Vocational High School Students' Metacognitive Reading Strategy and Volition in Language Learning: A Correlational Study

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Article information	
Abstract	Volition helps students who are in the reading process to achieve their objectives. It converts their motivation into actual actions they need to undergo to reach the predetermined goals. Such actions may include the use of strategies, whether to manage their cognition, emotions, or distractions, that may elevate their reading comprehension and ultimately the desired achievements in conducting such activity. Metacognitive reading strategies can be beneficial to assist students in regulating those aspects. Therefore, students' volition may predict the use of metacognitive reading strategies, as volition drives students to use strategies in general. However, previous studies rarely investigate the correlation between students' volition and the use of metacognitive reading strategies. Hence, this study aimed to explore vocational high school students' volition and the correlation between their volition and their metacognitive reading strategy use. A close-ended survey questionnaire was administered to 204 vocational high school students to collect quantitative data. The results showed that students had high volition for their reading and they applied metacognitive reading strategies. The correlational analysis showed a significantly moderate correlation between volition and metacognitive reading strategy use. The results of this

	research can be used to improve students' volition and reading strategy use in achieving their reading goals.
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1. Introduction

To learn a new language, learners need to develop basic skills including reading. Reading is a receptive skill which enables learners to acquire more information regarding a new language (Al Sobaihi, 2020). It is a very mindful and elaborate process (Singh, 2017), as learners need to actively think to decode and comprehend words and the message of a text (Rahman, 2020a, 2020b). This activity can be challenging (Andriani & Mbato, 2021), as learners not only need to translate new words from the target language but also understand the content of the passage at the same time. In facing these challenges, learners need to keep their motivation and volition high to complete their reading tasks.

To overcome reading challenges, learners need to maintain their motivation and volition. Damaianti (2017) argues that the stronger the will, the more intensive and focused learners will be in their reading. Many factors can influence learners' reading process and distract them from their reading goals, but their volition can help them control their reading process to eventually achieve their goals (Mbato, 2013). Birgili et al. (2019) also mention that learners' volition and reading achievement are positively related. Learners first need a strong will and intention to undergo the reading activity, and then they can use their volition to convert them into actual actions (Hikkerova et al., 2016). In the process, learners may employ strategies to help them overcome their challenges in comprehending their reading, including metacognitive reading strategies.

When learners have trouble reading, such as when they are trying to understand a passage, metacognitive reading strategies can help them. Previous studies have revealed learners' use of metacognitive reading strategies to help their reading process (Andriani & Mbato, 2021; Daguay-James & Bulusan, 2020; Rahman, 2020a). The three stages of metacognitive reading strategies—planning, monitoring, and evaluation—can help learners regulate their emotion and cognition during reading so they can achieve their reading goals (Mbato, 2013). Metacognitive reading strategies are therefore aligned with volition, which leads

learners to put effort into achieving their goals. Although previous studies have investigated learners' volition in second language learning (Birgili et al., 2019; Damaianti, 2017; Ke Lomi & Mbato, 2019), to the best of the researcher's knowledge, studies rarely investigate the relationship between learners' volition and their metacognitive reading strategy use to control their cognition in learning to achieve their goals. Therefore, this study aimed to reveal vocational high school students' volition in their reading and whether their volition affected their metacognitive reading strategy use. The research questions for this study were: "What is students' volition in their reading activities?" and "What is the relationship between students' volition in reading and their metacognitive reading strategy use?" This study can be beneficial for students to maintain their volition in regulating their reading process and for their teachers to promote various metacognitive reading strategies to assist students' learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Volition and Its Relation to Reading

Reading is one of the fundamental language skills. It is a receptive skill, along with listening (Al Sobaihi, 2020; Zare-ee, 2007). Learners do not actively produce anything when they use their receptive skills, but they actively think during the reading process (Tabibian & Heidari-Shahreza, 2016). While reading, a complex process happens as learners try to decode the words and infer meaning from the text using their perception, language knowledge, and cognition (Aebersold & Field, 1997). Reading skills are challenging to acquire because comprehending a passage requires focus and attention (Arrington et al., 2014; Yildiz & Çetinkaya, 2017). For example, academic reading can be a difficult type of reading, as it requires very mindful and multidimensional process of thoughts to decipher and comprehend the content (Sohail, 2015). In learning a new language, learners will need to master language skills, including reading. By mastering reading skills, they have a better chance of improving their language learning process. As reading can be a challenging activity, learners may feel discouraged to

pursue it. Therefore, learners need to have good control of their determination to complete the activity.

