Relationship between Language Learning Strategies Used by Pekanbaru Senior High School Students and Situational Factors (types of school)

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Abstract

Tujuan utama studi ini adalah untuk meneliti hubungan antara strategi belajar bahasa dan faktor-faktor yang terkait Pekanbaru digunakan oleh siswa SMA. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi penggunaan strategi pembelajaran bahasa oleh para mahasiswa berbeda jenis kelamin dan jenis sekolah. Tujuan tambahan adalah untuk melihat perbedaan strategi pembelajaran bahasa yang digunakan berdasarkan gender, etnis, jenis sekolah, siswa latar belakang akademik dan sosial-ekonomi orang tua. Responden penelitian adalah 400 siswa SMA di Pekanbaru. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan Inventarisasi Strategi Belajar Bahasa (Sill) oleh Oxford (1990a). Deskriptif dan statistik inferensial digunakan untuk menganalisis data, temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara jenis kelamin, etnis, jenis sekolah, siswa latar belakang akademik dan sosial-ekonomi orang tua dengan strategi pembelajaran bahasa yang digunakan. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa walaupun siswa menyadari beberapa strategi pembelajaran bahasa, mereka mungkin perlu secara eksplisit diajarkan untuk menggunakannya.

Keywords: Strategi pembelajaran bahasa, faktor situasional, prestasi siswa

1 Introduction

English instruction in Indonesian context has been in line with the existence of this country. In the phase of 1945 until 1984 (almost forty years), the main target of learning English was to understand the reading passages with a strong support from vocabulary items terms and sentence structure. Grammar translation method (GTM) has dominated the teaching approach. Consequently, the teachers and the students concentrated to the pattern of the sentence (sentence formula) in order to acknowledge the existing ideas in the written text. In this era, it was really rare of the students to be able to speak and to in English.

The language learners -as the so-

called the senior high school students-concentrate to two important language learning targets : a) the use of English and b) the score of the final national examination(GBPP 2004). Referring to the building of the ability of using the language, the recent curriculum provides a framework to follow. They have to obey the genre of the text-descriptive, narrative, procedure, explanation, discussion, exposition, review, news item, etc., before they practice speaking and writing (GBPP 2006). In addition, they are also required to master the materials offered in the final national examination (reading for 35 items and listening for 15 items). Achieving both targets, the students employ certain language learning strategies in the classroom, out of the class, and in the final national examination.

They commonly follow what the teachers assign to do for instance-underlining the variety of language expression in the written text, finding out the meaning of certain words (conceptual words, structural words, and contextual words) in the dictionary, and identifying types of questions linked to the written text. They are also asked to read authentic materials form certain English newspaper (The Jakarta Post, The Indonesia Times) and magazine (Hello). In addition, they are provided a break-through program, usually done a few months before the final national examination. The highlight activity out of the class is that some the students take English course initiated by themselves or by their parents. The status and the needs of English imply to the teaching and learning English in Indonesia. Its status is still as the first foreign language among other big languages such as Arabic, Japanese, Mandarin, German, and French. English is being officially offered in secondary level and tertiary level as well. In addition, English has also been introduced in elementary level and in kindergarten as an elective subject. English is also nominated as one the subjects to be tested in the final national examination for secondary level. Besides, English is also put into one of the entrance subjects at tertiary level. Even, English proficiency (the TOEFL score) is already one of the compulsory requirements for the university graduates like at University of Lampung, University of Riau, Institute of Technology of Bandung, Indonesia University, etc.

This language –currently- has been widely needed (in oral or in written form) for academic purposes, medium of working in certain companies and offices, first language in famous tourism destination, and medium of instruction in English Department of Faculty of Education all over Indonesia. In addition, passive English is also –concentrating to the knowledge of the language- basically need to comprehend the English text in post-graduate programmes. In short, the passive and active English will be more widely needed by various parties like education, foreign companies, tourism agencies, international trades, etc.

1. 2 Statements of Problems

In any term of Indonesian Education curriculum (1969-2006), English is decided as one of the compulsory subjects at secondary level (lower secondary and upper secondary) and at tertiary level. In addition, English is being instructed at elementary level and even at pre-school as an elective subject. In the latest term of the English curriculum implementation (GBPP 2004 and GBPP 2006), the secondary school students are expected to have speaking and writing skills with a strong support of grammar competence, discourse competence, socio-linguistics competence, and strategic competence (see also Oxford 1990).

