

THE LEARNING STRATEGIES APPLIED BY A HIGH ACHIEVER IN SPEAKING AT SMAN 2 KEDIRI

Eka Aprillia Putri, Agung Wicaksono, Suhartono

English Language Education Department

University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri

Kediri, Indonesia

ekaaprillia Putri221@gmail.com , agungwicaksono@unpkediri.ac.id, suhartono.unp@gmail.com

Abstract

This aim of this research is to find out the learning strategies are factors that help the student to learn foreign language. The subject consisted of a high achiever at Speaking class in XI MIPA students of SMAN 2 Kediri. This research aimed to describe a high achiever's leaning strategies that are applied for speaking learning. This research used qualitative research. The method of collecting data was observation, questionnaires, and documentation. The result of this research showed that a high achiever applied almost all the learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990). A high achiever applied memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive strategies, effective strategies, and social strategies. Based on the result of this research, the researcher concluded that a high achiever mostly applied metacognitive and social strategies which were important to improve the students in learning speaking. The metacognitive strategies were included always notice English mistakes in order use the information to help do better, look for students to practice English, pay attention, try to find out to be a good English learner, and have a goal to improve English skills. The social strategies were always study with other students, study with native English speaker, ask question in English, ask for someone for correction in conversation and ask English teacher to slow down or say it again if do not understand something in English. By using the learning strategies in speaking learning, students will know that the learning strategies they apply are the best way to learn and overcome their learning problems.

Keywords – Speaking Skill, Learning Strategies, and ESOL

Introduction

Learning English is developing English language skill contextually according to the context, condition, and daily situation of the students. This is to produce a form of learning that is more in touch with the language needs of the students. Therefore, the existence of speaking is important and can not be separated from the existence of a language. The importance of speaking skills for the students will make it easier for them to find a good job or even easier to receive scholarship abroad. From that statement can be deducted that speaking skills is the most important element for students when they learn English. This statement is supported by Nunan (1991) that stated speaking is an important aspect in learning foreign language.

Speaking is one of the skills students must master when learning

English. Many experts define speaking in different ways. Nunan (2003) said speaking is an oral skill designed to produce systematic verbal speech to convey the meaning. Speaking productivity is measure of language proficiency and how to express one's thoughts through words. Harmer (2007) argued that speaking is ability to speak fluently by processing information, language and knowledge of language features.

In fact, many ESL/EFL students find it difficult to develop their speaking skills (Petersen, 2010). For reason, ESL and EFL student was the term was coined by some to argue that students studying English in an English-speaking country are not necessarily learning a second language. It can be a third or fourth language for students. English as a second language is also restrictive and for

students whose explanations are not fully covered.

According to Saville Troike (2006) a second language is the dominant language that is required officially or socially for education, work and other basic needs. Second Language is a specific approach to language teaching designed for those whose first language is not English. In addition, in Indonesia, the second language is the dominant language which is officially or socially required for education, work life, and other basic needs. Therefore, it is important for students to learn English especially for speaking in communicating. Speaking skills will develop well as long as students can find the right learning strategies.

In the learning process, students also need learning strategies to make successful in learning English, so the students will not blame the circumstances, materials, and teachers for their inability to speak. One aspect of developing speaking skills is the language learning strategies used by students themselves. Learning strategies are one of the factors that help students learn a language. According to Oxford (1990) language learning strategies are steps taken by students to learn language in order to improve their own abilities. Learning strategies have steps to improve language learning.

The concept of learning strategies is important in language learning. Language learning is a tool for active and voluntary participation, it is essential for the development of communicative competence (Oxford, 1990). Furthermore, Oxford (1990) explained that language learning strategies make learners faster, fun, more effective, and easier to learn languages. Many studies have contributed to understanding aspects of language learning strategies for second and foreign language learning. Learning strategies play an important role in improving learning abilities and are also

recommended methods for students to learn languages.

Some experts classify learning strategies into several categories. O'Malley & Chamot (1990) combine three components in language learning strategies are such as metacognitive, cognitive, and socio affective. Further, Oxford (1990) consists of two main strategies, namely direct and indirect strategies. The direct strategy is a strategy that directly involves the target language. The direct strategy is divided into three strategies: memory, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. The indirect strategy is a strategy that supports and manages language learning without directly involving the target language. It is also categorized into three categories: metacognitive strategies, effective strategies, and social strategies.

