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## Students' Strategies in Reading Literature: Literary Study in the EFL, Phenomenological Psychology Perspective

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore the strategies Indonesian students employ in writing comparative Indonesian-English literary criticism within the context of EFL students. A qualitative approach was utilized, and data collection techniques included questionnaires and interviews. The data analysis technique used the identification, classification, reduction, and exposure stages. This study used four phases, namely the screening phase, the reading process phase, the interpretation phase, and the reflection phase. The results showed that in the screening phase, 14.1% of participants expressed a liking for English, while 85.9% remained neutral; the mean score of English obtained by the participants was 45.1% very good, 45.1% good, 8.5% sufficient, 1.3% insufficient; and regarding the English courses attended by participants, 62% never attended, and 38% had taken English courses. In the reading process phase, 74% of the participants searched for translated novels on Google, 7% translated English novels using Google Translate, 3.5% engaged in skimmed reading, 2.5% translated English novels using translators, and other reading strategies were below 3%. Participants who responded with 'loved' were 71%, participants who responded with 'liked' were 19%, participants who responded with 'neutral' were 7%, and those who responded with 'disliked' were 3%.

**Keywords:** EFL student, reading, literature, psychology, phenomenology

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## 1. Introduction

Today, reading in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) poses a significant challenge for both students and lecturers (Al Qahtani, 2020; Ko, 2013). Moreover, reading, one of the language skills, is an extensively explored and widely discussed area (Mori, 2004; Soonthornmanee, 2002). It has been approached from various angles, including learning strategies, student aspects, teaching aspects, and policy-related aspects. In connection with reading, the education realm is grappling with a 'reading crisis' (Barton, 1997; Chall et al., 1991; Gallagher, 2009; Manarin, 2019) due to the unsatisfactory outcomes in reading quality. This challenge is also mirrored in the realm of reading English literature within the context of EFL.

In EFL, reading holds a significant level of importance (Brunfaut et al., 2021; Hoa & Thi, 2020). Reading plays a vital role for EFL students. However, many students encounter difficulties in reading, ranging from basic comprehension to understanding the nuanced meanings that impact their interpretation of literature. In fact, the ability to read correctly correlates with the ability to write correctly (Zamel, 1992). Therefore, reading and writing are inseparable.

Over the past decade, several researchers have focused on reading strategies in primary schools (e.g., Hung et al., 2020; Kaakinen et al., 2015; Swanson et al., 2011; Wanzek et al., 2013; Wanzek et al., 2020), reading in high school (e.g., Min, 2008; Shih & Reynolds, 2015; Song & Sardegna, 2014; Vu & Peters, 2020), and reading at the college level (e.g., Giusto & Ehri, 2019; Lee, 2013). Additionally, Tsung and Huang's (2009) research delved into reading within the context of previewing. The results of their study indicate that previewing in learning to read is highly effective in improving learning outcomes. However, research over the past decade has predominantly centered on the context of non-literary reading. Indeed, literary reading is equally crucial and should be aligned with non-literary reading. In literary reading, children also encounter difficulties in understanding English literature.

Research by Gu and Lau (2021) recently demonstrated the integration between reading and literary context. The results of this study indicate that the level of motivation and understanding of the Chinese language significantly influences reading comprehension. Unfortunately, the previous research did not establish a link between reading comprehension, literature, psychology, and language comprehension. Integrating the three aspects, namely language, literature, and psychology, is crucial in EFL learning for students. Therefore, a compelling literary reading strategy is needed so children can comprehend the meaning accurately.

This study aims to fill the gap in previous research by exploring students' perspectives on reading difficulties. By identifying students' reading difficulties and the strategies for reading English literature, it is hoped that lecturers will gain a better understanding to design more effective learning procedures for teaching literary criticism in the context of EFL, focusing on the comparative studies of Indonesian-English literature. Specifically, this study aims to explore students' difficulties in reading English literature and identify their strategies to overcome these difficulties. This study is grounded in the observed phenomenon within a class of Indonesian Language Department students undergoing Theory of Literature on Comparative Literature lessons. The students were encountering difficulties in comprehending English literature. Consequently, this study aims to assist lecturers in identifying the difficulties students face in reading English literature from the perspectives of EFL and phenomenological psychology. Historically, the role of psychology has often been overlooked in the context of learning. However, as demonstrated by Ahmadi (2019, 2020), Wilson (2008), and Bueno (2018), adopting a psychological perspective can lead to more optimal learning outcomes by acknowledging and addressing the psychological conditions of students. It is essential to note that this study is confined to EFL students, exploring literature through the lens of EFL and phenomenological psychology.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Reading Comprehension**