To regulate their motivation, learners need to have high volition. Their volition helps them control their motivation and action (Birgili et al., 2019; Chow, 2009; Hikkerova et al., 2016). When reading, learners who have high volition are more likely to achieve their reading goals. This is because they are focused on their end goals, and thus are more likely to take the necessary actions to achieve them (Haggard & Lau, 2013). Though there are some debates on whether volition is a conscious or unconscious act (Gligorov, 2017; Haggard & Lau, 2013), learners' volition makes them willing to take those actions to overcome challenges, such as anxiety and distractions (Ke Lomi & Mbato, 2019; Trang et al., 2012). Though they are similar, it is important to note that volition is slightly different from motivation. While motivation gives the will and intention to do something, volition is the drive that leads that intention into actual actions to achieve something (Achtziger & Gollwitzer, 2018; Mbato, 2013). Improving learners' motivation is beneficial as it may help improving their reading skills (Melekoğlu & Wilkerson, 2013), but knowing learners' volition allows adjustments in practices, such as instructions or strategies (Chapman, 1971; Keller et al., 2020).

To control learners' volition in reading, learners can apply strategies to help their focus and reduce obstacles. They may not be able to control their volition at first, but they can practice them to gradually increase it (Damaianti, 2017). Learners may start by asking themselves several questions, such as whether they can finish the task, whether they want to do it, and why they need to do it (Broussard & Garrison, 2004). They will gradually increase their determination to make a fruitful achievement in reading and apply strategies. Some volitional strategies were developed by Tseng et al. (2006) to control learners' own actions during reading, including their devotion, satiation, feeling, surrounding, and metacognition. Corno and Kanfer (1993) divide the use of volitional strategies into two types: covert and over strategies. Overt strategies are strategies learners apply

to manage their learning experience, while covert strategies control their motivation, emotion, and metacognition.

2.2 Metacognitive Reading Strategies: Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation

As mentioned before, volition controls metacognition. As volition converts learners' motivation into actions, learners will work towards the goals of their task. One way to assist learners to achieve their language learning goals is to apply reading strategies. Those strategies are the chosen means to help their learning (Rahman, 2020a; Roebers, 2017). Learners' volition can be the indicator of their use of learning strategies, such as cognitive, social, and metacognitive strategies (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012). Their volition helps them be aware of their knowledge and use metacognitive monitoring to be engaged in the tasks and continue on (Teng & Zhang, 2018). Previous studies also suggest that volition can motivate learners to utilize strategies such as cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Teng & Zhang, 2018). In fact, the use of metacognitive strategies in reading is especially beneficial, as they allow learners to prepare before an activity, monitor their understanding, evaluate their reading, and ultimately improve their language learning process.

Metacognitive reading strategies can help regulate learners' metacognition during the reading process (Andriani & Mbato, 2021). There are three stages of metacognitive strategies, including the planning, monitoring, and evaluation stages (Andriani & Mbato, 2021; Cao & Lin, 2020; Mbato, 2013). In the planning stage, learners prepare to condition themselves to do the task (Thuy, 2020). In the monitoring stage, they apply strategies to comprehend the language and the content of text. There are three categories in this stage, including support, global, and problem-solving categories (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). The evaluation stage helps learners evaluate their achievements and understanding in reading and their strategy use (Chamot et al., 1999; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2012). By implementing those strategies, learners can manage their reading

process and improve their reading skills (Kasim & Darus, 2020; Saengpakdeejit & Intaraprasert, 2014). Through their volition, learners can have the drive to choose their reading strategies, which leads to reading goal attainments (Ketonen et al., 2018). As such, learners' volition can help them evaluate their reading process, select the feasible metacognitive reading strategies, and actually implement those strategies during reading to achieve their goals.

