

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES OF HIGH PROFICIENCY STUDENTS IN THEIR ORAL PRESENTATION AT ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION OF PGRI RONGGOLawe UNIVERSITY TUBAN

Christina I.T. Panggabean

(State University of Surabaya (UNESA)/ christina306.cp@gmail.com)

Ingelia Kesuma

(University of PGRI Ronggolawe (UNIROW) Tuban/ ingelike30@gmail.com)

Abstract

This study is intended to describe 1) the language learning strategies used by male and female students with high speaking performance in their oral presentation and 2) their reasons of using certain language learning strategies. This study used descriptive qualitative method. The subject of the study were ten high proficiency students consisting of four male students and six female students. Questionnaire and interview were used to collect the data. The data from the questionnaire and the interview were analyzed descriptively. The result indicated that all of the students from high proficiency level used all learning strategies, including memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy. The students were categorized as medium users of language learning strategy. High proficiency male students used compensation strategy (3.85) the most frequently, followed by meta-cognitive strategy (3.63) and social strategy (3.37). Meanwhile, high proficiency female students used cognitive strategy (4.02) the most frequently, followed by compensation strategy (3.77) and metacognitive strategy (3.72). Both male and female students had some different and similar reasons of using certain language learning strategies for their oral presentation task.

Keywords:

Language Learning Strategy, High Proficiency Students, Oral Presentation

A. Introduction

Speaking a foreign language is not an easy skill to be mastered by learners. English language learners consider speaking as the most difficult skill since it needs great courage as well as preparation to speak well in the new language. Regarding this, Brown states speaking has five components namely: grammar, vocabulary, comprehension,

fluency, and pronunciation.¹ Students have to be aware of these components. Before they speak, they should know what they will say; therefore, they need to have many ideas in their mind about what they will say. In addition, students

¹H. Douglas Brown, *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices* (New York: Pearson Education, 2004).

must be able to use correct pronunciation; otherwise, it will be difficult for listeners to understand them. Moreover, in order to be able to speak fluently and correctly, they must have sufficient vocabulary and must be able to arrange their sentences so that they can be understood. If all these things are done well, the students surely will be able to speak well and their listeners will get the message easily.

One of the aspects that are involved in the process of developing speaking skills is the language learning strategies used by the learners themselves. Language learning strategies constitute a useful toolkit for active and conscious learning, and these strategies have the way toward greater language learning proficiency.² In addition, Oxford stated that the use of appropriate language learning strategies is a major contribution to the development of communicative competence.³ She assured that language learning strategies make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. It can be assumed that if inappropriate strategies are applied it will not result in

much improvement of proficiency to be communicatively competent. Thus, learning strategies are among the main factors that help to determine how, and how well, learners learn a foreign language.

Oxford divided language learning strategies into two types; direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are divided into three groups: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. Meanwhile, indirect strategies are divided into three: metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies⁴.

Memory strategies refer to the processes of encoding, storing, and retrieving information. The strategies applied by creating mental linkages, applying image and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action.

Cognitive strategies enable learners to manipulate the target language materials in direct way. The strategies are used by practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output.

Compensation strategies employed by language learners both for comprehension and production to overcome their limitation in knowledge. These can be done by guessing intelligently when listening or reading, and overcoming limitations in speaking

² Zoltán Dörnyei, *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition* (London: L. Erlbaum, 2005).

³ Rebecca L. Oxford, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know* (Boston: Newbury House Publisher, 1990).

⁴ Ibid.

and writing by some ways such as using language switch in speaking, and circumlocution in speaking and writing.

Metacognitive strategies involve learners in effective learning by focusing, planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

Affective strategies help language learners to anticipate anxious feelings, and reward for good performance related to language proficiency.

Social Strategies are used to help learners to understand the target culture as well as the language by asking questions to get verification of a confusing point and cooperate with others.

The language learning strategies can be applied in different language skills including speaking skill. One of the activities often applied in university classrooms is oral presentation.

According to Panggabean, giving oral presentation has been commonly practiced in EFL classrooms, especially at universities⁵. She further stated that in English class, giving oral presentation can be an opportunity for EFL students not only to learn to give presentation but also to improve their English ability orally.

⁵Christina I.T Panggabean, "Enhancing EFL Students Oral Presentation Skill Through Metacognitive Strategy Training." *Proceeding the Seventh International conference on Applied Linguistics' Language Varieties and Language Teaching in a Multiethnic Setting*. Bandung, 24-25 November 2014. (pp. 25-29).

