# Learning strategy training: Awakening students' awareness of learning strategy use

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***Abstract:*** *The study aimed at finding out the impact of learning-strategy training in the instructional process. English Department students of semester 3 and 5 were given training in learning-strategy skills in a regular 16-week semester program. SILL (Oxford, 2000), modified for the purpose of the study, was administered on the first day of class. Group and individual students' learning strategy profiles were examined for follow-up action plans. Strategy skills were integrated in the instructional material and activities. Students assigned themselves to strategy groups, for example. Compensation group, and practiced the assigned skills. Weekly reflections were written by students reporting their progress in the use of learning strategies and in their language learning. At the end of the semester, SILL was given for the second time for reflective comparisons. Findings indicated that students (1) became aware of their learning strategies, (2) were more prepared for and concentrated on instructional tasks, (3) had more positive attitude towards foreign-language learning, and (4) improved their language learning.*

***Keywords:*** *learning strategies, learning strategy profile, learning strategy skills, learning strategy use, learning strategy training*

## 1. Introduction

College students need various skills and strategies in order to cope with the array of academic tasks and demands to complete their study. A group of such skills and strategies is related to the use of learning strategies. Many students are not aware that they are applying some kind of learning strategies when they are doing their class activities. These students may not be those categorized as slow learners or even failing students. In fact, many of them belong to those who are doing fairly well in their study. A few students are aware of their learning processes how to attack a particular task, and of asking themselves how successful they are in doing the task. These students are those who are usually more prepared for class, enjoy their instructional activities, and have high motivation and self-confidence in their academic endeavour.

The present study is stimulated by the constant urge of language teachers to help the learners cope with their academic tasks in the best possible way. This is a classroom-research

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type so that research activities are merged in the classroom teaching-learning interaction. The research technicalities may not be as rigorous, but more real-life situations are observed and described.

## 2. Related Literature

Language learning strategy has become an important topic in the theory and practice of language education. Many teachers and researchers have discussed the usefulness of the knowledge and use of learning strategies in the language classes. The emphasis on the use of learning strategies in language learning is in agreement with many of the concepts and innovations in modern language education. For one, this emphasis is congruent with student-centred education, communicative methodology, and autonomous learning (Nunan, 1991; Phillips, 1991; Sugeng, 2003).

Many students do not have the knowledge of strategy use. In a learning atmosphere where students are not used to independent learning, the learning-teaching activities are mostly led by the teacher. It is a common practice among students to merely depend on the teacher in acquiring knowledge in the classroom. The teacher may have worked hard to plan and carry out the instructional activities such that learning may occur in the students more independently and creatively. However, the students do not react in the expected way; not because they are lazy, but mostly because they do not know how to do it. In the end, the class slips into a more traditional approach of instruction often oriented toward "teacher telling" (Palmer, *et al.*, 2005). The present study is motivated by this kind of situation which actually occurs in classes at present. It is expected that this study will help students be aware of learning strategy use, on the one hand, and enrich research in language learning strategies, on the other.

### a. Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are 'specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations' (Oxford, 1990: 8). Most language teachers and researchers will agree that learners who know and apply particular learning strategies acquire English as a second or foreign language more quickly and effectively than those who do not. Nisbet, *et al.* (2005), for one, relate learning strategies to learning outcomes and state that students can use a variety of learning strategies to promote their learning success.

One established categorization of learning strategies (Oxford, 1990) begins with direct strategies, those which are directly related to language; and indirect strategies, which are not directly related to language. The direct strategy category is further sub-categorized into major strategies: memory, cognitive, and compensation while the indirect strategy group into meta-cognitive, affective, and social. These six major strategy categories are developed into skills and sub-skills. *Memory*, for example, is sub-categorized into five skills: creating mental images, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing actions. Creating mental images is further sub-categorized into three sub-skills: grouping, associating or elaborating, and placing new words into context. In all, this strategy classification consists of two main domains, six strategy categories, 19 sub-categories, and 62 strategy skills.

**b. Strategy Use**

Learners of English as a second or foreign language have used some or most of these learning strategies, consciously or unconsciously, since they came to the classroom to attend the language class. Conscious learners are those who are fully aware that they are applying some kind of strategies while they are engaged in classroom interaction. Unconscious learners may do as well as these conscious learners in the class; however, they are not aware that they are actually using some learning strategies.

