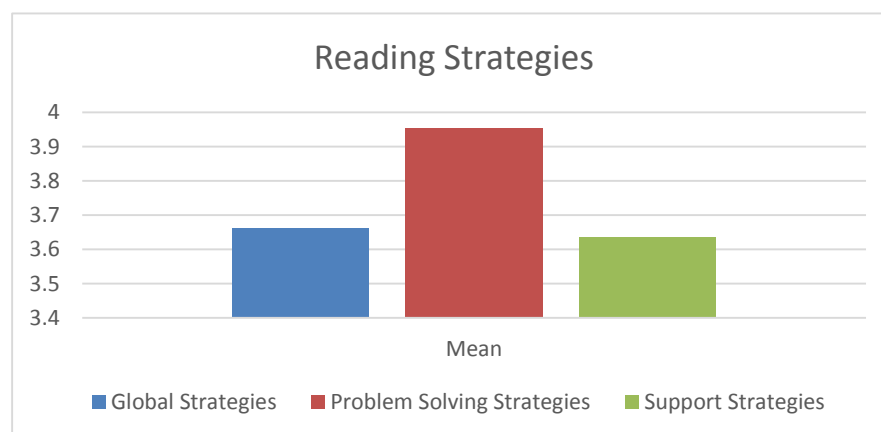


Figure 5. Reading strategies



strategies of students in Islamic boarding school is described into the figures below:

In the research, the highest average from all categories is problem-solving strategies (Mean = 3,952) and support strategies is the lowest strategies (Mean =3,633).

### Global Reading Strategies

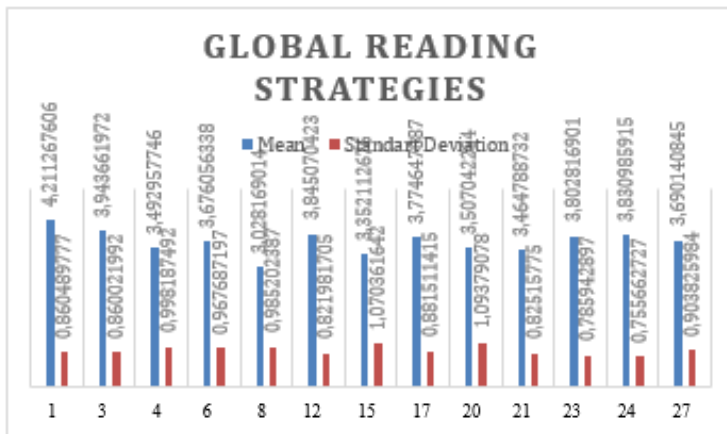


Figure 6. Global reading strategies

Based on the table above it is found that the highest from this domain is statement number 1 “I have a purpose when reading.” With mean 4,211 and standard deviation 1,093 statement number 20 “I use typographic features like bold and italics to identify important information.” and the lowest from this domain is statement number 8 “I review the text first by noting its characteristics such as length and organization.” With mean 3,028 and standard deviation 0,755 statement number 24 “I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.”

### Problem-Solving Strategies

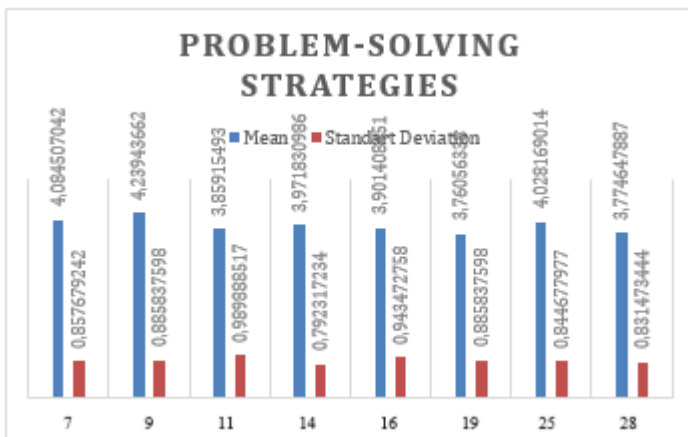


Figure 7. Problem-solving strategies

Based on the table above it is found that the highest from this domain is statement number 9 “I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.” with mean 4,239 and standard deviation 0,989 statement number 11 “I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading.” and the lowest from this domain is statement number 19 “I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.” with mean 3,760 and standard deviation 0,792 statement number 14 “When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading.”