2.3 Metacognitive Reading Strategies: Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Previous studies have revealed that learners' volition may influence their choices of reading strategies for better learning achievements. Volitional learners have the drive to better their learning. Birgili et al. (2019) point out that learners with high volition have higher academic achievements. To achieve their goals, learners use learning strategies, including in reading activities. Taheri et al. (2020) have reported that the students in their study who used reading strategies showed improvements in their learning and their strategy use in learning could be a form of volitional control. It could be stated that previous studies have investigated the relationship between volition and the use of learning strategies.

Sardegna et al. (2018) found that the students in their study used their volition to use strategies in learning English pronunciation. To measure the students' volition in using learning strategies, Keller et al. (2020) developed a volitional scale for students' learning, especially during online learning. In case of the use of metacognitive strategies, some studies argue that volition can influence students' use of metacognitive strategies during learning (Teng & Zhang, 2018). Teng and Zhang (2018) found that the motivation regulation and volition led to the use of cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies, and Damaianti (2017) discovered that the use of volition in students' reading tasks led to metacognitive reading strategy use and the students could effectively improve their motivation in reading. Though previous studies have revealed the relationship between volition and the use of metacognitive strategies, the number of existing studies regarding

the relationship between volition and metacognitive reading strategy use is still lacking. Therefore, this study intended to uncover the relationship between students' volition and their use of metacognitive reading strategies.

3. Methodology

This study used a survey to gather students' evaluation of their volition and metacognitive reading strategy use, and quantitative data collected with the survey questionnaire are presented in numeric data (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2012).

3.1 Research Participants

The 204 participants of this study were students at a private vocational high school in Surakarta, Indonesia. The students were selected using convenient sampling (Ary et al., 2010) as the number of participants who were able to participate in this research was limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The demographic information of the students is presented in Table 1. The students were from grade X and XII, and as all of the participants were students from one study program whose students were all male, there was no female student who took part in this study.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Participants

Category	Detail	Number	Percentage
Grade	X	163	79.90%
	XII	41	20.10%
Gender	Male	204	100.00%
Age (years)	>16	2	0.98%
	16-17	162	79.41%
	18-19	40	19.61%

3.2 Research Instrument

To gather data, the researcher used two questionnaires. Both questionnaires were in Bahasa Indonesia and English to allow better understanding of the questions. The first questionnaire was used to determine the students' volition. It was based on the studies by Keller et al. (2020) and Mbato (2013). There were 13 items in the questionnaire arranged in a five-point rating scale. The questionnaire items were designed to elicit data regarding the students' goals, their preparation in reading, their drive to maintain their reading activity and avoid distraction, and their determination in dealing with obstacles. The second questionnaire was used to explore the students' metacognitive reading strategy use. It was developed based on the studies undertaken by Andriani and Mbato (2021) and Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002). There were 16 items arranged in a five-point rating scale in the second questionnaire, including questionnaire items regarding planning, monitoring, and evaluation strategies.

3.3 Data Gathering and Analysis Procedure

To gather the data, the participants were asked to fill out both questionnaires through Google Form. The data gathering process was conducted in February 2022 during the English language class time. To assist the students, the researcher and the teachers of the class were on standby in case there were any questions from the students. The students were given 45 minutes to fill out the questionnaires, and most spent less time than allotted. The results from both questionnaires were then accumulated based on two categories: volition and strategy use. The researcher then used descriptive statistics to calculate the mean scores and standard deviation for volition and metacognitive strategy use. According to Astriningsih and Mbato (2019), the mean scores of a five-point rating scale questionnaire can be categorized into low (1.00-2.33), moderate (2.34-3.67), and high (3.68-5.00). The researcher then conducted correlational analysis using a statistical software to figure out the correlation between students' volition and their metacognitive reading strategy use. According to Schober et al. (2018), there are five interpretations of Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) results, including

negligible (.00-.10), weak (.10-.39), moderate (.40-.69), strong (.70-.89), and very strong (.90-1.00).

4. Findings

This research investigated students' volition in their reading activities and their metacognitive reading strategy use. This section presents the findings from the quantitative data gathered with the two survey questionnaires.

