

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY SENIOR AND VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE IN ELT

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Abstract

The shift of teaching English from method to post-method has made many of researchers have interest in understanding the learner's factors of the success of language teaching such as multiple intelligence, successful language learners, learner motivation and learning strategies. Inspired by language learning strategies research, learners can learn the language both directly and indirectly. Direct strategies include memory, cognitive and compensation while indirect cover metacognitive, affective and social strategies. The purpose of the study is to reveal the language learning strategies (LLSs) used by SMA and SMK students and to explain the differences of strategy use for the two groups. Questionnaire and documentation were used to collect the data. The findings of the study reveal that metacognitive strategies is the most frequent strategy used by both SMA and SMK students. The average use of LLS of SMA students is 2.88, while strategy used by SMA students is 2.69. It means that the students use the strategies less than half of the time. Among the 50 LLSs "Paying attention when someone is speaking English" is the most commonly used by the SMA students as the while "Writing down my feelings in a language learning diary" is almost never used. While to SMK students "Encouraging myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake" is the most commonly used. And "Writing down my feelings in a language learning diary" is also almost never used. This finding has implication for English teachers at both schools to encourage the students to use the various types of the strategies in order to get better English learning outcome. The average LLS use of SMK students is less than SMA students. It implicates that the English teachers at SMK should work harder to encourage their students to use various learning strategies integratedly in the learning tasks.

Keywords: *LLS, SMA students, SMK students*

INTRODUCTION

There are many factors affecting English Proficiency. SLA experts often called individual differences. According to Ellis in Davies and Elder (2004) there are seven factors, namely Language Aptitude, Learning Style, Motivation, Anxiety, Personality, Learner Belief and Learning Strategies (Davies & Elder, 2004)

Furthermore, Freeman and Long (2014) provide more explanation for differential success a second language learners which cover many factors namely age, aptitude, social-psychological factors (motivation, Attitude, Personality) Cognitive Style, Hemisphere specialization, Learning Strategies, and other factors like memory, language disability, interest, sex and prior experience (Freeman and Long, 2014).

Language learning strategy is one of the learner's factors that often related to the language achievement beside multiple intelligence, learner motivation, learning style. According to Oxford language-learning strategies (LLSs) are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information; they are specific actions taken by the learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.

While in Westwood ensures that factors of reading difficulty among them are limited mastery of vocabulary, lack of fluency, difficulty level of text, weak verbal reasoning,

processing information problem, and inadequate use of Learning Strategies. From the three argument we believe that learning strategy is one factor which contribute on the succes of second or foreign language learners. Negleting the learning strategies can raise learning difficulty which resulted poor learning achievement.

Oxford (1990) had issued on comprehensive theory on learning strategy which covers memory, cognitive, compensastion, metacognitive affective and social strategies. Beside issuing detail theoretical description on language learning strategies that can be applied in developing English language skills, she also developed a questionnaire of Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) which includes 50 items based on the six strategies. Since then many researchers have been interested in conducting research on this area in forms of explorative descriptve and experimental studies(Oxford, 1990).

Language Learning Strategies and Language Learning Achievement

The findings in the area of language learning strategies have repeatedly demonstrated that the use of language learning strategies leads to better proficiency or achievement in mastering the target language (Lee, 2003; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Rahimi *et at.*, 2008; Griffiths, 2003; Hong, 2006; Oxford, 1993). O'Malley *et al.*, (1985) clearly highlighted the importance of learning strategies by defining them as “any set of operations or steps used by a learner that will facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information”. In a study (O'Malley *et al.*, 1990), it has been found that successful language learners have reported to use more and wider range of learning strategies than less-successful students. The same conclusion has been reached in another study (Green and Oxford, 1995) in which language learning strategies of all kinds were used more frequently by more proficient students. In a different study (Griffiths, 2003), a strong positive correlation between learning strategy use and language proficiency has been discovered. The findings revealed that advanced language learners have reported to employ learning strategies more frequently than elementary students. In this regard, language instructors should take their students learning strategies into considerations and try to recognize and identify students' learning strategies in order to support less successful student to achieve success and master the target language. Teachers can identify these strategies through observations, language diaries, questionnaires, interviews and so on. By doing so, teachers will be able to assist language learners to recognize and appreciate the power of language learning strategies in the process of second or foreign language learning. Through learning strategies, teachers can also help the students to maintain their motivation, autonomy, and confidence and keep on going and try to accomplish the goal of learning the target language.

