ENGLISH LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY HIGH ACHIEVER STUDENTS IN IMPROVING ENGLISH AT SMKIT SMART INFORMATIKA SURAKARTA: A CASE STUDY

Submitted as a Partial of the Requirement for Getting Bachelor Degree in Department of English and Education

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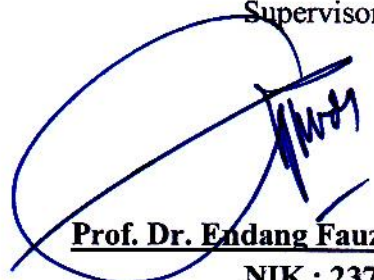
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ENGLISH LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY HIGH ACHIEVER STUDENTS IN IMPROVING ENGLISH AT SMKIT SMART INFORMATIKA SURAKARTA: A CASE STUDY

Abstrak

Penelitian ini tentang analisa strategi belajar siswa berprestasi dalam mengembangkan kemampuan berbahasa Inggris. Cara belajar ini berasarkan klasifikasi strategi belajar bahasa oleh Oxford. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah utuk menyelidiki tipe strategi belajar yang digunakan oleh siswa berprestasi dalam menegembangkan kemampuan berbahasa inggris, kemudian untuk menganalisa fekuensi tipe strategi belajar yang digunakan siswa, serta untuk mengetahui strategi belajar yang paling dominan digunakan oleh siswa berprestasi. Penelitian ini adalah sebuah penelitian studi kasus. Peserta dari penelitian ini adalah tiga orang siswa berprestasi dalam kemampuan bahasa Inggris SMKIT Smart Informatika Surakarta yang dipilih berdasarkan nilai siswa, dan lis rekomdenasi dari guru bahasa inggris. Data-data dikumpulkan dari angket SILL, wawancara, dan pengamatan kelas. Dalam menganalisa data, peneliti menggunakan model interaktif, teori milik Miles dan Hubberman. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa-siswa yang berprestasi dalam kemampuan bahasa Inggris menggunakan seluruh strategi belajar yang dicetuskan oleh Oxford, yakni strategi memori, kognitif, kompensasi, metakognitif, afektif, dan sosial. Frekuensi strategi belajar yang digunakan oleh ketiga siswa berprestasi berbeda satu sama lain. Siswa 1 menggunakan strategi belajar dengan level frekuensi rendah hingga tinggi, siswa 2 dan 3 menggunakan stategi belajar dengan level frekuensi menengah hingga tinggi, hanya saja siswa 3 menggunakan lebih banyak tipe strategi belajar dalam frekuensi tinggi dibandingkan dengan siswa 2. Strategi yang dominan digunakan oleh siswa-siswa berprestasi ini adalah strategi kompensasi. Penggunaan strategi belajar yang tepat memberikan implikasi positif dalam peningkatan kemampuan bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: Strategi belajar, Strategi pembelajaran Oxford

Abstract

This research is about the analysis of learning strategy used by high achiever students in improving English. The learning strategy is based on the Oxford's classification of language learning strategy. The objectives of the research are to investigate the types of learning strategy used by high achiever students, to analyze the frequency of learning strategy used by students, and to find the dominant learning strategy used by students. This research is a case study research. The participants of the research are three high achiever students of SMKIT Smart Informatika Surakarta who are chosen based on the students' score report, and list from the English teacher. The data are collected from SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) questionnaire, open-ended interview, and class observation. To analyze the data, the reasearcher uses interactive model

of data analysis technique from Miles and Hubberman's theory. The findings show that high achiever students in improving English applied the entire types of learning strategy proposed by Oxford; memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies. The frequency of learning strategy used by the participants is different among one and other. Student 1 used language learning strategy with low to high frequency, student 2 and student 3 used language learning strategies with medium to high frequency. However, Student 3 tends to use more language learning strategy in high frequency than Student 2. The dominant learning strategy used by high achiever students is compensation strategy. The use of appropriate learning strategies gives positive implication to the improvement of English proficiency.

Keywords: learning strategy, Oxford's language learning strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

English as an international language has gained its popularity all over the world, including Indonesia. English has been taught as an important foreign language, because of its advantages for people. It can be easier for people to conduct international relationship with all nations around the world, if they have a good mastery on English. In the past, English was only taught as secondary school. Nowadays, English is taught and learned from elementary schools to universities.