Giving oral presentation is not easy for the students to do. To give oral presentation effectively and successfully, students need language learning strategies. However, the use of language learning strategies can be various from one student to another student depending on different factors such as age, gender, personality, the learning purposes, and language proficiency.

Among the factors above, language proficiency and gender have been widely discussed. Related to language proficiency, Griffiths summarized her study that higher level learners frequently use a large number of language learning strategies, or activities consciously chosen for the purpose of regulating their own language learning.⁶ Meanwhile, according to Nyikos, the potential for gender to affect language learning cannot be ignored.⁷ He asserted that women inform equivalent but often greater use of learning strategies than men, especially strategies for authentic language use, for communicating meaning, and for self-management as well as for general, social, and affective strategies purposes.

Some previous studies show that the level of proficiency and gender differences determined the use of

⁶ Carol Griffiths, *Strategies and Good Language Learners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 83–98.

⁷ Nyikos, Martha. *Gender and Good Language Learners*. In Griffiths, *Strategies and Good Language Learners*, 73–82.

Language Learning Strategy. Salahshour, Sharifi, and Nedasalahshour conducted the research entitled "The relationship between language learning strategy use, language proficiency level, and learner gender".⁸ The aims of the study were to explore the relationship between choice of learning strategies and frequency of their use and learners' gender, and level of proficiency in English. The results revealed that Iranian high school learners employed learning strategies with medium frequency; meta-cognitive strategies were the most frequent, while cognitive strategies were the least frequent. Proficient learners showed significantly more strategy use, as well as more use of metacognitive and social strategies. According to the results, females used learning strategies more frequently than males.

The second previous study is from Rachmawati who conducted the research entitled "Language Learning Strategies Used By Learners in Learning Speaking".⁹ The aims of this study were to investigate learners' language learning strategies (LLS) in learning

⁸ Farzad Salahshour, Mahnaz Sharifi, and Neda Salahshour, "The Relationship between Language Learning Strategy Use, Language Proficiency Level and Learner Gender," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 70 (January 2013): 634–43, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.103>.

⁹ Yuli Rachmawati, "Language Learning Strategies Used by Learners in Learning Speaking," *Journal of English and Education* 1, no. 2 (2013): 124–131.

speaking and the different strategies used by the high and low achievers of the class. The findings show that compensation strategies are the most frequently used strategies employed by all learners. Meanwhile, the highest strategy used by high achiever students was social strategy (M=3.85) and the highest strategy used by low achiever students was metacognitive strategy (M=3.30). From her study, it can be concluded that the differences in the strategies used by the high and low achievers in speaking are found in terms of the frequency of use, strategy category, and varieties of strategy.

It shows that previous studies prove that language proficiency and gender may influence the choice and the frequency of language learning strategy used by EFL language learner in learning English as foreign language.

This article is aimed to describe the language learning strategies employed by high proficiency students and the reasons for using certain language learning strategies.

B. Research Method

This research was conducted using descriptive qualitative research design to answer the questions of the study. It is applied to describe the use of Language Learning Strategies by the students. The subject of the study were ten high proficiency students from the eighth semester at English Language Education of Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe Tuban. The ten students

consisted of four male students and six female students. The high proficiency level of the students was determined from the students' grade of Speaking IV subject (all of them got A for the subject).

To collect the data of the research questionnaire and semi-structure interview were applied. The questionnaire used in this research was Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0; consisting of 50 items developed by Oxford.¹⁰ To confirm the data from the questionnaire, two male and two female students were interviewed. The interview was also conducted to know the reasons the students used certain language learning strategies. All of the data were analyzed qualitatively through identifying, classifying, describing, interpreting, and concluding which included verifying.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

In this section, the results of the analysis of the data obtained are presented as follows:

1. Language Learning Strategies used by the High Proficiency Male and Female Students

a. Learning Strategies used by the High Proficiency Male Students (see appendix).

Based on the table, the high proficiency male students were

categorized into medium users of LLS. They used all types of LLS, from which compensation strategy (3.85) and metacognitive strategy (3.63) were highly used, followed by the other Language Learning Strategies which are used in medium level. They are: social strategy (3.37), memory strategy (3.34), affective strategy (3.20), and cognitive strategy (3.12).

b. Language Learning Strategies used by the High Proficiency Female Students (see appendix).

Based on the table, the high proficiency female students were also categorized into medium users of LLS. They also used all LLS, from which cognitive strategy (4.02), compensation strategy (3.77), and metacognitive strategy (3.72) were highly used, followed by the other Language Learning Strategies which are used in medium level. They are affective strategy (3.36), social strategy (3.35), and memory strategy (2.97).