There are empirical recent findings related to LLS, among them are:

First, Zare (2012) found that the employment of language learning strategies facilitate and improve language learning and assist language learner in different ways(Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011). Second, Afdaleni (2013) found that the more successful learners used more language learning strategies in theirreading comprehension. Whereas, the less successful learners used fewer languagelearning strategy in their reading comprehension(Afdaleni, 2013). Third, Ras (2013) proved that different language learning strategies among the students based on gender, ethnic group, parents' income, and academic results in secondary school(Ras, 2013). Fourth, Tam (2013) had shown that males and females had a significant difference in using Memory, Compensation, Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Social Strategies to learn English, with females using all of these strategies more frequently than males(Tam, 2013). Fifth, Madhumathi (2014) found that a linear relationship between the low proficiency students and their overall strategy use(Madhumathi, 2014). Sixth, Chand (2014) shown that metacognitive and cognitive strategies were used most frequently followed by social,

compensation, memory and affective(Chand, 2014). Seventh, Kashef et al. (2014) found that the teaching intervention had a significant effect on students' reading strategy use. The implications for teachers encouraging effective reading comprehension instruction through the use of strategies in EAP teaching contexts(Kashef, 2014). Eighth, Sukarni, et al. (2017) proved that *Strategy-based reading Instruction* is effective for teaching ' reading.The students found that *Strategy-based Reading Instruction* were helpful and practical for solving reading comprehension difficulty(Sukarni, 2017).

Overview on English at Senior High School and Vocational High School

Teaching English at SMA and SMK focus at developing students' competence to use the language to reach communication purposes in various context both spoken and written with more complexity compare to materials of Junior High School. The English competence in SMA or SMK covers three text types namely interpersonal, transactional and functional.

The goal of English subject of SMA and SMK is to develop learners' competence in order to acquire communicative competence in interpersonal, transactional and functional texts by using various English texts both spoken and written(Kementarian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Jakarta, 2016)

There are different time allocation for SMA and SMK. At SMA English subject has three learning periods for the tenth grade and four learning periods for the eleventh and the twelveth grades. However, at SMK the subject only has two learning periods per week for all grades. Seeing the time allocation limit the twelveth grade was added one more learning period. To achive the learning objective, teachers of English need to understand individual differences as mentioned earlier and more particulary draw more attention on students' language learning strategies as used by the students to get better achivement in English.

The objectives of the study namely:

- (1) To analyze the Language Learning Strategies used by Senior High School (SMA) and Vocational High School (SMK) students.
- (2) To explain the difference between Language Learning Strategies used by Senior High School students and Vocational High School students.

METHODS

The type of the study is descriptive quantitative. There are 238 participants which consist of 120 SMA students and 118 SMK students. The instrument which used to collect the data was Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire which had been translated into Indonesian. There are 50 statements of strategy which were constructed from six strategy categories namely Memory 9 strategies, Cognitive 14 strategies, Compensastion 6 strategies, Metacognitive 9 strategies, Affective 6 strategies and Social 6 strategies. The type of data was Language Learning Strategies used by students of SMA and SMK. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. LLS used by Senior High School Students

Descriptive Statistics was used to analyze the data of LLS used by Senior High School Students. There are 117 SMA students participated in this study. The result of Descriptive Statistics can be seen below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of LLS used by SMA students