Researchers have often found that higher-proficiency learners reported using more learning strategies, and with greater frequency than lower-proficiency learners (Azis, 2005; Bown, 2006; Oxford, 2003; Tuckman, 2003; Woodrow, 2005). Although some other researchers found that this was not always the case (Oxford, 2003), conscious use of learning strategies help learners formulate some plan before they come to class, take an active role during class, and make some self-evaluation after class.

Learning strategy use is not a closed, prescribed system. There are differences in the choice of strategies, the intensity of use, the relevance of the strategies to the classroom tasks, and others. Most memory strategies, for example, are particularly useful for quickly learning lots of vocabulary, while affective strategies are helpful when learners are anxious or when they need a motivational boost (Oxford, 2003). More successful learners tend to use strategies that are relevant to specific tasks and to their own learning styles, while less successful learners tend to use strategies in an impulsive, almost desperate fashion without regard to how well these strategies fit the demands of a given task or their learning style.

For college students, conscious use of learning strategies becomes one of the factors for their success. The importance of learning strategies for college students is evident from the fact that academic tasks at the college level tend to demand far higher-level thinking and more independent learning than those encountered in the secondary school (Tuckman, 2003). For example, memory and cognitive strategies are important in language learning since students are required to do some memorization and rationalization in their learning processes. Compensation strategies are helpful when students are faced with a task while their mastery of the task is not as complete. Meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies are of great importance if students want to be well prepared, highly motivated, having self-confidence and self-control, and are always planning and evaluating.

**c. Strategy Training**

The need for strategy training for college students is felt much by language teachers and researchers (Azis, 2005; Bown, 2006; Carrier, 2003). In countries where education is implemented through much teacher-oriented atmosphere, most students are not commonly trained in autonomous learning. Carrier (2003) rightly observed that learning strategies are often taken for granted and that, therefore, strategy training is commonly not part of the language instruction curriculum.

Any classroom activity inherently involves strategy training. It exists within the tasks in the instructional material or activities. When responding to the teacher's question of a reading comprehension question, for example, the students are actually practicing a strategy skill, such as using linguistic clues in the compensation strategy. There does not seem to be anything wrong in this situation. However, explicit strategy training will help learners become more aware of their use of learning strategies, know when and how to use those strategies in

their language classes, and be better able to control their learning activities. Another useful proposition is that explicit and specific information about how learning strategies work will put struggling learners in a better position (Carrier, 2003).

Strategy training techniques have been proposed by researchers. Mendelsohn (1994) in Carrier (2003) advised for explicit strategy instruction to include such steps as define the strategy, model how the strategy is used, guide the students in practicing the strategy, give appropriate feedback, provide opportunities for practice, help the students assess the effectiveness of their strategy use, and have the students use the strategy in an authentic task. A more formal approach is proposed by Azis (2005) who suggested that explicit strategies-based instruction be incorporated into the English curriculum, which can be achieved by inserting strategies into the language instructional materials and activities. Brown (2001) has four approaches to teach strategies through interactive techniques, use of compensatory techniques, administering strategy inventories, and impromptu teacher-initiated advice. Savignon and Sysoyev (2005) suggested a three-step procedure of explicit strategy training. In the first step, explanation, the teacher explains to learners the role and importance of a particular learning strategy category. In the second step, exploration, the learners practise what they have learned from the first step such as working in small groups to become acquainted with and study real-life examples of this strategy category. In the third step, expression, the learners make a reflection of what they experience and how they feel about it and exchange views about the use of the particular learning strategy, or learning strategies in general, among their peer.

**d. Research in Strategy Training**

A large body of research studies in strategy training can be identified. A survey by Oxford, *et al.* (2004) reported not fewer than 10 studies using the SILL or instruments derived from it in Japan, South Africa, Thailand, and Korea. While not all relationships between strategy use and proficiency are consistently positive, most of the studies surveyed reported positive relationships, ranging from mild to strong, between strategy use and L2 proficiency. It has become an almost established fact that higher-proficiency learners tend to use more strategies than lower-proficiency learners. The overall numeric frequency of strategy use is often important as a predictor or correlate of the language learners' general proficiency.

