

STRATEGIES USED BY HIGH, MEDIUM AND LOW ACHIEVING EFL STUDENTS IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract

As an international language whose role and use are dominant in various aspects in this era of globalization, English is suitable to be used as the main provision for students to support their academics and careers. Therefore, it is very important to analyse the English learning Strategies applied by students so that learning has appropriate results. The Objectives of this research are to describe the types of English learning strategies used by high, medium, and low achieving students at Dehasen University Bengkulu, and to find out whether there are any differences in the use of English learning strategies among three groups. This was descriptive research. The population consisted of the students from two departments, namely physical education and Early Childhood Education year 2022-2023 were 159 students reported as students of the high (got A score), medium (got B score), and low achiever group (got C/D score). Purposive sampling technique was used. Purposive sampling technique was used. The instruments were students' scores of English mastery and SILL questionnaire. Data were analysed by descriptive statistics by using SPSS 16 as well as in finding out the differences use of six categories of English learning strategies among the three groups. The results were as follows. All types of English learning strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) were used by all groups in the "moderate" category that were in the range 2.5 to 3.4. Metacognitive strategy was the strategy with the highest rank of use, whether for high which has a 3.37 mean score or medium achiever groups which has a 3.40 mean score. Meanwhile, memory strategy was the strategy with the highest rank of use for the low achiever group which has a 3.26. Furthermore, there were no differences in the use of English learning strategies among all groups, as can be seen from the result of two-way ANOVA data analysis.

Keywords: English learning strategies, high, medium and low achieving students, SILL

INTRODUCTION

The success in English learning can be influenced by the strategies that the learners used. It seems undeniable that foreign language learners should be equipped with appropriate learning strategies to learn the target language more effectively and efficiently because language learning is an intentional and strategic effort (Chamot & O'Malley, 1990). The usage of appropriate learning strategies enables students to take responsibility for their learning by enhancing learner autonomy, and self-direction. These factors are important because learners

need to keep on learning even when they are no longer in formal classroom setting (Oxford, 1990; Khoshsima & Tiyar, 2015).

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is designed for students of English as a second language or foreign language. In Oxford (1990) language learning strategies have been classified into two classes and six categories. The first is a direct strategy that consisted of memory, cognitive, and compensation. The second is indirect strategy which consisted of metacognitive, affective, and social. Besides, he states that direct learning strategies are the strategies that are directly involved in the target language. These direct strategies require mental processing, yet the learners might do the process differently according to what type of direct strategy they used. On the other hand, indirect strategies allow learners to control their cognition. The learners may plan, arrange, evaluate, and even regulate their emotions and motivations. The indirect learning strategies are used to manage and support the learners in language learning without being directly involved in the target language.

English masteries are the potentiality of students in applying English into aspects of language skills, such as reading, writing, vocabulary, and language structure that can be achieved from their total of English score. In this case, the high, medium, and low achieving students are classified according to their University Grade Point Averages (UGPA) as follows: Firstly, for those who score an A grade or got an English score on scale 80-100 were grouped into the high achievers. Secondly, for those who score a B grade or got an English score on scale 65-79 were grouped into the medium achievers. Thirdly, for those who score a C and D grade or got an English score on scale 50-64 were grouped into the low achievers.

Each of students has their ways of learning strategy in English learning that is different from others depends on how they learn which tells us that appropriate learning strategy will get the result in improvement of proficiency and greater self-confidence in many instances (Wu, 2008; Nambiar, 2009; Bessai, 2018; Rianto, 2020). Besides that, each of students has different scores in English learning which means that English lecturers also should be able to know about the English learning strategies used by their high, medium, and low achieving students so they can decide the right treatment or strategies in English learning and teaching.

