THE IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Kata kunci: pentingnya pengenalan, strategi belajar, bahasa Inggris.

Abstract
This article aims at describing the importance of introducing various English language learning strategies to university students. Although in Indonesia, English has been studied from the basic education level, but such learning assessed less successful. It can be seen from the
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average students' English skills which is still very minimal. One factor that affects the less successful of English learning was the lack of students' knowledge about the English learning strategies. The result of the literature review showed that by introducing various English learning strategies to university students there are plenty of benefits both for the university students and lecturers. One of the benefits is it can help the university students to do some efforts in achieving the better learning target. Besides, the lecturers are also able to use the more effective learning method that can be applied in the class.

Keywords: the importance of the introduction, learning strategies, English.

A. Introduction

English is one of foreign languages in Indonesia. It was decided as the first foreign language as mentioned in the Ministry of Education and Culture Decision No. 096/1967 on December 12th 1967 (Kartono, 1980: 126 in Syahputra, 2014: 128). It is decided as the first foreign language based on some considerations. One of the considerations is because our national language has not been used as a means of communication in this world. Therefore, we need English to make a relation with others nations as English has been used to communicate internationally.

Considering the importance of English mastery for Indonesian society, English has been one of foreign languages which are learned in every level of education in Indonesia. However, although it has been learned since the basic level of education, the result of English teaching and learning is still not satisfying. It is seen from the average of students' English mastery which is very minimal. There are some factors which affect the lack successful of English learning in Indonesia. One of factors which affect the process of English learning is the lack of students' knowledge of various English learning strategies. Based on the author observation in the class by asking the students about the language learning strategies that usually use by them are not vary. Therefore, English lecturers need to
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introduce various English learning strategies to their students so that they are able to choose and apply the suitable strategies for them. By applying the strategies which are suited them, the purpose of study will be achieved well.

Dealing with the English learning strategies, there are some researches that have been done by some researchers. In 2001, Tyers did an investigation into language learning strategies used by a group of Japanese learners of English. The findings of this research have implications for the introduction of further strategies that could increase students’ learning capacity. It is in accordance with the author’s intention in writing this article, i.e. describing the importance of introducing English language learning strategies to university students.

Then in 2007, Cheng, Xu, and Ma did a survey of engineering student’s use of English language learning strategies. They found that meta-cognitive strategies are poorly employed by the engineering students, they have a tendency to use more cognitive strategies than social/affective strategies. In addition, engineering students have strong belief on the positive impact of strategy use on English language learning. However, the effective English language learning strategy application in this case is varies from students to students.

Thu did a research in 2009 about learning strategies used by successful language learners. He examined the language learning strategies employed by successful learners of English as a foreign and second language. The data from this research show that a wide range of strategies to learn listening, reading, speaking, writing, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary were utilized by the learners. The learners were found widely used social strategies in improving their English. The important thing to be noted is practice as the key in improving all four language skills as well as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. On the other hand, it can be said that practicing the language learning strategies has an important role in improving the English mastery.

In 2009 Arauz focused his research on language learning strategies and its implications for second language teaching. He found that English instructors can help the EFL students learn better by raising their awareness of language learning strategies. Besides, it
also can be done by highlighting the relationship between the strategy use by the students and the language learning assignments. In addition, it also can be done by increasing students’ existing language learning strategies.

Fewell did an investigation of Japanese EFL university students in 2010. He focused on the language learning strategies and English language proficiency. He found that the selection of language learning strategies use by the learners have an implication on the success or the failure of learning. He also pointed out the urgency of raising the students’ awareness of language learning strategies that can be used by them effectively.

In the same year, Zhou analyzed the English language learning strategy used by Chinese senior high school students by means of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. He stressed out that language learning strategies are important factors that affect students’ learning. He found that Chinese senior high school students use compensation strategies most frequently. The significant differences exist between male students and female students, the female students using strategies more frequently than males.

