

## Students' Strategies in Learning Speaking: Experience of Two Indonesian Schools

Syafryadin  
Bengkulu University  
syafryadin@unib.ac.id

### ABSTRACT

The present study was an effort to investigate strategies mostly used in learning speaking, which covered direct strategies and indirect strategies. To this end, 60 students from two different high schools in a city in Indonesia, in which 30 students for each school participated this study. In collecting the data, this study used close-ended questionnaires with Strategy Inventory Language Learner (SILL) consisting of 39 items, which were analyzed by using a scoring system. The results of the study showed that students of both schools generally used the same and different learning strategies. The same learning strategies used by the students of both schools were organizing and evaluating learning, referring to metacognitive or indirect strategies. Meanwhile, the different learning strategies used by the students of both schools occurred on five strategies at a medium level. From the six types of learning strategies, as indicated in this study, the most popular learning strategies which were used by students of both schools were organizing and evaluating learning.

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### Introduction

Learning strategies are procedures undertaken by the learners in order to make their language learning improved. The strategies enable learners to enhance learning aspects such as skills, confidence, even motivation (Shi, 2017). In this sense, O'Malley & Chamot (1990) suggested focusing on selecting aspects of new information, analyzing, and monitoring information during the encoding process and evaluating the learning, so learning strategies are crucial to help students to alleviate their anxiety.

A Learning Strategy was an approach in learning and using information. Students used Learning Strategies to help them understand information and solve problems (Bruen, 2001). Students who did not know or use right learning strategies may learn passively and maybe fail in school. Learning Strategy instruction focused on making students more active since they knew how to learn and how to use what they have learned to be successful. Some strategies should be made to enhance the student's success, including in high school context. In high school, the strategies of

learning English should be supported by appropriate and proper learning strategies, the students' readiness, and suitable teaching equipment.

In fact, teaching is not always supported by qualified teachers, students are not ready to learn the materials, and schools have no complete equipment or appropriate with the materials. However, they can get a successful result, mainly speaking as one of the primary skills which should be mastered by language learners (Richards, 2008). It can happen if the language learners use proper strategies or learning techniques and the knowledge of classroom management that support them, including in learning to speak. Mistar & Umamah (2014) have provided evidence of how learning strategies contribute significantly to speaking.

Speaking practice is probably the most reliable route to authentic communication in developing the learner's proficiency. In the Indonesian context, the speaking ability of the students at the High School level requires enormous effort to develop it since most of them do not know how to express their feeling and ideas in speaking, conversation, and discussion. Speaking is considered as the hardest skill in learning English and needs various strategies that should be integrated with speaking class (Mistar, Zuhairi, & Umamah, 2014). The differences in learning speaking strategies show that there are many different strategies that students use to be active speakers. This is closely related that Learning Strategies are the mental process, which learners employ to learn and use the target language (Nunan, 1991).

Studies investigating learning strategies have been conducted by Amir (2018), Shi (2017), and Alfian (2016), whose studies aimed to know the language learning strategies used by the students, but they did not mention specific skills used for language learning strategies. In addition, Wael, Asnur, & Ibrahim (2018) conducted the research in a school that aimed to explore students' learning strategies in speaking in which memory strategies have been employed more than the other strategies (metacognitive, social and cognitive strategy) in speaking. In other skills, Yulianti (2018) conducted research that aimed to identify the learning strategies of the students in learning writing. However, since most of the studies investigate only one school as the setting, although they study different skills, it is crucial to find out whether any differences regarding the learning strategies in different schools and the most frequently typical strategies employed in different high schools.

In order to fill the void mentioned above, the current study focuses on finding out the strategies and differences of strategies employed by students in learning speaking at two different schools, which are at the same level. Besides, it also attempts to reveal whether any significant difference of strategies used in learning speaking by students at those schools.

