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Students Learning Strategies in EFL Remote Learning Environment in English Language Learners at Majalengka University

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Abstract

Language learning strategies (LLSs) are believed to be influenced by individual differences as well as environmental and contextual factors. Therefore, the effective use of LLSs is determined by various factors, including both learning and learner variables. This dynamic and complex nature of LLSs renders it appropriate to use a qualitative approach to undertake research into this issue. This paper details the qualitative findings from English LLSs among student at Majalengka University. The data was gathered from Questionnaires with 10 English as a foreign language (EFL). Interviews were conducted in lasting 30 to 40 minutes. The interview questions for students focused on their general attitudes and lived experiences of LLSs. Similarly, the interview questions for EFL staff were structured around their general attitudes. The interview data were translated into English, rechecked, and thematically analyzed. The findings are of a textual and interpretative nature with emerging themes and issues related to the attitudes towards and actual use of LLSs among the target learners.

Keywords: language learning strategies, second language learning, online learning.

Introduction

All students should have learning strategy when they are learning English. The learning strategy is a device in guiding the learners to accelerate their knowledge to master what contents they will learn. The learning strategy also helps the learners understand the specific information from the subject they learn besides it can focus their attention on the target they want to achieve. The learning strategy does not come automatically in trained well. Also, it needs a serious attention to select the learning strategy based on the goal they want to reach. It can be also said that learning strategy plays a very important role to get the content of the subject the students read. Reiss (2005) says, all students need to use the learning strategies because the learning strategies overcome the challenge of learning a new language while trying to use the language to learn the context. In other words, to learn English as a foreign language, the students get some challenges or difficulties to

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use the language in their daily life therefore, the learning strategy is used to help them overcome the difficulties.

Earlier, it was also observed that successful learners are capable of using various learning strategy properly compared with the unsuccessful learners (Oxford, 1996; Makmuroh, 2021). In brief, we can assume that there is a strong comparison of strategy learning used between the successful and unsuccessful learners. Therefore, it is interesting to know what strategies that successful and unsuccessful learners do in learning English so that it gives some information or the teacher, especially to help students learn better.

Oxford (1990) categorized Language Learning Strategies (LLS) into six aspects; cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social, in which it represents both in direct and indirect toward learners' behavior and activities. This present study focused on the most frequently used strategy by the successful and unsuccessful senior high school students and describe the difference of strategy used by them. In addition, the result of this study can hopefully provide a benefit that covers a facilitation to enhance teaching and learning quality by knowing the students' strategy choice as it can help them to become more active, creative, and autonomous. For the teachers, this study could give some insight on the facts that some students are having difficulty in their learning because they are unable to adjust their learning into different kinds of strategy variations. By knowing this, teachers could reflect on their teaching by creating and accustoming various approach and techniques during the teaching and learning process for the students to be familiar with any activity that represent the strategies that the students could employed by themselves later on.

Literature Review

Learning strategies refers to a set of skills that students use to understand different tasks. These strategies range from techniques for improved memory to better studying or test-taking strategies. Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies (LLS) as specific actions taken by learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations. It's mean that we have to know and understand what student's needed. Experts have identified LLS into various classifications. Some of them divide these classifications broader or narrower than the others. The following table presents three classifications of language learning strategies proposed by different experts.

Different strategies used by learners reflect learners' variation in terms of gender, level of proficiency, learner's belief etc. (Dornyei 2005).

The choice as well as the way of combining and sequencing LLS can be different for each individual. However, there must be some powerful strategies to use because as Savile (2006) stated not all strategies are equal. There are some strategies that are more effective than the others. Thus

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the current study finds which strategies are used by successful learners or the high achievers, as they show that their learning is effective.

Method

The research design

In this section we are using qualitative methods to find out the results of our research, by interview we take some of students from our classmates. Besides that, we try another way to get another option, we use Google forms to the participants so, they can access the questionnaire easily.