2. The Students' Reasons of Using Language Learning Strategies in Their Oral Presentation

a. The Reasons of High Proficiency Male Students in Using Language Learning Strategies in Their Oral Presentation

From the interview, the male students mentioned some reasons of

¹⁰ Ibid

using certain language learning strategies. The students stated that when they do not know some words, they will use other words to explain, paraphrase or use synonym. From SILL, it proves that 50% often and 25% always use a word or phrase that means the same thing. They will also ask their friends and their lecturer to repeat words or sentences when they are asked questions. From SILL, it proves that 25% of the students sometimes, 50% often, and 25% always ask the other person to slow down or say it again. If they do not understand something in English. From their statements, they used **compensation strategy and social strategy**.

The students also applied **metacognitive strategy**. They stated that they like to evaluate their mistakes in their speaking to improve their speaking skill. It proves from SILL that 50% of the students often and 25% of them always notice their English mistakes and use the information to help them do better. Beside that, after the presentation, they evaluated their performance whether they had performed well. From SILL, 50% of the students often and 50% of them always think about their progress in learning English.

Furthermore, the male students stated that they sometimes did not feel confident when they were speaking in front of the class. To

solve the problem they usually try not to look at the audience directly, but they look at the back side of the class. Using this strategy, the students felt that they could reduce their nervousness. It proves from SILL that 75% of the students often and 25% of them always try to relax whenever they feel afraid of using English, which is **related to affective strategy**.

In using **cognitive strategy**, the students try to remember some words by writing sentences or practicing the words in speaking so that it will be easier for them to remember the words. From SILL 50% of the students sometimes and 50% of them often use the English words they know in different ways. The students also made notes so that they can remember what to say in their oral presentation. It proves from SILL that 50% of the students sometimes, 25% often and 25% always use the strategy.

b. The Reasons of High Proficiency Female Students in Using Language Learning Strategies in Their Oral Presentation.

The female students mentioned some reasons of using certain language learning strategies. In applying **cognitive strategy**, the female students interviewed stated that they make notes to make them remember what to be said in their oral

presentation so that their performance in their oral presentation become better. It proves from SILL that 66.66% of the students sometimes and 33.33% often write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English. In addition, to make them more fluent in English, they like to watch the English movie. It proves from SILL that 25% of the students sometimes and 50% of them always watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English. The Statements show that the students applied **cognitive strategy**.

Besides that, when they know some new vocabularies, they have some ways to make them remember the words. They will write the words in their notebook and make sentences from the words. It proves from SILL that 83.33% of the students sometimes use new English words in a sentence so they can remember them. They also practice the new words with their friends. It proves from SILL that 66.66% of the students sometimes, 16.67% often, and 16.67% always use the English words they know in different ways, which show the use of cognitive strategy.

The students also applied **compensation strategy**. When they want to say a word in their oral presentation, but they do not remember the word, they will use other words. It proves from SILL that

33.33% of the female students often and 50% of them always use the strategy.

Related to meta-cognitive strategy, when they will have a presentation, they prepare the material a week before doing presentation. It proves from SILL that 50% of the students sometimes, 16.67% often, 16.67% always plan their schedule so they will have enough time to study English. And after doing the presentation, they always evaluate the result from their presentation to make them better in doing presentation for the next time. From SILL 33.33% of the students often and 33.33% of them always think about their progress in learning English.

The female students also sometimes feel nervous when they speak in front of the class. To solve the problem, they usually try to take a deep breath. From SILL 33.33% of the students often and 33.33% of them always try to relax whenever they feel afraid of using English. It shows that they applied **affective strategy**.

From their statements, there are similarities between male students and female students in using language learning strategies. They apply language learning strategies because they still have problems in their speaking skill. Beside that, they

want to perform better in their oral presentation.

The finding of the current research shows that the high proficiency male and female students have similarities and differences in using language learning strategies. They are categorized into medium users in applying language learning strategies. Compensation and metacognitive strategies are the most highly used by the male students. Meanwhile, cognitive, compensation, and metacognitive strategies are the most highly used by the female students. Both the male and female students use compensation, and metacognitive strategies highly.

There are various results of studies in the use of language learning strategies. The previous study from Salahshour, Sharifi, and Nedasalahshour¹¹ show that male students used meta-cognitive and social strategy more frequently and female students used meta-cognitive and compensation strategy more frequently. Meanwhile, Rachmawati¹² found that compensation strategy is used by both high and low achievers students.

