

How Do Students Learn Speaking English?:

A Quantitative Study on Speaking Strategies

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Abstract

Speaking becomes a measurement for some students in learning English. They feel successful when they can speak fluently in front of people and have a good speaking proficiency. This research was to find out the trends of students' strategies in learning speaking and the most frequent strategies used by students. This research used quantitative methodology and applied survey as the design. This research was conducted at English department at one of the private universities in Yogyakarta. To choose the respondents, the researcher used purposive sampling to 30 students of English department batch 2014 who have GPA (Grade Point Average) in the range of 3.5 to 4.0. The researcher used a questionnaire that was adapted from Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning questionnaires', and it contains 50 items. The data were analysed using descriptive statistic through SPSS program version 15. Then, the result revealed that students used the strategies in improving their speaking ability, which were including metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, affective strategies, social strategies, and memory strategies. The result also revealed that the most frequent strategies used by students were metacognitive strategies and the strategies rarely used by students were memory strategies.

Keywords: speaking skills, speaking strategies, language learning strategies

1. Introduction

Students believe that being successful in oral language performance is by having good speaking proficiency. Speaking becomes a measurement for some students in learning English. They feel successful when they can speak fluently in front of people and have a good speaking proficiency. In fact, people in the world often evaluate the people from speaking first. According to Richard (2008) "learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness on the basis of how much they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency" (p.19). Based on the earlier statement, it can be assumed that English learners should have good speaking proficiency to achieve their success in learning English.

During participation in listening and speaking for formal setting class, the researcher observed that there were some of her classmates who were fluent in speaking. They preferred to be active and fully participated in the classroom activities. They produced English language very fluent and they implemented the component of speaking in the classroom well. For example, when student delivered materials in presentation, they looked confident and they spoke very well

without being afraid of making mistake. In addition, they were confident to express their ideas and were also courageous to speak. Therefore, it can be concluded that students who speak English fluently in classroom might employ specific strategies so that their performance was successful.

On the other hand, the researcher also found some students who did not speak very well in the classroom. They were hesitated and shy to speak English. In fact, some students did not utter anything in classroom activities. They preferred to be silent in classroom activities. Lukitasari (2008) admitted that in speaking class the students faced some speaking problems including hesitation, nothing to say, and mother tongue used. It can be concluded that these students still have difficulties in English speaking.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1 Definition

Speaking is a process expressing words and it involves producing, receiving, and processing information. According to Brown (1994) speaking is a process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving words in an ordinary voice, uttering words and processing information. Then, Lawtie (2007) argued that speaking is fundamental to human communication, without speaking some people did not say anything. It means that speaking needs interaction with others. The interactions include speaker and listener who will be communicating each other.

2.2 Language learning strategies

According to O'malley and Chamot (1990), Learning strategies are defined as "special thoughts or behaviour that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information" (p.1). Afterward, Oxford (1990) conveyed that language learning strategies are important for language learners because teachers will not always be around students to guide use the language outside the classroom. Nyikos and Oxford (1993) supported that learning strategies make learning become more effective and learning strategies also can develop an awareness of learning strategies and it makes the students to use appropriate strategies.

2.3 Speaking Strategies

Learning strategies are divided into three main categories. Firstly, metacognitive strategies that involves planning for learning, thinking about learning process. Second, cognitive strategies involve more direct manipulation of the learning material. Then, Socio-affective strategy involves the activity and interaction with others. Furthermore, these strategies are classified into six groups which are memory strategies (students remember language), cognitive strategies (students think about their learning), compensation strategies (students to make up for limited knowledge), metacognitive strategies (students manage their own learning), affective strategies (students feeling), and social strategies (interaction with others (Brown, 2007).

3. Methodology

3.1 Respondent

Respondent of this research were thirty students of English Department batch 2014. They were chosen because they have studied English at the department at the longest period and it is believed that they have experienced various strategies dealing with speaking skills. There was one criterion, namely students' GPA (Grade Point Average). The researcher selected the students who have GPA in the range of 3.5 to 4.0 (Volwerk and Tindal, 2012).

