LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY
A STUDENT OF SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 1 SURAKARTA
TO MASTER SPEAKING SKILL (A CASE STUDY)

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Abstract

The research studies learning strategies used by S in mastering English speaking skill. The type of the research is a case study which aims to describe S's learning strategies. The method of collecting the data is interview, observation, and documentation. The data are taken from the subject of the research in the form of field notes, interview, and document.The result of the research shows that S uses three kinds of learning strategies: metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective.Her Metacognitive strategies cover advance organizer, directive attention, selective attention, self-management and functional planning. While her cognitive strategies involve repetition, resourcing, note-taking, imagery, and elaboration. The last, the subject uses both of types of socio-affective strategies. They are cooperation and question for clarification. Most of learning strategies employed by S are full of consciousness. As a Junior High School student, she likes applying these strategies in which on that occasion English is a foreign language that needs full concentration and awareness.

Key word: *A Case Study, Metacognitive, Cognitive, Social-affective.*

Introduction

In learning English, people need a strategy in order to master it well. Everyone has a different style to acquire the four language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each aspect might be studied with different strategy. At this research, the writer focuses on learning strategies to master speaking skill.

Speaking, one of the language skills is not an easy skill to master. Some reasons may account for it. They are anxiety, nervousness, stress, clumsy tounge etc. To avoid the difficulties, people should know what learning strategies are suitable to master the skill. Cohen (1998:4) defines learning strategies as learning process which are consciously selected by the learner.

In the junior high school, SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surakarta, she gets an opportunity to learn English formally for the first time. This opportunity is used as

good as possible. She does not follow any English course, just learns it by herself. Studying hard is her way to master English fluently. She collects 5 new vocabularies every day then memorizes them. Try to make many sentences from its vocabularies. Then, also practice her structure and her ability in writing. One way to make her speaking ability well is by taking conversation with her friends or just talking to herself. Her keyword is never to be shame in making mistakes while learning. Her habits in elementary school still used at this moment.

To sum up, S's capability in English especially her speaking skill is worth to be considered. It can be seen from her habitual learning strategies, such as memorizing 5 words every day and taking some conversations. Moreover, becoming a language coordinator in her school and joining some English competitions are the additional proofs of her ability. Realizing the phenomena of S's language background, the writer is interested in observing her learning strategies to master English speaking skill.

Research Method

Research method is a way employed by the writer to collect and analyze the data in order to solve the problem.

A. Research Design

Case study is a method of research. A case means a single instanceon an example of a class of objects or entities; thus, a case study is the investigation of that single, individual instance in the context in which it occurs. (Fauziati, 2009:257).

According to Nunan (1992:75) in Fauziati (2009:256-257) it is a kind of ethnographic research or it is a limited type of ethnograpy. It is similar in its philosophy, its methods and its concern for studying the phenomena in the context. Both of them attempts to provide a potrait of what is going on in a particular setting. Both are naturalistic in manner, in a sense that this investigation is carried out through a systematic observation of human behaviour in the natural environment. On the other hand, case study is distinguishable from ethnography

in the sense that case study is generally more limited in scope and is not necessary concerned with the cultural context and cultural interpretation of the phenomena under study. It concerns with individual to whom the reseacher observes, interviews, and develops personal relationship.

The goal of this research is to understand an individual S who has particular case. The writer wants to describe and define everything done by S in details related to her learning strategies to master speaking skill.

B. Subject and Object of the Research

In this research, the subject is S, a student of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surakarta. Now she is in the second year, class VIII D. Studying hard is her way to master English fluently. One way to make her speaking ability well is by taking conversation with her friends or just talking to herself. The object of research is learning strategies employed by her in mastering English speaking skill.

C. Data and Data Source

The sources of the data are taken from the subject of research, namely "S" where the writer sets many information needed. The data include her attitudes in learning English speaking skill, her behaviors toward English speaking skill, and her habits of using the strategies in learning English especially to master speaking skill. The secondary sources come from her peers, teachers, and her surrounding where the writer may get additional information.

D. Technique of Collecting the Data

This research uses two kinds of techniques to collect the data. They are interview and observation. By doing this methods, the writer can get some information needed which deal with the strategies used by S to master speaking skill.

1. Interview

In this research the writer uses two kinds of interview, they are retrospective interview and interview guide. According to Graham

(1997:175) retrospective interview is an interview in which learners are asked to look back and report on the learning strategies they generally use. It is a semi-structured interview enquiring about students usual learning behaviour. It also allows access to a much wider range of strategy use (Graham, 1997:175).

Interview guide will be the second type which is used by the writer. She conducts specific questions to the subject S, her parents F and M, her teacher T, and her peers L and N. She conducts specific questions that concern with an information related to the data needed so that the interviewee gives suitable answers. Consequently, the writer is able to collect the information which may be unable found through observation.