In mastering the English, students have to be good learner. A good learner should be understood the learning well. In high schools level there are many subjects of knowledge have been taught; such as science, social, language, art etc. Then, in vocational schools there are additionally specific skill comprehensions. Moreover, in integrated Islamic schools there are also some Islamic subjects which have to be mastered by students. It all becomes challenging for learners to comprehend those subjects well. There are many obstacles faced by the learners to get those all in balance. Deal with English, as a part of the set of knowledge which has to be mastered by the students, it also has difficulties. A good English learner in that condition must own strategies to achieve or and improve it. That is an interesting phenomenon which was found by the researcher.

The researcher has interest to do the research, because learning English still becomes one of the most difficult learning. Taking high achiever students or

good English learner as the object of research hopefully can give many information about learning strategies that they applied in learning so it can give contribution to make learning English easier and also more enjoyable for other learners. Moreover, there are some previous research findings revealed positive implication of learning strategies to English proficiency, such as Park's work (1997), Griffiths's work (2003), Villamizar's work (2014), and Rao's work (2016).

The literature on learning strategies in second language acquisition emerged from a concern for identifying the characteristics of effective learners. Research efforts concentrating on the "good language learner" (Naiman et al. 1078; Rubin 1975; O'Malley 1990; Oxford 1990) had identified strategies reported by students or observed in language learning situations that appear to contribute to learning.

According to Oxford (1989) "language learning strategies are behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable". In fact, language learners use it either consciously or unconsciously while they get new information or performing task in language classroom. And the using of learning strategies depends on each student. While, Brown (2000: 210) stated that strategies are "specific method of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, or planned design for controlling and manipulating certain information." According to O'Malley and Chamot (1985: 582), "language learning strategies are divided into three main categories; namely: meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies". Each category has many sub-categories. Learners who pick the appropriate strategies will be successful to accomplish the tasks.

Some previous research findings revealed different results according to the use of learning strategies in distance learning of English. Altunay's work (2014) result indicated that the participants use the strategy categories 'sometimes'. However, they use the affective strategies 'rarely'. While, Souriyavongsa et al's work (2013) findings indicate that all participants reported a medium frequency use of strategy on learning English. The most frequently used strategies involved

in using vocabulary books and electronic dictionaries to remember new English words (cognitive strategies). Then, Cabaysa and Baetiong's work (2010) results indicate significant differences between groups in the level of frequency at which meta-cognitive strategies were used and at which strategies were orchestrated.

Those previous studies were focused on the investigation of learning strategies of distance learners of English. All participants were in university level. When distance learners include into an English class, it means that they only focus on learning English, all of subjects is about English. Whereas, the investigation of learning strategies used by learners who have high achievement in English while they must focus in multi subjects has not been found in the presented previous studies yet. Thus, the current research conducted by the researcher then.

The objectives of the research are to investigate the types of learning strategy used by high achiever students, to analyze the frequency of learning strategy used by students, and to find the dominant learning strategy used by students.

2. METHOD

In this research, the researcher concerns in case study research. According Grosvernor and Rose in Agus (2014) describe case study research as research which is concern with an in depth investigation into individual, group or collection of individuals which have similar attribute. It can be undertaken using a variety of data collection methodologies, but is generally concerned with developing a detailed understanding of particular institutions, individual, or phenomenon.

The subject of this research is the twelfth grade students of Islamic Integrated vocational school (SMK IT) Smart Informatika Surakarta. The classification is based on the students' score report and list from the English teacher. The students are all male. The object of the research is learning strategies used by high achiever students. The data sources come from three students who have high achievement in improving English. The data are collected from SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) questionnaire, open-ended interview, and class observation in order observes students activities through English

teaching learning process. The questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia in order to avoid misunderstanding. After all data are collected then the researcher classifies the data based on Oxford's learning strategy taxonomy. The analysis is based on the usage is from 2.5-3.4, low usage is from 1.0-2.4.

