A CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USE AND THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The way people learn a foreign language may be different from one person to another. The success of students' learning may be affected by the strategies which are employed by them. Therefore, attracted by the problem, this paper is aimed to investigate Language Learning Strategies (LLS) employed by the students and its relationship with their academic performance. Strategy Inventory of Language Learning Strategies from Oxford (1990) was adopted as the main theory of the study. The subjects of the research were 30 second year students of English Department of UNTIRTA (Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa) Serang, Banten Province. To collect the data of students' LLS, Questionnaire of Strategy Inventory of Language Learning, (Oxford, 1990) was adopted. Moreover, students' academic performance was measured from their Grade Point of Average (GPA).The study finds that, there is relationship between students' language learning strategies use and their academic performance. It is shown by the value of r, which is 0,776, while the critical value with df of 28 is 0.32 It means that the correlation is marked and significant. Thus, it suggess that the more a student employs language learning strategies the better her/his academic performance is.

KEYWORDS: LLS (Language Learning Strategies), SILL (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning)

A. Introduction

The way people learn foreign language may vary from one person to another since each person has her own peculiar characteristic and different learning style. Moreover, Mastery and proficiency is the goal of the foreign language learning. To achieve that, students or learners are required to be independent learners which mean that they must know how to learn or to develop their learning strategies by themselves.

The statement above implies that the success of the language learning is not determined by one single factor; there are many factors that influence it. As supported by Brown

that:" there is no single magic formula for successful foreign language." (207:2001). It suggests that there are many ways, methods, techniques or strategies that learners might use in their learning process and they may be different from one person to another. Some studies: Rubin (1975), Cohen (1997), Cohen (2005), Moir and Nation (2002) in Griffiths (2008) show that successful students prone to use learning strategies than less successful learners. According to Rebecca:" language learners at all levels use strategies, but that some or most learners are not fully aware of the strategies they use that might be the most beneficial to employ" (3:1989).

According to the writer's experience, students will undergo several stages before they come skillful in the subject they are taking. It also believed to happen to new or the first and second year students of English, they may also found some difficulties in catching up with the material given by the lecturers. And this problem is might due to the lack of mastering of language skills (Wilkin (1976) and Nobert (1997)). Moreover, the language proficiency and achievement level among the students are different. Some students can be considered as successful and some are less successful.

This research was conducted within the framework of the following question and hypotheses::

1) Is there any relationship between students' language learning strategies use and their academic performance?
2) Ho   : there is no relationship between students' language learning strategies use and their academic performance.
3) Hi   : There is relationship between students' language learning strategies use and their academic performance.

This research is intended to figure out the correlation between students' language learning strategies use and their academic performance. Therefore, it adopted quantitative method, particularly, correlational study.

In addition, It is expected that by knowing the relationship of the students' learning strategies use and their academic performance, teachers can set their teaching materials and method in order to help students to improve their learning process. Moreover, it is also expected that students will become more aware of their own learning process and the use of various learning strategies to improve their language skill. Therefore, equality of students' performance and competence can be achieved.

B. Literature Review

In this section two key concepts – learning strategies and characteristics will be reviewed.

1. Learning Strategies

Each person is believed to have her own way of learning a foreign language (Oxford, 1990). Many research have been conducted in this matter, some revealed that successful learners prone to use various strategies in their learning process. Some other believes that less successful learners also employ learning strategies (Moir and Nation (2002) in Griffiths (2008). Eventually, many research indicate that the success is lay in how aware the learners to employ the strategies. As has been said by Rebecca (3:1989) that:" language learners at all levels use strategies, but that some or most learners are not fully aware of the strategies use or the strategies that might be most beneficial to employ." It can be infered that all language learners actually employ learning strategies but what differentiate successful language learners and less successful learners are in their awareness of the benefit or advantages of the language learning their empoy and in their ability in choosing the best strategies for their particular needs.

Many definitions of learning strategies have been proposed by researchers. Weistein and Mayer (in Lessard, 1997:1) said that "learning strategies (LS) broadly as "behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning" which are "intended to influence the learner's encoding process" later he defined that definition LS more specifically as "behavior of a learner that are intended to influence how the learner processes information. While Brown (2001:208) said that:" strategies are, in essence, learners' techniques for capitalizing on the principle of successful learning.

Many prior researches in language study as the root of the born of the Strategies-Based Instruction approach appeared, analyzed and identified how successful language learners learn a foreign language. Rebecca (Brawn, 2001:217) comes with the most comprehensive taxonomy of learning strategies. The strategies are divided into two big categories, that is: direct or cognitive strategies and indirect or meta cognitive strategies.