## Literature Review

English learning strategies based on Oxford's (1990) classified system which is used for language skills namely reading, speaking, writing, and listening. The strategies are divided into two main strategies, namely, direct and indirect strategies. The direct strategies are language learning strategies that directly involve the target language. All direct strategies require mental processing of the language, such as memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. Memory strategies refer to strategies that are used by students to help them remember new language. Oxford (1990) stated that this strategy could be facilitated for learners in entering information into long-term or short-term memory and retrieving information when needed for some learning activities. Memory strategies involve creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action. Then, cognitive strategies are strategies which help the learners think about and understand the new language and become the most popular strategies with language learner. This strategy consists of several sets, such as practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating for input and output. Compensation strategies are a strategy that helps the learners for either comprehension or producing to overcome knowledge in the target language. The compensation strategy is useful to make up for an inadequate repertoire of grammar and especially vocabulary. There are two other strategies that are involved in this strategy, namely guessing intelligently in listening and reading and overcoming limitations in speaking and reading.

Indirect strategy means a language learning strategy that supports and manages language learning without (in many instances) directly involving the target language (R. Oxford, 1990). Indirect strategies are classified into three categories, namely metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies: metacognitive means beyond, besides, or the cognitive. Metacognitive strategies are actions that go beyond purely cognitive devices, which provide away for the learners to coordinate their learning process. Metacognitive strategies include three strategy sets, namely centering learning, arranging and planning learning, and evaluating learning. Affective strategies refer to emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values, according to Brown (Oxford, 1990: 140), that the affective domain is impossible limits. The affective side of the learner is probably one of the very biggest influences on language learning success or failure. Affective strategies are divided into three main sets are lowering anxiety, encouraging self, and taking emotional temperature. Next, social strategies can be stated that they are related to social to mediating activity and transacting with others. Three sets of social strategies, they are asking a question, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others. Since learning strategies are considered as a sign of improving the students' language performance, and impressive researcher, namely Oxford (1990), devises the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) that can be sent for assessing kinds of learning strategies that are mostly used by the students.

The strategy questionnaire most often used around the world at this time is the strategy inventory for language learning (R. Oxford, 1990). There are two versions: one for native speakers of English (80 items) and another for learners of English as second language (50 items). The SILL is one of the major useful manuals of learner strategy assessment tools currently available. A SILL package includes a short set of directions to the students with a sample item, the 50-item instrument, scoring worksheet on which students record their answers and calculate their averages for each strategy subscale and their overall average, a summary profile that shows their results and provides examples for self-interpretation, and a strategy graph that allowed each learner to graph result from the SILL. It is estimated that 40-50 studies, including dissertation and theses, have been done employing the SILL both in Indonesia and overseas country. The SILL uses a 5 likers-scale for which the learners are asked to indicate their responds (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) five responds represent on the following options: (1) never or almost 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. The questionnaire consist of six part namely part A, B, C, D, E, F and each part represent about earning strategies both direct and indirect.

Direct strategies are classified into three parts: A, B, and C. Part A is about remembering more effectively. This part represents memory strategies that are used for entering new information into memory storage and retrieving it when the need for communication (e.g., representing sound in memory, structured, reviewing, and using physical responses)). Part B is using all mental processes which represent cognitive strategies used for linking information with exiting schemata and for analysis. Cognitive strategies are responsible for deep processing, forming and revising internal mental models, and receiving and producing messages in the target language (e.g., repeating, getting ideas quickly, analyzing and taking notes). Part C is compensating for missing knowledge, which represents compensation strategies include such strategies are guessing and using gestures. Such strategies are needed to fill any gaps in the knowledge of the language (e.g., switching to the mother tongue, using other clues, getting help, and using synonym).

Indirect Strategies are classified into three parts namely D, E, and F. Part D is organizing and evaluating learning which represents metacognitive strategies and techniques used for organizing, planning, focusing, and evaluating one's own learning (e.g., linking new information with already known one, seeking practice, opportunities, and self-monitoring). Part E is about managing emotions that represent effective strategies that are used for handling feelings, attitudes, and motivation (e.g., lowering anxiety by use music, encouraging oneself, and discussing feelings with others). Finally, part F is about learning with others which represents social strategies that are used for facilitating interaction by asking questions and cooperating with others in learning process (e.g., asking for clarification, cooperating with others, and developing cultural understanding).

