LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES BY SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN DUMAI, BENGKALIS, AND SELAT PANJANG

Fakhri Ras

English Study Program of FKIP University of Riau

Abstract: This study aims to evaluate language learning strategies by successful students of senior high schools in Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang based on gender and parents' income and to investigate their strategies in learning English generally and developing skills of listening, speaking, writing, reading, vocabulary, and structure. The sample are taken randomly as big as 10% or 400 students out of 4000 students as the population. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford; 1989) and interviewing section are used to get the quantitative and qualitative data. Descriptive and inferential statistics, One-Way Anova, and Product Moment Coefficient Correlation are some sets of data analyzing technique. The findings show different language learning strategies among the students based on gender and parents' income. The students used social strategy (mean: 4.02) as the most effective strategy. The implication of the study is that language learning strategies should be taught in the classroom.
Key words: Language learning strategies, Successful students.

INTRODUCTION

Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang are directly abutted on two nearest-neighbouring countries (Malaysia and Singapura) where the status of English is as a second language. Those countries use English as a language for official as well as trade, legal, and social. The society who live around the border area are connected each other in various activities either a formal state agenda or daily activities. Therefore, English as an international language is chosen as a way of communication.

High school students, as a part of society who live in the seaboard of Riau Province (Dumai, Bengkalis, and selat Panjang), plays an important role in term of association between various cities in Riau province with the communities in the two neighboring countries. In this case, successful students whose English achievements are up to eight until ten are basically able to communicate in English even though they have various difficulties in organizing words into sentences, choosing appropriate words, and setting the sentence intonation.

Language learning strategies have been used by the successful students to solve their learning difficulties and to improve their capability of four language skills, vocabulary, and grammar. The students often do some common ways like: a. seriously following the procedures of learning process, b. asking further explanation for any

unclear materials, c. completing various tasks related to the topic, d. intensifying group discussions (Fakhri Ras; 2012), e. use new vocabulary in context, f. correcting errors made by classmates, g. sharing ideas in composing texts, h. accumulating important ideas before writing the texts.

Based on the above phenomenon, language learning strategies used by successful students must be thoroughly identified by using a valid measurement. In this case, strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) (Oxford; 1990) can be used as an effective test (quantitative). The obvious and measured recognition of language learning strategies can influence on successful students' language achievement. To identify the relationship between the strategies and the achievement, weak students' language learning strategies are used as comparison. Besides, the use of SILL is empowered by some questions in interview section (Qualitative). The combination between those two kinds of data collection techniques is expected to obviously identify the strategies used by the successful students in this research area.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Tarone (1983) bases her definition on the context of the use of communication strategies, in which two interlocutors agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared. Then she differentiates communication strategy from production strategy, in which one linguistic system is used efficiently and clearly. She also clarifies the distinction between communication and learning strategy, by which linguistic and socio-linguistic competence in the target language was developed.

Rubin (1975) defines language learning strategies as the techniques or devices that learners use to acquire second language knowledge. Stern (1975) calls them some general order of higher approaches to learning which govern the choice of specific techniques. Naiman et al. (1978) define LLS as more or less deliberate approaches to learning.

Rubin (1987) states that LLS are sets of operations, steps, plans, and routines of what learners do to facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information to regulate learning. Wenden & Rubin (1987) refers to them as behaviours, where learners engage in and regulate the learning of a second language. Chamot (1987) defines LLS as techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information. Ellis (1994) focuses on skills and language learning. Those two aspects are crucial in language learning

strategies. Lan (2005) sees language learning strategies as terms applied to various behaviours used in learning: things people do that are relatively easy to change, vary according to their learning style, are effective or ineffective for specific situations, and are frequently under some level of conscious control. Some learning strategies are specific to each of the four language skills.

To summarise, constructing the definitions of language learning strategies includes various key elements, such as the context of using the strategies, the target of learning the language, and the suitable steps to be taken by the learners. These elements are reflected in the various LLS that have been formulated by experts such as Tarone (1983), Rubin (1975), Oxford (1989), Ellis (1994), and Lan (2005).