In language learning, reading stands out as one of the most crucial language skills. Mastering the art of reading determines students' success in comprehending the textual information they encounter (see Shah-Wundenberg et al., 2013; Toste et al., 2017). At an advanced stage, proficient reading comprehension leads to accurate interpretation. Thus far, reading skills have been prominently emphasized in language learning, as they are suspected to play a pivotal role in children's language acquisition success. Reading is classified as a receptive language skill (Nushi & Orouji, 2020) and is inherently complex (Hoffman, 2017). Two key aspects are highlighted in the realm of reading: the reading process and the reading outcome (Alderson, 2000, 2015). An individual with a sound reading process will likely produce accurate reading outcomes. Therefore, studies on reading delve into either the reading process or the reading outcomes.

One type of reading is reading comprehension. This aspect is typically taught in schools or colleges, focusing on students gaining a deep understanding of the text they study. Kendeou et al. (2016, 62) explained that “reading comprehension is multidimensional and complex” as it demands understanding and interpretation from the reader. In this context, readers should be exposed to the material they are about to read, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding and interpretation. Therefore, an initial grasp of the text and the ability to interpret it is essential in reading comprehension. According to Khalifa and Weir (2009), comprehensive reading is a complex language skill requiring high cognitive abilities (related to psychology), skills, and knowledge. Hence, reading comprehension is a language skill demanding special and thorough attention from both teachers and students.

In literature, the most widely used type of reading is reading comprehension. A deeper understanding is required to interpret literature with ambiguous meanings (Kidd & Castano, 2019; Rayner et al., 2016) because literature is inherently multi-interpretable. Literary texts often employ unconventional language, sometimes in stark contrast to the real world. Consequently, a high-level and critical understanding is essential in comprehending literature. If there are errors in interpreting a literary text, it will result in an unaesthetic reading. This unaesthetic reading outcome impacts the understanding of literary texts, whether canonical or non-canonical. A discerning reader should be able to recognize and comprehend canonical literary works for what they are, distinguishing them from other types of literature.

## 2.2. Phenomenological Psychology

Phenomenological psychology is a unique field that traces its roots back to the philosophy pioneered by Husserl (Macann, 2005; Martin, 2008). Philosophers such as Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Sartre, who studied phenomenology, concurrently contributed to the development of existentialism—a philosophical school inseparable from phenomenology. The philosophy of existentialism shares similarities with phenomenology in its exploration of human existence as a “being” in the world. In subsequent developments, Heidegger’s followers further strengthened and developed phenomenological philosophy across various scientific disciplines. Consequently, phenomenology extends beyond philosophical realms and is now incorporated into psychology, sociology, and anthropology. It makes phenomenology a multidisciplinary and multi-methodological study due to the diverse perspectives of its thinkers.

Phenomenological psychology is rooted in the study of phenomena and human consciousness (Owen, 2007). Heidegger (2010, 20) pointed out that a critical phenomenology term is “something that shows itself.” Through phenomenology, researchers deconstruct facts based on phenomena, aiming to reveal the essential meaning contained within. Phenomenological psychology seeks to integrate the contexts of ‘empirical’ and ‘phenomenology’ (Charles, 2013), aspiring to be a comprehensive study of understanding humans as beings in the world. However, unifying the empirical and phenomenological aspects is challenging, as it is sometimes inseparable from researchers’ subjectivity in conducting research. Therefore, intersubjectivity and synthesis in the study were carried out (Yu, 2004) to ensure research results are accounted for ontologically, axiologically, and epistemologically.

Phenomenological psychology is also known as psychology which is related to naturalism (Reynolds, 2016) because phenomenology relies more on naturalistic methods (Paul, 1999) and is known as existentialism (Webber, 2011) because it refers to human consciousness and existence in the world. Phenomenological psychology aims to comprehend phenomena and the underlying aspects based on the researcher’s interpretation (Gorner, 2002). Therefore, profound interpretation is crucial in this context. Researchers strive to approach the subject naturally and descriptively in a phenomenological study. Stroller (2009) asserted that phenomenology utilizes experience as an object of investigation, distinguishing it from empiricism, which employs experience as the foundation of knowledge.