More specific research studies in strategy training are presented as follows. Holmes and Moulton (1997), in a 15-week intermediate composition class within the English language program of an urban southwestern U.S. university, involved 21 students in the use of dialogue journals as the classroom technique. The main finding was that students reported increased fluency not only in writing but also in thinking in English. Carrier (2003), using seven ESL students in listening classes, gave the students explicit learning strategies for listening comprehension such as defining, thinking aloud, modeling, and predicting in 15 listening strategy training sessions. By way of a pre-test posttest research technique, she found that the students' posttest scores were significantly higher than their pre-test scores. She also mentioned that explicit listening strategy training helped the students improve their discrete listening and note-taking abilities. Nisbet, Tindall, and Arroyo (2005) had the participation of 139 female and 29 male third-year English majors at Henan University in Kaifeng, China ranging from 19 to 27 years of age to investigate the effects of learning strategies on the students' English proficiency. Using standard statistical testing, they found that certain

strategy categories were significantly correlated with proficiency. Tuckman, (2003), using a somewhat different strategy classification containing four specific strategies each with two sub-strategies, involved almost 400 university students in his study which investigated the effects of learning strategy training on students' GPAs. He found that students who received the strategy training earned significantly higher GPAs than students who did not receive it. Azis (2005), involved 194 tenth graders at government schools and 184 freshman students majoring in English 120 as research subjects to investigate the general characteristics of the students' learning strategies using proficiency and demographic factors as dependent variables. Among his findings, university students were reported having significantly higher frequency of strategy use than high school students and that female students showed higher use of strategies than male students. Woodrow (2005) found that meta-cognitive strategies were significantly correlated with oral performance. While this correlation was rather modest, it lends support to the importance of meta-cognitive strategies being most effective in learning.

These studies indicate that strategy training is not only possible but it also produces results in the increase of strategy use and in knowledge of other matters as well. Suggestions are abundant to do more research in the field of strategy training.

## 3. Method

The present study was carried out in the classes of the English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Yogyakarta, Indonesia during the September-December semester 2006. This department houses around 1,200 students of the 4,000 of the faculty. Students are mostly Javanese coming from various places in Java; a few others come from different islands in the country. The English Department is a little over 30 years old and is often regarded as one of the leading places for EFL teacher training. Students are prepared to become teachers of grade and high schools.

The study was action research involving regular classes of student-teacher interactions. During the 12 to 14 weekly sessions of the semester, the learning-teaching activities were kept as normal as possible such that research treatment was obscure for the students. Nor were special activities and equipment used during classes other than those in ordinary classes. Further description of the research procedure is presented as follows.

### a. Objectives

The study was an attempt to find out the impact of strategy training on students in their learning experiences. It aimed at helping students to: (1) be aware of their learning strategies; (2) be more prepared for and concentrated on their instructional tasks; (3) develop positive attitude towards foreign-language learning; and (4) improve their language learning.

### b. Subjects

A total of 87 students were registered in five classes taught by the two researchers. After the second week of class, two students entered making the total number of the subjects 89 at the end of the semester. Distribution of the participants in the classes are presented in the table below.

**Table 1.** Subjects of the Study by Semester, Class, Teacher, and Class Size

| Semester | Class | Teacher | Number at First Class | Number at Last Class |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Writing V | Ba | 16 | 16 |
| 5 | Reading V | Ba | 17 | 17 |
| 3 | Structure III | Ba | 22 | 24 |
| 3 | Speaking III | Do | 15 | 15 |
| 3 | Listening III | Do | 17 | 17 |
| Total | | | 87 | 89 |

**c. Procedure**

On the first day of class, the students were given SILL (Oxford, 1990), modified in number and statement of the items for the purpose of this study. This modified inventory took about 20 minutes to complete. Scoring was done immediately after completion of the questionnaire. Based the results of the scoring, an individual strategy profile was plotted by each student, the teacher helping wherever needed. A brief description was given about strategy profiles and strategy skills. Based on their profiles, students were led to reflect on their learning experiences and think of ways to make changes for improvement.