Wenden (1987) classifies language learning strategies into at least six elements: (a) specific actions or techniques, (b) observable activities, (c) problem-oriented characteristic, (d) direct or indirect contribution to learning, (e) automatic application after prolonged and repeated usage, and (f) behaviours that are amenable to change. Similarly, Lessard-Clouston (1997) created four reference criteria: (a) learner-generated activities (steps taken by the learners), (b) learner-enhanced language learning or help in developing language competence, (c) learners' visible actions (behaviours, steps, techniques, etc.) or unseen things (thought and mental processes), and (d) the involvement of information and memory of the learners.

According to Oxford (1990b), language learning strategies (a) contribute to the main goal of communicative competence, (b) allow learners to become self-directed, (c) expand the role of teachers, (d) are problem-oriented, (e) are specific actions taken by the learner, (f) involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive, (g) support learning directly or indirectly, (h) are not always observable, (i) are often conscious, (j) can be taught, (k) are flexible, and (l) are influenced by various factors. Cohen (1996) suggests that language learning strategies (a) have the explicit goal of assisting learners in improving their knowledge; (b) include cognitive processing strategies, strategies for solidifying newly acquired language patterns, and strategies to determine the amount of cognitive energy needed; (c) encompass language performance and communication strategies; and (d) can be further differentiated into cognitive, metacognitive, affective, or social.

Several models of language learning strategies have been formulated by the experts. Lots of elements that are related to the language learning have been discussed in the models. Bialystok (1978) created two broad LLS categories, each of which has two

subcategories. The first, formal strategies, covers observation and formal training; and the second, functional strategies, includes inference and functional training. Bialystok (1981) said that observation strategy is used to increase the skill of language pattern (identifying the language mistakes). O'Malley & Chamot (1990) divide language learning strategies into three categories: metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective. *Metacognitive strategies* refer to the executive skills required in planning for learning, thinking about the ongoing learning processes, monitoring one's production or comprehension, and evaluating one's learning after an activity is completed. Self-monitoring, self-evaluation, advance organisation, self-management, and selective attention can be classified under metacognitive strategy.

Oxford (1990b) provides the most extensive classification of LLS developed so far, although it is not radically different from the other models. In fact, Oxford's taxonomy overlaps with that of O'Malley (1990) to a great extent. For instance, the cognitive strategies category in O'Malley's classification seems to cover both the cognitive and memory strategies in Oxford's. Moreover, while O'Malley puts socio-affective strategies in one category, Oxford splits them into two. A significant difference in Oxford's classification, however, is the addition of compensation strategies, which do not appear in any of the previous major classification systems. Oxford's taxonomy consists of two main categories: direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are behaviours that involve the use of the target language, which directly facilitates language learning.

METHODOTOGY

This study focuses on discussing the language learning strategies by successful students of Senior High Schools in Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang Riau Province based on gender and parents' income. In addition, it also aims to identify the preferred activities of the respondents to learn English in general, four language skills, vocabulary, and structure. This study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The population are all successful students from 14 state senior high schools and 14 private senior high schools in Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang Riau Province. The number of the population is about 4000 students. Due to the homogenous character of the population in term of their academic background, the sample is taken randomly as big as 10 % out of the population, that is about, 400 successful students.

The quantitative data are collected by using Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford; 1989) while interviewing section is conducted to 60 selected students taken from the sample in order to get the qualitative data.

Table 1: The Distribution of Respondents by Gender

No	Gender	Frequency	Percent
1	Male	200	50.0
2	Female	200	50.0
Total		400	100.0

Table 2: The Distribution of Respondents by Parents' Income

No	Parents' Income	Frequency	Percent
1	High	128	32.0
2	Medium	149	37.3
3	Low	123	30.8
Total		400	100.0

Descriptive and inferential statistics are used to analyze the data on the use of the language learning strategies (SILL). The descriptive statistics is used to present the language learning strategies used by the successful students. The inferential statistics, in this case, One-Way Anova is used to determine the differences of language learning strategies usage based on gender and parents' income. Then, the collected qualitative data is presented in the form of list of preferred activities to learn English in general, four language skills, vocabulary, and structure.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

a. Quantitative Findings

Ho 1; There is no significant difference of language learning usage by Gender.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA of Gender across Language Learning Strategies

Dependent Variable	Gender	Mean	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Memory	Male	3.49	Between Groups	.033	1	.033	.379	.539
	Female	3.47	Within Groups	34.417	398	.086		
	Total	3.48	Total	34.450	399			
Cognitive	Male	3.72	Between Groups	.020	1	.020	.289	.591
	Female	3.74	Within Groups	27.765	398	.070		
	Total	3.73	Total	27.785	399			
Compensation	Male	3.71	Between Groups	.029	1	.029	.231	.631
	Female	3.70	Within Groups	49.588	398	.125		
	Total	3.70	Total	49.616	399			
Metacognitive	Male	3.98	Between Groups	.096	1	.096	.694	.045
	Female	3.95	Within Groups	55.106	398	.138		