## Methodology

This study applied descriptive quantitative design, which aimed to know what speaking strategies used and identify the differences in learning speaking strategies applied by students at class XI, particularly in speaking skills. It means that the study describes the factual and natural data obtained in the field of the study. The purpose of using this method is to describe the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest systematically, factually, and accurately (Isaac & Michael, 1982).

The participants of this study were students at classes in SMAN X and SMAN Y, the high schools in Semarang, in which the name of the schools were pseudonyms as the research ethic. The researcher investigated class XI for the 2018/2019 academic year from both schools. Each class consisted of 30 students. So, the total numbers of subjects were 60 students. In this study, the researcher used close-ended questionnaires, which is adapted from a Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version for speakers of Language Learning English (version 7.0 [EFL/ESL]© (Oxford, 1989: 293) as the instrument.

In collecting the data, the researcher carried out the following procedures. Firstly, the researcher chooses the respondents of the research. Second, the researcher worked together with the teacher to determine the proper time for giving questionnaires. Third, the researcher gave respondents a brief explanation about how to fill out the worksheet of close-ended questionnaires. Fourth, the researcher asked the students to read the questionnaires and fill out the worksheet in 40 minutes. The fifth, the researcher collected close-ended questionnaires and worksheets directly and gave the score.

All collected data in this study were considered with a scoring used in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (version 7.0) adapted from [ESL/EFL]© (Oxford, 1989), with several procedures. First, the researcher summed up the result of each part of SILL and divided by a number of items in each part in order to get the overall and average score of an individual subject. Second, the results of each part transferred to a profile worksheet. This profile showed learners SILL results that informed the type of strategies they used in learning English, especially in Speaking.

Third, the researcher classified the results into three different criteria as in the following scheme;

<b>High</b>	→ Always or almost always used	<b>4.5 to 5.0</b>
	→ Usually used	<b>3.5 to 4.4</b>
<b>Medium</b>	→ Sometime used	<b>2.5 to 3.4</b>
<b>Low</b>	→ General not used	<b>1.5 to 2.4</b>
	→ Never or almost never used	<b>1.0 to 1.4</b>

Fourth, the researcher made a SILL Graph, from the results of students SILL averages for each part. In this graph, it showed which type of strategies that were mostly used by students at class IX of SMAN X and SMAN Y in improving their speaking skill.

## Findings

The finding of this study showed that both students XI<sup>1</sup> of SMAN X and SMAN Y generally had the same and different learning strategies. Students at class XI<sup>1</sup> of SMAN X and Y prefer to use the organizing and evaluating learning. The frequent use of these strategies categorized in the high-level. While other types of strategies such as managing emotions, remembering more effectively, using all mental processes, learning with others, and compensating for missing knowledge are categorized in the medium-level either for class XI<sup>1</sup> of SMAN X and XI<sup>1</sup> of SMAN Y students. Below explored the students' classification of how frequently they used learning strategies in high, medium, or low levels.

**Table 1** The Students Classification on Remembering More Effectively Strategies

Students	Remembering More Effectively					Total
	High		Medium	Low		
	Almost or almost used	Usually used	Sometimes	General not used	Never or rarely used	
SMAN X	- (0%)	6 (20%)	18 (60%)	6 (20%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)
SMAN Y	- (0%)	4 (13.3%)	16 (53.3%)	10 (33.3%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)

The table 1 shows that from 30 students of SMAN X, six students or (20%) use this strategy in the high level, 18 students or (60%) use this strategy in the medium level and six students or (20%) use this strategy in the level low level. While from 30 students of SMAN Y, four students or (13.3%) use this strategy in the high level, 16 students or (53.3%) use this strategy in the medium level, and ten students or (33.3%) use this strategy in low level

**Table 2.** The Students Classification on Using All Mental Process Strategies

Students	Using All Mental Process Strategies					Total
	High		Medium	Low		
	Almost or almost used	Usually used	Sometimes	General not used	Never or rarely used	

SMAN X	- (0%)	10 (33.33%)	17 (56.6%)	3 (10%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)
SMAN Y	- (0%)	7 (23.3%)	22 (73,3%)	1 (3.3%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)

The table 2 shows that from 30 students of SMAN X, ten students or (33.3%) use this strategy in the high level, 13 students or (56.6%) use this strategy in the medium level and three students or (10%) use this strategy in the low level. While 30 students of SMAN Y, seven students, or (23.3%) use this strategy at the high level, 22 students or (73.3%) use this strategy in medium level, and one student or (3.3%) uses this strategy in the low level.

