

AN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USE

(a Study in Regular and non-Regular Classes of Second Year Students of English Department of UNTIRTA Serang Banten)

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Abstract

The way people learn a language may be different from one person to another. The success of the students' learning may be affected by the strategies which are employed by them. Moreover, in English department of *Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa* Serang Banten where the students are divided into two types of classes, regular and non-regular, it seems that the regular students perform higher academic achievement than the non-regular students. Therefore, attracted by the problem, this paper is aimed to investigate Language Learning Strategies (LLS) employ by the students. Strategy Inventory of Language Learning Strategies from Oxford (1990) was adopted as the main theory of the study.

The subject of the research are second year students: regular and non-regular classes of English Department of UNTIRTA Serang Banten. It deals with how the students employ Language Learning Strategies in their study and the most frequently strategy used by the students. To collect the data, Questionnaire of SILL (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning) of Oxford (1990) was administered to the participants. The questionnaire consist of fifty statements which reflect the way language learners approach their language learning. Moreover, the statements were classified into two major categories: cognitive and meta cognitive strategies. The questionnaire employed five Likert scale was used to show the tendency or the preference of LLS employed by the language learners.

The study found that, firstly, generally the students employed Language Learning Strategies in Learning English. The students of regular class performed higher use of Language Learning Strategies than the non-regular students. Secondly, meta cognitive strategies, were frequently used the students, either the regular or the non-regular students. The study concludes that, all students regardless the level of their language proficiency employed learning strategies. Moreover, academic performance seemed to be affected by the learning strategies employed by the students.

Clarification of term: LLS (Language Learning Strategies), SILL (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning)

1. INTRODUCTION

The way people learn foreign language may vary from one person to another since each person has her own peculiar characteristic and different learning style. Moreover, Mastery and proficiency is the goal of the foreign language learning. To achieve that students or learners are required to be independent learners which means that they must know how to learn or to develop their learning strategies by themselves.

The statement above implies that the success of the language learning is not determined by one single factor; there are many factors that influence it. As supported by Brown that: "there is no single magic formula for successful foreign language." (207:2001). It suggests that there are many ways, methods, techniques or strategies that learners might use in their learning process and they may be different from one person to another. Some studies: Rubin (1975), Cohen (1997), Cohen (2005), Moir and Nation (2002) in Griffiths (2008) show that successful students prone to use learning strategies than less successful learners. According to Rebecca: "language learners at all levels use strategies, but that some or most learners are not fully aware of the strategies they use that might be the most beneficial to employ" (3:1989).

According to my experience students will undergo several stages before they come skillful in the subject they are taking. It also believed to happen to new or the first and second year students of English, they may also found some difficulties in catching up with the material given by the lecturers. And this problem is might due to the lack of mastering of language skills (Wilkin (1976) and Nobert (1997)). Moreover, the language proficiency and achievement level among the students are different. Some students can be considered as successful and some are less successful.

Referring to the condition in English Departement of UNTIRTA, the students are divided into two different classes, based on their entrance selection, that is regular and non-regular. The former were accepted through National Exam (*SNMPTN*) and the later were accepted through local exam (*Ujian Mandiri*) held locally/independently by the university. According to the researcher's judgement it seemed that regular classes students

perform better than non-regular classes. Therefore, in this paper the writer is encouraged to analyze the way students of English Department of the two different class types learn English, regular and non-regular. The writer focused herself to strategic investment: the method that the learners employ to internalize and to perform in the language. Moreover, it was narrowed down to the learning strategies used by the student in their learning process

1.1 Formulation of the Problems

This research was conducted within the framework of the following questions:

1. How is the use of language learning strategies between regular class and non-regular class?
2. What Strategies which are commonly used by the students from the regular and non-regular classes?