	Total	3.97	Total	55.203	399			
Affective	Male	3.67	Between Groups	.001	1	.001	.005	.943
	Female	3.68	Within Groups	50.440	398	.127		
	Total	3.68	Total	50.440	399			
Social	Male	4.02	Between Groups	.005	1	.005	.040	.842
	Female	4.01	Within Groups	45.496	398	.114		
	Total	4.02	Total	45.501	399			
LLS	Male	3.76	Between Groups	.005	1	.005	.117	.033
	Female	3.75	Within Groups	18.696	398	.047		
	Total	3.75	Total	18.701	399			

Table 3 presents the result of One-Way ANOVA of gender. The findings show that there is no significant difference by male or female students in memory (F = .379, Sig. = .539[> .05]), cognitive (F = .289, Sig. = .591[> .05]), compensation (F = .231, Sig. = .631[> .05]), affective (F = .005, Sig. = .943[> .05]), and social (F = .040, Sig. = .842[> .05]). However, there are significant differences by gender in metacognitive strategy (F = .694, Sig. = .045[< .05]) and overall language learning strategies (F = .117, Sig. = .033[< .05]). Thus, Ho1 is rejected.

Ho 2; There is no significant difference of language learning usage by Type of School.
Table 4: One-Way ANOVA of Parents' Income across Language Learning Strategies

Dipendent Variable	Parents' Income	Mean	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Memory	High	3.49	Between Groups	.330	2	.165	1.921	.148
	Medium	3.51	Within Groups	34.120	397	.086		
	Low	3.44	Total	34.450	399			
	Total	3.48						
Cognitive	High	3.77	Between Groups	.343	2	.171	2.478	.085
	Medium	3.72	Within Groups	27.442	397	.069		
	Low	3.70	Total	27.785	399			
	Total	3.73						
Compensation	High	3.72	Between Groups	.194	2	.097	.779	.459
	Medium	3.72	Within Groups	49.422	397	.124		
	Low	3.67	Total	49.616	399			
	Total	3.70						
Metacognitive	High	4.00	Between Groups	.896	2	.448	3.275	.039
	Medium	4.00	Within Groups	54.306	397	.137		
	Low	3.90	Total	55.202	399			
	Total	3.97						
Affective	High	3.69	Between Groups	.139	2	.070	.549	.578
	Medium	3.69	Within Groups	50.301	397	.127		
	Low	3.65	Total	50.440	399			
	Total	3.68						
Social	High	4.06	Between Groups	.537	2	.268	2.369	.095
	Medium	3.97	Within Groups	44.964	397	.113		
	Low	4.03	Total	45.501	399			
	Total	4.02						
LLS	High	3.78	Between Groups	.239	2	.120	2.572	.078
	Medium	3.76	Within Groups	18.462	397	.047		
	Low	3.72	Total	18.701	399			
	Total	3.75						

Table 4 displays the result of One-Way ANOVA of Parents' income. The findings show that there is no significant difference by both state and private school in memory (F = 1.921, sig. = .148 [> .05]), cognitive (F = 2.478, sig. = .085 [> .05]), compensation (F = .779, sig. = .459 [> .05]), affective (F = .549, sig. = .578 [> .05]), social (F = 2.369, sig. = .095 [> .05]), and LLS (F = 2.572, sig. = .078 [> .05]). This output means that parents' income gave no effect towards students' strategy in certain strategies. However, a significant difference is found in metacognitive strategy (F = 3.275, sig. = .039 [< .05]). The difference is indicated by table 5.