In addition to the expected skills to be mastered, the students should also have a minimum score of 5.00 out 10.00 obtained at the end of lower secondary and upper secondary as well (see the decree of ministry of education number 45 of 2007 /2008). The test contains two language skills –reading and listening. The aim of the test is to ascertain those two sub-level of students' achievement or proficiency in English.

The latest achievement of the students (2006/2007 academic year) in Pekanbaru senior higher school in this subject was 96 % of the test takers (6260 pupils) who obtain a minimum passing rate of 5.00 out 10.00. The test takers were about 6521 students. The number was big enough who have sufficient mastery in receptive skills of English. In contrary to the fact was that their productive skills (speaking and writing) were not equal to the reading and listening skills.

Their English proficiency level certainly assists them to get "the minimum prediction of TOEFL score of 450 at tertiary level (e.g. at University of Riau Pekanbaru Indonesia) (see the decree of Rector of UNRI 2003). Then, for those who attend the English Department, they should have the minimum prediction of TOEFL score of 500 (see the decree of the Dean of FKIP dean of UNRI 2004). In turn, their English proficiency, hopefully, could be applied in workplace especially at foreign companies or multi international companies.

Based on the above facts, the researcher is going to investigate the LLS uses (six broad categories made by Oxford 1990), factors affecting the choice of LLS by the students (socio-culture and academic factors, gender, ethnicity, and parental socio-economic- and academic background). Those factors are not yet deeply investigated in relation to the uses of language learning strategies in learning English in Indonesian context-especially in Pekanbaru municipality.

1. 3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify language learning strategies used by the Pekanbaru senior high school students in learning English,
2. Determine whether there is significant difference between situational factors

(private/state schools) in language learning strategies.

1. 4 Research Questions (RQ)

Is there any significant difference between situational factors (private and state schools) and language learning strategies use?

1. 5 Hypotheses

There is a significant difference between situational factors (state and private schools) and language learning strategies use.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Definitions of Language Learning Strategies

A very basic element in defining language learning strategies is the concept of the strategy itself (Chesterfield & and Chesterfield 1985). Based on this main thing, there are various definitions on language learning strategies formulated by most of researchers in relation to English as second language (L2) or foreign language (LF). The term of learning strategies and learning behaviors can be interchangeably used in this study (Mohammed Amin Embi 2000). On the other hand, learning strategies and learning techniques may not be used for similar purpose(s) (Stern 1983).

First of all, Tarone (1983) based her definition on the context of the use of communication strategies in which mutual attempt of two interlocutors agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared. Then, she differentiates the communication strategy from production strategy in which one linguistic system is used efficiently and clearly. The following, she also makes clear the distinction between communication strategy and learning strategy by which developing linguistic and socio-linguistic competence occurred in the target language. On the other hand, Tarone (1987) ascertained the impossibility of separating communication strategies and learning strategies because of the following reasons: (a) it is difficult to measure the individual's purposes whether it is communication or learning; (b) the purpose might be both; and (c) even if the person just wants to communicate and not to learn, learning often occurs anyway.

Secondly, dealing with the communication strategies, Varadi (1980); Galvan & Campbell (1979) focuses on consciousness while Faerch & Kasper (1980) put emphasis on problem orientedness. In term of directing at facilitating communication- as contrary to advancing learning, Rubin (1975) determines circumlocution, paraphrase, and direct translation as good language learners' device. Those strategies have been recognized as communication strategies (Tarone 1978), as achievement strategies (Faerch & Kasper 1980), as resource expansion strategies (Corder 1983).

In line with the concept of the specific actions, there are several related purposes of using them like: (a) aiding

the acquisition, storing and retrieving information (Oxford & Nyikos 1989); (b) developing linguistic and socio-linguistic competence (Chesterfiled & Chesterfield 1985); (c) comprehending, storing, and remembering information and skills (Chamot & Kupper 1989); (d) exploring and improving information and competence in L2 (Bialystok 1978); (e) taking conscious steps or behaviors (Ehrman & Oxford 1990); (f) identifying the term language strategies; and (g) acquiring a second language knowledge (Rubin 1975).

Similarly to the above concepts, Green & Hetch (1993) used long term plans in order to control the learning process. In more specific, Donato & McCormik (1994) restrict the strategies as actions motivated by special objectives to fulfill specific goals.