The data analysis of this research is based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) model of data analysis. The methods of data analysis called Interactive Model which is included four steps of analysis activity. First, data collection is a form of analysis which is the researcher collects the data. Second, data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcription. The next step is data display. The forms of qualitative data display include types of matrices, graphs, charts, or networks. The function of these types of data display is to perform accessible compact and organized information of the data. The last is verification data; it is making conclusion and suggestion based on data analysis.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

This research is intended to investigate the learning strategy used by high achiever students in improving English, the frequency of learning strategy used by students, and the dominant learning strategy used by students. These are the analysis results:

3.1.1 Types of Learning Strategy Used by High Achiever Students

The finding of types of learning strategies used by high achiever students' show that the students apply all strategies proposed by Oxford (1990). The strategies are memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social.

3.1.1.1 Memory strategy

This strategy allows the students to store and retrieve new information about the target language. These strategies help the learners link items or concepts with one another by giving a verbal label of a picture, or making visual descriptions or words or phrases (Oxford, 1990).

Memory strategy divided into four parts, they are creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action

From the analysis of SILL questionnaire is found that the students use memory strategies in medium level. Their average means score is going from 2.6 to 3.1. Medium level can be interpreted as "sometime use".

"Yeah, I often relate a new knowledge with what I have got in previous. Then I will use those new vocabularies or terms in making sentence frequently, or relate it to some pictures." (S1, Creating mental linkage an reviewing well strategy).

(Interview, November 22nd 2016)

3.1.1.2 Cognitive strategy

Cognitive strategies belong to direct strategies which facilitate the students to comprehend and produce new language. Through these strategies, the learners are able to manipulate language materials in direct. Cognitive strategy divided into four parts; practicing, receiving and sending message, analyzing and reasoning, and reading structure for input and output.

Derived from the analysis of SILL, the result showed that S1 and S2 include into medium level usage of cognitive strategy because their average means score is 2.5 and 2.9. It means they "sometimes use" the strategy. While, S3 includes into high level use, because his means score is 3.8. It means he "often use" it.

"I prefer to ask whenever get something new in order to develop my English skill. While I get unfamiliar word I will try to remember it repeatedly then note it to my notes, if I bring my pocket dictionary I will also check it spontaneously." (S1, practicing strategy, receiving and sending message strategy).

(Interview, November 22nd 2016)

3.1.1.3 Compensation strategy

Compensation strategy helps students to compose the lack of understanding. These strategies consist of the using of synonyms,

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paraphrase, and gestures, also the guessing meaning from context. Compensation strategy has two sub strategies; they are guessing intelligent, and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing.

Derived from the analysis of SILL, the result showed that S1 ad S3 include into high level use, because the means score are 3.7 and 4.3. while S2 include into medium level use because his means score is 3. High means "often use" and medium means "sometimes use".

> "When I find some obstacles in doing English conversation or assignments, I always guess the meaning and try to remember the synonym." (S2, Guessing and using synonym).

<div align="right">(Interview on 22nd November 2016)</div>

3.1.1.4 Metacognitive strategy

Metacognitive strategies help the students in handling the whole learning process. The strategies consist of identifying student's own learning preference and requirements, preparing for L2 tasks, collecting and managing material, monitoring mistakes, organizing a learning space and timetable, assessing task, etc. Meta-cognitive strategy is divided into three sub strategies; they are centering the student's learning, arranging and planning the learner's learning, and evaluating the learner's learning.

Derived from the SILL analysis, the result showed that means score of S1and S2 are categorized to medium level or "sometimes use", those are; 3.3 and 3.2. Conversely, S3 owns 4.4 point, it categorized into high usage or "often use".

> "At home, I prefer to study English at midnight because the condition is very comfortable and makes me more concentrate."(S3, Arranging and planning the learner's learning).

<div align="right">(Interview on 22nd November 2016)</div>

3.1.1.5 Affective strategy

Affective strategies enable the students to be familiar with their mood and nervousness level, allow them to talk about feelings, prize themselves for fine act in using English, and make use of positive words or

deep breathing. Affective strategy has three categories; they are lowering anxiety, encourage student's self, and taking student's emotional temperature.

Derived from the analysis of SILL, the result showed that S1 is "rarely use" this strategy because his means score is 2.3, it is low level. While, S2 and S3 is "sometimes use" affective strategy showed from their means score; 2.7 and 3.1, it is medium level.