### **2.3. Literary Criticism**

The key term in literary criticism relates to assessing literary works (Eagleton, 2015; Richards, 2017; Wellek & Warren, 2019). Classical literary criticism is heavily influenced by the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle (Dorsch, 2004). In its development, literary criticism expanded and entered several disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, religion, and comparison. Moreover, as modern literary criticism entered various disciplines, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary studies emerged (Ahmadi, 2023, Huggan, 2008, 2022; Sandfort, 2000). The medium of literary criticism is the language used in literature (Atherton, 2005) in the form of novels, short stories, poetry, and drama. Therefore, language studies can be included in the area of literature.



Concerning language, especially the study of reading comprehension in the literary text, phenomenological psychology is employed to investigate how students understand the literary text within the EFL context. The advantages of using phenomenological psychology to explore students' understanding of reading literary texts are as follows. Firstly, students' understanding, as examined through phenomenological psychology, is conducted naturally, enabling direct exploration and resulting in more objective research outcomes. Secondly, students can articulate difficulties in reading literary texts from a psychological perspective. In the context of reading comprehension related to literary texts, the study of phenomenological psychology in this research encompasses four stages: the screening phase, the reading process phase of English literature, the interpretation phase, and the reflection phase.

### 3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach aligned with the perspective of Paulus & Lester (2021), emphasizing uniqueness, inductiveness, holism, and contextuality. The researcher described the data in a descriptive and in-depth manner (Yamin et al., 2020) based on the results of the analysis and interpretation. In presenting the data, the researcher adhered to Moustakas's (2010) viewpoint, asserting that data in phenomenological psychology studies should be narrated according to the natural life experiences of the participants. In this study, the participants comprised 65 students enrolled in the Theory of Literature course. The following table shows the data of the participants.

**Table 1**  
*Data of the Participants*

Class	Number of Participants	Gender	
		Male	Female
Class A	33	6	27
Class B	32	7	25
	65 (total)		

Regarding the age category, the participants were between 20 and 22 years old. In terms of English proficiency, participants were at the intermediate level. In this course, students were required to create essays related to Comparative Literature. Specifically, the researcher instructed students to compare English literature with Indonesian literature. The chosen novel from English literature was *The Old Man and the Sea*

(Hemingway, 2020) by Ernest Hemingway, which was first published in 1952 by Scribner Publications. The selection of "The Old Man and the Sea" was based on its manageable length, approximately 65 pages, facilitating students' reading. Additionally, the novel received a Pulitzer Prize. The novel was compared with an Indonesian novel that shared theme, characterization, plot, or setting similarities. For the Indonesian novel, the researcher used *Ikan-Ikan Hiu, Ido, and Homa* (Mangunwijaya, 2016), which was first published in 1983. Both Hemingway and Mangunwijaya explored stories of men and the sea.

The data collection techniques were carried out using a phenomenological model, encompassing (1) questionnaires related to the understanding of reading the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* and (2) interviews with students regarding the results of reading the novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. In this case, the researcher employed interviews with a natural model to ensure participants' comfort and familiarity (Ahmadi, 2021). The interviews utilized a combination of structured and semi-structured models. Structured interviews aimed to gather participants' personal data. In contrast, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain information about the contextual background of participants' experiences reading foreign literature works, specifically in English Literature. Additionally, an unstructured interview model was employed to elicit participants' more relaxed and reflective responses. This approach was conducted to prevent participants from feeling 'rigid' or 'interrogated' during the interview process. The research implementation phase spanned 4 weeks, with distinct weekly phases: screening, the reading process of English literature, interpretation, and reflection.

