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BOOK 2

SPEAKING QUALITY IN ENGLISH AND LEARNING STRATEGIES OF STUDENTS IN PONDOK PESANTREN DARULHIJRAHMARTAPURA

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ABSTRACT

Learning strategies is one of the studies of language acquisition. The study is implemented by extending the study of language acquisition process. In English language acquisition process, the study of speaking strategy is an important thing used by English learners to bridge the gap between his/her knowledge of the language and his/her partner's knowledge of the language in the communication process. The purposes of detailed research are (1) to describe the kinds of the learning strategies, and (2) to describe the quality of speaking English. This study used a qualitative descriptive design to answer the above questions. The instrument of this research is the researcher who serves as a key instrument with the guidelines of supporting instruments of observation, electronic recording devices, recording off field, observation, questionnaires, daily notes, interviews and oral test. This research data is verbal utterances of males and female students, the results of the questionnaire, the results of observations and interviews. Data analyzed by analysis techniques performance. Through this technique, data analysis performed by the form of communicative competence and the way of acquirement. In this study, the triangulation of data sources, data, theory and methodology applied to check the validity of the data. Based on data analysis, research findings obtained as follows. The speaking quality of the students is in good category (mean score, 72, 41). Students can discuss on speaking learning strategy, have a fairly complete understanding of normal conversation level. Aspects of grammar and fluency seems to be necessary improved in speaking instruction. Learning strategies through English practice could be categorized unique, only found in certain Islamic boarding schools which are 59 types learning strategies consists of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Language learning strategies contribute the development of the students' quality in speaking. Understanding of learning strategies is also required by English teachers and language programmer to assist competence development and communication competence of students. The real interaction between students and meaningful language use encourage the development of communicative competence, namely the grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and competence strategies. Language learning strategies help students participate actively in real communication. The contributions of learning strategy has positive impact toward the quality of speaking.

Keywords: *Speaking quality, learning strategies, communicative competence, and students*

INTRODUCTION

Learning languages takes time and efforts. It is not an instant process, which can be done in a night, especially for learning foreign languages. It is not enough for them to have only a strong willingness, they also need to have a battery of learning strategies to gain effective learning outcome. By employing good learning strategies, students can learn languages easily, swiftly, and even more independently. Moreover, when the students need to improve their foreign language speaking skill, learning strategy take more salient role. Speaking becomes a more challenging skill for students since it needs intensive practice. They also need to deal with spontaneous responses needed to be produced while they speak as well as the gap between their own language ability and the interlocutor language ability. Therefore, the presence of learning strategies will help students to make the process of speaking be more effortless.

According to Wenden dan Rubin (1987:19), learning strategy refers to any activities, steps, plans, and routines used by learners to facilitate them acquiring, retaining, and using information. Cohen et al.(1996:3) mention that the purpose of language-learning strategy is to

help learners improve their knowledge and understanding of the target language. Learning strategy is an individual matter. It means that one best learning strategy for a student can be not a good learning strategy for others. In other words, learning strategies can take various forms in accordance with the students' characteristics, psychological conditions, ages, and language abilities (Oxford, 1990). Therefore, the study of various learning strategies is necessarily needed for giving information to teachers and students so they can choose best strategy for their own classes or themselves.

Oxford (1990:57) divides learning strategies into two main groups, which are direct and indirect learning strategies. Direct learning strategies directly involve the target language in the process of learning. Meanwhile, indirect strategy supports the language learning process. She, then, elicits each strategy into more specific lists. Direct learning strategy covers several types, those are memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. Next, indirect strategy has some types, including metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. See the following table to better understand the definition of each strategy.

Table 1 Direct and Indirect Learning Strategies

Direct Learning Strategies		
<i>Memory strategies</i> They help students store and retrieve new information	<i>Cognitive Strategies</i> They involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself.	<i>Compensation Strategies</i> They help learners to understand or produce messages in the target language despite limitations of knowledge.
Indirect Learning Strategies		
<i>Metacognitive Strategies</i> They involve planning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, and monitoring, and evaluating one's progress.	<i>Affective Strategies</i> They help students to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes.	<i>Social Strategies</i> They help to learn through interaction with others.