It is interesting that both high proficiency male and female students use metacognitive and compensation strategies highly. It proves O'Malley and Chamot as well as Griffith's

statement in Anderson¹³ that good language learners make frequent use of wide range of metacognitive strategies.

Related to compensation strategies, Wardhono stated from his study that high achievers use compensation strategy the most frequently in learning vocabulary.¹⁴ His finding also reported that female students scored significantly higher in term of frequency in strategy use in five of the six strategies categories (memory, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategy). Meanwhile, the male students used compensation and metacognitive strategies the most frequently.

Another study by Taheri and Davoudi¹⁵ proved that there is significant relationship between the frequency of the strategies use and language proficiency. The frequency of compensation strategies uses increases as the level of language

¹³ Neil J Anderson. Metacognitive and Good Language Learners. In Griffiths, *Strategies and Good Language Learners*, 73–82. 99-109.

¹⁴ Agus Wardhono. "Learning Strategies Employed by 'SBI' High School Students In Vocabulary Mastery." Unpublished dissertation. State University of Surabaya, 2009.

¹⁵ Ali Akbar Taheri and Mohammad Davoudi, "The Use of Compensation Strategies in the Iranian EFL Learners' Speaking and Its Relationship with Their Foreign Language Proficiency.," *Journal of Education and Practice* 7, no. 9 (2016): 165–179.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

proficiency develops. Whereas, no significant relationship was observed between strategy frequency and gender.

The studies support Oxford's statement that learners with different language proficiency adopt different patterns and frequencies of LLSs in foreign language learning.¹⁶ In addition, Oxford reported that females are more aware of their use of strategies to facilitate their learning. As a result, their overall performance in language acquisition is generally better than that of males.¹⁷

D. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and findings above, it can be concluded that: all the students of high proficiency male and female students use all types of language learning strategies, from which compensation and metacognitive strategies are the highest strategies used by male students, while cognitive, compensation and metacognitive strategies are the highest strategies used by female students. Compared to male students, female students demonstrated a greater use of various strategies.

¹⁶ Rebecca L. Oxford and Judith A. Burry-Stock, "Assessing the Use of Language Learning Strategies Worldwide with the ESL/EFL Version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)," *System* 23, no. 1 (February 1, 1995): 1–23, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0346-251X\(94\)00047-A](https://doi.org/10.1016/0346-251X(94)00047-A).

¹⁷ Oxford, *Language Learning Strategies*.

It also can be concluded that the reasons the high proficiency students used certain language learning strategies that they still had problems in their speaking. To solve the problems, they used compensation strategy when they have their oral presentation to be able to deliver their ideas to the audience. Besides that, they use metacognitive strategy in order to perform better in their oral presentation.

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Appendix:

Table 1: Language Learning Strategies used by the High Proficiency Male Students.

No	Subject	MS	CogS	ComS	MCS	AS	SS	OLS	Mostly Used
1	MS1	3.11	2.71	3.66	2.44	2.33	2.83	2.85	ComS
2	MS2	3.22	3.28	2.83	3.66	2.50	3.00	3.08	MCS
3	MS3	2.66	3.50	4.83	4.00	4.33	3.50	3.80	ComS
4	MS4	4.00	3.00	4.10	4.44	3.66	4.16	3.89	MCS
MEAN		3.34	3.12	3.85	3.63	3.20	3.37	3.40	ComS
THE MOST STRATEGY USED									

Table 2: Language Learning Strategies used by the High Proficiency Female Students.

No	Subject	MS	CogS	ComS	MCS	AS	SS	OLS	Mostly Used
1	FS1	2.33	3.35	3.33	3.44	3.50	2.83	3.13	AS
2	FS2	2.77	4.00	4.50	3.55	4.50	3.50	3.80	ComS, AS
3	FS3	3.44	4.00	3.83	4.00	3.00	3.16	3.57	CogS, MCS
4	FS4	2.66	3.50	4.83	4.00	4.33	3.50	3.80	ComS
5	FS5	3.11	2.57	3.16	4.11	3.00	3.16	3.18	MCS
6	FS6	3.55	3.35	3.00	3.22	1.83	4.00	3.16	SS
MEAN		2.97	4.02	3.77	3.72	3.36	3.35	3.44	CogS
THE MOST STRATEGY USED									

Note:

- MS : Memory Strategy
- CogS : Cognitive Strategy
- CompS : Compensation Strategy
- MCS : Metacognitive Strategy
- AS : Affective Strategy
- SS : Social Strategy
- OLS : Overall Strategy