The data analysis techniques adapted Langdridge's approach (2007), involving data collection through questionnaires and naturally conducted interviews, data observation, data analysis, and feedback. In phenomenology, researchers employ the "intersubjectivity" technique to minimize subjectivity levels in both the researcher and participant (Craig, 2009; Sanders, 2019; Mutch, 2009) during data interpretation. Therefore, the level of research accuracy can be more objective. Furthermore, the researcher validated the data using Creswell & Creswell's (2020) criteria to ensure data validity and reliability, focusing on internal and external validity. Internal validity was confirmed through simultaneous reading, repeated checks, and thorough examination of theory, methods, and analysis. External validity was established through discussions of research results with practitioners who are experts in language learning, literature, and EFL.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. First Phase: The Screening Phase

The first phase involved the pre-task phase of reading English literature. In this phase, the researcher performed screening. During this phase, the researcher conducted screening activities, which included collecting data on students' names, gender, hobbies, and things they disliked. Students were asked to fill in the screening data through an application provided by the teacher. The purpose of data collection was to grasp the psychological context of students in their learning process. Understanding the psychological context of participants is crucial, serving as the initial step to delve deeper into potential psychological issues related to language learning, language skills, and language motivation. Identifying psychological difficulties in students' learning makes it easier for teachers to offer appropriate interventions (Ahmadi, 2019). Therefore, during the screening phase, students were encouraged to share information about their identity honestly, enabling teachers to recognize, understand, and take action if any learning-related problems were identified.

In conducting the questionnaires and interviews, the researcher followed the model Sinha & Back (2014) proposed, which involves 'warm, dialectical, and comfortable' interviews. This type of interview would create a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students. The researcher adopted this approach to create a comfortable environment for students to explore themselves, ensuring they did not perceive themselves as mere objects of the research. In this context, students were regarded as equals to the researcher, acknowledged as 'persons,' not objects. The researcher treated the participants as colleagues, fostering an environment where they felt comfortable sharing personal or 'deep' insights related to the research data. To identify the EFL skills in students, the initial phase involved exploring participants' experiences with English. Therefore, the researcher administered a questionnaire to participants addressing several key questions, namely:

1. Do you like English language materials/lessons?
2. What is your average score in English?
3. Have you ever taken or are currently taking English courses?

Based on question number 1, 85.9% of participants gave a neutral response to the English material/lessons, while 14.1% expressed their liking for them. No



participants reported disliking the material. Concerning question number 2, 45.1% of participants obtained an average score of a very good score in English, and 8.5% obtained a sufficient score. Meanwhile, 1.3% of participants received an insufficient score. Based on question number 3, it was revealed that 62% of participants answered that they had never attended or are taking English courses, while 38% answered that they had attended or are currently taking English courses. The data description is visually represented in the table below.

**Table 2**  
*Data of the Screening Phase*

Question	Answer
Do you like English language materials/lessons?	85,9 % Neutral 14,1% love
What is your average English score?	45,1% very good 45,1% good 8,5% sufficient 1,3% insufficient
Have you ever had/are currently taking English courses?	62% had never attended 38% had attended/ are currently taking

The data above showed that only 14.1% of participants were enthusiastic about English. This inclination could not be separated from the majors they chose. Participants opted for the Indonesian Language and Literature major, expressing a preference for Indonesian over English. Moreover, their proficiency in speaking English was not optimal. Consequently, they decided to enroll in the Indonesian Language and Literature Department. The main factor influencing students to prefer the Indonesian Language and Literature Department is their limited proficiency in English. Hence, they pursued studies within the Indonesian Language and Literature department. Apart from language competency, students also choose Indonesian Language and Literature due to their fondness for Indonesian lessons.

Based on Table 2, only 45.1% of Indonesian Language and Literature Department students indicated proficiency in English across all language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). This indicates that the English language proficiency of Indonesian Language and Literature Department students is still below average. Consequently, the enthusiasm for English among Indonesian Language and Literature Department students is lower.

#### 4.2. Second Phase: The Reading Process Phase of English Literature

The second phase involved an activity related to the reading process of English Literature. During this phase, students were tasked with reading Ernest Hemingway's novel, *The Old Man and the Sea*. The reading of English Literature aimed to explore literary works' intrinsic and extrinsic elements using the reading comprehension model. To assess and comprehend students' reading comprehension of the novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, the researcher conducted a screening through a questionnaire. This was carried out to gauge the depth of their understanding of English literature. The following data were obtained based on the questionnaire.