1.2 The Aims of the Study

The aims of the study are:

1. To identify the way the third semester students of English Department, regular and non-regular students, of *Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa* employ learning strategies.
2. To figure out common strategies used by the students in from different class.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Learning Strategies

Each person is believed to have her own way of learning a foreign language (Oxford, 1990). Many research have been conducted in this matter, some revealed that successful learners prone to use various strategies in their learning process. Some other believes that less successful learners also employ learning strategies (Moir and Nation (2002) in Griffiths (2008). Eventually, many research indicate that the success is lay in how aware the learners to employ the strategies. As has been said by Rebecca (3:1989) that: "language learners at all levels use strategies, but that some or most learners are not fully aware of the strategies use or the strategies that might be most beneficial to employ." It can be inferred that all language learners actually employ learning strategies but what differentiate successful language learners and less successful learners are in their awareness of the benefit or advantages of the language learning their employ and in their ability in choosing the best strategies for their particular needs.

Many definitions of learning strategies have been proposed by researchers. Weinstein and Mayer (in Lessard, 1997:1) said that "learning strategies (LS) broadly as "behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning" which are "intended to influence the learner's encoding process" later he defined that definition LS more specifically as "behavior of a learner that are intended to influence how the learner processes information. While Brown (2001:208) said that: "strategies are, in essence, learners' techniques for capitalizing on the principle of successful learning.

Many prior researches in language study as the root of the born of the Strategies-Based Instruction approach appeared, analyzed and identified how successful language learners learn a foreign language. Rebecca (Brawn, 2001:217) comes with the most comprehensive taxonomy of learning strategies. The strategies are divided into two big categories, that is: direct or cognitive strategies and indirect or meta cognitive strategies.

The direct or cognitive strategies are strategies which learners apply directly to the language itself. It consists of three different ways, such as: remembering more effectively, using all your cognitive processes, compensating for missing knowledge. On the other hand, indirect strategies are the way learners manage to control their own leaning process. It includes: organizing and evaluating your learning, managing your emotions, and learning with other.

2.2 The Characteristics of Good Language Learners

A number of researchers have drawn up lists of the characteristics of good language learners. Wenden referred to some of these in filling out the following list:

1. Good language learners find a style of learning that suits them.
They are self aware that they know themselves. When they are in a learning situation which they do not like, they are able to adapt it to their personal needs. They believe they can always learn something, whatever the situation. They also know how they prefer to learn and choose learning situations that are suited to their way of learning.
2. Good language learners are actively involved in the language learning process.
They take responsibility for their own learning. Besides regular language classes, they create opportunities to use the language. They know practice is very important. They are willing to take risks, to appear foolish if necessary.
3. Good language learners try to figure out how the language works. They try to come to grips with the language as a system. They pay attention to form and look for patterns. They develop good techniques for improving

their pronunciation, learning grammar and vocabulary. They welcome mistakes as a way of learning more about the language.

4. Good language learners know that language is used to communicate.
They pay attention to meaning. They have good techniques to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the early stages of their language learning they do not worry about making mistakes. They speak and try to become fluent. They look for opportunities to speak with native speakers.
5. Good language learners are like good detectives.
They are always looking for clues that will help them understand how the language works. They make guesses and ask people to correct them if they are wrong. They compare what they say with what others say. They keep a record of what they have learned and think about it. They monitor themselves.
6. Good language learners learn to think in the language.
7. Good language learners realize that language learning is not easy.
They try to overcome their feelings of frustration and their lack of confidence. They are able to come to terms with the affective demands of language learning, that they can manage their emotions. They are realistic in their setting of study goals.
8. Good language learners are also good culture learners aware of the very close relationship between language and culture.
9. Good language learners have a long term commitment to language learning.
They are realistic in realizing that it takes time and practice.
It is supported by Rubin (1975) in Griffiths (2008), one of the earliest researchers directing attention from teaching methods and materials to a more learner-centred aspect, assuming that successful learners tend to operate a range of strategies in their learning process which might be made available to help underachieved learners. Rubin points out that the good language learner:
 1. is a willing and accurate guesser;
 2. has a strong drive to communicate;
 3. is uninhibited and willing to make mistakes;
 4. focuses on form by looking at patterns and using analysis;
 5. takes advantage of all practice opportunities;
 6. monitors his or her own speech and that of others;
 7. pays attention to meaning. (cited Oxford 2001, p.169)

2.3 EFL Learning and Teaching

Learning English as second language (ESL) is different than Learning English as foreign language (EFL). It is due to the social context that surrounds the learning process is totally different. In ESL, the social environment gives more opportunity to the students to hear and practice the language. Hence, the students are conditioned to the use of the language. On the other hand, in the EFL, students face different condition: the social context does not give students access to the target language. Therefore, they lack of ready communication situation (the term borrowed from Brown) outside the classroom.