3.2 Instrument

In this research, the researcher used a questionnaire as the instrument to gather the data. The questionnaire was adopted from The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0. It was developed by Oxford (1990). Creswell (2012) suggested that a questionnaire is a form which is used in a survey research design in which participants fill in and return it to the researcher. The reason why the researcher used the questionnaire was because the questionnaire helped the researcher get the survey information and the nature of data is numerical which was easily analysed. Version 7.0 of SILL contains 50 items and divided into six subscales: (a) memory strategies (items 1 to 9), (b) cognitive strategies (items 10 to 23), (c) compensation strategies (items 24 to 29), (d) metacognitive strategies (items 30 to 38), (e) Affective strategies (items 39 to 44), (f) Social strategies (items 45 to 50).

3.3 Data analysis

The researcher obtained the document of students' Grade Point Average score from the office staff at the department. After that, the researcher listed the names of students who have GPA in range of 3.5 to 4.0. From there, the researcher searched for their contact numbers. After that, the researcher made a group using WhatsApp application and the researcher shared the link to 30 students at English department batch 2014. Next, the researcher asked the respondents to fill the questionnaire by opening the link and they filled in the questionnaires until the last question. The reason why the researcher used online questionnaire because it was more economical and practical as well as it required less time and energy to gather the data.

The further steps after gathering the data, the researcher analysed the data used SPSS application version 15. The first step was checking the validity of each statement in the questionnaire. It was an essential step in analysing the data because the researcher needed to know which questions items were used and which items in the question cannot be used for the next stage. Cohen et al., (2011) stated that analysing the validity of the data is important because in a part of the study. If it is not valid then it is useless.

The researcher used descriptive statistic to analyse the data. Cohen et.al (2011) described descriptive statistics as a statistic that only described and show the data, and then the researcher evaluated and inferred the meaning of the description. Descriptive statistics included mean, mode, median, max, min, range, variance, and standard deviation. The descriptive statistic could describe students' strategies used by students in learning speaking English because in

this study the researcher did not make any hypothesis or prediction then this type of statistic is the best choice to be used.

4. Discussion

4.1 Strategies used by students in learning speaking English

The first question of this research is about the strategies used by students in learning speaking English. From the data analysis, the researcher categorized the students' strategies in learning speaking into four categories (see table 6). The researcher analysed the data using descriptive statistic in SPSS 15.0 program. The results show that the mean score of questionnaire item is related to the students' strategies in learning speaking. There are six categories showing the data for strategies used by students in learning speaking English. The six categories are metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, compensations strategies, affective strategies, social strategies, and memory strategies. The researcher clearly described the result of questionnaire items from the highest mean score to the lowest mean score. The results of strategies used by students in learning speaking are presented below:

Metacognitive strategies. From the data above, there are 9 items showing the data from the metacognitive strategies. The nine items are Q19, Q18, Q31, Q6, Q30, Q41, Q40, Q7, and Q45. These nine items represent the metacognitive strategies, namely: finding out about language learning strategy, paying attention strategy, self-evaluation strategy, seeking practice opportunities strategy, setting goals and objective strategy, identifying the purpose of a language task strategy, planning for language task strategy, self-monitoring strategy, overviewing and linking with already known material strategy, and organizing strategy. The mean score of each item was obtained from calculating the result of the questionnaire using SPSS version 15.

Cognitive strategies. From the data above, there are 10 items showing the data from the cognitive strategies. The ten items were Q26, Q15, Q49, Q27, Q3, Q50, Q2, Q43, Q14, and Q47. These ten items represent the cognitive strategies, namely: formally practicing with sound system strategy, using sources for receiving and sending messages strategy, translating and transferring strategy, recombining strategy, repeating strategy, summarizing strategy, recognizing and using formulas and patterns and reasoning deductively strategy, practicing naturalistically strategy, and analysing contrastively strategy. The mean score of each item was obtained from calculating the result of the questionnaire using SPSS version 15.

Compensation strategies. From the data above, there are 5 items showing the data from the compensation strategies. The five items are Q17, Q29, Q28, Q4, and Q5. These five items represent the compensation strategies, namely: adjusting or approximating the message strategy, using a circumlocution or synonym strategy, using mime and gesture strategy, and using coining words strategy. The mean score of each item was obtained from calculating the result of the questionnaire using SPSS version 15.