All those strategies can be applied into all language skill, including speaking. Speaking skill refers to ability to sound and to express words, ideas, and feeling. This skill is important because we need to communicate orally in our daily life. One's ability to speak also commonly becomes a standard to judge whether she or he has good language proficiency. This skill cannot be developed except the students practice to speak every day. If they are shy, doubtful, or afraid to speak, they will not be able to master this skill fluently. Thus, it is very important for teachers to provide language environment, which gives the students lot of exposures to practice the target language being learnt.

According to Bialystok (2005:46), learning strategies can facilitate students to improve their language competence. Rubin (1975) stated that learning strategies help the students to learn effectively and make them become good communicator. O'Malley dan Chamot (1990) added that learning strategies help students to understand and learn new information. Based on these theories, then, it can be assumed that learning strategies has significant impact on students' language skills, including their speaking skill. Therefore, a research on this topic will be valuable to be conducted.

Based on the writer's prior observation, Darul Hijrah boarding school is one of schools, which provides supporting environment for students to develop their speaking skill. This school is located in Cindai Alus, Martapura, South Kalimantan. It employs multilingual learning system. English and Arabic are used for students' daily conversation and the language of instruction, except for some subjects, which should be delivered in Indonesian. This condition, of course, requires the students to intensively use both foreign languages, Arabic and English. In the process of acquiring fluency and accuracy for speaking in a foreign language, each students, definitely, has their own problems. The problems are various. Sometimes, for instance, they get difficulty to get the equivalence of certain words of their mother tongue in the foreign language. They also need to store as many as vocabulary to smooth the process of communication. For

overcoming these problems, the writer assumes that they have their own learning strategies. Therefore, Darul Hijrah is an appropriate place for her to conduct a research on learning strategies on speaking English. By conducting a research on this setting, she can reveal what are strategies used by students and the impact of those strategies on their speaking ability.

There are some previous research related to the present research's topic. Djiwandono (1998) conducted a study entitled *The Relationship between EFL Learning Strategies Degree of Extroversion and Oral Communication (A study of Second Year Secretarial Students at Widyakarya University)*. His research described the profile of learning strategies used by Indonesian students to gain proficiency in speaking English in ESP context. Then, Tolok (2006) studied *Learning Strategies Across Cultures of EFL learners Residing in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) Province*. He identified similarities and differences of students' learning strategies. He also found that there is significant relationship between students' learning strategies and their successfulness in learning. Next, Werdiningsih (2007) investigated preschool students' learning strategies to gain pragmatic competence. The findings yielded that preschool students used cognitive strategies and they employ verbal and nonverbal language to communicate.

The present study is different from those previous ones in terms of the setting, the subjects, and the focus of research. This study observe students learning strategies in a natural language environment in which the required to speak English on purpose of both communication and learning. The subject are Islamic boarding school students which quite distinct from the subject of previous studies. The present study also focus on searching the impact of learning strategies used by the students on their speaking ability. Therefore, this article will focus to answer the following research questions: (1) what are strategies used by the students of Darul Hijrah Boarding School in speaking English? and (2) how is the quality of students' speaking skill related to their learning strategies?

METHOD

The writer used qualitative approach to conduct this study. The reasons for choosing this approach were based on the following considerations: (1) the number of the subjects of the study, (2) the data collected were mostly in form of learning strategies, which should be explained verbally, (3) the purpose of the study were to elaborate various types of learning strategies to learn English, and (5) the writer acted as the key instrument of the study. In term of research design, the present study was realist ethnographic research. Cresswell (2007:68) mentioned that in this type of research, the researcher becomes a participant observer, in which she has a close and intimate familiarity with the subject of the research through having intensive involvement with the people being observed, observing their behaviour, and interviewing them. Since the purpose of the study was to gain data related to the students' learning strategies patterns, their behaviours in learning, as well as their beliefs underlying those behaviour so this type of research design was suitably match with the purpose of the study. According to Latief (2012:132), ethnographic research is one of the qualitative research design used to describe teachers and students' behavior; their viewpoints, their needs, their interactions, their language use, etc.