**Table 3.** Students Classification on Ccompensating for Missing Knowledge Strategy

Students	Compensating for Missing Knowledge Strategy					Total
	High		Medium	Low		
	Almost or almost used	Usually used	Sometimes	General not used	Never or rarely used	
SMAN X	- (0%)	8 (26.6%)	19 (63.3%)	3 (10%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)
SMAN Y	2 (6.6%)	8 (26.6%)	14 (46,6%)	6 (20%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)

The table 3 shows that from 30 students of SMAN X, eight students or (26.6%) use this strategy in the high level, 19 students or (63.3%) use this strategy in the medium level and three students or (10%) use this strategy in the low level. While 30 students of SMAN Y, ten students, or (33.3%) use this strategy in the high level, 14 students or (46.6%) use this strategy in the medium level, and six students or (20%) use this strategy in the low level.

**Table 4.** The Students Classification on Organizing and Evaluating Learning Strategy

Students	Organizing and Evaluating Learning					Total
	High		Medium	Low		
	Almost or almost used	Usually used	Sometimes	General not used	Never or rarely used	
SMAN X	2 (6.66%)	17 (56.6%)	8 (26.6%)	3 (10%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)
SMANY	1 (3.33%)	14 (46.6%)	13 (43.3%)	2 (6.66%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)

The table 4 shows that from 30 students of SMAN X, 19 students or (63.3%) use this strategy in the high level, eight students or (26.6%) use this strategy in the medium level and three students or (10%) use this strategy in the low level. While 30 students

of SMAN Y, 15 students, or (50%) use this strategy at the high level, 13 students or (43.3%) use this strategy in medium level, and two students or (6.66%) use this strategy in the low level. To clarify about the percentage of student’s classification in this strategy will be figured out in the following chart.

**Table 5.** The Students Classification on Managing Emotion Strategies

Students	Managing Emotion					Total
	High		Medium	Low		
	Almost or almost used	Usually used	Sometimes	General not used	Never or rarely used	
SMAN X	2 (6.66%)	11 (36.6%)	14 (46.6%)	3 (10%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)
SMAN Y	1 (3.33%)	12 (40%)	14 (46.6%)	3 (10%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)

The table 5 shows that from 30 students of SMAN X, 13 students or (43.3%) use this strategy in the high level, 14 students or (46.6%) use this strategy in the medium level and three students or (10%) use this strategy in the low level. While 30 students of SMAN Y, 13 students, or (43.3%) use this strategy at the high level, 14 students or (46.6%) use this strategy in a medium level, and three students or (10%) use this strategy in the low level.

**Table 6.** The Students Classification on Learning with Others Strategies

Students	Learning with Others					Total
	High		Medium	Low		
	Almost or almost used	Usually used	Sometimes	General not used	Never or almost never used	
SMAN X	- (0%)	11 (36.6%)	17 (56.6%)	2 (6.66%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)
SMAN Y	1 (3.33%)	10 (33.3%)	17 (56.6%)	2 (6.66%)	- (0%)	30 (100%)

The table 6 shows that from 30 students of SMAN X, 11 students or (36.6%) use this strategy in the high level, 17 students or (56.6%) use this strategy in the medium level, and two students or (6.6%) use this strategy in the low level. While students of SMAN Y, 11 students, or (36.6%) use this strategy at the high level, 17 students (56.6%) use this strategy in the medium level, and two students or (6.66%) use this strategy in the low level.

The following section has presented a comparison of student's learning strategies between SMAN X and SMAN Y students. The result is a collective result based on their overall average Sill result in the following.