Gerami and Baighlou in 2011 examined the application of language learning strategies by successful and unsuccessful Iranian EFL students. They found that a wider range of learning strategies used by successful EFL students different from the unsuccessful students. The successful learners often used meta-cognitive strategies while the unsuccessful learners tended to use surface level cognitive strategies.

Pathomchaiwat in 2013 did a research about English Language Learning Strategies Used by University Students: A Case Study of English and Business English Major at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat in Bangkok. It is found that affective strategy, making an intelligent guess or compensation strategy, self-study skill strategy and self-monitoring strategy are most frequently used by the students respectively. He also stated that “aspect of making an intelligent guess or compensation strategy had the most significant affect on English learning achievement”.

Liu in 2010 summarized and reviewed the literature regarding language learning strategies and it’s training model, he
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pointed out the significance of language learning strategies to EFL learners and an applicable and effective language learning strategies training model, which is beneficial and very needed by both to EFL learners and instructors.

Samad & Singh (n.y) did a survey on the language learning strategies used by the UHB 1412 students. They identified the language learning strategy used by good and poor learners of English. They found that the meta-cognitive strategy and social strategy are used more by the students in their learning. In addition, they also identified the favored language learning strategies used by good and poor learners.

Those researches showed that the topic of language learning strategies is very interesting to be discussed and it means that this issue is very important in the English teaching and learning process. It has an important role in determining the success of English teaching learning processes.

B. Discussion

1. Teaching English to University Students

As a foreign language, English is learned in every department in universities in Indonesia. As mentioned previously that although English has been learned by most of learners in Indonesia since the basic level of education, however there are so many university students who have minim mastery in English. It is seen in the process and the result of the study in every semester. Some lecturers are often found some obstacles in English learning processes. As mentioned by Megawati (2016: 147) that in the practice of teaching English as a foreign language, both lecturers and students still face various problems. These problems are related with the students’ attitude in joining the learning process, students’ achievement, and students’ participation in conducting group activities.

Mastering English is actually has a wide benefits for university students. According to Fitriana (2012: 4), English is a potential skill in an entrepreneurship development. In her opinion, it is very useful for university students to master English well, so they are able to prepare for the future carrier. It is because English skill has become a special value for job seeker. Besides, by mastering
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English, university students who want to continue their study to abroad will be easier to get scholarship.

In addition, the importance of mastering English in social life in the globalization era can be seen in various perspectives. In the perspective of global communication, mastering English has a very strategic role. It is showed that mastering English is an access to science and technology innovation and it is the media of across culture introduction and appreciation.

The indication of claims in information and science and technology transfer from the source language (foreign language) makes English proficiency and translation activities are something that is important and necessary. English has evolved into an important medium of international communication. The importance of the role of English not only lies in the number of its use as a mother tongue as well as the broad dissemination of its use are geographically, but also due to the political and economic influence of countries that use English as the mother tongue.

The empirical reality pointed out that on the one hand, most of the reference books used in universities in Indonesia are still written or published in a foreign language (especially in English). However, on the other hand, the condition of the library and the reading skills of English texts of scholars and students in Indonesia lack adequate. It is because of their lack of English mastery. This situation has made English proficiency became the need of the academic community and so that the activities of the translation from a foreign language, especially English into Indonesian, is becoming increasingly important in the future for the development of science, technology, and the arts in Indonesia.

From an economic perspective, the ability to speak in English became an important activity because the world increasingly fused built on information sharing and communication sophistication. English language proficiency and Interpreter will play a vital role in the interaction between international company, state and Government. There are many cases of the failure of business relations due to the miss understanding and the failure of English language proficiency. Therefore, communication is no longer solely as a diversion of words but also concerns the transformation of
meaning and desire. For companies that operate in various countries, the activities of English speaking ability will be unable to pass both for disseminating information or negotiation.