The participants of the study were in the sophomore and junior years of their studies and no special treatment was given in their classroom procedure. They were led to carry out class sessions in the usual manner. Research treatment was given in the six strategy categories of *Memory*, *Cognitive*, *Compensation*, *Meta-cognitive*, *Affective*, and *Social* (Oxford, 1990). Treatment, in the form of explicit strategy training was integrated in the instructional processes mostly in the form of instructions or input material. Below is an example of such treatment.

> Respond to the questions below concerning learning strategies. Write your answers on this paper. Your responses will become your product of today's writing class.

Of the six strategy categories, *Memory* and *Cognitive* were given the least treatment, seeing that these strategies were found in most regular instructional material activities. Each of the other four categories (*Compensation*, *Meta-cognitive*, *Affective*, and *Social*) received more attention and treatment. Examples of these can be seen below.

*Memory*: As you see my corrections on your last week's work, what is the most difficult problem that you have in writing? List the words and sentences that you can remember from your writing.

*Cognitive*: As you give me your revised essay on the role of literature in life (or any other topic), tell me how you go about completing this writing. What things (steps) did you do (take) to work on your revision? Were there any special events or experiences you encountered in doing your assignment?

*Compensation*: Today's topic is extensive listening. You will hear the story just once. As you listen, follow the general plot of the story. Guessing for difficult words or words that you don't hear clearly. Then, fill in the blanks in Exercise 1.

*Meta-cognitive*: Write reflective notes in two short paragraphs pertaining to: (1) What you have learned well, what you have learned not so well, and what you have not learned at all in this class; (2) How much you have improved in your grammar knowledge or in

your mastery of English grammatical structures (as compared to what you experienced in Structure I and II classes).

*Affective*: Some time during the first week of the class, we studied and discussed strategies in language learning (*Memory*, *Cognitive*, *Compensation*, *Meta-cognitive*, *Affective*, *Social*). Since then, have you done anything concerning these strategies either in this class or other classes? What are your feelings, opinions, comments, etc. concerning your experiences in taking this class?

*Social*: What do you think of polygamy? Share your opinion with your friends. Be sure to talk to at least one boy and one girl. After you finish, come back to class and present your opinion in front of the class. (Classroom activities proceeded from individual deskwork, pair crosschecking, and small group brainstorming).

Weekly reflections were written by students after each class session (some of the reflection passages became students' work for the session). These journals were kept for one week for data recording purposes the following week completed with feedback from the teacher. One semester reflection was written at the 14th and 15th week to be kept by the teacher for overall feedback of the instructional processes.

On the last day of class, the students were again given the SILL. Scoring and profile plotting were done immediately after completion of the questionnaire. On the basis of individual profiles, students were led to reflect on their learning experiences during the semester and think of things to plan for the future.

### d. Data Analysis

Four kinds of data were obtained: pre-class and post class SILL scores and strategy profiles, written students' reflections, results of selected student interviews, and researchers' collaborative evaluations. These hard data were sorted, coded, and grouped into four themes following the four research topics in question. Further screening was done on each of the four themes till listing of responses was regarded exhaustive.

Quantitative figures were used wherever appropriate, such as for means of scores of strategy categories. Written responses of students' reflections were used as the main data items to be analysed. For a number of responses, results of students' interviews were used either for clarification or additional information. A small number of responses needed the researchers' deliberation to reach a conformed interpretation.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

Students' pre-class strategy profile step used to start the discussion. Students' awareness of learning strategy use turned out to be the most prominent issue in the findings. Description of strategy skills is included to give a clearer picture of students' strategy use. Students' preparedness, concentration, and attitudes are presented in one discussion section concerning the impact of strategy use. Students' post class strategy profile semester reflections are used for discussing students' improvement in their language learning.

### a. Pre-class Strategy Profile

The modified SILL consisted of 9 strategy-skill items for *Memory*, 18 for *Cognitive*, 9 for *Compensation*, 9 for *Meta-cognitive*, 9 for *Affective*, and 6 for *Social*. Mean scores were

calculated for the six strategy categories to plot the general strategy profile of students as a group. The results of the calculation were: 58.39 for *Memory*, 60.13 for *Cognitive*, 69.95 for *Compensation*, 60.23 for *Meta-cognitive*, 64.13 for *Affective*, and 66.74 for *Social*. In visual representation, the profile can be seen as in Figure I below.