Those statements are very relevant to the topic of this research which is aimed to analyse the English learning strategies used by students at Dehasen University Bengkulu in English learning as the foreign language. It can be assumed that the strategy has turned into a general term to achieve goals in every field including the field of English language education as a foreign language. It means that learners need to know and use the learning strategy that suitable for them so that they can achieve good learning results in the English learning

optimally. Therefore, lecturers are expected to encourage students with right treatment to improve English learning strategies effectively and sustainably.

There are several previous studies related to language learning strategy. The first related research is from Rohayati (2016) entitled “An analysis of language learning strategies used by students of agribusiness department in learning English as a foreign language” which talks about types of English learning strategies most frequently used by students of agribusiness department in English learning. The Second related research is from Hidayat (2018) entitled “Language learning strategy used by successful students of Senior High School in learning English” which talks about the most dominant learning strategy implemented by successful students.

From the previous researches above, there are several similarities and differences that made the researchers of this study interested in conducting this research. For the similarities, there are, first, several previous researches used the same theories that used by one researcher to another, such as the type of English learning Strategies used by students. It made easier for the researchers to search and add theories that can support the researches. Second, the data collection techniques used by previous researchers are in the form of students’ English learning strategies are collected through a questionnaire (SILL and the students’ English masteries are collected through their English score.

This research is different from those previous researches because in the study of Rohayati (2016) she just analyses the type of strategy most frequently used by students less specifically as well as Hidayat (2018) that just focuses his research on analysing the language learning strategies used by successful students. There are differences in characteristics and variations of the process of learning and acquisition which can influence the use of the strategies both of successful and unsuccessful students as well as high, medium, and low achieving students. So that, in this research the researchers tried to find out types of English learning strategies used by high, medium, and low achieving students as well as to find out the differences in the use of English learning strategies among those groups in English learning as a form of effort to complement those previous researches by doing the research entitled “Strategies used by high, medium, and low achieving EFL students in learning English”.

METHODOLOGY

The design of this study was descriptive research. It aims to describe the types of English learning strategies used by high, medium, and low achieving students at Dehasen University Bengkulu, and to find out whether there are any differences in the use of English learning strategies among three groups. The population consisted of the students from two departments of Dehasen University Bengkulu year 2022-2023, namely physical education

consisted of Seven class and Early Childhood Education consisted of one class were total 359 students. Purposive sampling technique was used in this study. The researchers only used one class for each of departments as a sample of research were the students who get an English score on grade A, B, C, or D from two departments with total sample 159 students. The instruments were students' scores of English mastery and SILL questionnaire. Data were analysed by descriptive statistics by using SPSS 16. This research was carried out by taking steps to collect data, classify data, analyse data, and make conclusions. Therefore, before doing the research, the researchers did observations that aimed to collect data and select data related to research problems.

The data of this research was collected by using documentation. The steps are: (1) Preparing a questionnaire from SILL questionnaire (Oxford, 1990), as well as documenting the students' score in English learning that is conducted by English lecturers to categorize the students' groups of English achieving; (2) Making the transcription of the questionnaire into Bahasa Indonesia as well as checking it to certain that there are no confusing words or phrases and then collecting the students' English scores; (3) Categorizing the groups of students' achieving based on their English scores and then administering the questionnaire to the students.

In analysing the data, the researchers used descriptive statistic technique that displaying the data from the questionnaire in the distribution table. Then, the data was tabulated by using statistical formula to find the students' strategy in English learning. The statistical formulas used are mean and proportion. The steps are: (1) Categorizing the students into three group: high, medium, and low achieving students based on the results of the students; second, tabulating the use of six categories of English learning strategies among three groups and after that finding the overall strategy use by the entire groups as well as the category of strategy use by using Oxford' rating scheme (1990) and then describing the types of English learning strategies used by high, medium and low achieving students; third, tabulating the use of English learning strategies for each of students in each groups in order finding out the most dominant English learning strategy types used by those students. In deciding the technique of data analysis, the researchers tested the normality of the data from students' English scores through the test of normality in SPSS 16 namely Kolmogorov-Smirnov.