From the perspective of the politics and culture, the foreign language (English) proficiency and the profession of translators is also indispensable. Nowadays, the international diplomacy is being the part of a country's external business including Indonesia. The success of the international dialogue is very dependent on the English language proficiency and the good translator. The English-speaking capabilities of various works of art such as music, film and literature an area indispensable to understanding global interests against the area's social life and their culture. Thus the English language proficiency has become a medium of cultural exchange or cultural diplomacy.

In the term of law, the importance of English language proficiency and the need for a reliable translator was getting into the demands of the community. The ability of speak English and translating some legal documents which has implications for the law is indispensable. The demands of the most destination countries requiring official documents translated into the vernacular also require the existence of an official sworn translator.

Moreover, English language proficiency can also become the media in building the image of the intellectual and cultural nation. Recently, more of learning resources are written and wrote by foreigners. Even the knowledge of our own culture region has to be learnt from books or writings of a stranger. In this case, usually the researchers and foreign experts coming to the area in Indonesia to examine the human and cultural area of the archipelago then return to their home countries. They poured the result of the research into English and publish the result of the research that can be accessed by the international community and even became a reference for us to learn about ourselves and our own culture. It's obviously an irony and become our common challenges especially for the academic community.

Seeing the previous reality, we should be able to change our circumstances and the paradigm of object from becoming the object of study switched into learning resources. The foreigners should
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learn about us and our culture from the Indonesian expert that already qualified in various areas. Unhappily, the habits and skills of our experts in English writing as an international language are very limited. In consequence, the research results, product and intellectual innovation property of our experts are not widely disseminated internationally. Therefore, the improvement of foreign language (English) capabilities for academics becomes an important need that cannot be denied if we want to align ourselves in the international arena.

Along with the era of globalization which is characterized by an openness of access to information, a sense of curiosity of the outside world to know about Indonesia with all aspects of human and culture can be fulfilled. With the capability of dual language i.e. foreign languages (English) and the Indonesian language or region language, it makes a possibility in translation activities. Beginning from the curiosity and the desire to introduce the local culture, various paper especially Indonesian-language literary works and outstanding local languages have been translated into foreign languages especially in English. Culturally, the translation works into foreign languages is of course could be a donation on the world civilization. Thus in order to introducing and appreciating the cross culture, the translation of literary or scientific works are increasingly required. All of this is only possible by mastering the foreign language (English) well.

See the sense of the importance of mastering English as a foreign language then there is no doubt that the university students need to have mastery of the language well. Therefore, in the process of learning, lecturers and students need to create a good cooperation so that the target can be achieved with good learning. As explained by Stern (1983 in Liu 2010: 100), had noted that learning outcomes are much influenced by learning process, and the learning process is affected by the learners’ internal characteristics and learning conditions.

2. English Language Learning Strategies

Many people who learn English became desperate because they don’t feel any progress. They also often feel frustrated and lose of motivation to study because they are not satisfied against the way
the teachers taught or subject matter that they earn. Whereas in reality a failure like this is often caused by self error. There is a wide range of English language learning strategy that could be applied by the students, but not all of these strategies can be applied to each individual. Therefore students need to recognize a range of strategies that can be used in developing English and then select the appropriate to it.

According to Oxford (1989 in Liu, 2010: 100) language learning strategies are behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable. Dealing with language learning strategies, Liu (2010: 100-101) mentioned some classification of language learning strategies, they are as follows:

a. *Wenden’s Classification*

She identifies the following three general categories of self-directing strategies:
1) Knowing about language and relating to what language and language learning involves;
2) Planning relating to the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of language learning;
3) Self-evaluation. It relates to progress in learning and learner’s responses to the learning experience.

b. *Dansereau’s Classification*

Dansereau (1985) draws a distinction between a primary strategy and support strategies, the former is used to directly manage learning materials, and the latter helps to establish an appropriate learning attitude and therefore aids in coping with distractions, fatigue and frustrations.