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Memory	117	1,22	5,44	2,7400	,71420
Cognitive	117	,85	4,69	2,9139	,79219

Compensation	117	1,33	5,50	2,9694	,83904
Metacognitive	117	1,33	5,67	3,2283	,93938
Affective	117	,00	4,33	2,6234	,78251
Social	117	1,00	5,00	2,8377	,88127
Valid N (listwise)	117				

The table shows that the mean of metacognitive strategy is the highest (3.22). It means that the most frequent type of strategy used by the SMA students is metacognitive. While Affective is the lowest (2.62). It means that the least frequent type of strategy used by the SMA students is Affective. To make the result clearer, below is the chart for LLS used by SMA students. There are six bars describe the use of LLS from each type of strategy.

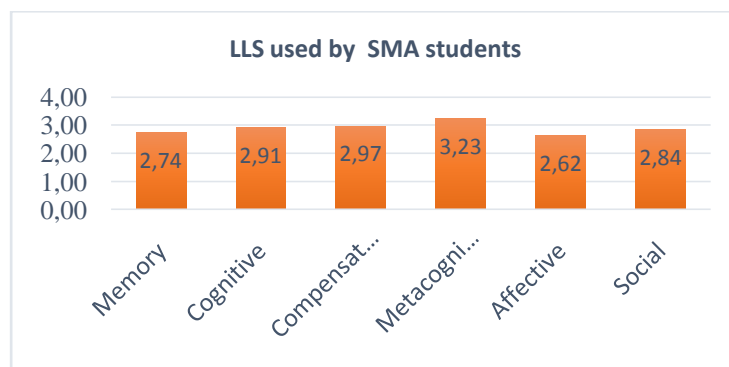


Chart 1. LLS Used by SMA Students

The chart shows the bar of metacognitive strategy is the highest as it is used most frequently, the second is Compensation strategy, while the bar of affective strategy is the lowest as it is used the least.

2. LLS used by Vocational High School Students

Descriptive Statistics was used to analyze the data of LLS used by Vocational High School students. There are 120 SMK students participated in this study. The result of Descriptive Statistics can be seen below.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of LLS used by SMK students

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Memory	120	1,00	4,22	2,5660	,60761
Cognitive	120	1,36	4,14	2,5857	,56625
Compensation	120	1,17	4,83	2,8100	,72893
Metacognitive	120	1,00	4,56	2,8673	,68331
Affective	120	1,00	4,83	2,5901	,70568
Social	120	1,00	4,67	2,7402	,71411
Valid N (listwise)	120				

The table shows that the mean of metacognitive strategy is the highest (2.81). It means that the most frequent type of strategy used by the SMK students is metacognitive. While, Memory is the lowest (2.56). It means that the least frequent type of strategy used by the SMK students is

Memory. To make the result clearer, below is the chart for LLS used by SMK students. There are six bars describe the use of LLS from each type of strategy.

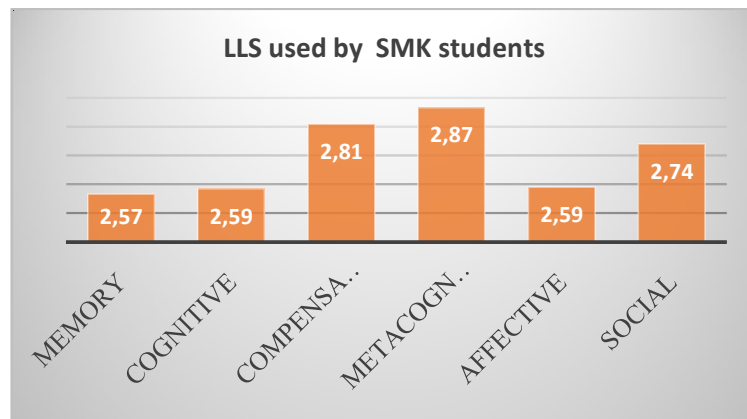


Chart 2. LLS Used by SMK Students

The chart shows the bar of metacognitive strategy is the highest as it is used most frequently, the second is Compensation strategy, while the bar of Memory strategy is the lowest as it is used the least.

