



EXPLORING GENDER-BASED EFL STUDENTS' LEARNING STRATEGIES IN ACHIEVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore or find out the use of learning strategies in learning speaking based on gender differences. Narrative inquiry research design is used in this study and data collection is employed through questionnaires and interviews to the participants. The results showed that the strategy most often used between male and female students was metacognitive strategies and the overall use of learning strategies showed that there were differences in the order in which male and female used learning strategies. Male students used more metacognitive, compensatory, cognitive, social and affective strategies. Meanwhile, female students used metacognitive, compensation, memory and social strategies.

INTRODUCTION

According to Younger, Warrington, and Jacquita (1999) in the classroom setting gender difference show different learning participation in which male students tend to dominate in interacting in certain classes, while female students participate more in supporting learning. However, there are several characteristics of female such as shyness, nervousness and uncertainty, which can affect their language skills, and this is overcome by writing as a way to express their ideas, while male is more likely to maintain their strength as male by choosing to speak in expressing his ideas (Mahmud, 2010). Gender differences also affect the differences in language use between male and female. This is in line with Lakoff (1976) and Tannen (1990) who state that there are differences in the concept of language between female and male in communication. One of the characteristics of female language is that it tends to use lexical hedges or fillers, question tags, high intonation in declarative, hypercorrect grammar, super polite form, avoiding harsh curses and firm pressure.

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In terms of language learning strategies Wenden and Rubin (1987) state that these strategies have a significant role in improving the language systems built by language learners and can have a direct impact on learning. Cohen (1998) adds that language learning strategies are conscious steps that students take in learning and using a language. Oxford (1990) classifies language learning strategies into six categories, namely as follows:

- 1) Memory strategies, which are strategies that emphasize efforts to remember, store or recall what has been learned. For example, creating mental relationships, such as connecting words into context, using visual and sound impressions, such as imagining and representing sounds, reviewing properly and regularly, and managing actions are used in mechanical techniques.
- 2) Cognitive strategies, which emphasize manipulation and transformation in the target language. For example, practicing language, receiving and sending messages means receiving ideas quickly, analyzing and reasoning, namely like expressions, translating and transferring, making structures such as taking notes and summarizing and making a concept.
- 3) Compensation strategy is to overcome language deficiencies and disabilities. For example, guessing intelligently in other words using linguistic clues, overcoming limitations such as asking for help from others, gestures in conveying something on the basis of asking for help, modifying messages, choosing topics and avoiding communication.
- 4) Metacognitive strategies, namely giving students a way to coordinate learning. For example, organizing and planning activities means looking for and creating opportunities as well as organizing and also setting goals, evaluating learning activities or by monitoring yourself.
- 5) Affective Strategy, which is a strategy to present elements of relaxedness, fun, enthusiasm, calmness and other emotional aspects. For example, reducing anxiety and also pushing yourself in other words can motivate yourself.
- 6) Social Strategy, namely a learning strategy by involving other people. For example, asking other people, such as asking or correcting, cooperating, the meaning can be by asking someone who is more expert or peer.

Research that discusses language strategy learning, it is found that several learning strategies are more often used by women than men (Oxford, 1990). As well as other research which states that the use of learning strategies causes women to use all types of learning strategies more often than men (Sindik, 2011). In developing language improvement, especially regarding speaking mastery, it is important to have knowledge of various learning strategies (Diaz, 2011).

Through learning to speak, many problems, such as difficulty in a vocabulary, experiencing crises and not being confident when speaking. This can be overcome by using different learning strategies based on each student. Research studies on the use of learning strategies in learning to speak based on gender differences have not been widely studied. In this study, researchers tried to focus and explore more deeply about the use of learning strategies by EFL pre-service teacher students in achieving speaking skills between male and female.

Based on the limitation of the problem mention above, the problem of the research can be formulated as a follow : (a) What are the speaking learning strategy categories most frequently used by male and female students? (b) What is the overall of using a type of speaking learning strategy among EFL students?

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach by displaying data with the translation in sentences or paragraphs. Researcher uses qualitative in seeing and specific information in real situations. In this study, researcher used narrative inquiry as a research design. Narrative inquiry study is a form of research carried out by investigating the experiences that have occurred.

The use of a narrative inquiry in this study is to determine the use of learning strategies in learning speaking through the experiences of participants who have learned English, especially in speaking skills for four years at university. The information of speaking learning experience is obtained through interviews conducted by researcher to participants. The participants used were three male and three female EFL pre-service teacher students at university in Karawang.

The data collection use questionnaire and interview based refers to substrategy in six point from theory Oxford (1990). The questionnaire used in the google form and the interview was conducted via WhatsApp chat. Researcher used data analysis techniques based on (Milles and Huberman, 1994). In this research use the analysis technique involving three steps, namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Speaking learning strategy categories most frequently used by male and female students

Male Respondents

The use of metacognitive strategies in the speaking learning strategy shows that there are two male respondents who strongly agree with several statements in the questionnaire related to substrategies in the use of metacognitive strategies. The first male respondent (R1) stated that he strongly agreed with the statement about the frequent evaluation of learning and focusing on learning. Based on the results of the interview, several answers were also obtained that led to several of the existing subteties in metacognitive strategies. R1 conveyed the reasons why he learned English, namely because English is a universal language and must be studied, and R1 always evaluates the quality of his speaking to make it better. The second male respondent (R2) also stated that he strongly agreed with the statements in the metacognitive strategy. Through the interview, R2 also said that when he practiced speaking he used or took advantage of his spare time to practice so that his speaking quality was better. This is one of the subsets in the metacognitive strategy.