The research setting was in an Islamic boarding school, namely *Pondok Pesantren Darul Hijrah* (Darul Hijrah Islamic Boarding School), located in Banjar regency, Martapura, South Kalimantan. The school has two divisions, separated based on gender: one school is for boy only (Darul Hijrah Putra) and another is for girl only (Darul Hijrah Putri). The distance between Darul Hijrah Putra to Darul Hijrah Putri is about 3 Km. This school is a good place for conducting a research on learning strategies since it has a strong willingness to develop the students' foreign languages ability. The school has a language immersion program, which requires every student, started from the second semester, to speak either Indonesian, English, or Arabic in their daily communication.

In the present study, the writer observed 30 students of the eight graders. The reason for choosing these subjects were they already joined the immersion program so they needed to communicate in English or Arabic alternately in a period of a week. During the study, the writer acted as the subject partner so her presence did not disturb or change the subject behaviors. The writer actively participated in students' activities for learning English since the focus of her study was observing students' strategies in learning English.

The data were collected by using six instruments: (1) observation guide, (2) interview guide (3) students' diary, (4) documentation, (5) speech and non speech task (common conversation), and (6) *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)* questionnaire developed by Oxford (1990: 293) and oral test. Observation was used to gather the data about students' behaviour in using the language either inside or outside the classroom. It was done by noticing and recording their speeches related to the aspects of language, content, physical, and fluency of the speech. The students' diary was used to collect data related to their activities in using the language based on the students' notes. Then, interview was used to cross-checked the data gather from observation and students weekly diaries. Next, oral test was administered to determine the quality of students' speaking skill. To check the validity of those instruments, the writer tried them out to 20 students of eight graders. She also conducted a triangulation with the English teachers and the languages officers of Darul Hijrah.

All data collected, then, were analyzed qualitatively. Interactive model of data analysis developed by Miles dan Huberman (1992) was used. There were four steps of data analysis according to this model: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data presentation, and (4) conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

(1) The Kinds of the Learning Strategies Used by Students

Based on the findings, it was found that 59 learning strategies were used by students of Darul Hijrah in learning speaking. Those strategies, then, can be classified into 6 major strategies: (1) memory strategies, (2) cognitive strategies, (3) compensation strategies, (4) metacognitive strategies, (5) affective strategies and (6) social strategies. Among those strategies, there 43 strategies that are same with the *Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL)* questionnaire developed from R. Oxford's theory. The writer found 19 new strategies, which have not discussed in the previous theories yet. See Table 2 to get the detail of the learning strategies employed by eight graders of Darul Hijrah Islamic Boarding School.

Table 2 Learning Strategies Employed by Students on Learning Speaking

Learning Strategies	Explanation
Memory Strategies	
1. Grouping words	The students group words based on the part of speech, such as verb, noun, adjective, etc.
2. Using semantic mapping	The students link words, which have same root, for instance moslem and moslemah, make them easier in memorizing the words.
3. Recalling sounds from the students' memory	The students related the words with its visual or auditory characteristics.
4. Recognizing and practicing new vocabulary	The students practice every new vocabulary they got.
5. Memorizing new vocabulary	The students read the school magazine and wall magazine to get new vocabulary or idioms then retaining them by memorizing the vocabulary.
6. Involving visual and auditory	Every time students forget or do not know certain vocabulary, they will ask others by giving clues of the vocabulary visual look or the sounds.
7. Doing an action	The students response to what they heard by doing an action commended in audio speaker.
8. Doing technical and mechanical action.	The students make activities which can enable them to use English.
9. Repeating the utterances in Arabic and English	The students repeat again conversation they have done in English to Arabic or vice versa.
Cognitive strategies	

