DEVELOPING HARMONY OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN ELT

An Analysis of Students' Speaking Learning Strategies in Seventh Grade at SMPN 2 KotaCilegon

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Abstract

This research aimed to find out the speaking learning strategies commonly used and the difficulties of students speaking learning strategies by students of 7th grade in SMPN 2 Kota Cilegon. This research used a qualitative method, particularly a case study. This research was conducted at SMPN 2 Kota Cilegon Academic year 2022/2023 the participants were 32 students. To collect the data, the researcher used a questionnaire, interview, and documentation. It was found that the commonly used speaking learning strategies among students in class 7D of SMPN 2 Kota Cilegon are metacognitive strategies from indirect strategies, with an average percentage of 27%, while memory strategies are the least used in learning speaking, with an average percentage of 8%. The difficulties of speaking learning strategies in speaking activities in the classroom were identified such as memorizing new vocabulary, pronunciation, constructing sentences, lack of confidence, and feeling embarrassed when speaking in front of others. Those statements were based on interview data. This indicates differences in the difficulties faced and the strategies used by students when learning to speak.

Keywords: *Language Learning Strategies, Learning Speaking, Speaking Learning Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

In learning English, speaking is one of the most important things to know in theother four skills: reading, listening, and writing. Brown (2007) states that speaking is considered a challenging talent compared to other skills because students do not acknowledge the pronunciation movement that produces the pretentious, charismatic style of speech that affects them. Moreover, students need to know strategies for speaking so they can speak easily. As stated by Florez (1999:1), speaking requires students to have linguistic competence,which includes knowing how to generate language for specific goals like pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary but also knowing when, why, and how to do so (sociolinguistic competence).

In the educational field, learning English is very important for students,especially speaking. Many students are afraid to fail in speaking English due to several things, such as a lack of preparation strategy, information, and confidence.Saputra & Subekti (2008) stated that learning to speak another language is challenging. Since speaking well in a foreign language requires a lot ofcourage and preparation, learners consider speaking the most difficult skill to learn.Based on the researcher's experience, speaking is difficult for students when they learn English. Therefore, they become shy, afraid, and not confident when speakingin front of the class, a problem that often occurs in schools.

Learning strategies are required toincrease students' motivation and enable them to become independent English learners (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). Language learning strategies (LLS) are an individual's efforts to select methods to enhance their learning (Oxford, 1990:1).Additionally, learning strategies assist students in becoming self-directed learners and direct them toward their learning objectives. Therefore, the learners have decided to look for solutions to their difficulties with the learning process. As a result, learning strategies are among the main factors influencing when and how effectively learners acquire a foreign language.

Research on students speaking learning strategies, research has been carried out by several researchers (Fitasari et al, 2019; Guo, 2022; Khotimah et al., 2020; Sinurat, 2021). Those studies showed that students mostly used metacognitive and cognitive strategies in speaking learning strategies (SLS). However, the previous studies and this study have differences in data collection procedures and examined subjects. The previous studies that the researchers mentioned employed quantitative methods, qualitative, and mixed methods. The previous studies also showed that the previous researcher examined first-year students in the second semester of university, students in first-year senior high school, and English major junior colleges. Considering the outcomes of previous research, it can be concluded that each student uses a different strategy to learn to speak. Therefore, the author conducted more detailed research by observing junior high school students in the seventh grade.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This research design used the qualitative method, chose the case study design in this study because the method is appropriate for this research. Paul & Ellis (2015:258) state that the Qualitative method is better comprehending and making sense of the phenomena they are examining, qualitative researchers must be well-versed in observational methods, interviewing procedures, and any other data-gathering techniques that may be required. In addition, Creswell, J. W., & Poth (2007) stated that case studies are an approach to study that is used in many disciplines, including evaluation. In these studies, the researcher develops an in-depth examination of a case, frequently a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals.

2. Subject

This research was conducted at SMPN 2 KOTA CILEGON. This school was chosen because the curriculum implemented at SMPN 2 Kota Cilegon is the K13 curriculum. There were 10 classes in grade 7 in that school, and one class was selected, especially the 7D class as a subject in this research.