c. *Rubin’s Classification*

Rubin (1975: 43 in Griffiths, 2004: 2) described the definition of language learning strategies as the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge. According to the criteria of whether the strategy contributes directly or indirectly to learning, Rubin proposed a classification scheme that subsumes learning strategies under two primary groupings and a number of subgroups. She describes a typology of three major kinds of strategies: learning, (interactive) communication, and social strategies.
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Language learning strategies are further categorized in cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, which directly affect the development of the language system constructed by the learner. Rubin’s cognitive strategies include: clarification/verification, guessing/inductive inference, deductive reasoning, practice (e.g. repetition, rehearsal, experimentation, application of rules, imitation, attention to detail), memorization, and monitoring. Meta-cognitive strategies involve various processes such as planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and self-management. Communication strategies are less directly related to language learning since they focus on the process of participating in a conversation and getting the speaker understood or clarifying his original intention. Social strategies, which contribute indirectly to language learning, are described by Rubin as activities affording them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge. They include: questions to fellow students/teachers/native speakers, initiating conversations, listening to L2 media etc.

d. Oxford’s Classification

Oxford (1990 in Liu, 2010: 101) distinguished the learning strategy into two parts, they are direct and indirect strategies. The strategies which are included in the direct strategies are:

1) Memory strategies

Memory strategies such as creating mental linkages and employing actions, aid in entering information into long-term memory and retrieving information when needed for communication.

2) Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies, such as analyzing and reasoning, are used for forming and revising internal mental modes and receiving and producing messages in the target language.

3) Compensation strategies

Compensation strategies, such as guessing unknown words while listening and reading or using circumlocution in speaking and writing, are used by learners when a language
task is beyond their reach, to make up for their incompetence in the target language so as to continue the communication.

The direct strategies involve direct learning and use of the subject matter, in this case a new language.
The indirect strategies are:
1) Meta-cognitive strategies
Meta-cognitive strategies help learners to regulate their learning through planning, arranging, focusing, and evaluating their own learning process.
2) Affective strategies
Affective strategies enable learners to control feelings such as confidence, motivations, and attitudes related to language learning.
3) Social strategies
Social strategies, such as asking questions and cooperation with others, facilitate interaction with others, often in a discourse situation.
The indirect language learning strategies contribute indirectly but powerfully to learning.

e. O’Malley and Chamot’s Classification
O’Malley and Chamot (1985: 23 in Griffiths, 2004: 4) defined the language learning strategies as being operations or steps used by a learner that will facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information. According to them, the language learning strategies are differentiated into the three primary categories, they are:
1) Cognitive
Cognitive strategies involve the manipulation or transformation of the material to be learned, such as resourcing, repetition, grouping, deduction, imagery, auditory representation, key word method, elaboration, transfer, inferencing, note taking, summarizing, recombination and translation.
2) Meta-cognitive
In their opinion, meta-cognitive strategies involve “knowing about learning and controlling learning through planning (including advance organizers, directed attention, functional
planning, selective attention and self-management),
monitoring (checking, verifying, or correcting one’s
comprehension or performance in the course of language
task) and evaluating the learning activity (checking the
outcomes of one’s own language learning against a standard
after it has been completed)’
3) Affective or social strategies
Social/affective strategies mainly involve the learner in
communicative interaction with another person, for
example, when collaborating with peers in problem-solving
exercises.

Those classifications emerged from interviews with experts
and novices and theoretical analyses of reading comprehension
and problem solving.

f. Cohen’s Classification
strategies are defined as processes which are consciously
selected by learners. Cohen divided the learning strategies into
four strategies, they are:

1) Cognitive strategies
Cognitive strategies encompass the language learning
strategies of identification, grouping, retention, and storage
of language material, as well as the language use strategies
of retrieval, rehearsal, and comprehension or production of
words, phrases, and other elements of the second language.

2) Meta-cognitive strategies
Meta-cognitive strategies deal with pre-assessment and
preplanning, on-line planning and evaluation, and post-
evaluation of language learning activities and of language
use events. Such strategies allow learners to control their
cognition by coordinating the planning, organizing, and
evaluating of the learning process.