"I like to make positive statements for myself, moreover when I fell bored or dizzy because of some complicated sentence or difficult words during learning for the test time. But I have never give reward to myself yet." (S2, encourage student's self).

(Interview on 22nd November 2016)

3.1.1.6 Social strategy

Social strategies facilitate students to comprehend the L2 and its customs, and help them working with others. It consist of talking with native speaker, begging for assistance in doing the language assignment, asking question for clarification and verification of a confusing point, and searching social and cultural customs. Social strategy has three categories; they are asking question, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others.

Derived from the analysis of SILL, the result showed that the means score of S1 categorized in medium level which the means score is 2.8. Differently, the means score of S2 and S3 includes in high usage, those are; 3.6 and 3.9. S1 sometimes uses social strategy, but S2 and S3 often use it.

"I feel very enthusiastic when studying English. I use every chance to begin conversation in English with my friends. I am interested in culture based the English. I know from reading books and internet." (S3, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others).

(Interview on 22nd November 2016)

3.1.2 The Frequency of Learning Strategy Used by Students

The findings of the current research showed that students of SMKIT Smart Informatika Surakarta used a number of strategies relevant to their English studies, although wider and more frequent strategy use would be desirable in order to make their learning more effective (Cohen, 2000). The finding of current research supported the theory from Ellis (2005) that the more learners used strategies the more they could interact and the more they interacted the more they developed their strategies.

The findings showed that the three high achiever students of SMKIT Smart Informatika have different level in frequency of learning strategy used. Student 1 used language learning strategy with low to high frequency, whereas Student 2 and 3 used language learning strategy with medium to high frequency. However, Student 3 tends to use more language learning strategy in high frequency than Student 1 and 2.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Frequency of Language Strategy Used

Frequency level		S1	mean score	S2	mean score	S3	mean score
High	Very often use	-		-		-	
	Often use	**Compensation** Guessing intelligently	3.7	**social strategy** asking question	3.6	**metacognitive** evaluating	4.4
						Compensation guessing intelligent	4.3
						social strategy empathizing with others	3.9
						Cognitive Practicing	3.8
Medium	Sometimes use	**Metacognitive** Centering the student's learning	3.3	**Metacognitive** Evaluating	3.2	**Affective** encourages student's self	3.1
		Social strategy Cooperatig with	2.8	**Memory** reviewing well	3.1		

		Others		**Compensation** overcoming liitation in speaking and writing	3		
		Memory Creating mental Linkages	2.6	**Cognitive** analyzing and reasoning	2.9	**Memory** reviewing well	2.7
		Cognitive Practicing	2.5	**Affective** encourages student's self	2.7		
Low	Rarely use	**Affective** Encourages student's self	2.3	-		-	
	Never use	-		-		-	

3.1.3 The Dominant Learning Strategy Used by Students

The findings of the dominant learning strategy used by high achiever students revealed that it falls into compensation strategies. It is based on SILL especially on the average means score of all types of learning strategies used by the students. The highest point lays on compensation strategy.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Language Learning Strategy Use by the Students

Mean score strategy	Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
S1	2.6	2.5	3.7	3.3	2.3	2.8
Level	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Medium
S2	3.1	2.9	3	3.2	2.7	3.6
Level	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
S3	2.7	3.8	4.3	4.4	3.1	3.9
Level	Medium	High	High	High	Medium	High
Average	2.8	3.1	3.7	3.6	2.7	3.4

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the three students of SMKIT Smart Informatika Surakarta who are classified as high achiever

students used six types of learning strategies proposed by Oxford. The three students have different choice of learning strategy in improving English. It could be seen from the frequency. Student 3 uses more varieties of learning strategy in high frequency; four strategies, then Student 1 and 2, each only has a learning strategy in high frequency usage.

The finding is also in line with the result of the interview. Statement of S3; "Right, I frequently use gesture when I forget the word I mean. I usually use my hands, and my head to tell my friend." Statement of S2; "I always guess the meaning and try to remember the synonym." Statemet of S1; "When I don't understand with some words during conversation or doing task, I usually guess the meaning of that term by understanding the context or using synonyms." (interview on 22nd November 2016). "Frequently", "often", "always", and "usually" are terms that refer to high level usage of learning strategy.