3. Data Collection Techniques

Closed–response questionnaires were employed out the students' most speaking learning strategies. Two categories of items can be included in a questionnaire: closed- and open-ended questionnaires (Croker, 2021). This questionnaire is a formalized set of questions to obtain information from students and asked to select a variety of responses. The distributed questionnaire is in Indonesian to obtain accurate results from students. Besides, there is no misunderstanding in answering the questionnaire. The questionnaire was employed for this study adapted from Sri Wahyuni (2013) version 7.0 (ESL/EFL) (Oxford, 1990). The form and content of the SILL consist of 37 statements, statements number 1-19 is direct language learning strategies and statement 20-37 is indirect language strategies. After the questionnaire had been collected, a Semi-structured interview was used. It intended to triangulate the data and to gain in-depth answers from the chosen participants.

4. Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive analysis is used in qualitative research when examining data. The researcher used the Matrix analysis of Miles and Huberman (2014:10) in data analysis techniques divided into 3 data techniques: Data Reduction is a sensitive thought process requiring intelligence and high insights breadth. Data from a considerable amount of the field requires careful, detailed records. Reduction is summarizing, selecting keys-one that focuses on it and one that is important. This would make it easier for researchers to collect data., Data Display after data reduction, the next step is displaying the data. In qualitative research, data presentation can be done in the form of narrative text, graphs, matrices, networks, charts., and Conclusion drawing/verification After data reduction and display, the next step in qualitative research is drawing conclusions and verification. The conclusion in qualitative research is to answer the formulation of the problem formulated at the beginning, but maybe not because it has been explained that the problems and formulation of the problem in qualitative research are still temporary and was developed after field research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Speaking Learning Strategies Commonly Used by Students

This section discusses the result of the study, which is an investigation of the use of English as a foreign language by the students of SMPN 2 Kota Cilegon. After the data was grouped, it was analyzed to answer the research question. Here The result of the survey will be displayed in a diagram. The data was obtained from 37 questionnaire items. That was completed by the students as the participants. In

every category of SLS, the total of each frequency range is displayed in percentage to make it easier to observe.
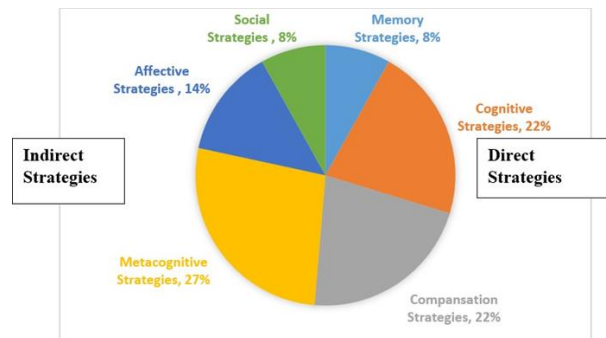

Figure 1. Diagram of The Percentage of Speaking Learning Strategies Commonly Used

Diagram 4.1 shows that students mostly use Indirect strategies, especially Metacognitive Strategies, which are the most chosen by class 7D students of SMPN 2 Kota Cilegon with a percentage result of 27%. Metacognitive strategies teach students to control themselves when learning to speak. According to Oxford (1990:137) stated that metacognitive strategies are essential for successful language learners. English is a foreign language with many new rules that probably make learners lose focus. Menggo (2018) stated that indirect strategies enable the student to manage learning, including metacognitive strategies, such as using advanced organizers to approach new material at a higher level of generality. Therefore, metacognitive strategies are primarily implemented outside the classroom to help students focus on themselves.

Furthermore, the percentage that students least chose the memory strategy from the direct strategy; the percentage of memory strategies was 8%. Then, supported by Oxford (1990:40), memory strategies that are used less frequently may be because they do not use these strategies or are unaware of how often they use them. Fitasari et al. (2019) found that strategies such as thinking about one's progress in learning or using memory techniques to memorize new vocabulary words, or skimming selections before reading them carefully, are unproductive or unimportant.

Related to the previous studies that metacognitive was most commonly used by the students' memory strategies and social strategies were the least strategies that the students used. Pebriani (2017) stated that the students favored the most metacognitive strategies and the least memory strategies. Other than that, according to Fitasari (2021), Metacognitive strategies are often used by students in the speaking language learning process, where the least used in this learning process is social strategies. Based on previous research, which has different results, according to Khotimah (2020), the results of this research in the learning strategies students often use Memory and affective strategies.

