
How do the Darmasiswa students learn Indonesian language in Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia?

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Abstract: *This study was aimed at investigating the language learning strategies (LLSs) employed by students of Indonesian as a foreign language (IFL) at YSU. The study was descriptive analytical. The participants were nine students granted the Darmasiswa (DS) scholarship who undertook their study at YSU. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed descriptively qualitatively. Findings of the study showed that (1) the compensation and social LLSs were the highest employed by the students and the memory strategy was the lowest, (2) female students took more of the affective strategy and male students took more of the metacognitive strategy, and (3) there was no influence of cultural or personal background and nor different level of Indonesian language proficiency on the application of LLSs*

Keywords: *language learning strategies, Indonesian as foreign language, Darmasiswa students*

1. Introduction

Naturally, when they are born, people do not understand everything but have to learn everything so that they are able to understand. For example learning the Indonesian language; not everybody can understand that language, but some non-native speakers can use the language very well like near native speakers. Those who successfully acquire the Indonesian language may apply some strategies that make their learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable (Oxford, 1990).

The Darmasiswa scholarship program, or DS scholarship for short, is a non-

degree scholarship program offered to all foreign students from countries which have diplomatic relationship with Indonesia to study the Indonesian language, arts, music, crafts, and particular subjects in more than 50 selected Indonesian Higher Education Institutions in different cities in Indonesia. This annual program is organized by the Minister of Education and Culture and supported by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Minister of Education and Culture, 2014).

In the context of DS students who studied the Indonesian language in YSU, although there were only nine students, they came from different countries, different learning experiences, and different levels of Indonesian proficiency. They are from

Hungary (two students), Thailand (one student), Spain (one student), Australia (one student), Poland (one student), South Korea (one student), Russia (one student), and Fiji (one student). Their Indonesian language proficiency backgrounds varied from zero experience, three months of Indonesian learning, and five years of Indonesian learning. They were three male and 6 female students. In brief, they were a heterogeneous group of adult learners.

On the other side, YSU as the institution has been offering the Indonesian language and culture as the subject chosen for more than one decade. Up to the present, Indonesian language, arts, music, and Indonesian culinary are the regular subjects offered to the DS students. There are also some particular subjects based on the request, namely “*Pencak Silat*” the Indonesian martial art, and “Indonesian Massage”. During their learning, an Indonesian language immersion program is conducted. This program is characterized by focusing on learning subject through the medium of Indonesian as the second language, rather than an exclusive group focusing on the language being learned (Chamot, Robbin, & El-Dinary, 1993).

Besides, for the DS students, the status of the Indonesian language in Indonesia has changed from foreign language to second language. A second language is a language studied in a setting where the target language is the main vehicle in everyday communication, abundant input exists in that language, and plays dominant role in the society. Meanwhile, a foreign language is one studied in an environment where the target language is not the primarily vehicle for daily interaction, and there is a restriction of input from that language (Ellis, 2008).

Through the identification of the DS students and how they have applied their learning strategy in learning Indonesian

language some useful suggestions and tips may be given. These suggestions will be useful in preparing the teaching material for the Indonesian learners as well as helping other IFL learners in Indonesia to improve their strategies and consequently advance their Indonesian language proficiency.

Strategy is a word from ancient Greek *strategia* which means steps or actions taken for the purpose of winning in a war. In relation to the learning purposes, a strategy will be useful when meeting the following condition: (a) the strategy is well related to the target language’s task at hand, (b) the strategy fits the particular students’ learning style preference to one degree or another, and (c) the learner employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies (Oxford, 1990).

Cohen (2007) states that an LLS is a conscious mental activity that contains a goal or intention, an action to reach this goal, and a learning activity. Furthermore, Cohen adds that self-regulation in LLS can be paralleled to autonomy or self-management as they share core term of independent learning setting, learner-centeredness, and also the raising of awareness and knowledge necessary for their own learning (White, 2008).

Lee (2010) states that studies about LLSs have been developing since 1970s. Based on Chamot, Robbin & El-Dinary (1993) LLSs are divided into three main categories: (1) metacognitive, (2) cognitive, and (3) social affective. Oxford (1990) developed a new LLS system which includes two main classification, they are direct and indirect strategies. Moreover, Ehrman & Oxford (1990) clarify the classification of strategies as seen in Table 1.

Knowledge and practice about language learning strategies may help in the success of language learning. The present research is interested in how different students use

Table 1
Oxford LLS Classification

Direct strategies		
1	Memory strategies	Creative mental linkage Applying images and sounds Reviewing well Employing action
2.	Cognitive strategies	Practicing Receiving and sending messages Analyzing and reasoning Creative structure for input and output
3	Compensation strategies	Guessing intelligently Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing
Indirect strategies		
1	Metacognitive strategies	Centering your learning Arranging and planning your learning Evaluating your learning
2	Affective strategies	Lowering your anxiety Encouraging yourself Taking your emotional temperature
3	Social strategies	Asking questions Cooperating with others Empathizing with others

Source: Oxford (1990)

different language learning strategies in studying the Indonesian language as a foreign language. The research questions can be formulated as follows: (1) What is the overall language learning strategy (LLS) use in learning Indonesian language? What are the most commonly used strategies? (2) Do learner characteristics such as experiences of studying abroad, different levels of Indonesian language proficiency, or gender result differences in the use of LLSs among the DS learners and how?