The students' use of digital technology aligns with Bezemer & Cowan's (2021) perspective that, in the present era, readers must possess the ability to use and comprehend digital technology. Similarly, EFL students leverage digital technology in comprehending English literature. This is crucial to facilitate the understanding of foreign literary works composed in English. Various views, such as Ramati & Pinchevski (2018) and Anastasiou & Gupta (2011), showed that machine translation is indeed the most effective and widely used by the public. In this matter, EFL students also chose a translation machine, including Google Translate, to comprehend literary works composed in English.

Questions relating to this second phase were as follows.

1. Do you have difficulty in reading English literature?
2. What strategies do you use in understanding English literature?

Based on question number 1, it was found that 66.2% of participants answered that they had difficulties reading the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* because it is written in English, and 33.8% of participants answered that they did not have difficulties understanding the novel. The following was one of the results of interviews with a participant relating to the difficulties experienced when reading the novel *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Researcher: What difficulties did you have while reading Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Old Man and the Sea*?

Participant (ISN): The problem in reading the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* is that many vocabularies were not understood.

The participant indicated having difficulty with English vocabulary in the novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. The difficulty in understanding the novel was because English's

literary vocabulary is more difficult than non-literary vocabulary. Reading English literature requires an ability to comprehend symbolic meanings embedded in the text. Furthermore, the student expressed a lack of interest in literature, as their primary focus was linguistics. This preference contributed to the difficulty in grasping the English language used in the novel.

Meanwhile, the following answers were obtained in question number 2 related to the participants' strategies in understanding English literature.

**Table 3**

*Data of the Reading Process Phase of English Literature*

Reading strategies	Percentage
Search for translated novels on Google	74%
Translating to Google Translate	7%
Skim reading	3,5%
Translating to the translators	2,5%
Translating to friends	2%
Using a <i>U-dictionary</i> translator application	2%
Looking for the novel in Indonesian; if not, then I will ask a friend or English teacher for help	2%
Ask a friend or teacher majoring in English	2%
Get PDF translations from class groups	2%
Other	2%

Based on the participants' responses, the most widely used strategy category was searching for translations of the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* on Google, accounting for approximately 74.5%. The second most utilized strategy was translating the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* into Google Translate, constituting about 7%. Skim reading, a reading strategy, secured the third position at around 4.5%. Other reading strategies accounted for less than 3%. These results indicate that the participants predominantly relied on English literature translated into Indonesian. This approach can indeed facilitate the comprehension of foreign literature in English for literary readers. The following answers were obtained based on the results of an interview with one of the participants.

Researcher: Why did you choose to search for the translated book on Google?

Participant (RS): I searched for translation on Google because it is more practical and easier, as the translation is in the form of a PDF file.

The interview results revealed that the participant sought an easier, more practical,

and quicker way to read the novel. Once he found the literary translation, he could compare it with the original novel in English. After getting the translated novel, the participant reread *The Old Man and the Sea* because the stage after reading English literature involved analyzing the literature. Therefore, the participant needed to comprehend the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* in English. There was minimal interest in using translators for this purpose. However, translators are currently the fastest and most accurate translation option, given their language translation expertise (Kushner, 2018). Translators can assist students in their reading strategies if they encounter difficulties in translation.

#### 4.4. Third Phase: The Interpretation Phase

The third phase is the interpretation phase. In this phase, the researcher delved into the students' novel reading results. The exploration was conducted organically through questionnaires and interviews with the students. During this phase, the researcher collected data concerning the students' interpretations of their readings that were documented as comparative essays on English and Indonesian literature. Subsequently, after completing the comparative essays, participants were asked to respond to specific questions.

1. Based on your reading strategy, did you have any difficulty writing an essay comparing the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* (English) with the Indonesian novel?

2. How much would your reading strategy score in writing comparative literary essays?

Based on the results of the questionnaire given to the participants, the following data were obtained.

