

# LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY PEKANBARU SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO LEARN ENGLISH IN GENERAL

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**Abstract.** This research identified the use of language learning strategies by the viewed from different gender, ethnicity, types of school, academic background and parents' income. The research subject of this study is limited to ten selected students related to the above five factors, and taken purposively by considering the factors which relate to them. The research instrument of this study is a written interview. The technique of data analysis used is qualitative analysis in which the answers of the respondents are presented in the form of tables. Each table is discussed only on a certain element like the most preferred strategies used by sub-factors.

**Keywords:** *language learning strategy, gender, ethnicity, types of school, academic background and parents' income factors.*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the objectives to learn English at Senior High School level in Indonesia is to grasp the ideas in a text (2004 Curriculum). The understanding of the ideas aims at using English and getting success on the final national examination. Referring to the development of the ability of using the language, the recent curriculum provides a framework to follow. They have to adopt the genre of the text-descriptive, narrative, procedure, explanation, discussion, exposition, review, news item, etc., before they practice speaking and writing (2006 Curriculum). In addition, they are also required to master the materials offered in the final national examination (35 items for reading and 15 items for listening). Achieving both targets, the students employ certain language learning strategies (Oxford:1990) in the classroom, out of the class, and in the final national examination.

They commonly follow what the teachers assign them to do, for instance-underlining the variety of language expression in the written text, finding out the meaning of certain words (conceptual words, structural words, and contextual words) in the dictionary (Christine Nuttall, 1981), and identifying types of questions linked to the written text. They are also asked to read authentic materials from certain English newspapers (The Jakarta Post, The Indonesian Times) and magazine (Hello). Besides, they are provided a break-through program, usually done a few months before the final national examination. The highlight activity out of the class is that some of the students take English courses initiated by themselves or by their parents.

The objectives of this research is to investigate Pekanbaru senior high school students to learn

English in general. In line with this objective, one research question is formulated, that is “how do Pekanbaru Senior High School students learn English in general?”

## METHODOLOGY

This work is a qualitative research paradigm. Ten students of the third year of 2008/2009 were assigned purposively as sample. The factors of the sample cover gender, ethnicity, academic background, parents' income, and types of school. They were interviewed about the ways they learn English in general. Most of the given responses are still in Bahasa Indonesia, and even, in local language. The interviews focus on students' strategies (what they do to learn) English in general. Any written interview which was in Bahasa Indonesia or local language, is translated into English. The collected data are discussed, on the aspect of the most preferred strategies.

## FINDINGS

## 1. Learning English in general

The most preferred strategy done by the students is to keep studying English outside school and at school. The strategy is practiced by three factors of the sample: gender (male and female students), ethnics (Riau Malay, Minangkabaunese, Javanese, Bataknese and Chinese students), and parents' income (medium and high income parents). In addition, discussing lessons with English teachers and friends are also employed by all factors of the sample.

## 2. Learning English in general based on Gender

Female						Male										
No	Strategies used	R2	R6	R8	R10	F	No	Strategies used	R1	R3	R4	R5	R7	R9	F	
1	Keeping studying English outside school and at school	3	3	4	3	13	1	Keeping studying English outside school and at school	2	2	4	2	1		11	
2	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	6	2	1	4	13	2	Singing a song	1						1	
3	Finding various English sources	2	3	2	1	7	3	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	2	6	4	7	1	4	24	
4	Reading something related to English	1				1	4	Listening to the lesson, paying attention to the lesson	2		1	1		1	5	
5	Joining an English course		1			1	5	Finding various English sources	2	2	3	4	4	1	16	
6	Getting more English competence			1		1	6	Enriching English vocabulary		1					1	
7	Listening to music or learning TOEFL from CD				1	1	7	Joining an English course			1		1		2	
Total						38	8	Making a short comic, cartoon				1			1	
Average						9.5	9	Learning a certain vocabulary and write it in small paper				1			1	
							10	Attending in every lesson meeting					1		1	
							11	Trying to think about the topic and develop it					1		1	
							12	Reading the frame work					1		1	
							13	Watching lot of movies					1		1	
							14	Imagining the words related to the topic						1	1	
							Total								67	
							Average								11.2	

The male students used two strategies in learning English in general. They are discussing lessons with English teachers and friends and finding various English sources. On the other hand, the female students used the strategy of discussing lessons with teachers and friends as their most preferred strategy among the used strategies.