**Table 7.** Average and Overall Average sill Result Between SMAN X and SMAN Y Students

Students	Language Learning Strategies						Overall Average
	Part A (Remembering more Effectively )	Part B (Using All Mental Process )	Part C (Compensating for Missing Knowledge )	Part D (Organizing and Evaluating Learning)	Part E (Managing Emotion)	Part F (Learning with others )	
SMAN X	3.03	3.19	3.01	3.50	3.42	3.17	3.22
SMAN Y	2.74	3.08	3.09	3.51	3.32	3.24	3.16

The overall score for students on the table above shows different, and similarities of learning strategies applied in learning English. For SMAN X students applied to organize and evaluating learning is ranked in the first place, with an average score of 3.50 and Compensating for Missing Knowledge is in the lowest score with 3.01. For students of SMAN Y applied to organize and to evaluate learning is ranked in the first place, with the average score 3.51 and Remembering more Effectively is in the last place, with the average score 2.74.

In short, organizing and evaluating learning or metacognitive strategies was the most popular and expense than other types of strategies and this finding is essentially based on the expert's assumption that L2 learners who learn English will be able to use viable metacognitive learning strategies (O'Malley et al, Bialystok, in Oxford 1990, internet document).

## Discussion

An impressive result has been drawn between SMAN X and SMAN Y students, where students of both schools were dominant in part D (organizing and evaluating learning). This part is relating to the metacognitive strategy, which helps the learners to organize their learning through planning one's learning, centering, monitoring, and evaluating how well one has done. Planning is a crucial metacognitive strategy in second of foreign language learning skills. Planning, according to Oxford's theory, involves a variety of ways; for instance, setting goals and objectives that will be achieved in learning.

This study also performed similarities that result in other types of strategies between SMAN X and SMAN Y students. Both also dominantly (highest average

score) used Part E (managing emotion), and all statements in this part focus on the Affective strategies, which help the learners to organize their feeling or emotion. Emotion includes all thoughts and actions of human beings. As “an intellectual,” as we know would like to think we are influenced by our emotion as well as in learning a language. According to Ehrman (1996) cited in (Muslatif, 2006) stated that “every imaginable feeling is going to accompany the students’ learning”. There can be positive feelings such as Joy, happiness, pleasure, contentment, enthusiasm, satisfaction, warmth believed in making language learning more effectively.

Meanwhile, negative feeling such as anxiety, tension, fear, frustration, lack of confidence is creating learning difficulties. A variety of ways in affective strategies (e.g., lowering anxiety by listening music, encourage self by making a positive statement or writing feeling into language learning diary) are very important to be applied in order the students are able to control their emotional state, to keep themselves motivated and on-task, and to get help when they need it (Dasereau 1985 in Oxford (1990)). These findings were in line with Oxford (1990), who stated that young learners seem to involve their feeling as they attempt to learn a new language. However, when they become more advanced learners, they are not familiar with paying attention to their feeling as a part of the learning process.

Part B (using all mental Proses) was another type of strategy also used by SMAN X students, slightly beyond SMAN Y students in medium-frequency. Part B represents cognitive strategies that help learners to make sense of learning by thinking and understanding their learning. Practising, revising, sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating the structure for input and output are ways in the cognitive framework. Cognitive strategies also associated with human language acquisition, which operates directly on incoming information of the target language and manipulate it in ways that can enhance language learning (e.g., repeating, getting the idea quickly, reasoning deductively and summarizing).

As can be seen, the data set out in the finding section, SMAN X and SMAN Y students also report using Part C (compensating for missing knowledge) or compensation strategies in the medium-frequency. Primarily, this strategy can be used by students to help them compensate for the lack of knowledge in using the target language. Thus, Oxford (1990) reveals two significant kinds of strategies, namely guessing intelligently in listening and reading and listening by using linguistic clues that can help the learners to recognize and understand every single word in the text before they comprehend the overall meaning of the text. Overcoming limitation both in speaking and writing consist of eight strategy sets (e.g., switching to the mother tongue, getting help, using mime or gesture, selecting to the topic, coining words, adjusting to the message and using a synonym) can contribute to the learning by allowing learners to stay in conversation or keep their writing.