2.2 Characteristics of Good Language Learner

A series of research activities dealt with the language learning strategies used by good learner has been conducted in the last four decades. The earliest study conducted by Rubin in 1975 and Stern (1975). Rubin concluded that good language learner has seven characteristics : (a) willing and accurate guesser, (b) having strong drive to communicate, (c) often inhibited and willing to appear foolish or making mistakes in order to learn or to communicate, (d) paying attentions to form by looking for linguistics patterns and by continually classifying, analyzing, and synthesizing

linguistics information, (e) taking advantages of all practice opportunities, (f) monitoring his or her own speech as well as the speech of others and actively participates even when he or she is not called on to perform, and (g) attending to meaning, not just to surface structure or grammar.

Similarly to Rubin's characteristics, Stern (1975) lists ten characteristics of good language learner that he or she has : (a) a positive learning strategy, (b) an active approach to the learning task, (c) a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and empathy with its speakers, (d) technical know-how of how to tackle a language, (e) strategies of experimentation and planning into an ordered system and of revising this system progressively, (f) constantly searching of meaning, (g) willingness to practice, (h) self-monitoring to critical sensitivity to language use, and (i) developing the target language more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it.

2.3 Factors Affecting LLS

Numerous studies have been listed about various factors that directly or indirectly affect the language learning strategies used by learners. The work of of Naiman *et.al* 1978 revealed that learners who have positive attitude learn more, but also learners who learn well acquire positive attitude. This makes sense when it is understood that the skill of how to learn a language can be improved. In similar to the previous

work, Gardner (1980) & Mukattash (1980) have reported that aptitude is a major factor determining the level of success of classroom language learning.

Then, Livesey (1992) examined the similar factor and social support. He concluded that the two factors would predict intention to engage in specific categories of language learning behavior in an ESL instructional setting. The conclusion of the research was based the response of secondary school students with an average age of 16 years through questionnaire about personal background and language intension, attitudes, and social support. Results indicate that attitude and social support were highly predictive of behavioral intention and were significantly related to their determinants. In short, it can be restated that attitude or aptitude and social support play important roles when one learns a new language (e.g. English as a second or as a foreign language). The following factors that have been investigated in relation to language learning strategies are proficiency, teacher perception, gender, aptitude, personality, and motivation. These factors have been examined by Oxford and Ehrman (1995).

Dealing with learning environment (in classroom and out the classroom), a series of researches have also been done (Liu & Littlewood 1997; O'Neill 1991; Ho and Crookall 1995; Lee 1995; Schleppegreel and Oxford 1988; Watkins *et.al* 1991; Stern 1993; Pickard 1996; Burstall et.al 1974; Ramirez 1986; Skehan 1989; Kouraogo 1993). Liu & Littlwood

(1997) created an effective environment designed for speaking tasks to achieve success in the classroom; e.g "Buzz group" which are small discussion group, require the use of English in a low-risk environment which would also boost students' confidence in using the language. For more detail, O' Neill (1991); Ho and Crookall (1995) have given examples for speaking tasks. The work of Lee (1995) described how L2 learners apply learning strategies to learning tasks both in and outside the classroom.

2.4 Situational Factors

Indonesian decree number 20, 2003 regulates government and society to run education. One of the reflections of the regulation is the schools consist of state school and private school. The state schools are fully funded by the governments (central government and local government). The revised constitution of 1945 stated that the governments should at least allocate the budget as big as 20 % every year. While, the budget of the private schools come from their foundation, parents, certain stakeholders, their businesses, and government's subsidy.

In most situation or conditions, certain private schools in town are high qualified education institution. They can pay high qualified and competence teachers. Besides, the schools can also provide comfortable classrooms, libraries, offices, laboratories, and other support facilities. In addition, the schools

have cooperation with other smart school in other town or in other countries. The rich parents from various ethnics and social backgrounds send their children to those schools even-though they should pay higher tuition compared to state schools. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) support the theory of language learning strategies in relation to situational variables. They find that characteristics of language learners, situational variables, and type of learning strategies interact in complicated way to influence proficiency in a second language.

3 Research Methodologies

The needed data to prove and to test the hypotheses in chapter one have been put into the consideration in determining the research methods. This chapter aims at presenting the research methods which are used to investigate the language learning strategies used by the secondary school students and factors affecting the choice of the language learning strategies.