3.2 Discussion

In this section, the researcher discusses the theory and the research findings whether or not, both are having similarities or differences. The researcher also converses the research finding put side by side to the earlier research' finding. It deals with three major issues; type of learning strategies used by high achiever students, the frequency of learning strategies used, the dominant learning strategies used

3.2.1 Types of Learning Strategies Used by High Achiever Students

The finding of types of learning strategies used by high achiever students' reveal that they use the entire strategies classified by Oxford (1990). The strategies are memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social. The current research' finding is relevant with Tragant, Thompson, and Vicrory's theory in Souriyavongsa (2013), that students apply various learning strategies, as followed; memory strategies for vocabulary learning, cognitive strategies for text comprehension and production, compensation strategies to overcome lack of knowledge, metacognitive strategies for

regulating learning processes, affective strategies for management of feelings, and social strategies involving interaction with others.

The result is relevant with Williams and Burden's (2001) theory which found that learners have a variety of resources and take advantage of them in different modes. The result is also supported by statement of Brown (2007) in Thu (2009), "learning strategies can significantly enable learners to achieve a high level of success in learning another language."

The result of types of learning strategies applied by high achiever students conversed to previous research is relevant with Xiao and Hurd (2007); Souriyavogsa et al (2013); and Altunay (2014). The participants apply all categories of Oxford's learning strategies. And the distinction is on the frequency use. The current research' finding is contradict to Park (2010). The finding shows the slight amount of correlation between learning strategies use and English ability.

3.2.2 Frequency of Learning Strategies Used by The Students

Derived from the result of research, three high achiever students of SMKIT Smart Informatika have different level in frequency of learning strategy used. The findings show that Student 1 used the strategies at low to high frequency, whereas Student 2 and 3 applied the strategies at medium to high frequency. However, Student 3 tends to use more language learning strategies at high frequency than Student 1 and 2.

In general, the findings showed that students of SMKIT Smart Informatika Surakarta use numerous strategies which appropriate to their English learning, even though wider and more common strategy use depends on their desire to facilitate their studies more effective, it relevant with Cohen's theory (2004). The result of current research supported by the theory from Ellis (2005) which showed the correlation among the learners' strategies use, the learners' ability to interact, and the learners' aptitude in developing their strategies. This finding is relevant with Fan's theory (2003) in Thu (2009), "language learners who have greater control of their learning will become more successful than those who do not."

3.2.3 Most Dominant Learning Strategies Used by The Students

The most dominant learning strategy used by students of the current research is compensation strategy. This strategy helps students to compose the lack of understanding. These strategies consist of the using of synonyms, paraphrase, and gestures, also the guessing meaning from context. Compensation strategy has two sub strategies; they are guessing intelligent, and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing.

The finding is relevant with theory of Good Language Learners (GLLs) from Rubin (1975) in Thu (2009), "GLLs are willing and accurate guessers, they are usually not afraid of appearing foolish by making mistakes." The students use guessing strategy in high frequency, they also use gesture and synonym, they are usually not afraid though making mistakes.

However, the finding of most dominant learning strategies of the currents research conversed to previous research is contradict with Xiao and Hurd's finding (2007) that affective and social strategies proved more popular in used by Chinese students than other strategies. While, Altunay's finding (2014) revealed that the dominant strategy applied by Turkish distance learners is metacognoitive strategy. Then Cabayssa and Baetiong's finding (2010) proved that metacognitive become the most frequently use strategies used by Filipino learners of English in accomplish speaking proficiency. The result is relevant with Williams and Burden's theory (2000) which found that learners have a variety of resources and take advantage of them in different modes.

4   CONCLUSION

The types of learning strategies used by three high achiever students of SMKIT Smart Informatika Surakarta are almost the same. They applied six types of learning strategies proposed by Oxford namely memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy. The different learning strategy is in the frequency of learning strategy used by students. It means that learning strategy

influences the achievement of the students' English proficiency and also important for students in improving their ability in English.

In this research, the researcher focus on high achiever students in improving English, for the next researcher can conduct the research with make a comparison between high and low achiever students, or between male and female students. Moreover, it may more challenging if the next researchers conduct the research with explores the skills of English. The next researcher can develop the research with different method, subject, and object of the research. Hopefully, this research can be useful as the reference for further researchers in studying more about learning strategies and for other researchers who are interested to complete the research in different perspective.

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