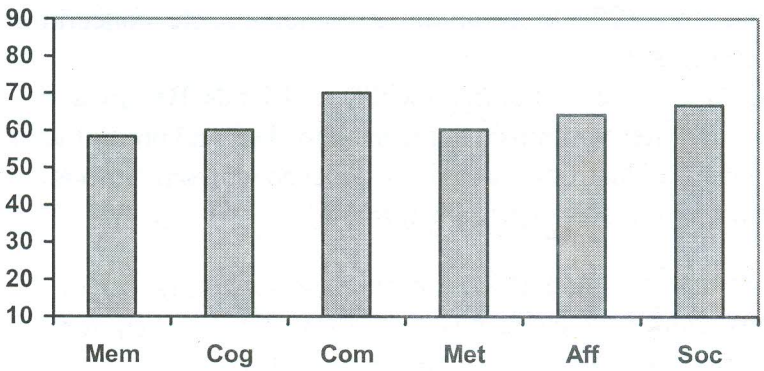


**Figure I**: General learning-strategy profile of students as a group (beginning of semester).

On the score range between 10 and 90, the mean scores above are by no means related to any standardized parameter. These scores are relative in magnitude comparable only within this group of subjects. The profile merely indicates that this group of students shows a medium to high use of learning strategies. Individually, use of the compensation strategy is reported to be the highest, reaching the relative measure of almost 70, followed by *Social* of a medium high of almost 67 and *Affective* of a little over 64. The three remaining *Memory*, *Cognitive*, and *Meta-cognitive* show use of a medium score point of around 60.

This profile can be said to be atypical for Indonesian students. Expectation is high that use of memory and cognitive strategies are highest for Indonesian students who, from their grade and high-school years, have been educated in these modes of learning (Sugeng, 2000). On the other hand, use of the remaining *Compensation*, *Meta-cognitive*, *Affective*, and *Social* is expected to be much lower. However, these student respondents have been exposed to language learning for at least three semesters in their school, not to mention the six years in their junior and senior high schools. High use of learning strategies as shown in the profile can be explained by the fact that many strategy skills have been integrated in the instructional tasks and activities in the classroom interactions. Had the participants been non-language learners, the expectation would have been satisfied that high use is found in *Memory* and *Cognitive* while somewhat lower use is found in *Compensation*, *Meta-cognitive*, *Affective*, and *Social*.

Students' reactions on their strategy profile are varied. Many students stated that the strategy profile described their traits quite accurately. In response to her low score in the memory category, one student wrote, "I have low grade in memory strategies because sometimes I am lazy in memorizing the material that I have learned." Another student gave a comment on her low score in *Meta-cognitive*: "I feel weak in meta-cognitive aspect. I think, myself and most Indonesian students usually do not make preparations for tomorrow lessons." Many of the students expressed their need to know more about learning strategies in spite of the fact that their scores on certain categories were high. Statements like or similar to these were numerous: "I have a high score in cognitive and compensation. This fact shows that there are some knowledge that I haven't known before;" or "I think I must learn about learning strategy to rise (!) my profile."

**b. Awareness**

Although the students in the study are identified as having a medium to high use of learning strategies as shown in the profile above, almost all of them reported that they had had no knowledge about learning strategies, at least in Oxford's (1990) technical terms as they encountered in the SILL, till the first day of class. A few students stated that they knew of some learning strategies from their high school teachers or their parents at home. These are general statements such as "you must listen to your teacher", "work carefully and accurately", "never put off doing your homework", etc. One student's comment made a clear difference between what he had before and after the first class session: "I think this learning strategies (!) is better than the other learning strategies. During this time, I don't have any better learning strategies."

The absence of knowledge of formal learning strategies in students, specific strategy skills as in SILL as compared to general strategy statements, is understandable. First, from the instructional experiences in their earlier education practices, students are not accustomed to being acquainted with learning strategies. Although there have been changes of curricula in the national system education, student active learning is one, the effects on the instructional practices in the field have been so lenient. Consequently, classroom activities are still dominated by "teacher telling" (Palmer, *et al.*, 2005) and students relying on whatever their teacher tells them in the class. Secondly, learning strategies have never been mentioned in curricula or syllabi. Even though there is strategic competency basis, such as in the communicative/competency-based curricula, its translation and implementation in the field do not refer to the formal categorizations as in SILL. Thirdly, learning strategies are relatively new. Seventeen years since Oxford (1990) is not long enough for new concepts and theories to become common practices. Commonly, it takes at least 20 years for education innovations to take place in the field of teaching of English as a foreign language.