Tabel 5
Post-Hoc Test of One-Way ANOVA on the Differences in Language Learning Strategies between Students according to Parents' Income

Dependent Variable	(I) Parents' Income	(J) Parents' Income	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Metacognitive	High	Medium	-.00410	.04457	.927
		Low	.10029*	.04670	.032
	Medium	High	.00410	.04457	.927
		Low	.10439*	.04506	.021
	Low	High	-.10029*	.04670	.032
		Medium	-.10439*	.04506	.021

Table 5 shows significant differences in metacognitive strategy between students from high and low parents' income (DF = -.10029, sig. = .032 [<.05]). Besides, the table also indicates that the mean of metacognitive strategy used by medium parents' income is higher than the low one (DF = -.10439, sig. = .021 [<.05]). Therefore, Ho2 is rejected.

b. Qualitative Findings

English is generally learnt by successful students by using various strategies. Table 6 displays the strategies used by successful students of senior high schools in Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang based on gender and parents' income which were listed through interview section.

Table 6: Strategies used by successful students to learn English in General

Factor	Indicator	Strategy
Gender	Male	• Practicing English in the Classroom • Joining an English course • Forming a group of English studying • Trying to improve writing, reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar skills of English
	Female	• Being active in various activities of English language learning • Discussing lessons with English teacher and friends by using English language • Keep Studying English outside of school as well as inside
Parents' Income	High	• Discussing lessons with English teacher and friends by using English language • Joining an English course • Practicing English in the Classroom • Keep Studying English outside of school as well as inside
	Medium	• Discussing lessons with English teacher and friends by using English language • Joining an English course • Forming a group of English studying
	Low	• Discussing lessons with English teacher and friends by using English language • Trying to improve writing, reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar skills of English • Being active in various activities of English language learning

Table 7: Strategies used by successful students to improve four language skills, vocabulary, and structure by Gender

Variable	Strategy by Type of School	
	Male	**Female**
Listening	• Following tests of English listening (TOEFL, TOEIC, Etc) • Finding the speaker's idea • Concentrating to the spoken text • Taking notes while listening to the speakers • Preparing vocabulary as many as needed • Watching movies	• Taking notes while listening to the speakers • Concentrating to the spoken text • Doing exercise at home • Giving suggestion and critics • Listening to the English songs
Speaking	• Practicing speaking with native speaker • Speaking English everyday • Take an English course • Practicing speaking English in front of a mirror • Keep studying English pronunciation • Joining conversation course of English	• Enriching Vocabulary • Joining English Club • Following teachers instruction • Practicing speaking with native speaker

	• Trying to speak English as often as possible	
Reading	• Writing small notes of vocabulary • Discussing reading tasks in group • Answering questions based on the texts • Asking teachers for appropriate techniques of comprehending texts • Reading English book • Underlining difficult words in the text	• Reading English Novel • Answering questions based on the texts • Discussing reading tasks in group • Consulting to a dictionary for unfamiliar words
Writing	• Writing Diary by using English • Making an article of fun story using English • Writing English sentences ever day • Correcting errors of essay writing • Writing short story of English	• Enriching vocabulary mastery • Learning how to make good sentences, paragraphs, and essays • Writing Diary by using English • Making an article of fun story using English • Writing English sentences ever day
Vocabulary	• Finding the meaning of unfamiliar words • Memorizing at least 10 new vocabularies everyday • Reading English texts as many as possible • Practicing English vocabulary with friends • Writing notes of important vocabulary • Finding antonym or synonym of difficult words	• Memorizing at least 10 new vocabularies everyday • Finding the meaning of unfamiliar words • Reading English texts as many as possible • Correcting mistakes • Practicing English vocabulary with friends
Structure	• Making sentences based on the correct structure of English language • Correcting Mistakes • Joining English course • Doing exercises of structure regularly • Finding sources of structure materials • Discussing structure lessons with English teachers and friends	• Correcting Mistakes • Joining English course • Doing exercises of structure regularly • Finding sources of structure materials • Discussing structure lessons with English teachers and friends

Table 8: Strategies used by successful students to improve four language skills, vocabulary, and structure by Parents' Income

Variable	Strategy by Parents' Income		
	High	**Medium**	**Low**
Listening	• Concentrating to the spoken text • Doing exercise at home • Giving suggestion and critics • Listening to the English songs • Preparing vocabulary as many as needed • Watching movies	• Doing exercise of listening materials • Finding the speaker's idea • Taking notes while listening to the speakers	• Following tests of English listening (TOEFL, TOEIC, Etc) • Concentrating to the spoken text • Taking notes while listening to the speakers
Speaking	• Enriching Vocabulary	• Practicing speaking	• Practicing speaking with