10. Practicing to pronounce and to write in English	The students keep practicing how t sound and to write in English.
11. Watching movies	The students discuss the content of the movie they have watched. They also keep talking while watching the movie to practice new words they get from the movie.
12. Giving a speech	Every two weeks students have to practice how to give speech in three languages (Indonesian, English, and Arabic).
13. Drilling	The students repeat what their teacher said.
14. Giving explanation	The students explain what they have understood from the lesson to his friend.
15. Comparing grammar	The students compare different between the grammar of the target language and their mother tongue.
16. Reading aloud	The students read aloud words, sentences, or paragraph to gain their proficiency in pronunciation and intonation.
17. Translating into Arabic.	The students translate from English to Arabic.
18. Making a summary	The students talk based on the summary of the lesson they learnt.
19. Sending and receiving messages.	The students use new vocabulary given to them by practicing it with friends
20. Reasoning and analyzing	The students analyze the meaning of phrases given to them and then practice it with partner.
21. Using fixed expression	The students practice particular phrases pattern given in conversation class.
22. Reading book and dictionary	The students read book and dictionary to enlarge their vocabulary so they can improve their speaking ability.
23. Using key word	The students use key word to retain new words.
24. Using situational clue	The students use situational context to explain difficult words.
25. Writing the transcript of the sounds	The students write the transcription of a word sound to practice how to pronoun the word correctly.
26. Translating words and sentences	Every time the students see words, phrases, or sentences written on the wall, tree, or spoken in a speech, the students translate them into Indonesian or vice versa.
27. Practicing speaking	The students keep practicing to speak English in their daily communication
28. Playing scrabble	The students arrange jumbled letters into a new meaningful word.
Compensation Strategies	
29. Using synonym	The students look for a synonym of a word when they get difficulty to say a particular word.
30. Using smart guessing	The students guess the meaning of a word based on the context and language clues.
31. Code-Mixing	The students mix their languages between Arabic and English when they get difficulty to explain in just one of the target language.

32. Using mimicry and gestures	The students use body language to strengthen what they said or when they don't know the words.
33. Switching the topic	When the students get difficulty to speak in a particular topic, they will change it into easier topic, which they know more about it.
34. Modifying the messages	The students simplify the message by make it simpler or add additional information.
<i>Metacognitive Strategies</i>	
35. Peer correction	Asking friends for giving correction for their summary or written preparation they have made.
36. Having punishment	The students who speak in Indonesian or using their mother tongue will get punishment from the language officers. They will be asked to do something as their punishment.
37. Creating a language game	Students create a language game to make the processes of language learning become more fun.
38. Focusing themselves to learn language	Since the immersion program started from the second semester, after six month being in the boarding school students usually will focus themselves to speak English and Arabic. They become active to learn new vocabulary.
39. Listen first then speak	In conversation practice or in a speech event, the students usually will stop talking to listen to what their friend said. They need to do it because sometimes, a students from the audience can be chosen to deliver the summary of the speech.
40. Self-evaluating learning strategy	The students identify their own mistakes in using the language. Sometimes, they also invite friends to give evaluation on their speaking.
<i>Affective Learning Strategies</i>	
41. Keep talking strategy	The students always keep to talk in English although they make mistakes during the practice.
42. Memorizing songs	The students learn to listen, pronunciation, and new vocabulary while they are listening to English song, which usually played through loudspeaker in the boarding school.
43. Minimizing language anxiety through fun activities	Since there are lot of language tasks in the school, the students usually will make some fun to minimize their anxieties. They make laugh while reading funny stories or funny cartoon movie.
44. Controlling emotion strategy	The students minimize their negative feeling about their speaking ability by writing diaries, talk to themselves, friends, or family.
45. Relaxation strategy	The students do relaxing activities to fresh their mind and to lower their anxiety. They also do breathing exercise every time they feel anxious about speaking in English.
46. Silence strategy	Some students need time to silence. They need to muse what they are going to say.

