

Chapter One

Introduction

The contents of this chapter focus on discussing background of the study, identification of the problem, delimitation of the problem, research questions, objective of the research, and significances of the research. It begins from the urgency of the variables and actors underlying this investigation. Diverse issues towards the notion and phenomena are identified to find the spotlight of the research. Hence, the research questions are systemized, so this study provides a clear goal to achieve.

Background of the Study

Learning English takes a lot of efforts and times. Brown (2007) stated that learning a second or foreign language is a long and complex process because learners are required to cover all the aspects of a new language such as the structure and culture of the target language. Especially for the students in Indonesia where English is considered as a foreign language (Rini, 2014). Thus, the government has put English into the curriculum of elementary, secondary, and high school. Still, most of the students in Indonesia take an additional English course in other educational institution since English has become crucial in this era.

Yet, most of students in almost every non-English speaking country are struggled in learning English itself. Mohammed (2018) stated that there some difficulties that the students face when learning English such as learning grammar and

vocabulary, pronunciation and accent, and their environment. That incapability was portrayed on the students who had errors in grammar, lack in vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and the students who rarely practicing English. They do not know what language learning strategies are and how to apply.

On other hand, learning strategies can be a significant tool to help the students in learning English. Celce-Murcia stated that when students are able to choose the proper strategies that appropriate with their learning style, these strategies become a useful tool-kit for active, conscious, and purposeful self-regulation of learning (as cited in Dwiniasih, 2015). Moreover, Moir & Nation also revealed that successful learners prefer to use various language learning strategies in their learning process (as cited in Griffiths, 2008). Students also get more meaningful and practical learning if they know how to learn properly based on the materials that they will learn (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). In fact, knowing their learning strategies might be helpful for other students who struggled in improving their English.

Some experts have studied language learning strategies since 1990's. Oxford (1990) stated that learning strategy as an action used by the learner in order to create their learning becomes more efficient and easier to adapt in different circumstances. According to, O'Malley and Chamot (1990), language learning strategies are the ways or tools used by the learners to remember and organize samples of the language target. It means that learning strategy is an approach chosen by the learners in order to make themselves easier to obtain a new knowledge or information. Unfortunately, according

to Nurani (2015), English Education Department students in one private university on Yogyakarta have some difficulties when they want to speak, write, listen, and read. The other problem is that they do not know what language strategies that they use to apply.

Meanwhile, all of these skills are only able to be obtained through the learning process with proper learning strategies. Yet, the students are not able to identify their learning strategies that they use in the language learning. Thus, knowing someone learning strategies and providing the information about it is a crucial information since learning strategies act as the tools for the students to learn English effectively (Rubin, 1981). They will be able to identify which strategies that they can use to learn a particular skill.

Based on the statements above, students who do not use language learning strategies may have difficulties in learning a language. Based on the researcher's prior observation and informal interview, some had some difficulties in learning English from speaking, writing, listening, and reading. These students had experienced language learning, unfortunately most of them had no idea about their language learning strategies. Thus, helping them to identify and providing such information will help them significantly to improve their language learning process. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the what language learning strategies that the students of English Education Department Students used the most and what are the differences in language learning strategies based on gender.

Identification of the Problem

According to the researcher's previous experience, many students in English education department may find it difficult to identify their learning strategies to begin with. They also have the problems to decide what strategies they belong with. They do not know what strategies that suit on them since their knowledge on language learning strategies (LLS) are low. Some factors like age, culture, and personality traits also might affect their preferences on LLS. Both male and female students have some difficulties in learning English from speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. Some evidences are shown by their inability to produce a good pronunciation, having sufficient vocabularies, giving response, and others. Yet, there are some differences on their excuses on learning English and the ways they learn English. Male and female students also performed different approach on their language learning process. Nevertheless, the role of gender in LLS also quite being underestimated and neglected in research for a long period of time (Michońska-Stadnik, 2014).

Thus, helping them to identify and provide such information will help them to improve their language learning process. This also contributes to the research regarding the differences in LLS based on gender differences. LLS have two main strategies and each strategy has three categories. They are direct strategies which consists of cognitive strategy, memory strategy, compensation strategy, and indirect strategies are comprised of metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social

strategy. Students might use them to learn a particular skill which needs a particular learning strategy. Thus, learning strategies should be known by the students so they will be able to match a proper strategy with the skill that they learn.

Delimitation of the Problem

This research focus on investigating what LLS that the students used the most and the differences in LLS based on the gender. The language strategies that are also studied generally from direct and indirect strategies and each strategy has three categories of Language Learning Strategies by Oxford (1990). This research investigates which of those six categories that the learners used the most. Moreover, this study also focusses on exploring the gender differences on language learning strategies in order to provide clear information regarding what language learning strategies of each male and female use.

Any factors like personality traits, teaching method, and personal background of the students will be not included on this research. Therefore, other researchers might conduct other research that might correlate language learning strategies on those factors above. Hopefully, this research will give the insight for the institution regarding the language learning strategies of English Language Department of a private university in Yogyakarta to help them improve their learning by applying a proper language learning strategy

Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the research questions of this study can be formulated as follows:

1. What are the most frequently used language learning strategies among English Language Education Department students?
2. What are the differences of language learning strategies used by male and female students?

Objective of the research

Based on its objectives, the purposes can be formulated as follows:

1. To describe what language learning strategies among the students in English Language Education Department students used the most.
2. To explain the differences of language learning strategies used by male and female students

Significance of the Research

This research might be helpful for:

The students. The students will be able to identify what language learning strategies that students in their department use. So, they will have a plentiful knowledge of language learning strategies which can be chosen as their LLS. By

knowing the gender preferences on LLS, students have a recommendation on what strategy they will use according to their gender.

The lecturers. The lecturers will receive an insight towards the language learning strategies that most of the students the students use in their department, so they can adjust their teaching strategies based on their students' LLS. Moreover, the information of gender differences on LLS may help the lecturer to differentiate the students' LLS based on the gender which will lead them to make different approach to male and female students.

The department. This research will provide an insight of the students' language learning strategies that might help the department to provide and adjust their facilities according to the students learning strategies. Thus, the students will receive a proper facilitation to improve their language learning process.

Other researchers. This study might be helpful for other researchers as a reference to conduct more research about language learning strategies and gender differences of LLS in Yogyakarta. Other researchers also can put this research as a comparison in their previous related study on language learning strategies, the preference of LLS based on gender differences, or even any research that contains language learning in general especially in Indonesia.