	• Joining English Club • Following teachers instruction • Practicing speaking with native speaker	with native speaker • Joining conversation course of English • Trying to speak English as often as possible	native speaker • Speaking English everyday • Take an English course • Practicing speaking English in front of a mirror • Keep studying English pronunciation
Reading	• Discussing reading tasks in group • Answering questions based on the texts • Asking teachers for appropriate techniques of comprehending texts • Reading English book • Underlining difficult words in the text	• Answering questions based on the texts • Consulting to a dictionary for unfamiliar words • Writing small notes of vocabulary	• Reading English Novel • Answering questions based on the texts • Discussing reading tasks in group
Writing	• Writing Diary by using English • Making an article of fun story using English • Writing English sentences ever day • Correcting errors of essay writing	• Writing short story of English • Enriching vocabulary mastery • Learning how to make good sentences, paragraphs, and essays	• Writing Diary by using English • Making an article of fun story using English
Vocabulary	• Memorizing at least 10 new vocabularies everyday • Finding the meaning of unfamiliar words • Reading English texts as many as possible • Correcting mistakes • Practicing English vocabulary with friends	• Reading English texts as many as possible • Practicing English vocabulary with friends • Writing notes of important vocabulary • Finding antonym or synonym of difficult words	• Finding the meaning of unfamiliar words • Memorizing at least 10 new vocabularies everyday
Structure	• Correcting Mistakes • Joining English course • Doing exercises of structure regularly • Finding sources of structure materials • Discussing structure lessons with English teachers and friends	• Doing exercises of structure regularly • Correcting Mistakes • Joining English course • Doing exercises of structure regularly • Finding sources of structure materials	• Making sentences based on the correct structure of English language • Discussing structure lessons with English teachers and friends

CONCLUSSION AND SUGESTION

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the successful students' learning strategies at high level (mean of LLS: 3.75). The students use different strategies viewed from gender and parents' income factors. In addition, they prefer various strategies to improve their ability of listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and structure. Based on gender, male students use more strategies rather than female. Similarly, viewed from parents' income, the students, whether from high, medium, or low parents' income group use metacognitive strategy differently These findings offer an important input to educators to be able to encourage more effective strategies for students especially them whose parents' income is low. The findings also provide some insight for further researches to explore language learning strategies employed by high achievers in a more detailed manner.

REFERENCES

Bialystok, E. (1981). The role of conscious strategies in second language proficiency. *Modern Language Journal* 62 :327-366.

Chamot & O'Malley (1987). The coginitive academic language learning approach: a bridge to the mainstream. *TESOL Quarterly* 21:227-249.

Cohen, A.D. (1996). Verbal reports as a source of insights into second language learner strategies. *Applied Language learning,* 7 (1&2): 5-24.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition.* Oxford:Oxford Uinversity Press.

Fakhri Ras (2012). *The use of language learning strategies by Pekanbaru Senior High School students and their socio-economic, academic, and type of school.*Bangi:Universiti Kebangsaaan Malaysia.

Lan, Rae L. (2005). *Language learning strategies profiles of EFL elementary school students in Taiwan.* Maryland: Department of Curriculum and Instruction University of Maryland.

Naiman, N, Forhlich,M, Stern, H.H & Todesco, A. (1978). *The good language language learner.* Research in Education Series, 7 . Toronto:OISE.

Nenden Sri Lengkanawti (2004). How learners from different cultural backgrounds learn a foreign language. *Asian EFL Journal,* 1-8.

O'Malley &Anna Uhl Chamot. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition.* Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R & Nyikos, M. (1989). Variables affecting choice of language learning strategies by university students. *Modern Language Journal*, 73: 291-300.

Oxford, R & Crookall, D. (1990). Research on language learning strategies worldwide with ESL/EFL version of the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL). *System*, 25 (1):4-23.

Oxford, R.L. (1990a). Use of language learning strategies: a synthesis of studieswith implications for strategy training. *System,* 17: 235-247.

Oxford, R. L. (1990b). *Language learning strategies: what every teacher   should know*. Boston:Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Rubin, J. (1987). Learners' strategies: theoretical assumptions, research history and typology. *In. A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.). Learner strategies in language learning*, 15-29.

Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41-51.

Stern, H. H. (1975). What can we learn from the good language learners?. *Canadian Modern Language Review,* 31 (3): 304-318.

Tarone, E. (1983). *Some thoughts on the notion of 'communication strategy" in C. Faerch & G.Kaspur (Eds.). Strategies in interlanguage communication.* New York:Longman.