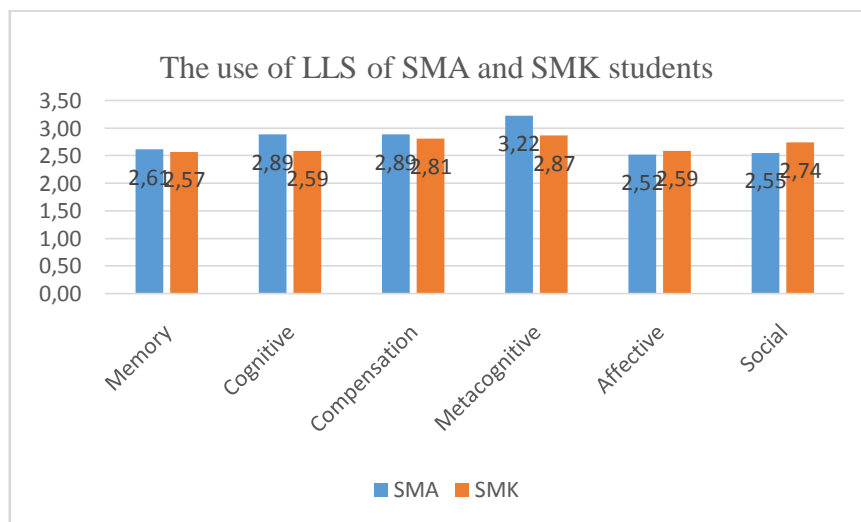


Chart 3. LLS Used by SMA and SMK Students

The most frequent strategy used by both groups of students is the same namely metacognitive. However, the sequence order of LLS use for both schools are different. After metacognitive strategy, SMA students use Cognitive, Compensation, Memory, Social and the least is Affective strategy, while SMK students use Compensation, Social, Cognitive, Affective and the least is Memory strategy.

3. The Average Use of LLS by SMA and SMK Students

The Average Use of LLS by SMA Students is 2.88. whereas, The Average Use of LLS by SMK Students is 2.69. This average is less than 3.00, or it is equal to "Some what true of me". It means that the students use the strategies less than half of the time.

4. LLS Frequently used by SMA Students

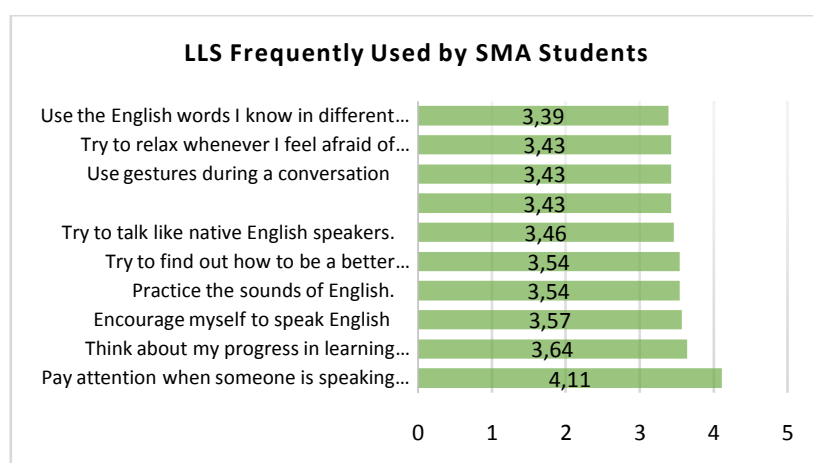


Chart 4. LLS Frequently Used by SMA Students

Among the strategy sets in each LLS category used in Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire “Paying attention when someone is speaking English” is mostly used by the students. This strategy is metacognitive. The second is also metacognitive strategy “Thinking about my progress in learning English. While the third “Encouraging myself to speak English” is affective strategy.