Considering the fact, teachers of EFL must do some ways to compensate the lack of ready communication situation. As proposed by Brown (1975:2001) teachers should: use class time for optimal authentic language input and interaction, don't waste class time on work that can be done as homework, provide regular motivation-stimulating activities, help students to see genuine uses of English in their own lives, play down the role of tests and emphasize more intrinsic factors, provide plenty of extra-class learning opportunities, such as assigning an English-speaking movie, having them listen to an English speaking TV or radio program, getting an English-speaking conversation partner, doing out-side reading (news, magazine, book), writing journal or diary in English, encourage the use of learning strategies outside the classroom, form a language club and schedule regular activities.

2.4 The Principle of EFL/ESL Teaching and Learning

There are many factors that influence foreign language learning. It may come from the social context, the teachers' method and the characteristic of the students. Brown (1975: 2001) purposes twelve principles in English Foreign Language Teaching and Learning which are grouped into three categories, that is Cognitive Principle, Affective Principle and Linguistics Principle. Each category consists of several specific principles of EFL/ESL Teaching and Learning as will be exemplified below:

2.5 Cognitive Principle

2.5.1 Automaticity

Efficient second language learning involves a timely movement of the control of a few language forms into the automatic processing of a relatively unlimited number of language forms. Overanalyzing language, thinking too much about its forms, and consciously lingering on rules of language all tend to impede this graduation to automat city.

2.5.2 Meaningful Learning

The principle of Meaningful Learning is quite simply, that is Meaningful Learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning.

2.5.3 The Anticipation of Reward

Human beings are universally driven to act, or “behave” by the anticipation of some sort of reward—tangible or intangible, short term or long term—that will ensue as a result of the behavior.

2.5.4 Intrinsic Motivation

The most powerful rewards are those that are intrinsically motivated within the learner. Because the behavior stems from need, wants, or desires within oneself, the behavior itself is self-rewarding; therefore, no externally administered reward is necessary.

2.5.5 Strategic Investment

Successful mastery of the second language will be due to a large extent to a learner’s own personal “investment” of time, effort, and attention to the second language in the form of an individualized battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language.

2.6 Affective Principles

2.6.1 Language Ego

As human beings learn to use a second language, they also develop a new mode of thinking, feeling, and acting—a second identity. The new “language ego,” intertwined with the second language, can easily create within the learner a sense of fragility, a defensiveness, and a rising of inhibitions.

2.6.2 Self Confidence

Learner’s belief that they indeed are fully capable of accomplishing a task is at least partially a factor in their eventual success in attaining the task.

2.6.3 Risk-Taking

Successful language learners, in their realistic appraisal of themselves as vulnerable beings yet capable of accomplishing tasks, must be willing to become “gamblers” in the game of language, to attempt to produce and to interpret language that is a bit beyond their absolute certainty.

2.6.4 The language Culture-Connection

Whenever you teach a language, you also teach a complex system of cultural customs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling and acting.

2.7 Linguistics Principle

2.7.1 The Native Language Effect

The native language of learners exerts a strong influence on the acquisition of the target language system. While that native system will exercise both facilitating and interfering effects on the production and comprehension of the new language, the interfering effects are likely to be the most salient.

2.7.2 Interlanguage

Second language learners tend to go through a systematic or quasi-systematic development process as they progress to full competence in the target language. Successful interlanguage development is partially a result of utilizing feedback from others.