Female Respondents

The use of metacognitive strategies in speaking learning strategies also showed that women agreed to use metacognitive strategies in learning to speak. These results were obtained through the results of questionnaires and interviews which showed that female respondents 3 (R3) and female respondents 4 (R4) used metacognitive strategies depeleving their speaking skills. From the interview Female Respondent 3 (R3) told about how to develop her speaking skills, namely practicing and learning several tasks in practicing english speaking. From the interview Female Respondent 4 (R4) also explained the reason why English speaking skill needs to be learned because for R4 English is important and she wants to meet her idol who requires her to also be able to speak English, and another way that she uses in developing speaking skills is to practice speaking English to be better.

From the results regarding gender differences in the use of learning strategies in speaking learning shows the same results for four of the six respondents who most or strongly agree to use metacognitive strategies. The use of metacognitive indicated by four respondents was two male and two female. All of them have similarities in the use of the most frequently used learning strategies, namely metacognitive strategies. Overall, these four respondents stated several reasons and goals in learning to speak English, such as stating that English is an important language to learn for the future, and they also stated how to develop their speaking skills by utilizing free time to train their speaking skills so that they are more good. So it can be concluded from some of these descriptions is a substrategy in metacognitive strategies, and there is no gender difference in the use of the most frequently used strategies.

The results of this study are also in line with the results of research by Lestari and Wahyudin (2020) which state that the findings in their research indicate that the most frequently used strategy is metacognitive strategy. Based on the results of the number of metacognitive use, where the use of metacognitive shows a balanced result between male and female, namely two male and two female using the same metacognitive strategy. So it can also be said that there is no gender difference in the use of metacognitive strategies in learning to speak. This is also in line with the research of Ahsanah (2020) which states that there is no significant difference between men and women in using language learning strategies.

The overall of using a type of speaking strategy among EFL students

From the data obtained through the questionnaire, it is known that the overall results of the use of learning strategies used by English education students. The overall results of the use of learning strategies are sorted from the most frequently used to the least used by students in learning to speak: first, metacognitive strategy, second compensation strategy, third cognitive strategy, fourth memory strategy, fifth social strategy, sixth affective strategy. The followings are answers from all of the respondents sorted based on the learning strategies used most often to those that are least used.

The overall conclusion of the use of learning strategies in speaking between male and female shows the differences in how they are used. Male students prefer to use Metacognitive, Compensation, Cognitive, Social and Affective. Male students who became respondents in this study showed that they did not use memory strategies at all in learning speaking.

Meanwhile, female students prefer to use metacognitive, compensation, memory, and social strategies. The female students who participated in this study did not use cognitive strategies and affective strategies much. Female participants rarely use cognitive strategies because most of the female respondents in speaking learning tell about their anxiety and not having confidence in practicing English, so it is related to not using cognitive strategies which are more often used for practicing speaking or producing language.

However, in the use of learning strategies between male and female respondents, the order is different. Male respondents used metacognitive, compensatory, cognitive, social and affective learning strategies. In this study, male respondents did not use memory strategies. Male often prefer to directly practice language or produce language by understanding it first.

Meanwhile, female in using learning strategies use metacognitive, compensatory, memory, and social strategies. In this study, female did not use cognitive learning in their speaking, because they did not use the level of affective strategies, namely by

bringing enthusiasm and calmness. Female more often face or use compensation strategies, because according to Oxford (1990), a compensation strategy is a strategy to overcome language deficiencies and inability by asking for help, using gestures, and mixing language with English when they feel unable to pronounce words while speaking.

CONCLUSION

The use of learning strategies in speaking between male and female students shows the results of the most frequently used strategies, namely metacognitive strategies, both of which use metacognitive strategies seen from the results of existing interviews, namely entering into the existing substrategy in metacognitive strategies, namely, determining goals, planning goals and also evaluation. The use of learning strategies as a whole between men and women has a different order.

However, in the use of learning strategies between male and female respondents, the order is different. The male respondents used metacognitive, compensatory, cognitive, social and affective learning strategies. In this study, male respondents did not use memory strategies. Men often prefer to practice language directly or produce language by understanding it first. Meanwhile, women in using learning strategies use metacognitive, compensation, memory, and social strategies. In this study, women did not use cognitive learning in their speech, because they did not use the level of affective strategies, namely bringing enthusiasm and calmness. Women more often face or use compensation strategies, because according to Oxford (1990), compensation strategies are strategies to overcome language deficiencies and disabilities by asking for help, using gestures, and mixing language with English when they feel unable to pronounce words when speaking.

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