The questionnaire (SILL) has been tried out many times by some previous researchers who conducted study regarding learning strategies. SILL already been used to investigate learning strategy in many countries, such as Portuguese, Chinese, Russia, Japan, and even in Indonesia. Thus, data from the questionnaire are already valid in order to find out the types of English learning strategies used among high, medium, and low achieving students. Besides

that, the data from documentation of Students' English score are validated test of normality namely Kolmogorov-Smirnov. By the result of the test, the researchers can decide that the data can be analysed through statistic parametric or non-parametric. It means that, if the data are normal so the data are considered as parametric which can be analysed through two-way ANNOVA test otherwise if the data are not normal so the data are considered as non-parametric which then is analysed through Wilcoxon test. Those ways are used to find out the differences in the use of English learning strategies among high, medium, and low achieving students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this part, the researchers show the result of the research. The researchers found that all types of English learning strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) were used by all groups in the “moderate” category.

The most frequently used English learning strategy for the high achiever group was the metacognitive strategy which has 3.37 mean score categorized as “moderate use” with a total of 33 students or 26% as the dominant users. The most frequently used English learning strategy for the medium achiever group was the metacognitive strategy which has 3.40 mean score categorized as “moderate use” with a total of 6 students or 20% as the dominant users. The most frequently used English learning strategy for the low achiever group was the memory strategy which has 3.26 mean score categorized as “moderate use” with a total of 1 student or 33% as the dominant users

Metacognitive strategy was the strategy with the highest rank of use, whether for high or medium achiever groups. Meanwhile, memory strategy was the strategy with the highest rank of use for the low achiever group.

Furthermore, there were no differences in the use of English learning strategies among all groups, as can be seen from the result of two-way ANOVA data analysis.

Table 1. The types of English learning strategies used among high, medium, and low achiever groups

English Learning Strategy	Student Group					
	High Achiever		Medium Achiever		Low Achiever	
	Mean Score	Strategy Use	Mean Score	Strategy Use	Mean Score	Strategy Use
Memory	3.06	Moderate	3.13	Moderate	3.26	Moderate
Cognitive	3.03	Moderate	3.01	Moderate	3.19	Moderate
Compensation	3.36	Moderate	3.32	Moderate	3.22	Moderate
Metacognitive	3.37	Moderate	3.40	Moderate	3.22	Moderate
Affective	3.12	Moderate	3.17	Moderate	2.89	Moderate
Social	3.06	Moderate	3.34	Moderate	3.06	Moderate

The table above shows the use of English learning strategy types, the mean score and the category of strategy use for the students in the whole group. The result shows that six types of English learning strategies were used by high, medium, and low achiever group namely, strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social. Both high and medium achiever groups, the metacognitive strategy has the highest rank than others which has a 3.37 mean score on the high achiever group and 3.40 mean score on medium achiever group. Besides, both of them, cognitive strategies were in similar rank that was in the lowest rank than others which has a 3.03 mean score on high achiever and 3.01 mean score on medium achiever group. Meanwhile, in low achiever group memory strategy has the highest rank than others which has a 3.26 mean score. Besides, affective strategy was in the lowest rank than others which has 2.89 mean score. However, all mean score for six strategy categories of the whole groups were in a similar range that was in range 2.5 to 3.4 which means that they were categorized as moderate use (Oxford, 1990). It indicates that students of high, medium, and low achiever groups were usually using the six categories in their English learning.

Table 2. The differences in the use of English learning strategy among high, medium, and low achiever

English Score	English Grade	Student Group	N	%
80-100	A	High Achiever	126	79%
65-79	B	Medium Achiever	30	19%
50-64	C/D	Low Achiever	3	2%
Total			159	100%

The table above shows that 159 students reported as students of the high, medium, and low achiever group. There were 126 students or 79% who grade A categorized as students of high achiever group. Then, there were 30 students or 19% who grade B categorized as students of medium achiever group. Then, there were 3 students or 2% who grade C/D categorized as students of low achiever group. By using the Kolmogrov-Smirnov test normality then the result shows that the data were distributed normally. It means that the data were parametric and can be analyzed through two-way ANOVA test procedure in SPSS 16 program as the following result: $F < F_{crit}$ or $0,794595 < 6,388233$ with significance level 0.05. F_{score} was lower than F_{crit} , thus H_0 was accepted and H_1 was rejected. This means that there were not any differences in the use of English learning strategies among high, medium, and low achieving students of the institution in English learning.