### 3. Learning English in general based on Ethnicity

Batakese					Chinese					Javanese					Malay					Minangkabaunese				
No	Strategies used	R7	R8	F	No	Strategies used	R9	R10	F	No	Strategies used	R5	R6	F	No	Strategies used	R1	R2	F	No	Strategies used	R3	R4	F
1	Trying to be active in any discussion	1	1	2	1	Reading the frame work	1		1	1	Reading English textbook, reading book and trying to understand the book	2	1	3	1	Keeping studying English outside school and at school	2		2	1	Doing a lot of exercises	1	1	2
2	Finding various English sources	2	2	4	2	Watching lot of movies	1		1	2	Trying to be active in any discussion , Looking for English teacher in other school, finding English teacher who can solve my problem	3	1	4	2	Singing a song	1		1	2	Answering English question	1	1	2
3	Joining an English course	1		1	3	Searching multiple sources in internet, blending them up into one package	1		1	3	Looking up the dictionary , trying to search the book in library and internet, Searching other books which are related to textbook		2	2	3	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	2	5	7	3	Asking teacher and discussing with friends	1	1	3
4	Attending in every lesson meeting	1		1	4	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	1	3	4	4	Asking mom and English teacher	1		1	4	Listening to various learning sources	1	2	3	4	Listening , understanding and Writing what teacher explained	1	1	1
5	Keeping studying , but not harder	1		1	5	Listening carefully and arguing	1	1	2	5	Reading textbook and trying to		1	1	5	Concentrating to the given lesson	2	2	4	5	Answering what teacher asked	1		1

[illegible]

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	Practicing very hard a day before the test			
<b>Total</b>				<b>20</b>
<b>Average</b>				<b>10</b>

	nd			
1 3	Reading book and trying to understa nd it		1	1
1 4	Searchin g another book and reading it		1	1
1 5	Joining an English course		1	1
<b>Total</b>				<b>22</b>
<b>Average</b>				<b>11</b>

The Malay students used the strategy of discussing lessons with English teachers and friends in learning English in general (20 frequencies). On the other hand, the Minangkabaunese students also used the strategy of asking teachers and discussing with friends as their most often-used strategy among others (22 frequencies). Furthermore, Javanese students used some strategies (20 frequencies) with the highest frequency on trying to be active in any discussion; looking for English teachers in other schools, finding English teachers who can solve their problems. Bataknese students used less strategy (14 frequencies) than three other ethnics (Malay, Minangkabaunese and Javanese students) with the highest frequency on finding various English sources. At last, Chinese students used less strategy (12 frequencies). The highest frequency of the strategies done by the Chinese students is discussing lessons with English teacher and friends.

#### 4. Learning English in general based on parents' income

High Income								Medium Income							
No	Strategies used	R 2	R 4	R 6	R 9	R 10	F	N o	Strategies used	R 1	R 3	R 5	R 7	R 8	F
1	Keeping studying English outside school and at school	2	2	2		3	9	1	Keeping studying English outside school and at school	3	4	6	3	4	20
2	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	5	4	1	4	2	16	2	Singing a song	1					1
3	Finding various English sources	2	2	2	1		7	3	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	2	4	6	1	1	14
4	Concentrating to the given lesson	2	2	2	1	2	9	4	Reading English textbook, reading novel, reading book	1	1	2	1	2	7
5	Reading various English sources	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	Finding various English sources	2	2	2	3	1	10
6	Joining an English course		1	1			2	6	Joining an English course				1		1
7	Watching lot of movies				1		1	7	Making a short comic and cartoon			1			1
8	Blending them up into one package				1		1	8	Getting more English competence					1	1
9	Imagining the words related to the topic				1		1	<b>Total</b>						55	
10	Listening to music or learning TOEFL from CD					1	1	<b>Average</b>						11	

Total					51
Average					10.2

The students whose parents have high income used less strategies (51 frequencies) than the students whose parents have medium income did (55 frequencies) in learning English in general. Then, the most preferred strategies done by the students whose parents have high income is on three strategies. They are discussing lessons with English teachers and friends, keeping studying English outside school and at school and concentrating to the given lesson. On the other hand, the students whose parents have medium income used the strategy of keeping studying English outside school and at school as the most preferred strategies among the used strategies.