Affective strategies. From the data above, there are 6 items showing the data from the affective strategies. The six items are Q32, Q8, Q9, Q20, Q33, and Q21. These six items represent the affective strategies, namely: making positive statement strategy and taking risk

wisely strategy, lowering anxiety strategy and using progressive relaxation, deep breathing strategy, using music strategy, using laughter strategy, discussing your feeling with someone else strategy, listening to your body strategy and using a checklist strategy, rewarding yourself strategy, and taking your personal temperature strategy.

Social strategies. From the data above, there are 6 items showing the data from the social strategies. The six items are Q34, Q11, Q23, Q35, Q10, and Q22. These six items represent the social strategies, namely: asking for clarification strategy, cooperating with peer strategy, asking questions strategy, developing cultural understanding and becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings strategy, asking for correction strategy, and cooperating with proficient users of new language strategy.

Memory strategies. From the data above, there are 9 items showing the data from the memory strategies. The nine items are Q37, Q12, Q13, Q36, Q25, Q24, Q48, Q1, and Q42. These nine items represent the memory strategies, namely: placing a new word into a context strategy, using physical response or sensation strategy, reviewing well strategy, associating or elaborating strategy, semantic mapping strategy, applying images and sound strategy, using imagery strategy, representing sounds in memory strategy, and using mechanical technique strategy.

4.2 The most frequent strategies used by students in learning speaking English.

There are six categories showing the data for strategies used by students in learning speaking English. The six categories namely memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. The following mean score of each category was obtained by calculating the result of the questionnaire using SPSS version 15.

	Metacognitive strategies	Cognitive strategies	Compensation strategies	Affective strategies	Social strategies	Memory strategies
Mean	4.30	4.01	4.01	3.73	3.69	3.64

Table 12 shows the mean score for each strategy. The table explained that firstly, students used metacognitive strategies (M=4.30), and followed by cognitive strategies (M=4.01), compensation strategies (M=4.01), affective strategies (M=3.73), social strategies (M=3.69), and the least strategies used by students are memory strategies (M=3.64). The histogram below shows the strategies used by students' batch 2014 in learning speaking English.

5. Conclusion

The results were gained as there are two research questions needed to answer. The first research question is about strategies used by the students in learning speaking English, and the second research question is about the most frequent strategies used by students in learning speaking

English. In order to answer these questions, the researcher used the questionnaire and analysed the gathered data using descriptive statistics in SPSS program. The researcher divided first research questions about strategies used by students in learning speaking into six categories namely metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, affective strategies, social strategies and memory strategies. The results showed that in metacognitive strategies, there are 9 items. The strategy which has the highest mean score was statement 19 “I try to find out how to be a better learner of English” which has mean 4.63. According to the categories, that strategy belongs to ‘always’ category. Furthermore, there are 10 items in cognitive strategies that can be seen from the total mean score item 26 “I practice the sound of English” which has the highest mean score 4.43, and that strategy belongs to ‘always’ categories’. Then, there are 6 items and 17 items in compensation strategies “I try to guess what the other person will say next in English”. This strategy has the highest mean of all which was 4.33, and based on the categories belong to ‘always’ categories. Moreover, there are 6 items in affective strategies. The one who has the highest mean score was item 32 “I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistake” which has the mean score 4.40. Based on the categories, that strategy belongs to ‘always categories. Besides that, there are 6 items and items 34 in social strategies “if I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again”. That strategy has the highest mean score which was 4.37. Based on the categories, that strategy belongs to ‘always’ categories. The last, there are 9 items as seen from the total score items 37 in memory strategies “I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them”. That strategy has the highest mean score which was 4.20. Based on the categories, this score belongs to ‘always’ categories.

Moreover, the second research question is about the most frequent strategies used by students in learning speaking English. In this question, the researcher showed the result based on the highest mean score to the lowest mean score. Then, the researcher has six categories strategy in learning speaking English. Which means that the metacognitive strategies are the most frequent strategies used by students because metacognitive strategies have the highest means score from all categories. The mean score was 4.30. Based on the categories (see table 6), this score belongs to ‘always’ categories. However, the strategies which have the lowest mean score were memory strategies. This strategy has the mean score 3.64.

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