By comparing F_{score} and F_{crit} the researchers found that there were no differences in the use of English learning strategies among high, medium, and low achieving students in English learning. So, it could be assumed that English learning strategies did not have a significant influence on students' English learning achievement.

Discussion

Based on the result, it can be seen that the six types of English learning strategy, according to Oxford's classification of learning strategy categories (1990) namely: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social were used by high, medium, and low achiever groups in their English learning. The result shows metacognitive strategy which has the highest rank of strategy used by both high and medium achiever groups with 3.37 mean score on high achiever group and 3.40 mean score on medium achiever group were in a similar range of category of strategy use that was in the range 2.5 to 3.4 which categorized as "moderate use with total 33 students or 26% as the dominant users in high achiever group and 6 students or 20% as the dominant users in medium achiever group.

The reason is that the students are aware that they are learning English. This is the first strategy explained by Oxford as an indirect strategy, which has functions for general management of learning. The involved strategies concentrate to centralize, arranging, planning and evaluating learning. As Kuhn (2000) says, learners with an awareness of the learning process will get the best result at the end. Supporting the ideas, Belet and Guven (2011) state that applying metacognition will enhance the learning process that is done by the learners.

According to Oxford (1990), metacognitive is as the awareness of the mental process in learning something that very useful for supporting the learning process of the students. Besides, it can be said that metacognitive strategies can help students to develop their thinking ability and their management ability. It also creates good academic achievement as can be seen from the data of this research which shows that the most students who use metacognitive strategy as their dominant strategy in English learning are in high and medium achiever groups which indicates that their achievement score in English learning were "very good: and "good" category.

According to Livingston (1997), metacognition is thinking about thinking. It refers to higher order thinking which involves active control over the cognitive processes engaged in learning. While metacognitive skills are usually conceptualized as an interrelated set of competencies for learning and thinking, reflective judgement, problem solving, and decision making. Activities such as planning how to approach a given learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating progress toward the completion of a task are metacognitive.

Besides, it can be said that adults whose metacognitive skills are well developed are better problem-solvers, decision makers and critical thinkers, are abler and more motivated to learn, and are more likely to be able to regulate their emotions, handle complexity, and cope with conflict. Therefore, it was very reasonable that the students of both high and medium achiever groups were tended to apply the metacognitive strategy as their dominant strategy in English learning as can be shown in the result of this research. It can be said that students from this institution were considered as adult learners with metacognitive strategy.

This result was in line with findings from some previous studies (Rustam, et.al., 2015; Fazeli, 2012; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011; Dhanapala, 2007), in which the metacognitive strategy category was the most used by the EFL students. Those result findings support the finding of this result which shows that the students' respond indicate that the students tended to apply metacognitive strategy when learning English.

Based on those explanations above, it can be said that metacognitive strategy has been priority for most students of two departments at Dehasen University Bengkulu namely: physical education and early childhood education in English learning. As stated by Fatimah and Sari (2018), a possible explanation about why metacognitive becomes the most preferred strategies because it allows the learners to overview the lesson, to pay attention in the classroom and to self-monitor and self-evaluate the language learning.

Metacognitive plays a critical role in successful learning. It is important then to study metacognitive activity and development to determine how student can be taught to better apply their cognitive resources through metacognitive strategy. Therefore, this strategy should be done optimally by students. While for the lecturers or teachers they should be able to trigger the English learning process of their students in achieving successful learning (Hayati, et.al., 2021).

