

# Context Clues in Reading Text for Improving EFL Students' Reading Skills

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## ABSTRACT

*This research was purposed to describe the use of context clues in order to help students in improving their reading skills. There were still some difficulties in reading skill experienced by the students. The students at higher education have difficulties in reading comprehension because they have no motivation in reading habit; they read a little or nothing. Other students' difficulties in reading comprehension were the low reading skill. However, it is known that reading and vocabulary are related to each others, so that the use of context clues is related to vocabulary. But it is also known that context clue also used in the sentence structures and the position of the main idea of the text. It can be concluded that the use of context clue can help students, either in secondary school or in higher education, to develop their practicing reading skill.*

**Keywords:** Context clues, reading skills, EFL, English at higher education

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A context clue is one of the many techniques that are commonly used by teachers to improve students' reading skill. Context clues itself, as stated by (Roell, 2020) are simply hints or additional information the author provides that can help you understand the meaning of a particular word or phrase. These clues can be found in the same sentence as the vocabulary word or elsewhere in the passage, so be on the lookout whenever a new term presents itself. Context clues can also ease the students to find out the main idea of a passage or struggling to make inferences about meaning due to unknown words. They can help to connect the blanks in exceedingly practical ways.

This research was purposed to describe the use of context clues in order to help students in improving their reading skills. There were still some difficulties in reading skill experienced by the students. The students at higher education have difficulties in reading comprehension

because they have no motivation in reading habit; they read a little or nothing. Other students' difficulties in reading comprehension were the low reading skill. The students complained about the fact that they found, they need to study hard to remember the information they just read. They also need much time to read the text to overcome their problem. The material of reading is unfamiliar for them and grammatical complexity is also a reason why the students failed to comprehend the text correctly. The sentences in reading text too long or uses complicated sentences. Related with these problems, new words and long texts are seen by the students as a major obstacle to comprehend a reading text (Satriani, 2020).

Meanwhile the difficulties which were face by students of senior high school students as find out by (Lestasi, Fitriani, & Erdiana, 2017) were absence of extensive reading, inadequate vocabulary, type of text, type of questions, the absence of the use of reading strategy, and the uncertainty of students' reading levels. Those were similar to the result of research by (Rizqon, Andreani, & Astuti, 2021) revealed that 52% of the students had problems in vocabulary and 43.2% of the students had problems in background knowledge when reading English texts. Therefore, the students need to exercise more on their vocabulary and background knowledge skills by reading more narrative text.

In practicing reading skill, there students also need to have good vocabulary mastery. A research conducted by (Tuyen & Huyen, 2019) combining the use of contextual clues on English vocabulary retention and reading comprehension. Their study revealed that contextual clues positively affected students' vocabulary retention and reading comprehension. The use of context clue can also improve the vocabulary mastery and motivated students in learning process. The research result conducted by (Salim, Suryadi, & Erlangga, 2021) showed that the use of context clue picture shows positive effects in increasing the vocabulary mastery of the students. The finding also reveals that by using those techniques the students were motivated to perform the learning activity and taking the test enthusiastically. Context clues are beneficial not only for students at elementary and secondary school but also for student at higher education. A study conducted by (Putri & Fitriwati, 2019) there is significance correlation in strong category between context clues strategy and reading comprehension ability of the second semester students of Universitas Negeri Padang. The research which conducted by (Vernandes, 2019) there is influence of context clues strategy on students' reading achievement on narrative text in of the tenth grade students of state Senior High School 2 of Palembang. The type of context clues that were used was synonym, antonym, the example-illustration, the contrast, the logic, the root words, affixes and the grammar.

Theoretically, there are several types of context clues, those are; definition of description clue, example clues, synonym restatement clue, contrast or anonym clue, mood or tone clue, experience clue, analysis or structure clue, inference clue, and cause and effect clue (College, 2005). The research conducted by (Mauliza, Samad, & Erdiana, 2019) stated that the development in reading skill can be achieved since the strategy trains and guides the students to find out the clues provided in the text in the form of definition, synonym, antonym,

example, or inference, could help them to guess the meaning of the word. In conclusion, context clues strategy does assist the students in inferring words meaning from context.

## 2. METHODS

The method used in this study was Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The objectives of Systematic Literature Review (SLR) include being used to identify, review, evaluate, and interpret all available research with interesting phenomenon topic areas, with certain relevant research questions (Triandini, Jayanatha, Indrawan, Putra, & Iswara, 2019). The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method reviews and identifies the journal systematically, in each of its processes following the steps or protocols that have been set.

The activities consist of determining a strategy for finding data and/or information sources, selecting studies through quality assessment in accordance with the eligibility criteria as well as quality assessment instruments, data synthesis and data extraction (Rahayu & Hosizah, 2021).

### 2.1 Search Strategy

In order to find data needed, the writers used keywords such as *context clue in reading text*, *reading skills*, and *English as Foreign Language*

### 2.2 Information Sources

The database sources used in searching the literature in this study were the results of some researches which were published by Online Journal System (OJS) and also registered by Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

### 2.3 Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria in this study included inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria were; 1) Literature in the form of scientific journals and/or proceedings, 2) Sources scientific journals and/or proceedings of published by Online Journal System (OJS) and also registered by Digital Object Identifier (DOI), 3) Scientific journals and/or proceedings have open access, 4) Articles must be accessible in full text, 5) Scientific journals and/or proceedings in English language, 6) Year of publication of scientific journals and/or proceedings between 2017-2022, 7) Discussions in scientific journals and proceedings included context clue in reading comprehension especially EFL students, 8) The research design was qualitative with descriptive approach.

Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria in this study were the criteria which were not mentioned above.

### 2.4 Literature Selection

Articles or literature obtained were selected and analyzed based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Retrieved data related to keyword that is as many as 10 articles discussed about context clue in reading comprehension.

### 2.5 Data Synthesis

The data synthesis process in this study was carried out by comparing the literature which has met the quality assessment as well as the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Synthesis data refers to the purpose of research, to describe the use of context clues in order to help students in improving their reading skills.

### 2.6 Data Extraction

The output of data extraction is in the form of a table consisting of the name of the researcher, year of publication, research title, research object, research design, research place, and implementation of context clue in reading for EFL students.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data synthesis that had been conducted, there were several fact that could be resumed, those are;

1. The difficulties faced by students in reading practice are related to the absence of extensive reading, lack vocabulary, type of text, type of question, the absence of reading strategy used, and the uncertainty of students' reading levels. The material of reading is unfamiliar for them and grammatical complexity is also a reason why the students failed to comprehend the text correctly. The sentences in reading text too long or uses complicated sentences
2. Context clues have been used by the English teachers of junior and high school. It is also implemented for the students at higher education.
3. The strategies used by the students to improve reading skills are comprehension monitoring, predicting, generating and asking question, activating and using background knowledge, making inferences, summarizing, and visualizing.
4. Type of the context clues that are commonly used for reading skills are definition of description clue, example clues, synonym restatement clue, contrast or anonym clue, mood or tone clue, experience clue, analysis or structure clue, inference clue, and cause and effect clue.
5. The use of context clues is beneficial in improving students' reading skill.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the researches related to the use of the context clue in practicing reading skill, it is known that reading and vocabulary are related to each others. So that the use of context clues are related to vocabulary. But it is also known that context clue also used in the sentence structures and the position of the main idea of the text. It can be concluded that the use of context clue can help students, either in secondary school or in higher education, to develop their practicing reading skill.

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