Collecting the data of language learning strategies, questionnaires and interviews were conducted to the students. The questionnaire as the so called –Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)-was used to collect the data of how the students learn English (Oxford: 1990). The data about the factors affecting the choice of language learning strategies are social factors, economic factors, situational factors, and academic factors were collected through a certain form to fill in by the respondents.

3. 1 Research Design

This study has four independent variables (social factors, economic factors, situational factors, and academic factors) in relation to one moderator variable (language learning strategies), and another one dependent variable (English score obtained from the odd semester). This study has six research questions and six hypotheses either. Each hypothesis has an approach, an instrument, and data analysis. In detail, it can be seen the table 3.1

3.2 Research Instrument

McGoarty (1987, 1988) also uses questionnaire to examine the language learning strategies of American college students of French, German, Spanish and ESL. Oxford & Nyikos (1989) use the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as the main instrument along with other instruments in which 1200 undergraduates take part in. Oxford and Burry Stock (1995) stated that the questionnaire is the most efficient and comprehensive method to assess the frequency of language learning strategies. The latest statement is supported by Cohen (1996). He mentions that questionnaire is among the self-report data that frequently asks the learners to describe the way they usually learn and use a language. In this study, the "self-report" questionnaire was also used. The questionnaire is an important research instrument to be used in Indonesian context because of the following reasons: 1. to see whether the target

population-Pekanbaru upper secondary school students- is able to report on their language learning strategies, 2. to see if the questionnaire suits and supports the purpose of the study, and 3. to validate the Indonesian version of the questionnaire adopted from Oxford (1990).

The adopted questionnaire-as the so called Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)-contains two parts: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Each of which has three broad strategies. The direct strategies have memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. Then, the indirect strategies have metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. The memory strategies cover four components: creating mental linkage, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action. The cognitive strategies consist of other four components: practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for in put and output. The compensation strategies include two components: guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing. The metacognitive strategies cover three components: centering your learning, arranging and planning your learning, and evaluating your learning. The affective strategies consist of other three components: lowering your anxiety, encouraging yourself, and taking your emotional temperature. The social strategies also consist of three components: asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others.

3. 3 Populations

The population of this study is all third students of Pekanbaru Senior High School/upper secondary level. Those students have learned English for six academic years (three years in lower secondary level and other three years in upper secondary level). The total number of the population are 5.895 students of state general schools, private general schools, state vocational schools (engineering and entrepreneurship) and private vocational schools (engineering and entrepreneurship). The population has numerous characters like social background (gender and ethnics), situational schools, academic background, and economic background. * Kicjie and Morgan (1970). The sample size are purposively taken from each factor and sub-factors. The questionnaires have been distributed to more than 361 students (400 students) in order to get the appropriate number of the sample size.

3.4 Data collection procedure

The permission letter from supervisors (supervisor 1 and supervisor 2) and the concerned offices in Riau Province and Pekanbaru Municipality are very important in carrying out this study. The issued permission letters are given to the secondary school headmasters in order they cooperate with the researcher

in collecting the needed data. The researcher himself handles the distribution and collection of the questionnaires to and from the subjects in their schools. The time of the distribution has been negotiated with English teachers so that their classes are not be disturbed.

Before distributing the questionnaires, the research subjects have been briefed by the researcher about the purpose and the expected values of the research. The research subjects have also been told that their responses remain anonymous and that they should respond as honestly as possible to show what they mainly do to learn English. Specifically, they have also been told that there are no right or wrong answers or responses. They have been given an example of how to respond to 1-5 Likert Scale together with questionnaire which was translated into Indonesian language to ensure the respondents understand and avoid wasting time on explaining the meaning of the items. Then, the researcher remains in the classroom to ensure seriousness and attend any inquiry by the subjects. The school principals and English teachers have been invited to accompany the researcher, and if possible, talk to the students about the importance of doing research and responding honestly.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

To analyze the collected data, several procedures have been followed. First of all, scoring the response of the respondents in the given questionnaires,

and interviews. Afterwards, (RQ 1) is used to show the differences between male and female and language learning strategies. (RQ 4) is used to show ethnicities (Riau Malay, Minangkabau, Java, Batak and China) and language learning strategies use and situational factors and language strategies.