Part A (Remembering more effectively) another strategy was in the medium frequency, either SMAN X or SMAN Y students, and this was the lowest average

score for whole strategies. Seven statements in this part are representing memory strategies used by the learners to help them acquiring information on language items into long term or short term memory. The information might be found from some learning activities such as listening, reading, and other communication activities (Oxford, 1990). A variety of ways which involve in these strategies, such as students using semantic mapping, using keywords, and reviewing well, also enable the learners to retrieve information when needed to facilitate the learning activities (listening, reading, speaking, and writing).

Based on the finding for the Part F, SMAN Y has a higher average score than SMAN X. Part F (leaning with others) or social strategies was the last choice tended in the medium-frequency. Consequently, these strategies imply proficiency increase. In this case, the learners are required to feel confident and recognize the importance of interacting with others to improve their performance (e.g., asking for clarification, cooperating with others, and developing cultural understanding). Both SMAN X and SMAN Y students used social strategies to become even better.

### **Pedagogical Implication**

Based on the result of this study that English major students either SMAN X or SMAN Y students are dominantly in part D that has strong connection with the learners' metacognition is essentially intends to establish of self-directed and encouragement of learners independence through planning, centering, monitoring and evaluating the success of learning activity. It is supported by Ellis (2006) that connectionism seeks to explain SLA in terms of mental representations and information processing while rejecting the innate endowment hypothesis. In this case, the processing of learning can be connected to the learning strategy that will be determined by the students.

In the language classroom setting, it is important for the teacher to develop the students' metacognition to help them become better language learners inside and outside the classroom because they will not always have the teacher around to guide them when they use the language. Johnson (2003) stated that the behaviourism theory that language learners' behaviour either in the classroom or outside the classroom, can become their learning style and strategy to improve their ability. Partly, this can be achieved through a specific "learners training" in metacognitive strategies: equipping the students with the means to guide themselves by explaining the strategies to them and help them to select the most appropriate strategies. Oxford (1990), one of the leading teachers and researchers in the language learning strategies field, provided a wealth of activities to heighten the learners' awareness of strategies and their ability to use them. For example, teach the learner to find out about language learning by reading books and talking with other people are good preparation before learning. The teacher teaches the students to pay attention to language learning task and to ignore distracters by giving directed attention to a specific of the language (e.g. the old lady

ahead of you in the bus is chastising a young man in a new language, listen to their conversation to find out exactly what she is saying to him). This example is also explained by Long (1996) who stated that the interaction between students and teachers in learning could give a positive influence to their ability improvement, and by interaction, the students also can find out the strategies that can be used for them in learning. Another example also can be done in teaching speaking, the teacher can start with reflection ('How do you feel about speaking English?'), knowledge about language ('What do you know about speaking English), and self evaluation ('How well are you doing).

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Based on the finding, it showed that the most popular strategy used for both SMAN X and SMAN Y students was organizing and evaluating learning or metacognitive strategies. Then, both schools strongly used managing emotion or metacognitive strategies as their learning strategies in learning speaking. The difference of learning strategies used in both schools occurred in medium level, in order SMAN X students used using all mental processes, learning with others, remembering more effectively, and compensating for missing knowledge strategies. Then, SMAN Y students used learning with others, compensating for missing knowledge, using all mental processes, and remembering more effective strategies. The finding of this study gives a reflection on how they learn English and as an input for them to be aware of their learning strategies that can be used in improving their language skills as well as other students who do not include as the sample of this study. In addition, the researcher of the present study recommends further research in the area of learning strategy. The first, this study revealed that L2 stage differences made the learners chosen similar and different language learning strategies so that further research could be investigated from different factors such as sex and cultural background of the students. Second, this study did not explore the effect of learning strategy use with the students' achievement. Third, this study also should be becoming a basic consideration of a language teacher to guide the learners to be aware of their own learning strategy because using appropriate strategies in learning the target language has great potential in improving the students' language performance and the students' communicative competence.

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