INVESTIGATING STUDENTS’ STRATEGIES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR STUDENTS’ SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: The main objective of this paper is to investigate the learning strategies and to discuss those strategies in relation to different performances among different classrooms. The subjects of this current research were university students. The number of respondents was 110 students (a regular class) taken randomly from 250 students (at least 5 class). The study used quantitative data. The quantitative data was collected by using a questionnaire of SILL. Findings from the SILL questionnaire show that both female students in upper class and lower class used social strategies more often compared to cognitive, affective, memory, metacognitive, and compensational strategies. Male students also used similar strategy but just in lower class. In addition, at least there are little connection in language learning strategies student used on their performance in English. These findings significantly give beneficial inputs to the process of English language teaching in order to create effective teaching and classroom interaction. It also provides significant contribution to the study on language and gender in communication in a setting of education and language teaching.

Keywords: Language learning strategies, lower upper class, speaking performance

INTRODUCTION
Over the years many researchers have tried to review the results of research or make experiments in class about how English teaching should be carried out in countries where English is used as a foreign language. Some of the results of these studies provide evidence of the need for innovations in terms of how English learning becomes interesting.

This is considered important given that motivating students to the spirit of learning English is not always easy. Efforts to obtain learning outcomes with an efficient and effective process become its own challenges. This is compounded if the duration of learning English is too short so as to limit classroom activities and the interaction of teachers and students in exploring learning to be as interesting as possible and get maximum benefit.

Many researchers try to justify a number of things including how the learning strategy also has an influence on the learning process of English as a foreign language. Mapping learning strategies will help students find their ways to learn more efficiently and effectively (Sugeng, 2004). The claim was made after he examined his findings which illustrate the learning characteristics of adult learners who are different at a certain age level. He further stated these findings as a good recommendation to help instructors or instructors in designing learning designs. A similar study that I did earlier also investigated learning strategies for English as a foreign language but took a different view by differentiating learning strategies between female and male students where each student was categorized as a low performance learner. This study found similarities and differences between them although not too significant because there were not too many respondents involved (Sumarni: 2019). The equation that I found is that the perspective of both male and female students in learning foreign languages is more often the use of social strategy with a variety of strategies that are in it. At least the research described the mental atmosphere of students who turned out to be dominant using certain learning strategies among the six other language learning strategies.

This research became interesting after I found a variety of different results in each of these similar studies. Farther back, Huang (2016) found that English learning is contextual in nature, there is a tendency to use certain learning strategies to target passing exams but it is not permanent and this does not support long-term learning targets. Shakarami, A., Hajhashemi, K. & Caltabiano, N.J. (2017) in their study of six learning strategies investigated by the Net-Generets, found compensation learning strategies as a choice of foreign language learning strategies by students. The urgency of these studies is to make the learning process run efficiently and effectively to achieve maximum learning outcomes. Even so the researchers’ suggestion for the next learning strategy research is not only mapping learning strategies but also looking for other factors that influence the selection of learning strategies.
There are some learning strategies that can be applied by the students in learning. Oxford (1990) proposes two major groups of learning strategies: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies consist of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. Meanwhile, indirect strategies are classified into metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Rubin (1981) identified three kinds of strategies, which contribute directly or indirectly to language learning: learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies. O’Malley et al (1985) divided LLS into three main categories: metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. In Oxford (1990) a distinction is made between direct and indirect strategies: Direct strategies require mental processing of the target language. There are three main groups of direct strategies: memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. Each group processes the language differently and for different purposes. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, support and manage language learning often without involving the target language directly. There are three groups of indirect strategies: metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Oxford’s classification has been selected for this study.

Language learning strategies is the several mental processes that involve students to aware with their classroom action. Over the years, many experts tried to construct a definition of that. Enhancing theirs progress in building up foreign language is supported by some approaches or technique students use in learning (Oxford, 1990). In learning new language and to become satisfying it, learners need mental steps and movement (Wenden, 1991). Psychology side is crucial for learner to accompany them to learn, memorize and remember something new (Richard & Platt, 1992). Cook (2001) said that strategy in learning a foreign language is a choice by learners to influence learning. Finally, Griffiths (2007) also say that to have a self-regulation in language learning students tend to be in an activity consciously chosen by learners. Beside that in connecting types of strategy use and any achievement is something more interesting by the researcher. Ahmad Wael, ect (2018) in his research, found that memory strategy as a learning strategy is most often used by students where the justification is done by investigating it against activities speaking, things that I haven't done in my previous studies. That tells us that speaking is important to be investigated in what perception students say for what strategies they use.

Speaking ability is one of the goals in language learning. Although it is difficult to learn the ability to speak a foreign language, a number of values from this learning achievement need to be obtained by the students, especially those who are at a school or university level. However, the real meaning of language learning is the ability to use the language itself, especially speaking. Communication is important to interpret the message referred to in an incident (Argawati: 2014)

Throughout the development of foreign language learning lately, foreign language learners no longer view English language knowledge as a separate part of their language skills and material. They tend to assume that the achievement of foreign language learning is not only about grammar but how they are able to speak the language (Malihah, 2010, p. 86).

From the overall results of the existing research, especially for speaking performance, this research is still considered necessary to gain an in-depth understanding of how foreign language learning strategies are known to then examine their relation to that. The current study was carried out not only about strategies in language learning but also by adding a review of gender differences upper and lower class of speaking performance, which were then elaborated in a number of questions, including (1) the difference in the achievement of speaking between male and female students, and (2) the description of the language learning strategy used, is it same between male and female students related with their speaking performance.