Based on the descriptive above, it can be seen that Oxford's learning strategies is one of the most useful strategy manuals for training learning strategies available today that has equipped with an inventory of language learning strategies that can find out what strategies the learner is using.

Language learning strategies can be interpreted as tools for active engagement and appropriate self-direction resulting in increased proficiency and confidence. The students who used learning strategies will be most effective during their learning. As a result, they know that the strategies they are using is the best way to learn and overcome their English learning problem (Griffiths, 2010). The selection of learning strategies is essential in the learning process because it can help students to learn more easily and master the material provided.

In fact, students have different ways of studying and different abilities in learning languages (Ang, Embi and Yunus, 2017). Essentially, the students direct their learning to the target language in a conscious, organized way, and practice the language effectively to retain

and apply the knowledge acquired. They also need proper strategy instruction and training to make them aware of the existence of their strategies. For that reason, the use of learning strategies is the key to high achiever success. A High achiever is someone who knows what it takes to succeed in school and is willing to put in the time and effort. They are also known to be good language learners.

From that explanation, it can be assumed that the high achiever or good learners is a student who is successful in schools that score high or pass the standards set by the school. That statement was supported by Rubin (1975). He said that good learners have a strong desire to communicate, are not afraid to make mistakes to learn and communicate. Additionally, they are accurate guessers, looking for language patterns, creating opportunities to speak, and monitoring their own learning.

Additionally, according to Maryellen Weimer (2014) the characteristics of good learners were (1) the good learners are eager to understand, (2) the good learners understand that a lot of learning is not fun, (3), the good learners are curious, (4) the good learners fear failure, but is an advantage, (5) the good learners share what they have learned, (5) the good learners make knowledge their own, (6) the good learners never run out of questions, and (7) the good learners own knowledge.

Based on the researcher's observation to some students at High School SMAN 2 Kediri, there are several high achievers who applied interesting learning strategies in learning speaking. Therefore, this research aims to describe the learning strategies were applied by a high achiever in speaking class at SMAN 2 Kediri. In this research would be able to finds the results of any strategies that are applied in their learning so it can be a reference for learners who find it difficult to learn foreign language or second language.

Methodology

A. Setting and Participant

This research was conducted at high school SMAN 2 Kediri in the academic year 2022/2023. The place was chosen because SMAN 2 Kediri is one of the favorite schools in Kediri according to the University Entrance Test Institute Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education Indonesia 2022. In addition, SMAN 2 Kediri also has several awards for the English language competition in 2022: the 2nd place winner at the National League level English Olympiad and 3rd winner in English competition by CV Divya Cahya National. This research was held in October 2022 – December 202 which was only taken from speaking class.

The participant of this research was the eleven grade XI MIPA students in the speaking class. The research subject was taken by one of the students who is a high achiever in the class. The selection of the data based on academic grades, English achievement, and recommendation from English teachers.

B. Data Collection

This research used qualitative research. According to Ary, et al. (2010:22), qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of human engaged in the natural environment. In qualitative research, the data was taken from observation checklist, questionnaires, and documentation.

First is observation. In this condition, the researcher acted as an observer. This is line with Ary et al (2010) stated that the five attitudes that qualitative observation researchers carry out are as full participants, participants as observers, observers as participants, complete observers, and collaborative partners.

At the time of observation in English speaking class, the researcher brought observation checklist that matches the required data. The observation checklist

was adapted of the Strategy Inventory for Languages Learning (SILL) Version 7.0 was developed by Oxford (1990) ESL/EF. The observation checklist included six strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, effective, and social strategies. In collecting the data, the researcher checked the checklist to see if a high achiever was doing the same as the statement in the observation checklist in the speaking class.

Second is questionnaires. The questionnaires are written multi statement instrument that requires respondents to respond by writing down their responses or selecting items from the available responses (Mackey and Suran, 2015). In this research, the researcher used a questionnaire to collect data, because by using a questionnaire the answers from the respondents were well organized.

The questionnaires were also adopted of the strategy inventory for languages learning (SILL) Version 7.0 was developed by Oxford (1990) for ESL/EFL. The questionnaires included six strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, effective, and social strategies. The questionnaire applied 5-choice response format: 1 (never), 2 (seldom), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), and 5 (Always).