**Table 4**

#### *Data of the Interpretation Phase*

Reading Strategy	Percentage
Based on your reading strategy, did you have any difficulty writing an essay comparing the novel <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i> (English) with the Indonesian novel?	91% experienced no difficulties 9% had difficulties
How much would your reading strategy score in writing comparative literary essays?	Those who chose the score of 90-100 were 0% Those who chose the score of 80-89 were

Reading Strategy	Percentage
	61%
	Those who chose the score of 70-79 were 33%
	Those who chose the score of 60-69 were 4%

For question number 1, it was found that 91% of participants answered they had no difficulties writing comparative essays because they already had strategies for reading English novels. Meanwhile, 9% of participants experienced difficulties in interpreting English literature. For question number 2, it was found that participants who chose the score of 90-100 were 0%, participants who chose the score of 80-89 were 61%, participants who chose the score of 70-79 were 33%, and the participants who chose the score of 60-69 were 4%. Based on the questionnaire results, it is evident that the participants have a better understanding of English literature based on their reading strategies, whether using translated novels, engaging in translation, or employing other strategies. Regarding the time category for collecting manuscripts from reading and interpreting literary works, all participants could complete their tasks according to the time determined by the researcher. They all managed to understand the entire contents of the novel, although initially, nine participants had difficulty understanding the entire contents of *The Old Man and the Sea* novel.

#### 4.5 Fourth Phase: The Reflection Phase

The fourth phase is the reflection phase. In this phase, students were prompted to reflect on their experience reading novels in English. Following the principles of phenomenological psychology, the exploration of reading reflection occurred organically, and students were asked to be honest in their exploration. This approach allowed the researcher to recognize and comprehend the extent to which students were proficient in reading English literature, specifically in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). During the reflection phase, the researcher conducted a questionnaire to the participants, which included the following questions.

1. Do you like learning to read English literary novels?
2. Did learning English literary novels motivate you to read other English literature?

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the following data were obtained: 71%



of participants answered “loved,” 19% answered “liked,” 7% answered “neutral,” and 3% answered “disliked.” The findings indicate that participants who answered “loved” ranked the highest based on the questionnaire results.

Providing students with an understanding that reading literature requires a high level of awareness and reflection encourages them to engage more with literature text. They should be able to experience reading literary works in English, even through translated novels. Reading with awareness and engaging in reflection motivates students to tackle English literature, which they might have found challenging initially. The difficulty in reading foreign literary works (in English) arises from a lack of understanding of the original language, leading to challenges in interpreting the text. However, when students translate creatively and employ various strategies, they gain a more profound and comprehensive understanding of the English literature they read. This marks the final learning phase and demonstrates that students experience a simultaneous improvement in their learning process when engaging with foreign literature (English) in the Literary Criticism course focusing on comparative literary material.

## 5. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the participants who dislike English language materials experience a negative impact on their English proficiency. This holds particularly true for literature learning within the Indonesian Language and Literature Department, where such sentiments have a significant effect. Participants with a disinterest in English exhibit sub-optimal abilities in understanding foreign literature, specifically English literature. The results of this study support the research conducted by Sok et al. (2021), which indicates that motivation plays a crucial role in learning to read in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). High motivation in participants will have an impact on higher learning outcomes. Conversely, low motivation to learn a language is linked to suboptimal learning outcomes. The results of this study also support Huang’s research (2021), which demonstrates a strong relationship between motivation and student learning outcomes. The higher the motivation in learning, the greater the learning outcomes achieved. In the context of phenomenological psychology within EFL research, the researcher found that motivation is crucial in learning to read foreign literature, specifically English literature. The main problem arises when participants are not motivated to read non-literature or English literature, leading to suboptimal development of their reading

comprehension skills. This lack of motivation results in participants encountering difficulties in understanding English literature more deeply. Since their first language is Indonesian, they face difficulties comprehending English literature as a second language. This aligns with Yu's (2008) perspective, which shows that the effectiveness of using the first language in reading is better than using the second language.

The results of this study imply that second language learners have their own strategies for understanding foreign literature (English) when they experience difficulties. In this context, participants predominantly rely on individual reading strategies. They attempt to understand the English literature they read through different approaches, such as translating with the help of a translator, using Google Translate, translating independently (self-translated in fragmentary terms), translating to peers, and translating to tutors. This indicates that participants who struggle with comprehending English literary texts have their own strategy for interpreting the text. Upon further exploration, the results of this study aim to demonstrate that a true understanding of literature should ideally come directly from the original language. This aligns with Scott's (2020) assertion that, in the context of phenomenology, a reader should be to understand the original language of the literature. As evidence, students who have their first language in Indonesian and their second language, English, will find it difficult to understand English literature. This is due to a lack of English language proficiency. This deficiency in English understanding has implications for students' grasp of English literary texts. However, Scott's view is not fully followed, as contemporary translations have achieved nearly the same quality as the original language. Consequently, literary readers must adeptly discern the translation within the language context and the translation of the literary context. Translating the literary context will require a higher understanding because literature uses aesthetically pleasing language with a high level of ambiguity.