It can be concluded that most participants frequently used language learning strategies in speaking skills. The average percentage of each strategy is as follows: metacognitive strategies were 27%, affective strategies were 13%, social strategies were 8%, compensation strategies were 22%, cognitive strategies were 22%, and memory strategy was 8%.

The Difficulties of Students Speaking Learning Strategies

The interviews revealed an overview of the difficulties and use of learning strategies in speaking skills. There are six students from the highest, medium, and lowest levels using strategies for speaking skills.

Question 1: In your opinion, what are the difficulties when you learn to speak English?

Based on the interviews with the students, it is evident that learners face common difficulties and challenges when it comes to speaking English. These include memorizing new vocabulary, pronunciation, constructing sentences, lack of confidence, and feeling embarrassed when speaking in front of others. Student 1 and Student 3 both mentioned struggling with memorizing new vocabulary, while Student 2 emphasized the challenge of pronunciation. Student 4 highlighted the difficulty in using correct sentence structures and experiencing a lack of vocabulary. Student 5 expressed difficulties constructing sentences and lacking confidence, while Student 6 mentioned issues with stuttering and hesitating while speaking. As confirmed by Baker and Burri (2016), students often face pronunciation problems. They felt it difficult to pronounce certain words because pronunciation and writing are different in English. Therefore, they did not recognize yet all the difficulties. Students had the most difficulty pronouncing words correctly and did not have a large vocabulary.

Therefore, these students clearly encounter various obstacles when speaking English, such as linguistic aspects, self-confidence, and communication barriers. Learners need to address these challenges through consistent practice, exposure to English, and building confidence in their speaking abilities. By identifying and understanding these difficulties, learners can implement targeted strategies to improve their speaking skills and overcome these obstacles over time.

Question 2: What are the errors that occur when speaking English?

Based on the interview with six students, many students mentioned feeling embarrassed, afraid, ashamed, and fearful while speaking English. These emotions create barriers to effective communication, leading to hesitation, pauses, and a lack of confidence during conversations. Some students expressed a lack of vocabulary as significant in speaking accurately and fluently in English. Some students expressed a lack of vocabulary as significant in expressing themselves accurately and fluently in English. As supported by Handini (2021), speaking presents unique challenges for every learner. The four are mother tongue, event participant, inhibition, and nothing to say. The current researchers concluded that inhibition, having nothing to say, being an uninvolved party, and mother tongue were the causes of the students' trouble speaking, mainly when introducing themselves. Feelings of nervousness were highlighted by one student, leading to difficulties in remembering words during conversations.

In conclusion, the interviews reveal that the students share common challenges and emotions when speaking English. Emotional barriers like 50 embarrassment, fear, and self-consciousness often arise due to linguistic difficulties such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and uncertainties

about grammar and sentence structures. To improve their English speaking skills, these students must build their confidence, expand their vocabulary, practice pronunciation, and better understand grammar rules and sentence construction. By addressing these areas of improvement, they can gradually overcome their difficulties and become more fluent and self-assured English speakers. Additionally, providing a supportive and encouraging language learning environment can significantly contribute to their progress and confidence in using the English language.

Question 3: What strategies do you use to learn to speak English?

From the strategies mentioned by the six students for learning and improving their English language skills, many students utilize movies, YouTube videos, and English songs as resources to enhance their listening skills. Watching movies with or without subtitles helps them get exposed to natural English speech, accents, and expressions. Reading is another common strategy the students employ to improve their language skills. They read various materials such as articles, novels, comics, and captions on social media platforms to practice reading and expand their vocabulary. Some students practice writing through games, chatting with friends, and taking notes on English lessons. Writing helps them reinforce their understanding of grammar, sentence structure, and spelling. As stated by Yusuf (2022), It is not simple to develop a language skill, especially speaking skills. Speaking skills require a lot of practice to be mastered.

Speaking practice is essential for improving spoken English. Students use various methods like speaking in front of a mirror, practicing with siblings or classmates, and monitoring their progress to gain confidence and fluency in speaking. Some students also mention that online platforms and games are popular resources for language learning. These interactive tools make learning more enjoyable and engaging for the students. The least mentioned strategy among the students for learning and improving their English, only one student, Student 5, mentioned using subtitles while watching movies or videos as a strategy for language learning. This student specified using English subtitles when watching English movies to aid comprehension. None of the other students mentioned using subtitles in their language-learning approach.