Memory strategy, as suggested by Oxford (1990) reflects principles such as arranging things in order, making the association, and reviewing, which all involve meaning. Memory strategy helps learners establish their mental by linking all information through images, sounds, words or numbers. Memory strategy has a highly specific function like helping learners to store and retrieve new information. The examples of memory strategies: Grouping, associating, placing new words into a context, using imaginary, semantic mapping, using keywords, representing sounds in memory, structured reviewing, using physical response or sensation, using mechanical technique.

In this research, memory strategy was used by the low achiever group on the highest rank with 3.26 mean score or moderate use. However, all mean score for the use of six categories of English strategy used by those three groups were in similar range, were in

moderate use. Therefore, it can be said that there were not any differences in the influences of the use of English learning strategies among those three groups of students according to the rating scale of categories of their English strategy use.

From the result of ANOVA two data analysis, it can be seen that F_{score} was lower than F_{crit} , which means that there were not any differences in the use of English learning strategy among high, medium, and low achieving students of two departments namely: physical education and early childhood education in English learning. It happened because from the total sample of research or 159 students, the high achiever group was the most dominant numbers of sample with a total of 126 students. It means that the most dominant score of the SILL questionnaire was done and be influenced by high achiever groups. It caused the result of the use of English learning strategy among whole group in English learning being not significantly different. Besides, the results show that all means score for six types of English learning strategies were in a similar range that was in rang 2.5 to 3.4 or categorized as moderate use. It supports the ideas that there were not any differences in the use of English learning strategies among those three groups.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research is concerned with English learning strategies used by high, medium and low achieving students at Dehasen University Bengkulu from two departments, namely physical education and Early Childhood Education year 2022-2023 were 159 students reported as students of the high (got A score), medium (got B score), and low achiever group (got C/D score).

In line with the research objectives, it can be concluded that all types of English learning strategies classification based on (Oxford, 1990) namely memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies were used by high, medium and low achieving students at Dehasen University Bengkulu namely physical education and Early Childhood Education year 2022-2023 in the “moderate” category that were in the range 2.5 to 3.4.

Metacognitive strategy was the strategy with the highest rank of use, whether for high which has a 3.37 mean score or medium achiever groups which has a 3.40 mean score. Meanwhile, memory strategy was the strategy with the highest rank of use for the low achiever group which has a 3.26. The two-way ANOVA test showed that $F < F_{crit}$ which means there were no differences in the use of English learning strategies among all groups.

There are some keywords from the definitions of learning strategies, such as learning process, improvement, mental process, and behaviour. In short, learning strategy is mental process and specific ways done by the learners to encourage their learning process. While the activities or steps that they did refer to the strategy they used.

Based the research finding we can be able to identify, which strategies that most frequently used among high, medium, and low achieving students as well as the category of strategy use. The identification of the strategies itself can be useful for the teachers or lecturers in conducting the activities that should done by their learners which can help them to encourage the English masteries as well as can be useful for the teachers or lecturers in conducting the treatment that they should give to their learners in order to motivate their learners and improve their learners' attitude or mental behaviour in English learning (Getie, 2020).

Moreover, by identifying the learners' English masteries and the English learning strategies, the teachers or lecturers will be able to decide on how to teach the English learning material for their learners as well as to decide on which the English learning media or methodology that relevant with their learners' characteristics based on the learners' English strategy. In short, the description of students' English learning strategy and English mastery give the valuable contribution and useful information for the teachers or the lecturers in adaptation with their learners in English learning to decide things or tactics that should they do to make sure that their students get what should they get.

In addition, for the next researchers who are later interested to carry out the similar research in the same field to deeper research and analyse more discourse elements which have not been discussed in this research such as: attitude towards achievement in English, students' learning behaviour and academic achievement, and so on with more sample. Besides, the next researchers are supposed to use the supporting data from a co-researchers or expert validator to make sure that the results of the research data be more tested and valid.

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