METHOD

This study was a descriptive research since its purpose was to describe the Indonesian students’ learning strategies in learning speaking English. Descriptive research is helpful for examining a variety of educational problems and issue (Gay, 2009, p. 275). In this research, the population was students of Mulawarman university. Meanwhile, the sample of the research was 110 students. The research instruments were questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire used in this research was a modified version of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990, 293-300) consisting of 21 items. After administering the questionnaire to the students, interview was conducted to support and gain the data. The results of interview would strengthen the data gained through questionnaire. The interview used open ended question to gain information about the speaking strategies used by the students. The data, strategy that has the highest score, was indicated as a strategy mostly used by a student. Then, the results were analyzed by using simple scaling percentage to see the strategy which was mostly used by all the students. After classifying, the
data was interpreted to get general conclusion. The strategy that has the highest score was indicated as a strategy mostly used by the students.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**The Overall Use of Language Learning Strategies**

| Table 1. The mean score of speaking achievement for upper and lower class |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Number of students      | Category achievement | Mean speaking score |
|                         |                  | Female | Male  |
| 42 students             | Upper class      | 76.3   | 76.8  |
| 68 students             | Lower class      | 76.5   | 65.0  |

From the data above, it can be seen the differences in the acquisition of male and female learners, where female learners get higher scores in the "good" category when compared with male learners who only receive an "average" score.

**Table 2. Summary of strategy use showing the most frequency used by female/male in upper class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mean f</th>
<th>Mean M</th>
<th>Strategy use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive strategies</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation strategies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-cognitive strategies</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective strategies</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social strategies</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows in average over all female and male in upper class of EFL students' responses to language learning strategies. Both females and males used metacognitive, compensation, social, memory, cognitive, and affective strategies respectively. For female, the mean of the most frequently used strategy, social strategy is 3.3 and the mean of the least frequency used strategy is cognitive strategy, 2.8. For Male the mean of the most frequently used strategy, memory strategy is 3.4 and the mean of the least frequency used strategy is affective strategy, 2.8.

**Table 3. Summary of strategy use showing the most frequency used by female/male in lower class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mean f</th>
<th>Mean M</th>
<th>Strategy use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive strategies</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation strategies</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-cognitive strategies</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective strategies</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social strategies</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Medium; sometime used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows in average over all female and male in lower class of EFL students' responses to language learning strategies. For female, the mean of the most frequently used social strategy, 3.4 and the mean of the least frequency used strategy, memory strategy is 2.5. For Male the mean of the most frequently used strategy, social strategy is 2.7 and the mean of the least frequency used strategy is affective strategy, 2.1.

**Comparison in Upper and Lower Class of a Specific Tendency Use of Language Learning Strategy**

From the interpretation of a number of data presented in several tables above shows a tendency to use social strategy as a choice of learning strategies that are of interest to female learners although this also occurs in male pursuers in the lower class. With the same learning outcomes in speaking both in the upper class and in the lower class in female students (mean speaking score for both classes = 76) tend to use social strategy in learning foreign languages. In male students in the lower class with lower learning achievement than female students (mean speaking score = 65) also use social strategy as a choice of learning strategies that are desirable.
where this does not happen to male students in the upper class with higher learning speaking achievement (mean speaking score = 76.8) tend to use memory strategies as the most preferred learning strategy choice.

For comparison learning strategies that are least desirable in male students in the upper and lower classes are equally not likely to use affective strategies as learning choices (in upper class Mean male = 2.8; in lower class Mean male = 2.1) although the tendency is not often using this learning strategy is for students in the lower class.

**DISCUSSION**

This tendency occurs in the results of the present study, namely the use of the most frequent foreign language learning strategies in social strategies in female students both in the upper class and lower class. This also happened to male students in the lower class where the results of this study showed a different study strategy specialization in male students in the upper class. This answers the limitations of my previous research that must be extended - if the number of respondents is added then the results can be the same - which at that time found one type of lower class, both male and female learners in the class, both using social strategy as the choice of learning strategy most often used (Sumarni: 2019).

Social strategy in foreign language learning strategies presents the steps of learning, among others, Asking questions to get verification, Asking for clarification, Asking for help in doing a language task, Cooperating with others, talking with a native-speaking conversation partner, empathizing with others, exploring cultural and social norms.

On the other hand, affective strategies are still the least desirable strategy which is seen from the data presented to male students both in the upper class and in the lower class. This is in line with previous research (Sumarni: 2019) in a lower class in English learning where the similar thing is found. It seems like they are not comfortable to express themselves in English such as writing in the diary, or talk to someone about the failure. This proves that there are learning strategies that support and do not support the learning felt by students. Of course knowing this will help us design learning designs that are well received by students.

Previous studies have been conducted to find out strategies in learning. In Turkey, Ipek and Yesilbursa (2017) found social strategy as the strategy most often used by students when learning English as a foreign language. They justified this after researching successful and unsuccessful learners about their achievements and connecting them with foreign language learning strategies. A study by Prabawa (2016) examines how compensation strategy plays a role in a speaking learning process. The result shows that to achieve maximum results in speaking, there were three strategies used by students in completing a series of tasks in speaking, namely cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy and compensation strategy. In speaking, compensation strategy was mostly used by the students. The results of this study recommend that it is important to know the strategies used by students so that teachers can help students find ways how they can learn comfortably.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The conclusion of this study reveals the use of different learning strategies when groupings are carried out, for example in this study which divides respondents into groups of students who have good speaking abilities and those who are not good. In the end this study provides several things to be a reference for further research, including recommendations to increase the number of male students who have good grades and also connect the results with language anxiety. This is considered important because this research takes the speaking variable which in reality contains a high tendency for anxiety in learning.

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