## Support Strategies

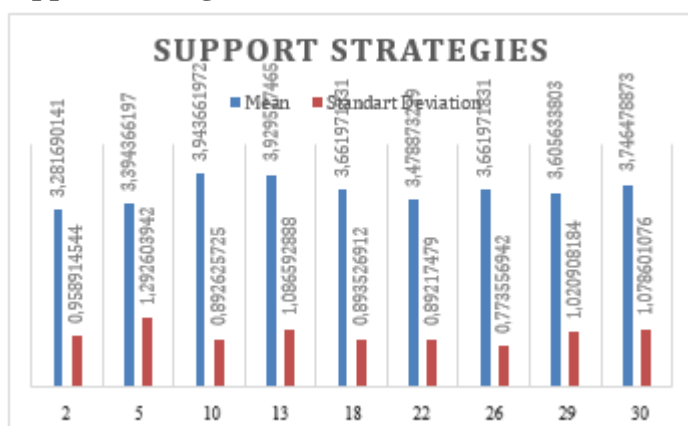


Figure 8. Support strategies

Based on the table above it is found that the highest from this domain is statement number 10 “I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.” with mean 3,943 and standard deviation 1,292 statement number 5 “When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.” and the lowest from this domain is statement number 2 “I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.” with mean 3,281 and standard deviation 0,773 statement number 26 “I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.”

## DISCUSSION

This study consists of various majors and age from university students at Islamic boarding school. Most of the students' are from the Islamic Religious Faculty. The researcher chooses this boarding school because as university students, reading does not have a certain restriction on every department, however, every student can seek information through reading and want to find strategy when reading. Moreover, they are still learning reading in English at Islamic boarding school.

Mokhtari and Richard (2002) explained from overall reading strategies SORS questionnaire is mentioned that reading strategies divided into three categories such as global strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support strategies. Then, after the researcher analyze the data, the result of this study found that the students which are living in Islamic boarding school have various strategy of reading. Most of the students in Islamic boarding school used are problem-solving strategies with mean 3,952, followed by global reading strategies with mean 3,663, and the lowest is support strategies with mean 3,633. In addition, there is possibility that Islamic boarding school students have high critical thinking and usual to face the difficult context in the text. It is based on the way to solve the problem as their favorite strategy.

There are some previous studies that similar to this study. First, Nisbet & Huang (2015) explained the relationship between reading strategy use and reading proficiency of EFL students in Chinese University. The finding showed that the students use all of three types of reading strategies after completed SORS questionnaire, with the most preferred is problem-solving strategies, and the lowest preferred is support strategies.

Secondly, Mahdavi and Mehrabi (2014) in their research showed the highest strategy used by the students is problem-solving strategies, followed global reading strategies, then support strategies. This research also similar in the context where the student in Islamic university. Thirdly, Yousefian (2016) explored the reading strategies used by EFL learners about nature and frequency while reading academic texts. The respondent is English language learners at the university in Iran. This research is different in the most strategy that they are used, but it is similar to the result in the lowest strategy which is support strategies.

In case this result could not really bound with the previous study specifically in Islamic boarding school as a context but, the researcher has tried to look for current

references of reading strategies in Islamic boarding school's students. The result quite unique, the researcher found the research in a boarding school is rarely found in reading strategies, even though there are research about reading habit and reading activities.

The finding of this result opposes the point as found by Park & Niyozov (2008). The writers argued that the practice of reading in Islamic boarding school is only a part of many rituals rather than employing reading strategies activity. It means there is a lack of awareness in reading. Although this study oppose that statement, there is a possibility in the characteristic of Islamic boarding school that the researcher used is different. In this research, the respondents are taken in two categories, as the students of the university and Islamic boarding school which under the university's auspices.

In addition, according to Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), in general, there are three classes of reading strategy usage: high (mean= 3.5 or higher), moderate (mean= 2.5 - 3.4), and low (mean= 2.4 or lower). It means all of the categories in reading strategies that students used are at high level with score above 3.5. It indicates that almost of students often use reading strategies. Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) stated general score of mean showed how a lot the students have confidence in the use of strategies in the instrument while reading academic materials.

## CONCLUSION

The research is aimed to identify the reading strategies used by the students of Islamic Boarding School quantitatively. In conclusion, the researcher found that the most reading strategies used by the students is problem-solving strategies with mean score = 3,952. It is higher than global reading strategies with mean score = 3,663. The lowest one is support strategies with mean 3,633. The score of each domain indicate in high level of use. It means that the students often use reading strategies. Furthermore, the finding has implications for the teacher and the students as a reference for them to implement the suitable reading strategy while reading their English texts. Because of the result in this research found that academic journal is the most used by the students while reading, it is possible for further research to identify about the influence between the types of the text that they are read and reading strategies. However, this research is limited to identify the used of reading strategies in Islamic boarding school with the respondents are university student and Islamic boarding school students in Yogyakarta which probably has different finding with the other place. Therefore, the researcher suggests for further research to collect the data of reading strategies in another Islamic boarding school that has different characteristic with this research.

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