Third is documentation. In this documentary data collection technique, the researcher took photo when a high achiever used learning strategies when leaning in English speaking class. In addition, she documented a high achiever's achievement in speaking to support the data.

C. Data Analysis Technique

After, the researcher collected data from observation checklists, questionnaires and documentation, the data is sorted and reduced to find the necessary data or main data about learning strategies based on the researcher' Oxford theory. Data obtained from observation checklist combined

from the results of the questionnaire. The researcher also collected documentation data as supporting evidence related to the research.

Then is analyzing the data. This step explains how the data is presented because this type of research is qualitative. The researcher convey data through detailed descriptive research findings. At this stage, after the researcher collects data from observation checklists, questionnaires, and documentation, the researcher presented data from each strategy.

At this last stage, before the researcher writes the conclusion, the researcher checks the data, if the data is incomplete the researcher tries to find the data. However, if the data is complete, the researcher makes conclusions based on the findings of the data analysis. The conclusion in qualitative research is to expect new findings that have never existed before. These findings can be in the form of a description of an object that was previously unclear so that when examined it becomes clearer.

Finding and Discussion

A. Findings

After going through the process if the collecting the data, the researcher found several learning strategies that a high achiever in XI MIPA 6 class applied in speaking. The data was gotten from an observation checklist and questionnaire. The data presented described learning strategies that applied by a high achiever in speaking.

The questionnaires have 30 statements or called sub indicator of strategies inventory for language which is consist of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Whereas to know a high achiever student's learning strategy, the questionnaire consists of Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often and Always.

1. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies has a functional role for storing and retrieving new information. Memory strategies help learners retain important things heard or read in a new language. This is aimed at broadening the knowledge base.

Based on the result of questionnaires, it was found 5 sub indicators of memory strategies only 3 were used by a high achiever. First, she often reviewed English lessons. when class has not started, she always reviews the material that was yesterday or that will be taught by the teacher. This can be seen during class observation, she read the material over and over again so that when class started she can make progress day by day to learn English better.

The second, she sometimes used new English words into sentences so can remember them. Third, she sometimes physically acted out the English vocabulary. This statement happened in observation class, when she did the roleplay, she acted out the word “*confused*” by moving the head with the hand holding the head.

Several data above didn’t find from the observation, because the researcher didn’t find the high achiever used this type of strategies in the class. It can be conclude that only three strategies are applied.

2. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies refer to a students’s mental processes in performing a specific task, such as summarizing or thinking in order to achieve a goal and give learners different ways to undersatnd and learn a new language. Cognitive strategies are also great strategies for learners who are not necessarily aware of the importance of exercises.

Based on the result of questionnaires, it was found 5 sub indicators of cognitive strategies only 3 were used by a high achiever. First, she always learned English read and write notes, letters, messages in

English. Second. she always watched English movie. Third, she often tried to talk and practiced English like a native speaker. This statement was supported by observation in the class. When she was playing roleplay, she tried to speak and pronouned well in English. Fouth, she sometimes wrote new English words. What a high achiever usually applied in class, when the teacher was using English as the language for teaching students, she always wrote new words into her book if she didn’t understand their meaning.

Several data above didn’t find from the observation, because the researcher didn’t find the high achiever used this type of strategies in the class. It can be conclude that only four strategies are applied.

3. Compensation Strategies

The compensation strategies are good for learners to use a new language even if their knowledge is limited. Compensation strategies aims to compensate for an inadequate repertoire of grammar and vocabulary.

Based on the result of questionnaires, it was found 5 sub indicators of compesation strategies only 4 were used by a high achiever. First, she always used gesture and made guess when didn’t know the word in English. This was suppoted by the obsevation. When she played role play, she used gestures to act out the word “*hit*”. Second, she often used the same word/phrasa if she forget English words. The third, she often made new words if don’t know properly in English, this statement was known in observation class, when she was conversation with her friend, she didn’t know the word “*pencil case*” and therefore said “*pencil box*”.

Several data above didn’t find from the observation, because the researcher didn’t find the high achiever used this type of strategies in the class. It can be conclude that only four strategies are applied.

4. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are actions that go beyond mere cognitive tools and provide students with opportunities to adjust their learning processes. Metacognition makes it easier for students who are overwhelmed with new things and vocabulary to learn without confusion.