47. Self-appreciation strategy	When students can accomplish their speaking task well, for example conversation practice, they usually will give a gift for themselves by doing or eating their favourite things or food.
48. Listening to music	The students listen to English song to relax themselves as well as to learn some vocabulary and pronunciation from the song lyric.
<i>Social Strategies</i>	
49. Having a discussion	The students discuss together to get a better solution toward any problems they have. This activity shape their critical and creative thinking.
50. Asking for repetition	When students get difficulty to understand someone's speaking, they usually ask the interlocutor to speak slowly and repeat again what they have said.
51. Working in groups or pairs	The students work together either in group or in pairs to discuss materials or topic given by teacher.
52. Working with teachers or experts	The students ask the meaning of words they do not understand or some problems related to language to their teacher or expert. However, students do not use this strategy frequently, except when they cannot get the solution from their friends or books.
53. Acting in a role play	Students usually do role play activities without previous preparation. They just act directly in the classroom after getting a topic.
54. Pair-work speaking practice	Every morning after Shubuh praying, the students stand and face each other to talk about any topic for 30 minutes.
55. Asking to others	The students ask teachers, smarter students, or their friends, to get new information or to get solution for language problems they have.
56. Asking for clarification	The students ask to clarify what others have said or explained by asking questions, ask them to repeat, ask for examples, or ask to get feedback.
57. Showing empathy	The students show their empathy toward the speaker by responding appropriately to what they have said through proper verbal and body language response.
58. Increasing cultural understanding knowledge	The students hold cultural events, such as Halloween, to increase their cultural understanding about English. They also communicate each other by respecting the rules of communication pattern governed in the boarding school.
59. Increasing awareness on others' feeling and ideas	The students try to understand their speaking partner difficulties to speak. They also ask about how others' feeling are while speaking.

Furthermore, the writer underlines several important findings related to the students' language learning strategies at Darul Hijrah Islamic Boarding School. *First*, among those six major strategies, metacognitive and compensation strategies were less used by the students.

Second, affective and memory strategies were sufficiently used by the students. *Third*, learning strategies intensively used by the students were cognitive and social strategies.

(2) The Quality of Students' Speaking Skill

To assess students' quality in speaking English, the writer relied on the result of oral test, which were categorized into two kinds of test: speech and interview. For the speech test, the instrument for assessment was a rubric, which covered some aspects: language, content, performance, and fluency. The students who can meet all aspects of assessment with fluent and accurate use of language means they can achieve the purpose and the function of good communication. In other words, they have good quality of speaking. Based on the result of speech test, it was found that the students' average score was 72.66, which can be said that the quality of Darul Hijrah students' speaking skill was in good category. They can deliver the language fluently with appropriate gestures and mimicry. They also can speak confidently and bravely in front of the audiences. Further investigation showed that most students who had that good categories employed memory and cognitive strategies while delivering speech.

For the non-speech test, the writer used interview as a technique to gain data about their quality in speaking in a free mode of conversation. It was scored based a rubric with the following aspects: (1) language, (2) content, (3) performance, and (4) cohesion. Based on the result of the test, it was shown that the means of students' score was 72.41. This score belongs to good category. The students were able to answer the questions given by the interviewer clearly and correctly. Vocabulary and expression used were also various and appropriate. Most of the students who are good in the interview were those who employed social learning strategies. All these findings then come to a conclusion that the students have already had a good quality of speaking considering their level of learners.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

There are 59 learning strategies used by the students at Darul Hijrah Boarding School. Those strategies can be classified into 6 major strategies: (1) memory strategies, (2) cognitive strategies, (3) compensation strategies, (4) metacognitive strategies, (5) affective strategies and (6) social strategies. Among those strategies, cognitive and social strategies are strategies, which intensively used by the students in their communication compared to other strategies.

Based on the result of speech test and interview it was found that the quality of the students speaking skill was in good category. In speech test, the students' average score was 72.66, which belongs to good category. Most of students who were good in speech employed memory and cognitive learning strategies to develop their speaking skills. The result of interview also showed the same thing. The means score was 72.41, which goes to good category as well. It can be seen through their clear and appropriate responses toward questions given by the interviewer. Most of the students who were good in the interview test were those who apply social learning strategies while doing communication with others. These findings then yields that learning strategies had by the students can help them to develop the quality of their speaking skills.

Based on the findings, the writer makes some recommendations for teachers, students, future researchers, and school. First, teachers should recognize their students' characteristics so they can select and teach appropriate learning strategies for them. Second, students are expected to look for learning strategies that meet their own characteristics so they can learn easily and swiftly, especially for learning speaking skill. Third, future researchers can use the present findings for conducting a more comprehensive research on learning strategies with different level of the subjects. Last, it is better for headmasters of schools to encourage English teachers to integrate their lessons with learning strategies to gain better learning outcome.

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