Therefore, the students' strategies demonstrate a proactive and diverse approach to language learning. They utilize multimedia resources, social interactions, and individual practice to develop their listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. This multi-faceted approach allows them to improve their English proficiency effectively and enjoy learning. Pebriani (2017) also stated that practicing speaking with others and creating an immersive English-speaking environment can significantly contribute to their overall language development and fluency.

Question 4: Do you practice speaking English with others, especially your friend?

Regarding the statements provided by six students, the highest result is that many students practice speaking with their classmates and tablemates. This 52 indicated that students find comfort in using speaking English with their friends. Some students almost every day to practice speaking English with

their online gaming friends. Some students also practice speaking with their close friends because the students having a comfortable and familiar group for language practice creates a positive and encouraging learning environment for them. As supported by Anggini (2021), English language learners measure their learning achievement through how much their spoken English has improved.

For the least result of the interview, only one student never had practiced speaking English. The student only speaks English when there is a speaking assignment. Overall, the student's preferences for speaking practice partners vary, with some enjoying online interactions, while others find value in face-to-face conversations with classmates, tablemates, and close friends. The choice of practice partners seems to be influenced by factors such as convenience, comfort, and the presence of supportive friends. As confirmed by Betiya & Septiyana (2020), Students must be able to use English as a daily language regarding speaking abilities. To enhance their speaking skills, learners must employ proper language when using it.

In conclusion, the students' statements highlight the significance of their friend interactions in language learning. They create an interactive and supportive environment that fosters language growth by practicing with classmates, tablemates, friends, or online gaming partners. Having a diverse range of speaking practice partners enables the students to enhance their English-speaking skills, gain confidence, and become more effective communicators in the language.

Question 5: What do you do when you do not know an English word in the middle of an English conversation?

Based on the interview provided by the six students regarding how they handle situations when they do not know English in the middle of a conversation, six students used gestures to convey their intended meaning when they do not know an English word. Gestures can be an effective way to communicate without relying on specific vocabulary. Some students asked their friends for help when they did not know English and used Indonesian words to convey their intended meaning when they did not know an English word. For the least result, only two students used google translate and guessed words when unfamiliar words during a conversation.

In conclusion, the students utilize a combination of approaches such as seeking assistance, using gestures, relying on their native language, or attempting to guess the English word based on context. These strategies help them overcome the challenge of encountering unfamiliar English vocabulary in the middle of conversations. As supported by Dilnoza & Kizi (2021), Most students will try to use their language when they ask other students to talk about something.

Question 6: In your opinion, does your mother tongue help you learn to speak English?

Based on the questionnaire above, the students' most common perception is that their mother tongue, Indonesian, positively impacts their ability to speak English or is not perceived as affecting their English speaking ability. Some students find Indonesian helpful in learning English, or it does not affect their English – speaking skills. The least perception among the students is that their mother tongue

sometimes affected their ability to speak English. However, these students believe that there may be instances when their mother influences their speaking skills. As supported by Dilnoza & Kizi (2021), Successful language learning necessitates overcoming inhibitions to take reasonable risks, such as guessing meanings or speaking up despite the possibility of making mistakes.

It can be concluded the students have varying perceptions about the role of their mother tongue in learning English. These diverse perspectives highlight the complexity of language learning and the influence of individual experiences and backgrounds. Language learners often draw upon their native language for support and face unique challenges based on the relationships between their mother tongue and the target language.

Question 7: Do you still learn to speak English when you are not in the classroom?

Based on the interview, most students, besides learning to speak in the classroom, also practice speaking English at home with their mother and siblings because their mother constantly monitors their progress; conversations with family members create an informal and supportive environment for language practice, allowing for natural language use and communication. Some students also take English courses, primarily focusing on speaking English to enhance their skills. The least result of this interview is monitoring progress in learning English. Only one student never monitored the progress; it is the only response that did not mention progress monitoring. While the other students mentioned keeping track of their progress in various ways, this student did not express the same practice as stated by Yusuf (2022) that a suitable environment for practicing speaking English by starting to speak English with friends, family, and others, either when meeting in person or using an application that helps to monitor speaking learning.

It can be concluded the students' responses indicate that some actively seek opportunities to practice speaking English outside the classroom, whether through courses, conversations with family members, or studying with friends. On the other hand, some students may not actively engage in learning English outside the classroom or monitor their progress. It highlights the importance of individual motivation and initiative in pursuing language learning opportunities beyond formal education.