4.1 Students' Volition during their Reading Activities

The findings regarding the students' volition are presented in Table 2. The results showed that the questionnaire item with the highest mean score was the item on the students' commitment to achieve the goals in their reading process ($M = 4.45$; $SD = 0.70$). On the other hand, the item with the lowest mean score was the item on the impact of their surroundings ($M = 3.47$; $SD = 0.95$).

Table 2

Vocational High School Students' Responses on their Volition

	Statements	M	SD
	Overall Mean Score = 4.00		
1	I have strong commitment to achieve the goals in this class/reading process.	4.45	0.70
2	I set up goals for my reading.	3.51	0.83
3	Once I have made my goals in life, I try to achieve them.	4.31	0.71
4	I am able to prepare a study plan that lists concrete tasks.	3.84	0.77
5	I monitor my performance in order to achieve my reading goals.	3.92	0.82
6	When reading, I direct all my attention to what I am reading.	3.97	0.83

	Statements	M	SD
7	I am the type of person that is persistent in achieving my goals.	3.67	0.80
8	I am prepared to work hard to achieve my goals no matter what my other classes require.	4.29	0.71
9	I am the type of person that is able to protect my goals from distractions.	3.59	0.80
10	I am confident that I could overcome obstacles while doing my work.	4.00	0.80
11	I can handle negative peer pressure in relation to my goals.	3.75	0.82
12	My surroundings will not prevent me from achieving my goals.	3.47	0.95
13	Overall, I am the type of person that will keep trying until I achieve my goals	3.62	0.82

In addition, the students perceived that they had high volition in general ($M = 4.00$), suggesting a strong general determination in their academic pursuits. They perceived high volition regarding their commitment to achieve reading goals ($M = 4.45$; $SD = 0.70$), their intention to achieve general goals in life ($M = 4.31$; $SD = 0.71$), and their drive to work hard to achieve their goals ($M = 4.29$; $SD. = 0.71$). To achieve such goals, the students were determined to keep their reading process on track. They were sure they could overcome obstacles ($M = 4.0$; $SD = 0.80$), monitor their performance ($M = 3.92$; $SD = 0.82$), and focus on their tasks ($M = 3.97$; $SD = 0.83$). These findings indicated the students' volition especially during the process of reading. To make themselves ready, the students also prepared concrete reading plans to direct their learning ($M = 3.84$; $SD = 0.77$). Also, the students tried to manage negative peer pressure ($M = 3.75$; $SD = 0.82$), which suggests the negative influence of their peers may impact their volition.

In contrast to the students' views on their goals to keep their volition, the mean score for their goal-setting activity was at a moderate level ($M = 3.51$; $SD = 0.83$). Moreover, their drive to keep trying to achieve goals and their persistence to achieve the goals were also at a moderate level ($M = 3.62$; $SD = 0.82$ and $M = 3.67$; $SD = 0.80$, respectively). These findings reflected the students' struggle in maintaining their volition to achieve goals, even though they had the commitment to their goals. Furthermore, outside influences could affect their volition, such as distractions and their surroundings.

In brief, the vocational high school students who participated in this study had relatively high volition. They were driven by their goals, especially in their reading process. To achieve their goals, they could prepare reading plans and monitor their reading process. They also made the effort to ignore the peer pressure they often encountered during the reading process. In addition, their persistence in achieving goals and the influences of their surroundings could sometimes negatively impact their volition.

4.2 The Correlation Between Students' Volition and their Metacognitive Reading Strategy Use

Metacognitive reading strategies are some of the reading strategies that learners can use to assist their reading activities. In this study, to determine the correlation between the students' volition and their metacognitive reading strategy use, the researcher first calculated the scores of students' metacognitive reading strategy use. As shown in Table 3, some differences can be seen, especially the strategies the students used less. The students used metacognitive reading strategies to a high degree in general ($M = 3.89$). However, there were differences in their planning, monitoring, and evaluation reading strategy use, as monitoring strategies were used the most ($M = 3.95$), followed by evaluation ($M = 3.87$) and planning strategies ($M = 3.85$).