Based on the result of questionnaires, it was found 5 sub indicators of metacognitive strategies were mostly used by a high achiever. She always noticed English mistakes in order use the information to help do better, looked for students to practice English, paid attention, tried to find out to be a good English learner, and had a goal to improve English skills.

Several strategies above can be seen by the observation in the class; pay attention was found during classroom observation. When the others students were doing roleplay, she paid close attention to how the students said the words in English. Then she also looked for the student who can talk to English. This was happening in observation class, when the teacher gave practice to the students about the learning material. She quickly looked for her classmates to practice English.

5. Affective Strategies

Affective strategies help learners to manage their emotions, motivations, and attitudes during the learning phase.

Based on the result of questionnaires, it was found 5 sub indicators of affective strategies only 2 were used by a high achiever. First, she always used motivation to learn English such as encourage herself to speak English. This was proven during class observations that in her English book notes there were scribbles of motivational words such as *“don't be lazy to learn a foreign language”*, *“remember your dream to study abroad”* or *“study until you get bored”*.

Second, she sometimes gave a reward when succeeded using English. The data above didn't find from observation during teaching learning process in the class.

6. Social Strategies

Social strategies help learners to learn how to interact with others. Social strategies involve the behaviors of participants who choose to interact and cooperate with others.

Based on the result of questionnaires, it was found 5 sub indicators of social strategies were mostly used by a high achiever. She always studied with other students, studied with native English speaker, asked question in English, asked for someone for correction in conversation and asked English teacher to slow down or say it again if do not understand something in English.

Several strategies above can be seen by the observation in the class; practice English with other students. This happens when the teacher gave time for roleplay exercises, she invited her group to practice her roleplay before doing the real roleplay. The second by asking questions in English. This was found in class observations, when the teacher held questions and answers session in class, she always used English to ask questions regarding material she did not understand. The third was asked for someone for correction in conversation. This happened in the class. Before conversation class begin, she asked to her classmate, if there was a grammatical sentence in English that is wrong, she was told to correct it briefly.

B. Discussion

Based on the result above, found that a high achiever applied these all strategies. This finding is in line with previous research conducted by Ihsan (2022) who gave the result of the high achiever used all the learning strategies. However, in this research, a high achiever mostly applied metacognitive and social

strategies in their learning English especially in speaking. It is felt that these strategies are the most effective strategies for learning speaking. The popularity of metacognitive and social strategies is supported by the results of the questionnaires above, that a high achiever “*always*” used in honing her skills in speaking.

On the other hand, there are differences in findings with previous researchers. The first previous research conducted by (Meyretha Z. and Erly W, 2019). The result showed that high achievers dominant used cognitive learning strategies. The second was conducted with (Jabu and Asriati, 2021) showed that most high achievers used metacognitive strategies in their learning English. It also line with (Salikin et al’s research, 2017). The result also concluded that metacognitive strategies were the most dominantly used. The link between previous research and this research showed that metacognitive strategies tend to be the strategies most used by a high achiever. However, in this study, researcher found another strategy “*social strategies*” was also the most dominantly used strategies in learning speaking.

Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that a high achiever in High School SMAN 2 Kediri applied all the learning strategies that conducted by Oxford (1990). The learning strategies are memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The order of learning strategies’ choice responses were metacognitive strategies (5 *always applied*), social strategies (5 *always applied*), compensation strategies (2 *always applied*, 2 *often applied*), cognitive strategies (2 *always applied*, 1 *often applied*), memory strategies (1 *often applied*, 2 *sometimes applied*), and affective strategies (1 *always applied*, 1 *sometimes applied*).

On the other hand, the learning strategies most dominant applied were metacognitive and social strategies. The metacognitive strategies were included always notice English mistakes in order use the information to help do better, look for students to practice English, pay attention, try to find out to be a good English learner, and have a goal to improve English skills. The social strategies were always study with other students, study with native English speaker, ask question in English, ask for someone for correction in conversation and asked English teacher to slow down or say it again if do not understand something in English.

Finally, the researcher points out that it is very important to use different learning strategies when learning a foreign language, especially speaking. In fact, for students themselves, they must know what strategies can help them to learn English. They have to choose the strategy they need to learn and analyze which strategy is most suitable for their own learning to improve their ability in English.

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