The Use of Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics has been used in order to get the central tendency (mean, median, and mode) of the response of the respondents in using the category of language learning strategies constructed in RQ 1 (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies) (Oxford 1990). The same statistics has also been used in analyzing the respondents' response in interviews.

4 Research Findings
4.1 Mean Score for Items in Each Strategy and the factor affected
1. **Language Learning Strategies Used based on gender**

Table 4.2   Language learning Strategy Used according to Gender

Strategy Categories	Mean Score		Total
	Male	**Female**	
Memory	3.9003	3.9042	3.9022
Cognitive	3.8757	3.8659	3.8709
Compensation	3.8742	3.9039	3.8888
Metacognitive	4.0120	3.9892	4.0008
Affective	4.0931	4.0910	4.0921
Social	3.9502	3.9184	3.9346
Mean score	3.9395	3.9329	3.9362

In this case the differences mean score between gender is not so significant, from the table displayed we can see that in mean score for male is 3.9003 and female students is 3.9042. In cognitive strategy male students got 3.8757 and female students got 3.8659. In compensation strategy male students got 3. 8742 and female students got 3.9039. if we see metacognitive strategies mean score for male students is 4.0120 and female students is 3.9892 followed by affective strategy which mean score for male students is 4.0931 and female students is 4.0910 and then followed by social strategy which male students got 3.9502 and female students is 3.9184.

2. Language Learning Strategies Used based situational (types of school)

Table 4.18 Language Learning Strategies Used based situational

Strategy Categories	Type of School		Total
	State School	Private School	
Memory	3.9017	3.9028	3.9022
Cognitive	3.8604	3.8814	3.8709
Compensation	3.9008	3.8767	3.8888
Metacognitive	4.0089	3.9928	4.0008
Affective	4.1008	4.0833	4.0921
Social	3.9608	3.9083	3.9346
Mean Score	3.9403	3.9322	3.9362

The data displayed showed that in Memory strategy students from State School with mean score 3.9017 followed by students from Private School with mean score 3.9028. In Cognitive strategy students from state school with mean score 3.8604 then followed by

students from private school 3.8814 . In Compensation strategy students from state school with mean score 3.9008 then followed by students from private school with mean score 3.8767. In Metacognitive students from state school with mean score 4.0089 then followed by stusents from private school with mean score 3.9928

Then in Affective students from state school with mean score followed by students from state school with mean score 4.1008 followed by students from private school with mean score 4.0833, then in Social strategy students from state school with mean score 3.9608 then followed by students from private school with mean score 3.9083. From totally Mean Score students from state school got mean score 3.9403 then followed by students from private school with mean score 3.9322.

5. Conclusion

The research findings provide valuable insight into learning strategies used by the English as a Foreign Language students at Senior High School in Pekanbaru. The results obtained show that strategies that are related to self-directed learning such as Metacognitive, Cognitive and Affective strategies are more frequently used. Even though more students use or know these strategies in order to improve on their English, but only a handful would actually use these strategies to learn English in the classroom. Anderson (1991) notes that it is not enough just to know about the

strategies. Students should also understand how to apply them strategically. They also need to know how to assess the success of a given strategy and apply corrective feedback to its use. Lavine and Crookall, and Oxford (1989) suggest that strategy training must be presented explicitly so that learners understand why certain strategies are important, the way in which the strategies can be used and the means for evaluating their effectiveness.

Language curriculum planners and those who are responsible for education in Indonesia in general, and in particular, in Pekanbaru municipality, should consider the various characteristics of the learners found in the language classroom. Use of appropriate learning strategies can enable students to take responsibility for their own learning by enhancing learner autonomy, independence and self-direction (Dickinson 1987). These factors are important because learners need to keep on learning when they are no longer in a formal classroom setting (Oxford & Crookall 1989).

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study examined the significant factors influencing the preferences of learning strategies among university students. Thus, this study could be considered as a guideline for future research regarding the strategies used by the learners at different levels and different learning contexts (for example, elementary, junior and senior high school students and university students). In replicating this study, it is suggested that a study be conducted to compare students studying English in the English department in Riau universities or other parts of Indonesia. This way, it can be ascertained if the findings of this study are applicable to other parts of the country. It would also be a good idea to follow up this study with interviews of both students and teachers or lecturers to gain more information about the processes and factors that influence strategy use in learning English as a foreign language in the Indonesian context. Teachers or lecturers close with students may be able to give in-depth and significant information about the use of strategy by the students.

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