Now, students' awareness of their learning strategies is guaranteed. This is indicated by such reflective statements as "Not only to improve it, I want to change my strategy. Since the last four months I have achieved my target to arrange my schedule well"; "I tried to apply those strategies in my writing"; "I think I have better learning strategies now because every day I got the new information and new skill"; and others. Statements that show awareness of strategy use were also found in negative modes, such as "I had a bad strategy in learning. I was lazy in study and sometimes did not do assignment"; "I didn't do a better strategy so I didn't have a good progress in most of my class"; "But there were some learning strategies that I could not do yet. I could not improve my cognitive and affective in the class"; and others.

From the reflections they wrote, students showed appreciation of learning strategies. Statements like "I think that these strategies gave big influence in my learning process";

"These strategies are very helpful in my learning process, so I can improve my knowledge and ability"; "In this first half of the semester, I can enjoy with those strategies and they were very helpful"; and other similar ones show that students are conscious and appreciative of their strategy use. This is an enlightening phenomenon since having awareness of learning strategies will be the beginning of more successful learning. The "Eureka" element in their knowledge of learning strategies is important for and has a strong therapeutic effect on these students. It will motivate them to practice using learning strategies as much as they can, till these strategies become their "unconscious habitual, automatic learning processes" (Cohen, 1998 in Oxford, *et al.*, 2004).

c. **Strategy Use**

Being aware of learning strategies is a start. The follow-up question is whether or not students use them consciously. From students' reflections some patterns of strategy use can be shown. Some students reported to have tried to use all strategies, some others tried to concentrate on certain strategies, still a few others were not sure of the strategies they had used in their learning activities.

Some students tried to apply all the strategies they learned from the first week of class. These are some statements expressed by these students: "During the first half of the semester, I tried to use all of the strategies but memory, cognitive, and social strategies more dominant"; "I tried to use all of the strategies to improve my ability. I think I can combine the strategies that I have chosen. It helps me to understand other subjects". Some other students reported to have used selected strategies, such as "However, in most of my writing, I usually use the cognitive strategy because using cognitive strategy is better than using other strategies"; "I think when I use affective learning strategy, my learning is better than before". A few other students expressed doubts about their strategy use: "Although it was not easy, I tried to apply these strategies to improve my skills and knowledge"; "I think the most important strategy of all is cognitive strategy, but I still cannot apply this strategy perfectly in my learning process".

These students were mature adults who had been studying in the university for at least three semesters. From their appreciative responses to knowing about learning strategies, they seemed to be excited with their new experiences in using learning strategies in their classes. A few of the students felt that certain strategies, especially in the memory and cognitive categories, overlapped and a few others expressed difficulty in identifying meta-cognitive strategies. Students' statements like the following were often found: "Memory strategies were the same with cognitive strategies because both of them use our mind"; "I have not too clear about the cognitive and meta-cognitive in this learning strategies"; and others. A few other students confused a particular strategy category with some other category; mostly among *Memory* and *Cognitive*, *Cognitive* and *Meta-cognitive*, and *Meta-cognitive* and *Compensation*. This is a common phenomenon as it happens when one is acquainted with something new. In time, as students are more familiar with strategy categories, they will be better able to distinguish one strategy from the other. Ultimately, it is the use of strategies which is important; labels come later.

*Memory* and *Cognitive* are familiar in these students. Statements about use of these two strategies are quite varied. Statements like "I tried to memorize 10 words a day. Actually not a day but a week" and "I seeks (!) a new vocabulary to memorize and write in small book" are typical of memory strategies." Statements related to cognitive strategy use are numerous, typical ones being "I always practice writing everyday"; I took notes when the teacher explained"; and "When watching movie, I try to enjoy the movie without reading the translation. This is one way to improve my skill in listening"; and others. Although the profile shows high use in *Compensation*, highest among the six categories, statements that are related to this category use are not so varied. Guessing for unfamiliar words (e.g. "When there are some difficult words that I must speak, I change those words to another word that I can understand") and changing topics of conversation (e.g. "I ask my friends to change topic so that I can speak more faster") are statements much mentioned by students. Some students also expressed their confusion between *Compensation* and *Meta-cognitive*. Use of meta-cognitive strategies itself is quite varied. For this strategy category, students' statements such as the