2.7.3 Communicative Competence

Given that communicative competence is the goal of all language class, instruction needs to point toward all its components: organizational, pragmatic, strategic, and psychomotor. Communicative goals are best achieved by giving due attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, to authentic language and contexts, and to students' eventual need to apply classroom learning to previously unrehearsed contexts in the real world.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the writer adopted the qualitative method. A qualitative approach, involves description and analysis rather than handled by statistical procedures (Bogdan, 1992). Thereby, the writer began with the formulation of the problem, data collection, data analysis and classification and then analyzed them.

In collecting the data, firstly the writer distributed questionnaires to 70 students of the third semester of English department of UNTIRTA Serang Banten: 35 students from regular class and 35 from non-regular. The questionnaires consists of fifty statements or learning strategies, taken from Oxford's SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning). They are divided into six groups, group 1 is concerned about the way students remembering process, and it consists of nine statements. Group 2 is concerned about the use of cognitive processes, it consists of fourteen statements. Group 3 consists of six statements about how students compensate the missing knowledge. Group 4 is about the learning organization and evaluation, it consists of nine statements. Group 5 consists of six statements about emotions management, and groups 6; it consists of six statements about students' interaction with other students in the learning process.

The students had to give score to each statement, range from 1 to five based on how often they employ the strategy. 1 means never or almost never true of me, 2 means usually not true of me, 3 means somewhat true of me, 4 means usually true of me, 5 means always or almost always true of me. Then, to know how the students learn English or how they improve their English skill, the writer summed up all the score of each category to get the total score which will show how often students employ learning strategy. Moreover, to know which strategy which is commonly used by the students, the writer summed up each score of the statement than divide them by fifty.

To know the effect or the influence of how the students of the two class types employ learning strategies toward their learning achievement, students' GPA was used as complementary data. The average of the Students' GPA of the regular and non-regular were used to see the academic achievement of the students.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION

This section describes the analysis and classification of the data found in the analysis. It shows how the students worked with the questionnaire and how the writer worked with the students' result-questionnaire.

4.1 Data Analysis

To analyze the data, descriptive statistics analysis was used in this research. Descriptive statistics is statistics which is used not to test a hypothesis and to make a generalization (Ary, D et. Al, 1979). To analyze the data firstly, the average score of total SILL were used to see the tendency of the learning strategies use. Moreover, to find out the tendency of the average score of SILL from the regular and non-regular classes, the average score was compared to find out. The procedure of measuring the SILL followed these steps: Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you! Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no rights or wrong answers to these statements. Write the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells how true of you the statement is.

1. Never or almost never true of me.
2. Usually not true of me.
3. Somewhat true of me.
4. Usually true of me.
5. Always or almost always true of me.

To know the way the students employ language learning strategies, the score the students made for each category were summed up. Then they were divided by the number of all statements (50): if the student's total score is 5, it indicates that she often employ learning strategies to improve their English skill and respectively. The degree of the overall average score shows how often a student use them. $22+31+13+27+19+9= 2,42$. This score shows that the students use learning strategies about half of the time or does not often uses learning strategy. Moreover, to know which group of strategy used by the students, the writer summed up each score or each group than divided it by the number of statement of the groups to get the average score. Part A: $22:9= 2,44$,

Part B: $31:14 = 2,21$, Part C: $13:6 = 2,16$, Part D: $27:9 = 3$, Part E: $19:6 = 3$, Part F: $16, 9:6 = 1,5$. Comparing the score of each subcategory, the writer can see that student A mostly employ learning strategies that belong to group E which means that she tend to use indirect or meta cognitive principle because she is more concern about managing her emotion when learning or Improving her English Skill. In addition, the total of the average scored made by the two classes were compared to figure out the tendency of the students of the two classes employ language learning strategies.