2. Observation

The writer conducts a direct observation for a month which is done when the subject does the activities of learning strategies and then makes such field note. Wenden (1992:80) states that some limited information on students' learning processes may be gained by observation. It is conducted either in the classroom or in her house activities which deals with speaking learning strategies. The writer collect the information in the classroom when teaching learning process and in her house activities. S has taking conversation privet course with the writer in her house for once a week. On this occasion, the writer follows the subject there then makes some field notes. Therefore, the writer will get information about her habitual behaviors in gaining her speaking skill.

E. **Technique of Analyzing the Data**

In analyzing the data, this research uses interactive model. The process of analyzing the data was done while the process of collecting the data also done too. It is conducted in order to make the data is easy to be classified.

According to Sutopo (1996:88) there are three steps used in this model; data reduction, data discussion, conclusion and verification.

1. Data Reduction

   It is the process of making summary from the main points, arranging it, and categorizing it based on its classification (Moleong, 2000:190). The writer categorizes the data taken from the interview and observation based on O'Malley and Chamot's classification.

2. Data Display

   In this step, the writer describes and discusses the finding of the research in the form of systematic classification. Therefore, it is easy to be understood and to be analyzed.

3. Conclusion and Verification.

   The last step is making conclusions and suggestions based on the data analysis.

Research Findings and Analysis

As a Junior High School student, S does not get a specific subject of speaking skill. However, she gets additional subjects which can improve her speaking skill. For examples; memorization of vocabulary, conversation, speech, etc. From this, the writer can observe that S uses some learning strategies in mastering her speaking skill.

1. Metacognitive Strategies

   Metacognitive Strategies are learning strategies which involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of one's production or comprehension and evaluating after learning.

   The writer analyzes that S uses some of the metacognitive strategies. It can be seen from the interview and observation which are done whether she is in her school or in her house. Some of the

strategies are advance organizer, directive attention, selective attention, self management, and functional planning.

a. Advance Organizer

S usually makes a concept before presenting her speech. It is done in order to make herself-confident and ready in carrying out her speech by writing the important things or making a comprehensive preview of the concept. S says:

> *"I usually make concept or point before presenting the speaking task, by writing the important point. I add my knowledge with the idea by reading books, magazines, or browsing in internet."(July, 25th '12)*

From the illustration above, we know that S applies the advance organizer learning strategies in mastering her speaking skill.

b. Directive Attention

It is a strategy where the learners have full concentration during the task, try to maintain the concentration and ignore irrelevant distractor. In learning speaking, S takes a full concentration to the teacher's explanation. Sometimes she feels nervous and unconfident in presenting her speech. To cope with the anxiety, she takes a deep breath for a moment and try to rehearse her concept by keeping silent, as she says:

> *"When my teacher gives explanation of speaking task, I try to take a full concentration. When I have speech, I feel unconfident and nervous. My way to cope with that situation is by taking a deep breath for a moment." (July, 25th '12)*

From this, the writer concludes that she uses directed attention learning strategy.

c. Selective Attention

Selective attention is deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input. It can be selecting familiar words to express her idea during speaking task in conversation to facilitate her to express her idea. She states:

> *"I like using familiar word in expressing my speaking task in order to make the audiences easy to understand my ideas."(July, 25th '12)*

Using simple sentences or familiar words in expressing her speech can be said that she takes selective attention learning strategy.

d. Self-management

Self-management is a kind of learning strategies in which the learners understand the conditions that help them learn and arrange for presence of those conditions. Condition here refers to the condition of the learners themselves and also to their environment. S states:

> *"My speaking is not good enough. But, I usually practice English by taking conversation to my friends."(July, 25th '12)*

Based on the statement above, the writer knows that S tries to manage herself in order to master speaking skill. It can be done by practicing conversation about certain topic with her friends in every day life.

e. Functional Planning

It is an attempt used by learners to plan and to rehearse linguistic components necessary to carry out language task. It can be said that it is an advance preparation used by the learners to get maximal production. As S says:

> *"Before my speech, I make concept first both written and oral, then I take practice by myself ."(July, 25th '12)*

S prepares her speech by doing this kind of learning strategies that is planning and rehearsing the concept before presenting her speech. She plans the concept both written and oral then she practices it by herself in front of the mirror.

This statement also supported by the finding in the interview with S's parents in her house. The finding show that she often makes a list of lyric song to enrich her vocabularies. In fact, S interested in listen to musics then sing that song. This way help her in mastering English speaking skill. As M says:

> *"If she has sing a West song, she is very clever"*

She makes the concept both written and oral then she practices it by herself with sing a song.