## 5. Learning English in general based on Types of school

Private School						State School									
No	Strategies used	R 6	R 7	R 9	R 10	F	No	Strategies used	R 1	R 2	R 3	R 4	R 5	R 8	F
1	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	2	1	4	2	9	1	Keeping studying English outside school and at school	1	3	1	4	2	4	15
2	Finding various English sources	3	4	1	1	9	2	Singing a song	1						1
3	Joining an English course, asking some cleverer students	1	1		1	3	3	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	2	4	5	4	6	1	22
4	Keeping studying English outside school and at school	3	2		3	8	4	Concentrating to given lesson	2	1	2		1		6
5	Attending in every lesson meeting		1			1	5	Finding various English sources	3	2	3	3	4	2	17
6	Reading the frame work			1		1	6	Writing what teacher explained			1				1
7	Watching lot of movies			1		1	7	Joining an English course				1			1
8	Blending them up into one package			1		1	8	Making a short comic, cartoon					1		1
9	Listening carefully, catching the point, listening to music or learning TOEFL from CD			1	3	4	9	Using English in the conversation					1		1
10	Imagining the words related to the topic			1		1	10	Joining English clubs in school , facebook and international websites					1		1
Total						38	11	Getting more English competence						1	1
Average						9.5	Total								67
							Average								11.2

The Private school students used less strategies (38 frequencies) than the State school students did (67 frequencies) in learning English in general. Then, the most preferred strategies done by the Private school students is on two strategies. They are discussing lessons with English teachers and friends and finding various English sources. On the other hand, the State school students used the strategy of discussing lessons with English teachers and friends as the most preferred strategy among the used strategies.

## 6. Learning English in general based on Academic background

Natural Science									Social Science							
No	Strategies used	R 1	R 3	R 4	R 5	R 9	R 10	F	N o	Strategies used	R 2	R 6	R 7	R 8	F	
1	Keep studying English outside school and at school	1		1	1		2	5	1	Keep studying English outside school and at school	1	1	1		3	
2	Singing a song	1						1	2	Searching various English sources	2	1	2		5	
3	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	2	2	1	1	2	1	9	3	Concentrating to the lesson	1	1		1	3	
4	Listening to various learning sources	1	1	1		1	2	6	4	Reading various English sources	1	2	2	2	7	
5	Concentrating to the given lesson	1	2	1	1		1	6	5	Discussing lesson with English teacher and friends	3	1	2	2	8	
6	Reading various English sources	1	1	1	2			5	6	Joining an English course		1	1		2	
7	Finding various English sources	2	1	2	1	1		7	7	Practicing by doing exercise		1	1		2	
8	Being active in various activities		3	4	5	2	2	16	8	Getting more English competence				1	1	
9	Enriching new English words		1		1	1		3	Total						31	
10	Joining an English course			1			1	2	Average						7.8	
11	Making a short comic, cartoon, and using English in the conversation				1			1								
12	Writing vocabulary in a small paper				1			1								
13	Reading the frame work of the text					1		1								
14	Watching lot of movies					1		1								
15	Blending multiple sources into one package					1		1								
	Total							65								
Average									10.8							

The Social Science students used less strategies (31 frequencies) than the Natural Science students did (65 frequencies) in learning English in general. Then, the most preferred strategies done by the Social Science students is on one strategy, namely discussing lessons with English teachers and friends. On the other hand, the Natural Science students used the strategy of being active in various activities as the most preferred strategy among the used strategies.

## CONCLUSION

The Pekanbaru Senior High School students learn English in general by using 5 different major strategies. The strategies are discussing lessons with English teachers, keeping studying English outside school and at school, asking teachers and discussing with friends, trying to be active in any discussion, looking for English teachers in other schools, and finding English teachers who can solve problem and finding various English sources.

Based on the findings, it can be drawn some conclusions. To learn English in general, the students practice the strategies that support the process of learning in the classroom.

Referring the above conclusions, some possible suggestions might be logically arisen. First of

all since the students like to do discussion with English teachers, it would be better the schools provide discussion facilities such as open spaces, meeting rooms, as well as consultation area. The second, since the students like to keep studying English outside school and at school, it would be better the schools do monitoring program towards the students' activities in studying English whether outside or at school. The third, since the students like to ask teachers and discuss with friends, it would be better the teachers control their students' language accuracy and fluency, and the content as well. The fourth, since the students like to try to be active in any discussion, it is wish to create challenging discussion themes. The fifth, since the students like to look for English teachers in other schools, it is wish to have a network of English teachers at that area. Finally, since the students like to find English teachers who can solve problem by finding various English sources, it is wish the schools have good facilities in empowering the achievement of English teaching learning such as library, reading park, and language laboratory.

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