Table 3

Vocational High School Students' Metacognitive Strategy Use

	Statements	M	SD
	Overall Mean Score = 3.89		
	Planning Strategies Mean = 3.85		
1	I set reading outcomes before I start reading.	3.69	0.89
2	I skim through the passage and check if the content is suitable with my topic domain.	3.98	0.79
3	I connect my prior knowledge to the topic of my reading.	3.99	0.73
4	I try to make predictions of what the passage will be about.	3.75	0.83
	Monitoring Strategies Mean = 3.95		
5	While reading, I regularly pause and check whether the text makes sense to me.	4.10	0.89
6	I visualize the information by imagining or drawing things.	3.98	0.98
7	I use features (tables, charts, section titles, etc.) or typographical aids (italics, bold, different word colors, etc.) available in the text to assist my reading activity.	3.44	1.04
8	I try to maintain my focus during reading.	4.07	0.76
9	I try to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words by contextualizing them (using familiar words, pictures, other sentences, etc.).	4.03	0.83
10	I use reference materials (dictionary, textbook, etc.) to resolve conflicting information and comprehension problems.	4.07	0.84
	Evaluation Strategies Mean = 3.87		
11	I summarize or paraphrase (written or mentally) the key information.	3.46	0.94
12	After reading, I check if my predictions are true.	4.00	0.82
13	I assess my understanding by reflecting and critically evaluating the information I got.	3.64	0.83
14	If I do not understand the passage enough, I re-read the passage for better understanding.	4.21	0.80

	Statements	M	SD
15	I judge if my strategies work or if there are other strategies that may work better.	3.87	0.75
16	I check whether I have accomplished my reading objectives.	4.03	0.73

As presented in Table 3, though the students had varying scores in planning, monitoring, and evaluation strategies, they used those strategies to a high degree (M = 3.89). The strategy that was used the most based on the questionnaire results was rereading (M = 4.21; SD = 0.80), which was an evaluation strategy, while the strategy which the students used least often was using text typographical aids and features (M = 3.44; SD = 1.04) which was a monitoring strategy. The students used most metacognitive reading strategies to a high degree and the rest of the strategies were still used, only less often. The strategies that were used moderately included reflecting and critically assessing the information (M = 3.64; SD = 0.83), summarizing or paraphrasing (M = 3.64; SD = 0.94), and using text features and typographical aids (M = 3.44; SD = 1.04). These mean scores were relatively high for the moderate degree range. These results indicated that the students were aware of the available strategies, and they actively used those strategies during the reading process.

After investigating and presenting the students' volition and metacognitive reading strategy use, the researcher calculated the correlation between those variables. The correlation results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Correlation Between Vocational High School Students' Volition and Metacognitive Reading Strategy Use

		Volition	Metacognitive Reading Strategies
Volition	Pearson correlation (r)	1	.635*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00
	N	204	204
Metacognitive Reading Strategies	Pearson correlation (r)	.635*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	
	N	204	204

Note: *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As presented in Table 4, the Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the correlation between the students' volition and metacognitive reading strategy use. The results show a moderate correlation coefficient a moderate correlation coefficient (r = .635, N = 204) between students' volition and metacognitive reading strategy use, which was statistically significant at the .05 level (p-value = .00). This indicates a substantial relationship between students' volition and their metacognitive reading strategy use. However, the correlation does not indicate a causal relationship, but rather a significant relationship between these two educational constructs.

When examining students' volition and metacognitive reading strategies, it was found that students reported both attributes to a high degree. Nevertheless, the correlation, although statistically significant, was only moderately strong. This suggests that students with high levels of volition tend to use metacognitive strategies more frequently although the differences in strategy use are not predicted by volition alone.

5. Discussion

This study investigated vocational high school students' volition and metacognitive reading strategy use. The findings of the study are discussed as follows.

5.1 Vocational High School Students' Volition

The results of this study indicated that the students had a high volition score (Mean = 4.00). This was in line with the results of Damaianti (2017) and Lomi and Mbato (2019) who found that the students in their studies had high volition in their reading process. In particular, the students' drive to achieve reading goals was their highest priority. Likewise, Haggard and Lau (2013) and Lomi and Mbato (2019) reported that determination to achieve the set goals is important for students to keep them going. Other studies also found that students' high volition increased their learning achievements (Birgili et al., 2019; Pekrun & Stephens, 2012; Taheri et al., 2020).