From the context of the approach in EFL learning related to understanding foreign literature (written in English), this research strengthens and solidifies phenomenological psychology as a viable alternative. This aligns with and supports Falke's (2018) view, demonstrating that literary learning is indeed more appropriate if it uses phenomenology. The rationalization is that literature as a creative work cannot be separated from the author's experience. Through phenomenological study, readers are drawn and encouraged to immerse themselves in the object narrated by the author. The objective is to make the reader aware of a 'conscious' and reflective

reading. In this case, readers are expected to be able to read literary texts consciously with their awareness of shaping the world found from reading according to their perceptions and experiences.

Additionally, this study also strengthens the findings of research conducted by Chen (2015), who examined classical literature using a phenomenological approach. Chen's findings indicate that literature is more appropriately approached through phenomenology, given its roots in psychology, as phenomenology aims to explore human consciousness in understanding reality. This connection is integral to the literary context, which emerges from the author's creativity, imagery, and reality to produce aesthetically pleasing literary texts containing human consciousness and humanism elements. Hence, the argument is made that teaching students to read is more suitable through the lens of phenomenological psychology.

This study's in-depth results indicate that EFL students' difficulty reading comprehensive literary texts cannot be separated from their language understanding. If the student understands the language of the literary text, they will easily understand all of the contents of the literature. However, the understanding fails when the language is not fully understood. Therefore, difficulties in reading comprehension of literary texts can be explored optimally through phenomenological psychology. When confronted with difficulties in reading literary texts, students employ various strategies by translating them through self-translation, engaging professional translators, seeking translated literature, or utilizing machine translation. Youdale (2021) claims that the more optimal translation in literature is the translation that comes from literary translators and is collaborated with machine translators, resulting in more comprehensive translation outcomes.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the research results and discussion described by the researcher at the beginning, the researcher offers three recommendations. First, for students studying translation literature (English), there is a suggestion to enhance their abilities by increasing their motivation to learn. Regarding phenomenological psychology, students can deepen their understanding of literary reading translation through reflective awareness while reading literature. Literary translation in foreign languages (in this case, English) may not be as 'pure' as understanding literary texts in the original language. However, the simultaneous reading process will further improve

students' ability to read literary comprehension in English (as a second language). Second, recommendations for teachers. In this case, teachers should be capable of encouraging and motivating students to appreciate and learn English literature through the original text, allowing them to approach the 'originality' of the literary works they read. Additionally, teachers should actively introduce foreign literature to enhance students' literary reading abilities over time, ultimately eliminating the reading crisis among students. Third, in EFL learning, the translation of literary texts can indeed be translated using a literary translator, but students can also collaborate with a machine translator. This way, the translation results will improve, and students can understand all the literature contents accurately.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on what has been described above, the following conclusions were obtained. During the screening phase, it was observed that only a few participants expressed a liking for English, which is understandable considering their choice of the Indonesian Language and Literature Department. Specifically, a minimal 14.1% of participants indicated a preference for English, while the majority, 85.9%, remained neutral. In the reading process phase, when the participants had difficulties in understanding English literature, 74% resorted to searching for translated novels on Google, 7% used Google Translate the English novel, 3.5% adopted a skim-reading, 2.5% translated into the translator, and other reading strategies were employed by less than 3%. This finding indicates that participants employed diverse strategies to understand English literature. In the reflection phase, 71% of participants loved English literature, 19% said they liked it, 7% were neutral, and 3% disliked it.

The research related to EFL literary reading context through phenomenological psychology is limited to small classes conducted by researchers. Therefore, the research results the researcher found may differ from other researchers in the context of universality. However, some aspects can be considered crucial: EFL learning in the context of reading literature using phenomenological psychology brings students closer to the awareness and reflective understanding of the literary text they read. This uniqueness sometimes leads to differences in perceptions regarding the meaning and interpretation of literary works through the lens of phenomenological psychology.

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