Question 8: How do you memorize new vocabulary in English?

From the responses provided by the six students regarding how they remember new vocabulary, the most prevalent method among the students for remembering new vocabulary is repetition. Additionally, note-taking and writing provide visual and kinesthetic reinforcement, further solidifying the memory.

A few students take notes to avoid forgetting the new words. Writing down the words and their meanings helps reinforce the memory and acts as a valuable reference for later review. The least student stated that they remember new vocabulary by writing and repeating the words in a book and repeating

them. Moreover, the students' strategies for remembering new vocabulary demonstrate the importance of active engagement with the terms to enhance memorization.

By incorporating repetition, note-taking, and writing the words, they create multiple pathways for reinforcing their memory and increasing word retention. It was in line with Anggini (2021) who stated that the proper diction that is employed in communication is referred to as vocabulary. One cannot correctly communicate or express their ideas in oral and written form without a suitable speech. Another obstacle that prevents learners from acquiring a language is having a small vocabulary.

It can be concluded the common approach among the students for remembering new vocabulary is through repetition. Additionally, note-taking and writing are supplementary methods that some students use to enhance their vocabulary retention. The students can expand their vocabulary and improve their language proficiency by employing these active learning techniques.

Question 9: Do you feel anxious when you learn to speak English?

Based on the interview, many students expressed fear, anxiety, and fear when speaking English, especially in public settings, like speaking in front of the class. Fear of making mistakes, being embarrassed, or being judged by others are common reasons for their anxiety. Some students feel little or occasional nervousness when speaking English, particularly in front of the class. While they may not be overly anxious, some fear remains. Sholikhi (2022) states that anxiousness typically occurs When the teacher calls the students' names. Additionally, many students will see English as a way to have a better future profession. Still, they cannot deny that English tests will determine their motivation to learn a foreign language.

In addition to coping with their nervousness and fear, some students mentioned taking deep breaths, using repeated words or filler sounds like "Hmmm," and trying to relax. These strategies are often employed to manage their emotions and reduce the negative impact on their speaking abilities. Therefore, It is essential to acknowledge that feeling nervous or anxious when speaking in a second language is a natural response, and many language learners experience similar emotions.

In conclusion, the student's responses highlight some learners' emotional challenges when speaking English. Addressing these feelings of nervousness and fear requires a combination of coping strategies, self-confidence building, and a supportive learning environment with patience, practice, and encouragement, students can gradually overcome their anxieties and become more fluent and confident English speakers. Those students agree with the statement, "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistakes". As supported by Sholikhi (2022) that anxiety is still not easy to define in a simple sentence.

Question 10: Do people around you help you learn to speak English?

Based on responses from the six students, most of them mention that their 58 teachers help them learn to speak English. Teachers play a vital role in providing guidance, feedback, and encouragement in language learning. Some students also stated that their family, especially parents, and older siblings,

supports their language learning journey. Family members often offer encouragement, practice opportunities, and sometimes direct teaching.

In addition, some students also have a private tutor who significantly helps with learning to speak English and using digital applications for learning to speak English. These language learning apps can provide additional resources, practice exercises, and support outside formal learning environments.

Moreover, the responses demonstrate the importance of supportive individuals in language learning. Teachers, family members, private tutors, housemates, and digital applications create a positive and encouraging language learning environment. Their assistance helps the students build confidence, practice regularly, and receive valuable feedback on their speaking skills. As supported by Sangaji (2019), It is not enough to concentrate on one aspect of speaking when trying to improve. The social role of speaking must be utilized for skill development. It is possible that societal barriers, rather than personal disabilities, are to blame for the issue or difficulty in speaking activities or speaking learning.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the commonly used speaking learning strategies among students in class 7D of SMPN 2 Kota Cilegon is metacognitive strategies from indirect strategy, with an average percentage of 27%. In contrast, memory strategies are the least used in learning to speak, with an average percentage of 8%. The difficulties of speaking learning strategies in speaking activities in the classroom were identified, such as memorizing new vocabulary, pronunciation, constructing sentences, lack of confidence, and feeling embarrassed when speaking in front of others; those statements are based on interview data. This indicates differences in the difficulties faced and students' strategies when learning to speak.

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