5. LLS Frequently used by SMK Students

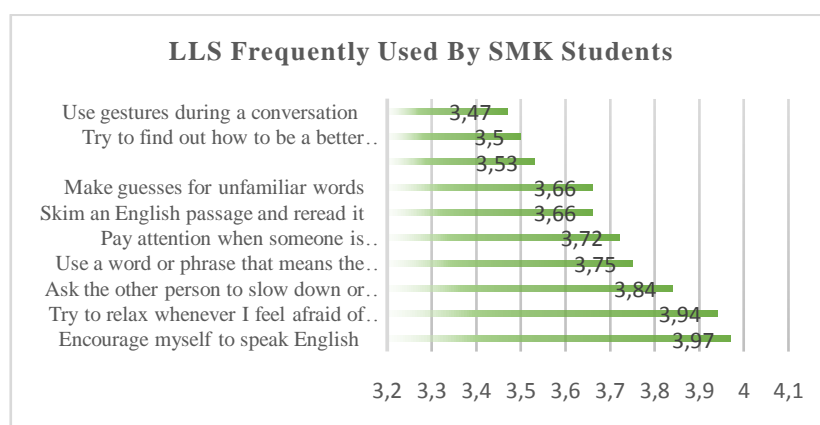


Chart 5.LLS Frequently used by SMK students

Among the strategy sets in each LLS category used in Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire “Encouraging myself to speak English” is mostly used by the students. This is affective strategy. The socond is “Trying to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English”. This is also affective strategy. While the third is social strategy “Asking the other person to slow down when I don’t undersrtand something in English”.

The findings of this study supportsChand’s finding that metacognitive strategy is mostly used by the participants. However the sequence strategy after metacognitive is different. In Chand, it is followed by cognitive, social, compensation, memory and affective. While, ini this study it follows compensation, cognitive, memory, social and affective for

SMA students. It is followed compensation, social, cognitive, affective and memory strategy for SMK students.

The mean of the over all of the strategy is still low (2.88) for SMA students and 2.69 for SMK students or less 3.00. This finding supports Madhumathi (2014) as it shows that the use of LLS used by the participants was still low.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

1. Conclusions

- (1) The most frequent strategy category used by SMA students is Metacognitive as the frequency use is 3.23, while the least frequent ones are affective strategies as the frequency use is 2.62. Among the 50 LLSs "Paying attention when someone is speaking English" is the most commonly used by the students as the frequency use is 4.11, while "Writing down my feelings in a language learning diary" is almost never used as the frequency use is 1.82.
- (2) The most frequent strategy category used by SMK students is also Metacognitive as the frequency use is 2.87, while the least frequent one is Memory strategy as the frequency use is 2.57. Among the 50 LLSs "Encouraging myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake" is the most commonly used by the students as the frequency use is 3.97 while "Writing down my feelings in a language learning diary" is almost never used as the frequency use is 1.38.
- (3) The mean of the over all use of the strategy of students from both schools is still low (2.88) for SMA students and 2.69 for SMK students or less 3.00.

2. Implications for ELT Teaching Practice

The use of LLS of both groups of students (SMA and SMK) is less than half of the time (less than 3.00). This finding has implication for English teachers at both schools to encourage the students to use the various types of the strategies in order to get better English learning outcome.

The average LLS use of SMK students is less than SMA students. The fact that SMK students have to master English skills better to prepare them in the job field. It implicates that the English teachers at SMK should work harder to encourage their students to use various learning strategies integratedly in the learning tasks.

Teaching the students to use learning strategy can be done through *Strategy-based Instruction* by applying Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) through five-phase instruction namely:

First-phase: Preparation,
Second-phase: Presentation,
Third-phase: Practice,
Fourth-phase: Self-evaluation and
Fifth-phase: Expansion (Chamot, 2008).

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