2. Method

Nine students granted the DS scholarship in the academic year of 2014-2015 participated in this research. They were in the range of 22 to 28 years of age. There were 3 male and 6 female students, thus the gender of the participants was somewhat imbalance. One student had been learning Indonesian for 5 years; one student had been living in Indonesia for voluntary work for 1 year; one student had been taking Indonesian

courses in his country for 2 semesters; two students had been learning Indonesian for 3 months; and four students learned Indonesian only prior to their arrival in Indonesia for one month. Two students held master degree qualifications; four students held bachelor qualification; and three students were still undertaking their undergraduate degree. Seven students were easy going persons, had experience of living outside their home countries, and had experience of multilingual setting. Two students were only fluent with their own national language.

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL version 7.0) a self-report questionnaire, was used to get the frequency use of LLS (Oxford, 1990). In the SILL, LLS are grouped into six categories of assessment (please refers to the figure 1 about Oxford's LLS Categories): (a) memory strategies (9 items), (b) cognitive strategies (14 items), (c) compensation strategies (6 items), (d) metacognitive strategies (9 items), (e) effective strategies (6 items), and (f) social strategies (6 items). A background questionnaire about the participant was also used in this research. Finally a semi-structured interview was conducted to obtain in-depth information from the participants.

The SILL of LLS and participant background questionnaire were administrated to those nine students during their off-class hours in YSU from February-May 2015. They were informed that their personal information revealed would be strictly for research purposes and therefore confidentiality would be absolutely guaranteed.

Data analysis for the students' language learning strategies used descriptive statistic techniques. The Statistic Package for the Social Science (SPSS, version 22.0) for Microsoft Windows was used to help the researcher to analyze the data that were obtained.

3. Findings and Discussion

Results of the data analyses show that the mean of overall LLS use was 4.07 indicating that the DS students exercised high use ($M=3.5-5.0$) of LLSs in learning the Indonesian language. Based on the analysis results in Table 2, the high uses of categories were compensation and social strategies ($M=4.22$), followed by cognitive strategy ($M=4.11$), then metacognitive and affective strategies ($M=4.00$), and the lowest use of the categories was the memory strategy ($M=3.89$).

Table 2
Summary of Descriptive Statistics for LLSs Use

Strategies	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Rank
Memory	3.89	1.05	2.00	5.00	4
Cognitive	4.11	1.17	2.00	5.00	2
Compensation	4.22	0.97	3.00	5.00	1
Metacognitive	4.00	0.87	3.00	5.00	3
Affective	4.00	1.00	2.00	5.00	3
Social	4.22	1.09	2.00	5.00	1
Overall Strategy Use	4.07	1.01	2.33	5.00	

The influence of gender in relation to the use of LLSs showed that the female group used higher LLSs than the male group, except for the metacognitive strategy where the male group scored ($M=4.33$) while the female group scored ($M=3.83$). However, both male and female students still show a high use of the metacognitive strategy. Male students show medium usage in affective strategy ($M=3.33$).

There is no significant difference in the usage of LLSs in terms of the different levels of Indonesian proficiency and cultural and personal backgrounds of the participants. It is reported before that Asian students use more memory strategy than European students (O'Malley, et al., 1985).

For the overall LLSs use, the result indicated high use in every LLSs' categories. This outcome was consistent with the previous studies of Althan (2003) and Brute (2001) in term of the fact that more proficient language learners use more LLSs in language learning. Compensation and social strategies are the common strategies used by the participants. In compensatory strategy, learners might guess from the context in listening and reading, using synonym, and tried to find out the missing words by gestures or word pauses. Meanwhile, in term of the social strategy, the learners asked some questions to get verification, were asking for clarification of a confusing subject, were asking the tutors to help them in accomplishing their task, were involved with local people to engage a simple conversation, and were participating in cultural activities to explore culture and social norms. This was clearly understood as they were all adult learners.

In relation to the relation among learners' characteristics and strategy use, five categories out of six, female students used more LLSs than male students. Male students used more metacognitive strategies

than female students. One of the male students from Hungary said that he was always identifying his own learning style preference and needs. He found his own style to evaluate his learning. He, with his classmate from Spain, was often gathering and organizing materials. He was never late in submitting instructional tasks.

Affective strategies were more dominant towards female students than towards male students. Female students often showed their feelings, and were rewarding themselves with lunch together and followed by the swimming pool after finishing tests or tasks. They sometimes even used deep breathing or positive self-talks to control their feelings.

There was no significant difference in experiences living abroad and different levels of language proficiency as they were only small groups of students, and they were all adults and mature students. There were two Asian students, both showing willingness in applying learning techniques, and supportive behaviors in cultural activities. This findings, however, were contrary to the study of O'Malley, et al. (1985) that found that that Asian students were less willing than Hispanic students in applying learning strategies.

4. Conclusion

DS students who undertook their one year Indonesian and culture class in YSU show high use of LLSs. The highest categories were compensatory and social strategy, while the lowest was the memory strategy. Male students used more metacognitive strategies than female students, while female students used more affective strategy than male students. There was no significant difference in applying the LLSs due to their living-abroad experiences, different levels

of language proficiency, and cultural and personal backgrounds.

Based on the overall results of the study, it was suggested that the YSU maintain its quality in offering the Indonesian language and culture towards foreign students. On the other side, the language instructors should apply more explicit teaching and modelling to enable the students to enjoy their journey, less frustrated, and more efficient in learning the Indonesian language during their stay in Indonesia.

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