3) Affective strategies
Affective strategies serve to regulate emotions, motivation,
and attitudes, for instance, strategies for reduction of
anxiety and for self-encouragement.

4) Social strategies
Social strategies include the actions which learners choose to take in order to interact with other learners and with native speakers, such as clarification and cooperation. Rubin and Thompson (1982 in Thu, 2009: 5-6) described fourteen strategies that may help one to be a better language learner. They are: 1) good language learners find their own way to learn and take charge of their own learning; 2) they organize information about the language and their own program of study; 3) they are creative and experiment with the language; 4) they create their own opportunities to practice the language; 5) they learn to live with uncertainty; 6) they use mnemonics by organizing individual items into patterns and linking things together; 7) they make errors work for them and know how to deal with errors (don't stop talking for fear of errors); 8) they use their linguistic knowledge and rely on what they know such as their first language or other languages they know); 9) they know how to use context to help them understand the message by guessing and taking risks; 10) they need to learn to make intelligent guesses; 11) they learn expressions and idioms as wholes; 12) they learn ways to keep conversations going; 13) they make use of production techniques such as paraphrasing, using synonyms, and asking for help; 14) they use different styles of speech depending on the formality of the context.

In General, the strategy involves three aspects of language learning. They are the cognitive power (absorb, store, and retrieve information from the mind), meta-cognition (the ability to monitor the process of the mind), and social/affective factors (ability of working with others and controlling emotions). Each student should be able to bring together these three aspects. They should recognize learning challenges faced then perform some type of different strategies and combine these three aspects. By combining these three aspects can be done by learning with friends. So if an error occurs can be mutual reminding each other.

3. The Importance of Introducing English Language Learning Strategies to University Students

In the process of English learning, some students will face various obstacles. It can be an effect of lack of maximal students' achievement. Sugeng (2004: 73) explained that a language learning
process can be successfully done when there is enough knowledge on recognizing the learner’s characteristic and behavior. It means that by recognizing the problems which are faced by students, the lecturer or language instructor will have more attention to the students’ condition. It can be followed by the better preparation in learning process.

Dealing with the problems of students in learning English, most of students get problems in mastering the materials because they do not know the appropriate strategies that must be applied in learning. Therefore, it is important to the lecturers to introduce some of language learning strategies that can be applied by them in learning English. The focus on introducing the English language learning strategies is not on what must be learned, but how to learn English. Subiyati (1995: 26) said that learner needs to be motivated continuously to be enthusiasm in work harder for the sake of their success. One of the ways to realize it is by introducing various strategies in learning English that can be applied by them well.

Gerami and Baighlou (2011: 1574) suggested that all EFL students should be informed of available strategies and the important role of language learning strategies in the learning of English. It will be beneficial for the language teachers or lecturers in terms of raising the students’ awareness on narrowing the gap between the students’ language learning strategies and the teaching methodologies preferences.

Kunasaraphan (2015: 1857) pointed out that achievement in learning English depends on the use of language learning strategies. In addition, he also suggested that the findings of his research on language learning strategies might be used as guidelines for teachers helping less-successful learners to learn language effectively and become better language learners. It is because he found that some classroom tasks or activities are much easier for some students than for others is relevant to learners’ use of language learning strategies to assist them to achieve their goals. The students with higher English proficiency levels used language learning strategies more frequently, appropriately, and effectively than did those with lower English proficiency level.
Arauz (2009: 399) found that: “Effective language learners are aware of the strategies they use and why they use them. Likewise, skilled language learners select those strategies that work well for specific tasks. Less effective learners are also aware of their learning strategies, but employ them randomly, without a careful selection or focus of a particular strategy for an assigned task. Language learning strategy instruction can help EFL students “learn better” by raising students’ awareness of language learning strategies, by highlighting the relationship between strategy use and language learning tasks, and by increasing students’ existing language learning strategies”.