following are commonly found: "I will make complete notes and summary of all subjects"; "I want to change my strategies to study"; "I made a schedule to read English novels and magazines three times a week, listen to English songs 30 minutes a day, and practice English with my friends." High use of the affective and social strategy skills in this profile shows the popularity of these two strategy categories among students. Statements are also varied in the *Affective* category: "I also try to relax when I join my lecture. It is make me more easy to study"; "I needed some of candies in this lesson because it made me to be more calm"; and others. Statements for *Social*, however, are related mostly to their peer and teachers: "If I did not understand about the lesson, I would try to ask it to my friends first before asking my teacher"; "I realized that studying with my friend is easier than studying by myself or when I only listen to the lecturer. When I get an assignment, I always talk to my friend"; and others.

**d. Impact**

Students expressed positive responses to their awareness and use of learning strategies. One direct impact of strategy training on academic tasks is preparedness towards class. "I feel better attending this class compared to Writing II last year. I can feel it after I have known about learning strategies last week"; "Yes, I use the learning strategies in studying English. Last night I read the workbook. I studied Lesson I for today class last night." Statements like these and similar to these show that students consciously prepared themselves for instructional tasks. This meta-cognitive stance provides favourable pre-condition for an instructional process to run effectively.

Coming along with preparedness, awareness and use of learning strategies makes students more concentrated on their instructional activities. As responses to one reflective question, students wrote, "I tried to concentrate on the lesson although I felt very tired"; "I paid a lot attention for the lecture explanation and sometimes wrote what he has said in the class"; indicating that they took the efforts to concentrate on their class activities. This is a valuable contribution for a learning teaching process to run successfully. It seems true that nowadays students' concentration on classroom activities is becoming more difficult to find and that teachers need to work hard to deliver their instructional material.

Positive attitudes are also apparent in students' support towards strategy training. In answer to the question about the need for strategy training, students showed full agreement on the need and benefits of such training. They showed similar observations that most Indonesian students did not know what their learning strategies were and how their skills and knowledge could be improved. From strategy training they will "know in what kind of way they learn", "know their position in the learning teaching process and what they can do about it", "maximally use their dominant strategies to learn something ", "and decide to change their strategies to be better in order that their quality will increase".

Finally, in response to the weekly reflection about planning, students showed enthusiasm in what they expected to happen to them in the future. They seemed to be quite realistic about their instructional plans. While some of their expressed plans were still very general in nature, such as "I want to improve my cumulative score" or "I will learn English more diligently and seriously", many were quite as specific as "I want to improve my speaking skill and grammar", "I will go to the library more often to read books", or "I will make a study group with my friends, especially my close friends, at least twice a week". Meta-cognitive attitudes like these give the students strong motivation and footing to work more effectively in their learning processes.

**e. Post Class Strategy Profile**

Mean scores of the SILL administered to students at the end of the semester were 62.49 for *Memory*, 64.20 for *Cognitive*, 73.43 for *Compensation*, 65.08 for *Meta-cognitive*, 68.02 for *Affective*, and 66.74 for *Social*. For ease of discussion, these figures are shown below in a graph with beginning-of-semester scores as background.