4.2 Data Classification

To classify how students employ language learning strategies, the writer summed up the overall average made by all students involved in the research and divide it by 45 (which is the number of the students of each class). As exemplified below:

These are the overall average made by 6 students

$$2,41 + 3,81 + 2,91 + 3,27 + 3,23 + 3,6 = 19,23 : 6 = 3,2$$

Each number indicates that the degree of the use of learning strategy among the students varies. The degree of language learning strategies was based on this standard:

High	: always or almost always used	4,5 to 5,0
	Usually used	3,5 to 5,4
Medium	: sometimes used	2,5 to 3,4
Low	: Generally not used	1,5 to 2,4
		1,8 to 1,4

The score 3,2 indicates that the students are in the medium use of learning strategy in learning English. Thus, this calculation showed the average of the SILL of the two classes which could be used to see the tendency of SILL use.

4.3 General Findings How Students employ learning strategies

The data analysis showed that students either from the regular class and non-regular class employed language learning strategies. It was shown by the average score of the SILL use which reached 3, 5 for regular and 3,3 for non-regular class. They suggested that the use of SILL was some kind of the students' learning strategy properties.

4.4 Language Learning Strategies of Regular Class

The analysis on the data indicated that the mean of the overall average made by regular was 3,5 which is 1, 5 point below the perfect score, 5. It showed that most of the third semester students of regular class of English Department of UNTIRTA, Serang Banten use learning strategy in learning and improving their English skills. However, the overall average of each student varies: Some are in +- 4, some are in +-3, and some are in 2. But none of them was below 2. The distribution of the score is based on the head score, e.g.: the score is 3, 95. Even though it is almost reach score 4, It is still put in 3. The distribution of the students' overall average can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Score Distribution of SILL's of Regular Class

Score range	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	1	29	5	0

The table of score distribution shows that from 35 students involved in this study, none of their overall average is 1. It indicates that there is no student who does not use learning strategies. From the table we can see, there was only 1 person in score range 2 which means that they use learning strategies less than half the time. And 29 persons fall in the score range 3. It indicated that they use learning strategies about half of the time. And there are only 5 persons who usually use learning strategies or they use them more than half time or in the score range 4. And no one falls in the score range 5 which means almost always or there no students who almost always use learning strategies. This findings indicated that the regular students regularly used language learning strategies.

The uses of the strategy between the students were also varying. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) used in this study included fifty different strategies which represent how English language learners learn English. From the data, the writer found that each statement was scored differently by the students. Look at the example (a) which taken from learning strategy Part.A

- (a) I use flashcard to remember new English words.

Some student gave score 1 to that statement, some gave 2, and some gave 3 to this learning strategy. Score 1 means never, 2 means usually not true of me, and 3 means somewhat true of me. It indicated that some students use flashcard to help them to increase their vocabulary, and some do not. Despite the scoring differences, the writer found that third semester students of English in UNTIRTA Serang Banten use learning strategies to improve their English skill. It can be seen from the scoring range that spread from range 2 to 4.

4.5 Language Learning Strategies of non-Regular Class

The analysis on the data indicated that the mean of the overall average made by non-regular was 3,3 which is 1, 7 point below the perfect score, 5. It showed that most of the third semester students of non-regular class of English Department of UNTIRTA, Serang Banten use learning strategy in learning and improving their English skills. However, the overall average of each student varies: Some are in +- 4, some are in +-3, and some are in 2. But none of them was below 2. The distribution of the score is based on the head score, e.g.: the score is 3, 95. Even though it is almost reach score 4, It is still put in 3. The distribution of the students' overall average can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Score Distribution of SILL's of non- Regular Class

Score range	1	2	3	4	5
Number of students	0	2	32	1	0

The table of score distribution shows that from 35 students of the non-regular class in the study, none of their overall average is 1. It indicated that there was no student who does not use learning strategies. From the table we can see, there were only 2 students in score range 2 which means that they use learning strategies less than half the time. And 32 persons fall in the score range 3. It indicated that they use learning strategies about half of the time. And there are only 1 person who usually use learning strategies or they use them more than half time or in the score range 4. And no one falls in the score range 5 which means almost always or there no students who almost always use learning strategies. This findings indicated that the non-regular students regularly used language learning strategies.

These findings suggested that the use of language learning strategies of regular students was higher than non-regular studnets. Eventhough, the dicrepancy of the language learning strategies was only 0,2. Therefore, it can be infered that the regular class students were more aware of language learning strategies than non-regular students and their academic performance must be better than the non-regular students.