Moreover, Arauz (2009: 406-407) said that learning strategies are teachable and the format of instruction has to be direct and integrated. Through strategy use instruction, language learners are provided with hands-on practices and reinforcement opportunities in strategy use. The optimal goal is to help learners become effective learner in order to improve language performance and proficiency. Integrating language learning strategy instruction into ESL/EFL classrooms not only helps learners become more efficient in their efforts to learn a second or foreign language, but it also it provides a meaningful way to focus the teaching efforts in facilitating the acquisition of a foreign language.

Zhou (2010: 152) stated that “language learning strategies are important factors that affect students’ learning. In addition, Zhou (2010: 156) also stated that the researches and studies in the field of language learning strategies showed that learning strategy use is closely related to the students’ academic performance and teachers can assist the language learning process by promoting language learning strategy awareness and use. Therefore, teachers in senior high schools and universities should pay special attention to the use of language learning strategies among students and train them to use strategies that are beneficial for them on the basis of the differences in their characters. Only by combining strategy instruction with the teaching content appropriately can teachers achieve satisfactory teaching results”.

Liu (2010: 104) stressed on the importance of an applicable and effective language learning strategies training model both to EFL learners and instructors. Furthermore, Oxford (in Berko-Gleason,
1988 in Tyers, 2001: 299) said that “...the greatest benefit language teachers can bestow on their learners is to help them to learn how to learn.”

Griffiths (2014: 1) mentioned an old proverb states: “Give a man a fish and he eats for a day, teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime”. This proverb reminds us that we could not be successful in learning instantly. We should some efforts regularly to reach our goals. Therefore, we need some strategies in learning, especially in learning English language.

Dealing with the university students who get some problems in learning English, it is important for the lecturers to introduce some language learning strategies that can be applied by them. Some of language learning strategies have been mentioned previously. However, there are various factors which may influence the learners in choosing the learning strategies. According to Ellis (2008 in Thu, 2009: 12) assumed that the factors are from the learner factors and also social and situational factors. Then Oxford (1990, 1994 in Thu, 2009: 12) also mentioned the factors that influencing the learners in choosing the language learning strategies are: 1) motivation, 2) gender, 3) cultural background, 3) attitudes and beliefs, 4) type of task, 5) age and stage of second language learning (such as beginner or advanced learners), 6) learning style (general approach to language learning), 7) tolerance of ambiguity (students more tolerant of ambiguity used significantly different learning strategies in some instances than did those less tolerant of ambiguity).

Overall, Grenfell and Macaro (2007: 27 in Thu, 2009: 13) provided a summary of the learning strategies that: 1) the strategies that learners use are accessible and can be documented; 2) strategy is a construct that can be defined, and what it is and what it does can be described in practical terms; 3) strategies are important because they are associated with successful learning; 4) some learner types are more likely to use strategies or use them more successfully than other learner types; 5) strategies can be taught and learners, as a result, can develop more effective strategic behavior.

Based on the previous explanation, it seems that the language learning strategies which have been chosen by the language learners has an important role in their successful learning. Tang and Moore
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(1992 in Griffiths, 2004: 15) concluded their result of research that “while cognitive strategy instruction (title discussion, pre-teaching vocabulary) improved comprehension scores, the performance gains were not maintained upon the withdrawal of the treatment”.

C. Conclusion

Learning English is a difficult thing for students who do not understand the benefits and urgencies of the language. Therefore, in every learning process, the lecturers need to remind the students about the importance of learning English for them. By explaining some benefits or urgencies in learning English, it is hoped that the students’ motivation will be emerged. Furthermore, most of students who do not have good motivation in learning English usually feel lazy to study and they do not know what to do to make them interested in English.

Considering the previous reality, the lecturer should introduce some ways or strategies in learning English. However, determining a way or strategy in learning English effectively is not an easy thing. It is because every person has their own way in learning based on their various talent, cognitive style, personality, passion, purpose, learning experience in the past and so on. Based on the discussion above, we know that there are various benefits that can be gained by introducing language learning strategies to the university students. The benefits are for both the learners and instructors.
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