Participants

There are 10 students English as a Foreign Language, that we have interviewed by WhatsApp messenger. The interview process was conducted at least 30 - 40 minutes. The age of the participants is about 21 - 25 years old, but most of students is 21 years old, and knows each other. So we try the interview just by WhatsApp messenger

Instrument and collection the data

For the instrument in this study we are using interview by WhatsApp messenger, is there 5 questions to describe the results of our research.

1. Do you have difficulty in learning because you cannot adapt to the environment?
2. Is your environment very influential on learning?
3. Does distance learning hinder learning?
4. Are you comfortable learning by using applications such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet?
5. Are you having trouble learning online?

After read and understanding the questions, we need response from the participant. And they have responded with the Voice note.

The data was gathered from questionnaires with 10 English as a foreign language (EFL). Interviews were conducted in lasting 30 to 40 minutes. The interview questions for students focussed on their general attitudes and lived experiences of LLSs. Similarly, the interview questions for EFL staff were structured around their general attitudes. The interview data were translated into English, rechecked, and thematically analyzed.

Finding and Discussion

In this section, the results of the data from the interview are presented. Based on the participants' reactions to the problem-solving session at the questionnaire, this case study lead us to believe there are several issues, there are students have difficulty in their learning because they cannot adapt their learning into various types of strategy variations. Student environment is very influential on

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learning (Hapsari, 2021). Investing in the right technology, teachers feel unsupported, the need for parent collaboration, a difficult of learning environment at home, ensuring Internet safety for students, monitoring & maintenance from the cloud, dealing with distractions, students struggling with isolation, and so on (Prastikawati, 2019)

Most of participant said based on the questionnaires is that All strategies are good enough based on the lesson that teacher teaches. Finally, we need to clarify and describe that student feel fun when teacher facilitated learning tools such us audio, power point, vidio and other media. According to Logan and Moore (2004) ‘...learner training is important and needs to be taught.’ (p. 1). So, student learning strategies must be taught do to english 4 skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing are skill that must be taught even though in pandemic situation teacher must give a best strategies of their learning and of course the learning strategies must be fun so the student still have a high motivation for online learning.

Most students indicated that strategies contributed a great deal to the learning process, especially by enhancing the effectiveness and quality of learning. The learning strategies selected contribute to the improvement of students learning (Prastikawati, 2021). It supported by Richards (2021) who states the proper learning strategies are required to improved the way the student learn. The attitudes of the student participants were clearly reflected in the following remarks:

"English learning is a complex and long-term process, so we need to have the right strategies in order to master the target language in the most effective way and in the shortest time. I believe about 80% of our success in English learning is determined by strategies. "

"I think learning strategies are very important in our success in learning English because having the right strategies will help increase the effectiveness of our learning process and reduce the time needed to achieve a learning target"

"Among the factors that contribute to our success in learning English, learning strategies are the most important. In fact, they play the deciding role"

The significant role of LLSs, in some cases, meant that students would encountered many difficulties in learning English if they did not use learning strategies in an effective way. Commenting on this issue, one student participant specified a case from her observations:

" I think strategies have an extremely important role in learning English, I have seen one IT [Information Technology] student struggling with English learning and when I approached him, I can say that improper use of learning strategies is what hinders him from progressing"

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"online learning strategies a little bit difficult due to pandemic covid 19"

However, learning strategies alone cannot determine success in English learning, despite their crucial role. In order to achieve the ultimate goal of mastering English, many student interviewees stated that there were other contributing factors. Those factors were, for example, an interest in English, an aptitude for language learning, effort investment in learning, or determination. The following comments typically illustrate the views of the student participants regarding this issue. To me, besides learning strategies, we need to be persistent and hardworking. Once we have set a certain goal, whether it is short-term or long-term, we have to try to achieve.

Conclusion

Learning strategy is a tool in guiding students to accelerate their knowledge to master what material they will learn. Learning strategies also help students understand specific information from the subjects they are studying besides being able to focus their attention on the targets to be achieved. The result of this study is that most of the participants said based on the questionnaire that all strategies were quite good based on the lessons taught by the teacher. Finally, it needs to be explained and described that students feel happy when the teacher facilitates learning tools such as audio, power point, video and other media.

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August 7, 2021

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