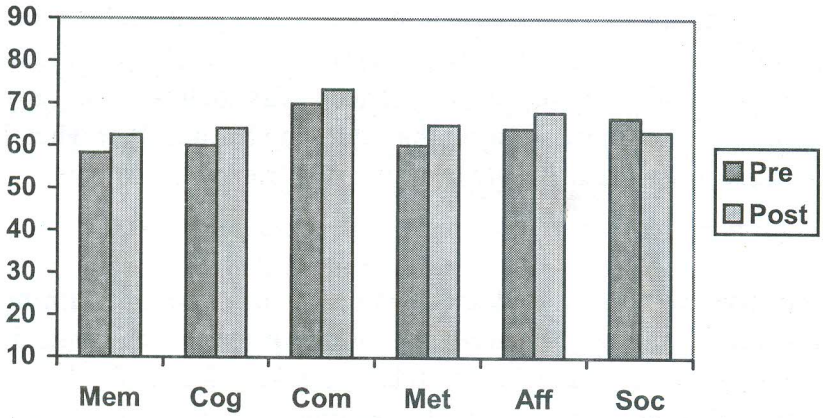


**Figure II**: General learning-strategy profile of students as a group (beginning and end of semester).

With the exception of *Social*, students showed higher use of learning strategies. The increase of scores in the five categories is quite similar, around four points up, and the two profiles show the same pattern in students' learning strategies. High use of *Compensation*, *Meta-cognitive*, and *Affective* strategies can be seen as an indication that students have used many of the strategy skills in these three categories in order to be good language learners. The drop of the *Social* strategy from 68.02 to 64.13 defies explanation except that Indonesian students tend to use less social strategies in their learning processes. The six items in the modified SILL all refer to students' interaction with other people; it seems characteristic that students do not make much use of this interaction.

The reflection data, however, show that students feel much helped by the use of learning strategies. Many of the students stated that "these strategies gave big influence in my learning process", "these strategies are very helpful in my learning process, so I can improve my knowledge and ability," "After using learning strategies, I felt easier when I study a lesson," and others expressing the benefits of strategy use in their learning processes and, thus, promoting to their learning success (Nisbet, *et al.*, 2005). Statements mentioning use specific strategies are no less numerous: "Yes, my profile is better. I try to increase my skills in listening by listening to foreign speakers in western movies. In speaking I try to speak English to myself," "in this semester, I become diligent to reading a book, listen to the western music, watching movies. I know more about using word in sentence in speaking," "since I have been using those strategies, I realized that my writing is better than before. I can memorize the tenses and find ideas," and others. These reflections lead to the direction for students to improve their learning strategy skills and learning outcomes, qualitatively.

## 5. Conclusion

At the outset of the study, it was thought that students would have a low measure of strategy use and that strategy training would be useful for them in order that they could improve it. As data were collected, and analyses and observation began and continued, it was found that almost of the students admitted that learning strategies were something new for them. This fact has somewhat shifted the focus of the study one step backwards to the issue of awareness of the existence and use of learning strategies. Awareness, formerly one of the four research objectives, became the most prominent finding of the study.

Somewhat out of expectation, students scored medium to high in their strategy profiles. Furthermore, their compensation, meta-cognitive, and affective categories are higher than the other remaining categories. On the other hand, they have not been acquainted with these strategy skills, at least in the technical terms such as the ones in SILL, till the day they completed the strategy inventory. This means that students have used these strategies all along. This can happen since many strategy skills are embedded in the instructional materials and activities in their classroom interactions.

Awareness and use of learning strategies have positive impact on the process and results of instructions. Among these, students are better prepared for classes, better able to concentrate on classroom interactions, and better able to plan for classes. In addition, they have positive attitudes towards learning strategies and strategy training.

## 6. Suggestions and Recommendations

For Indonesian students, awareness of language learning strategies is obscured. As the study has indicated, introduction of strategy skills and use help students to be better prepared, better concentrated, and improved in their learning skills and learning outcomes. Introduction can be given at the beginning of every class, thus integrating learning strategies into the curriculum. For teachers, findings of the study support the assumption that language learners have unconsciously used a high measure of learning strategy skills integrated in the instructional material and activities. More conscious efforts on the part of the teachers to include learning strategy skills in their instructional planning will give more help to students to maximize their use of learning strategies for more effective, efficient, self-directed, and autonomous learning (Wenden in Azis, 2005).

Strategy training is needed for both Indonesian students and teachers. For students, it must include explicit description of strategy skills, instructional tasks that carry strategy skills, and periodic assessment of learning strategy use and profiles. For teachers, strategy training can include general knowledge about what strategies are, specific skills in integrating strategy skills in their instructional planning, and research and assessment on students' strategy use and profiles.

Due to the nature of the data collected, this study has turned out to be a more general survey of students' learning strategy use rather than a specific directional study. Although substantial results have come out of the study, many otherwise interesting variables have been left out from analysis. For example, it is not known whether certain strategies are more related to certain language skills or whether certain strategies are more suitable for certain students' characteristics. This and other variables such as gender, semester, and language proficiency are open to interesting and useful research.

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