2. Cognitive Strategies

S uses cognitive strategies as the second learning strategies in mastering her speaking skill. It involves mental manipulation or transformation of material or task and intended to enhance comprehension, acquisition or retention. Based on the observation and interview done, S uses some of the categories as her strategies in mastering speaking skill, those are: Repetition, Resourcing, Note Taking, Imagery, and Elaboration.

a. Repetition

It is the effort of the learners to imitate a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal. In mastering speaking skill, S usually makes a concept of her speaking task. Next, she reads and repeats it to be memorized in her mind. She states:

> *"Before I present my speech, firstly I make the concept then I read and repeat it in order to make it easy to be memorized well."(July, 26th '12)*

Based on the activities, S applies repetition strategy of learning to master speaking skill.

b. Resourcing

S increases her ability in speaking by using English textbooks in which she can enrich her vocabulary, can spell the pronunciation correctly and it also helps her performance in presenting speaking task. She says in interview:

> *"My habitual activities are reading textbooks and magazines. I want to improve my knowledge which are usefull in making concept for speaking task. I also can enrich my vocabularies and know the best way to perform my presentation. I always consult my dictionary and follow the spelling proposed so I can pronounce it correctly."(July, 26th '12)*

Based on her statement, the writer considers that S applies repetition learning strategies.

c. Note Taking

Note taking is one of cognitive strategies in which the learning make a main note by writing down the main idea, important points, outline or summary of information presented orally or in writing. S states:

> *"Whenever I make a concept of speaking task, I make a main note by writing down the main ideas and points which is necessary to make my presentation well."(July, 26th '12)*

S applies a note taking as her learning strategies especially in mastering speaking skill.

d. Imagery

It is a learning strategy in which the learners attempt to relate new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar easily retrievable visualize, phrases or locations. In understanding new information the learners usually remember the location, condition or things which deal with it.. As S's statement in interview:

> *"I imagine the things which deal with my concept, in order to make my explanation clearer. For example the concept of my speaking is my house so I imagine the things which has correlation with it such as my parents' activities, etc."(July, 26th '12)*

Imagining something which has corelation with the concept done by S is a part of the activity of imagery learning strategy.

e. Elaboration

It is one type of cognitive learning strategies in which the learners try to relate new information to other concepts in memory or to previous knowledge to produce the language. When there are many topics, S choose the topics which are more familiar so that she can express and describe it clearly. In interview she says:

> *"In order to express and describe my speech clearly, I choose topics which are more familiar to me or I have more informations about it."(July, 26th '12)*

Considering its elaboration process done by S, the writer sees that S takes elaboration learning strategy.

3. Social-affective Strategies

Social-affective Strategies consists of using social interactions to assist in the comprehension, learning or retention of information. It

consists of cooperation and asking question for clarification. Here, S applies two kinds of those strategies, they are:

a. Cooperation

It is a strategy used by the learners in which they work with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information or model a language activity. In other words, a learner was studying together with their friends to practice speaking skill. S says:

> *"I often ask my friends to check my speaking especially for its pronunciation, grammar etc." (July, 26th '12)*

From this statement, S takes cooperation strategy in mastering speaking skill. It can be shown from the efforts for asking her friends to check her speech performance which deals with its pronunciation and spelling before presentation.

b. Question for Clarification

It is a strategy in which the learners ask the teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation and/or examples or verification. Whenever S does not understand enough about the teacher's explanations she always asks her teacher directly or to her friends.

As she says:

> *"Whenever I get difficulties in understanding the material, I always ask my teacher or my friends to reexplain more detail."(July, 26th '12)*

S's attempt to ask her teacher or her friends about the language or words used is one of the implementations of question for clarification strategy.

B. Discussion of the Findings

Based on the observation and interview, the writer finds out that in mastering speaking skill, the subject employs some of learning strategies classified by O'Malley and Chamot as metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective.

Firstly for Metacognitive Strategies, S applies five types of nine strategies, they are; advance organizer, directive attention, selective attention, self- management, and functional planning. She do not applies; self-monitoring, delayed production, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement. It is because these strategies are so difficult for her.

Secondly is the implementation of Cognitive Strategies used by S, they are; repetition, resourcing, note taking, imagery, and the last is elaboration. S only applies five types of fifteen cognitive strategies. She applies that five types of strategies because it is easy enough, simple, and not too complex for her. She do not applies; directed physical response, translation, grouping, deduction, recombination, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, transfer and inferencing in her learning strategies.

Thirdly is Social-Affective strategies which involve cooperation and question for clarification. Both of them are used by her in increasing her speaking ability as a Junior High School student. Totally she uses twelve strategies in mastering her speaking skill.

The writer shows that there are similarities' numbers of strategies that are used by S, those are between metacognitive and cognitive strategies. It seems that in learning process especially in speaking skill, there must be an active mental process that should exist or in other words cognitive factor is so essential.

In mastering speaking skill as a foreign language especially for Junior High School, students also need a conscious process and full of awareness. S can be categorized as an active learner. She learns with full of awareness. It can be shown from the kinds of learning strategies used, which is dominated

by cognitive and metacognitive strategies. She always tries to understand her abilities and needs in learning as well as tries to understand what is being learned. Her attempts to use English resources, to practice her speaking as well as make correctness to her mistakes are little examples of the activities done by her.

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