In addition to their determination to achieve goals, the students who participated in this study agreed that they took actual actions to maintain their reading activity by making plans with actual tasks, trying to overcome obstacles, monitoring their performances, focusing on their tasks, and managing negative peer pressure. Such results were consistent with the findings reported by Lomi and Mbato (2019) and Teng and Zhang (2018) that students with a high level of volition would take concrete action to control their reading.

In some cases, however, the students had slight contradictions regarding their volition. Firstly, when it came to reading goals, though the students were determined to achieve the goals they had set, the findings suggested that their volition regarding goal setting was not at a high level. On the contrary, Achtziger and Gollwitzer (2018), Keller et al. (2020), and Mbato (2013) found that student's volition led them to set their reading goals and keep them. As regards distractions, despite their determination to maintain their reading activities, the students faced

difficulties in avoiding distractions from their surroundings. The questionnaire results showed that the students did not have a high level of perception of their own ability to protect their goals from distractions and they perceived that their surroundings affected their goals. These results were contradictory to the findings reported by Lomi and Mbato (2019) and Mbato (2013) who found that students also kept their volition by managing the distractions around them. This may indicate that the students might be able to regulate themselves, but they still struggled to control the impact of their surroundings. Their ignorance of distractions may have been caused by a lack of appropriate strategies to specifically avoid distractions, negative emotions or feelings that had accumulated during the task, or an inconducive reading environment. Therefore, research is needed to future explore reasons underlying language learners' challenges in avoiding distractions.

5.2 The Correlation Between Vocational High School Students' Volition and Metacognitive Reading Strategy Use

To determine the correlation between students' volition and their metacognitive reading strategy use, the researcher first investigated the students' use of metacognitive reading strategies. It was found that students had a high level of metacognitive reading strategy use, thus indicating that they were aware of strategies that they could possibly utilize to aid their reading process and that they actually made use of them. Such findings were in congruence with the findings reported by previous studies conducted by Andriani and Mbato (2021), Rahman (2020b), and Thuy (2020), to name just a few. Moreover, it was found in this study that monitoring strategies were used most often by the students. The high use of monitoring strategies was consistent with the findings of a study undertaken by Kazi and Moghal (2020) who also found that the students used more monitoring strategies than other strategies. The second most frequently used strategy was evaluation, which was followed by planning strategies. However, the results contradicted the results of the study carried out by Andriani and Mbato (2021) which showed that students used planning strategies the most. Besides this, it

was found that the students used the rereading strategy more than other evaluation strategies. One plausible explanation is that rereading was used by the students when they encountered challenges or difficulties in reading because can be considered a strategy that can help solve problems (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). On the other hand, the strategy that was used the least was using text features and typographical aids, which was one of the monitoring strategies. Such a finding was inconsistent with the finding reported by Thuy (2020) who found that this strategy was among the most commonly used strategies for the study participants.

In addition, it was found that there was a relationship between volition and metacognitive ready strategy use with statistical significance at a moderate level. In other words, the students had high volition and high metacognitive reading strategy use, but their high volition did not necessarily translate to high metacognitive reading strategy use. However, it could still be assumed that volition had an influence on students' metacognitive reading strategy use to a certain extent, as similarly reported by Teng and Zhang (2018).

6. Conclusion

This research aimed to explore vocational high school students' volition and determine the correlation between their volition and metacognitive reading strategies. It was found that the students had a high level of volition, especially their determination to take action to achieve their goals. However, the outside challenges, especially surroundings and distractions, negatively impacted their volition. Regarding the students' metacognitive reading strategy use, the findings revealed that the students mostly used metacognitive reading strategy at a high level. However, their volition was moderately correlated with metacognitive reading strategy use. Thus, future research should be conducted to further investigate underlying reasons why the high level of volition and a high level of metacognitive reading strategy use do not necessarily translate to a strong correlation between them. The implication of this study is that teachers need to find ways to promote

volition and equip students with various metacognitive reading strategies to help them accomplish their reading goals.

7. About the Author

Erina Andriani is an English Education Magister Program graduate who has continued on as an independent researcher. Her areas of interest include linguistics, language education, and literature.

8. Acknowledgement

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