The data of students' GPA of the two classes supported the inference. The GPA of the regular students was 3,2 while the non-regular students was 2,7. This finding firmly suggest that the academic performance of the regular students were better or higher than the non-regular students. As supported by Rubin (1975) in Oxford (1990), assuming that successful learners tend to operate a range of strategies in their learning process which might be made available to help underachieved learners. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of the language learning really does influence the students' academic performance.

4.6 Group of Learning Strategies that Frequently Used by the Students.

There were two types of learning strategies used in this study. According to Oxford's taxonomy there are two types of learning strategies, which are direct or cognitive strategies and indirect or meta cognitive strategies. Each type of learning strategies consists of three different sub categories. The direct or cognitive learning strategies include a number of different ways of: remembering more effectively (it is labeled as part A), using all your cognitive process (part B), compensating for missing knowledge (part C). And the indirect or meta cognitive strategies include: organizing and evaluating your learning (part D), managing your emotions (part E), and learning with others (part F).

The data analysis showed that most of the students use indirect or meta cognitive learning strategies than direct or cognitive strategies. It has been shown by the highest average score of the group of the learning strategies made by the students. Most of the highest group average score were in indirect or meta cognitive strategies. The number is quite significant. As shown by the table of Learning Strategies below:

Table 3 of Frequency of the Learning Strategies Group

SILL		Average Score of SILL	Total
Direct or Cognitive Strategies	Part A	3	3,3
	Part B	3,3	
	Part C	3,5	
Indirect or Meta cognitive Strategies	Part D	3,6	3,4
	Part E	3,3	
	Part F	3,3	

The table shows that the use of learning strategy spreads from part A to part F: part A to part C are included in the direct of cognitive strategies and part D to part F are included to the indirect or meta cognitive strategies. Moreover, each part of the learning strategy represents how the students learn English. It indicated that the students use the two types of learning strategies.

However, the numbers of the use of the two types of the learning strategies are different. The total average score of the use of direct or cognitive strategies is only 3,3: 3 for Part A (learning strategies how students remember effectively), 3,3 for part B (learning strategies about the use of students' cognitive process), 3,5 in part C (learning strategies how students compensate for missing knowledge). Meanwhile, the total average of the indirect or Meta cognitive strategies is 3,4: 3,6 in part D (learning strategies how the students organizing and evaluating their learning), 3,3 made in part E (learning strategies how students manage their emotions), and 3,3 in part F (learning strategies how students learn English with others).

From that finding, the writer found that learning strategies that most commonly use by the students of the third semester of English Department of UNTIRTA Serang Banten is indirect or meta cognitive process in learning English or in improving their language skills.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Conclusion

After all the procedures to answer the questions of the research have been conducted and the analysis of showed the finding some conclusions can be offered. First, students of the third semester of English Department of UNTIRTA use Learning strategy to improve their language skills. It has been showed by the total average score of SILL which reach 3, 4. Moreover, regular students performed high use of SILL than non-regular students. It is in line with the GPA of the students where the GPA of the regular students is higher than the non-regular student. Therefore, it can be inferred that the use of language strategies seemed to affect students' academic performance.

Second, the type of learning strategy which is commonly used by the students to improve their English language skills is indirect or meta cognitive strategies. In order words, most of the students tend to manage or control their own learning process. It has been shown by the data where the meta cognitive learning strategies was higher than cognitive strategies. The former was 3,4 and the later was 3,3. Eventhough the discrepancy was only 0,1 but it still it seemed to show that the students, either class tend to choose meta cognitive strategies rather than cognitive strategies.

5.2 Suggestions

Since this study was concerned about the way the third semester students of English Department of UNTIRTA Serang Banten: regular and non-regular employed language learning strategies and what type of learning strategy that they mostly use, I only focused to how they improve their skills and to the language learning strategy they use. Actually, there are still plenty of rooms to study. Therefore, I suggest:

1. To figure out the best way to teach Language Learning Strategies to students.

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