The direct or cognitive strategies are strategies which learners apply directly to the language itself. It consists of three different ways, such as: memorization strategies, cognitive strategies, and consolidation strategies. On the other hand, indirect strategies are the way learners manage to control their own leaning process. It includes: meta cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

2. The Characteristics of Good Language Learners

A number of researchers have drawn up lists of the characteristics of good language learners. Wenden referred to some of these in filling out the following list:

1. Good language learners find a style of learning that suits them.

They are self aware that they know themselves. When they are in a learning situation which they do not like, they are able to adapt it to their personal needs. They believe they can always learn something, whatever the situation. They also know how they prefer to learn and choose learning situations that are suited to their way of learning.

2. Good language learners are actively involved in the language learning process.

They take responsibility for their own learning. Besides regular language classes, they create opportunities to use the language. They know practice is very important. They are willing to take risks, to appear foolish if necessary.

3. Good language learners try to figure out how the language works. They try to come to grips with the language as a system. They pay attention to form and look for patterns. They develop good techniques for improving their pronunciation, learning grammar and vocabulary. They welcome mistakes as a way of learning more about the language.

4. Good language learners know that language is used to communicate.

They pay attention to meaning. They have good techniques to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the early stages of their language learning they do not worry about making mistakes. They speak and try to become fluent. They look for opportunities to speak with native speakers.

5. Good language learners are like good detectives.

They are always looking for clues that will help them understand how the language works. They make guesses and ask people to correct them if they are wrong. They compare what they say with what others say. They keep a record of what they have learned and think about it. They monitor themselves.

6. Good language learners learn to think in the language.

7. Good language learners realize that language learning is not easy.

They try to overcome their feelings of frustration and their lack of confidence. They are able to come to terms with the affective demands of language learning, that they can manage their emotions. They are realistic in their setting of study goals.

8. Good language learners are also good culture learners aware of the very close relationship between language and culture.

9. Good language learners have a long term commitment to language learning. They are realistic in realizing that it takes time and practice.

It is supported by Rubin (1975) in Griffiths (2008), one of the earliest researchers directing attention from teaching methods and materials to a more learner-centred aspect, assuming that successful learners tend to operate a range of strategies in their

learning process which might be made available to help underachieved learners. Rubin points out that the good language learner:

- is a willing and accurate guesser;
- has a strong drive to communicate;
- is uninhibited and willing to make mistakes;
- focuses on form by looking at patterns and using analysis;
- takes advantage of all practice opportunities;
- monitors his or her own speech and that of others;
- pays attention to meaning. (cited Oxford 2001, p.169)

Refering to the explanation of learning strategies and the characteristics of good language learners, the correlation of language learning strategies needs employed by language learners needs further study. Therefore, this essay focused on investigating their connection. The formulation of the problem as followed:

C. Research Methodology

To answer the research question, the research employed correlation analysis; it is concerned with determining the extent or degree of relationship existing between variables (Ary, Donal et. al, 1972 & Hatch & Farhady, 1982). The participants of the research were 30 students of second year graders of English department. They were chosen due to the fact that they could represent the population of English students at UNTIRTA and on the reason of accessability toward data collection of SILL.

To find the tendency of students' learning strategies use, questionnaires of SILL from Oxford (1990) were administered to the participants. It consists of fifty statements or items that indicate language learning strategy. Moreover, the questionnaire uses five Likert scale as the measurement of students' response toward each statement: 1 means never or almost never true of me, 2 means usually not true of me, 3 means somewhat true of me, 4 means usually true of me, and 5 means always or almost always true of me. Each score made in each response were summed up and divided by fifty. The result or the average indicated the degree of language learning strategies use. The degree of use was based on these standard: 4,5 to 5,0 means always or almost always used and 3,5 to 4,4 means usually used, they indicated high use of language learnin strategies. Medium degree were indicated by 2,5 to 3,4. While low use were indicated by 1,5 to 2,4 and 1,0 to 1,4. In addition, students' academic performance was taken from their Grade Point of Average (GPA).

D. Data Analysis and Discussion

The average scores of SILL (X) and those of GPA can be presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Average scores of SILL and those of GPA

No	X	Y
1	4.12	3.77
2	3.33	3.36
3	3.56	3.45
4	3.82	3.59
5	3.52	3.42
6	4.10	3.61
7	4.02	3.55
8	4.00	3.54
9	3.08	3.32
10	3.25	3.05
11	3.52	3.32
12	3.56	3.32
13	4.08	3.45
14	3.46	3.59
15	3.45	3.45
16	3.00	3.09
17	3.45	3.59
18	3.45	3.45
19	3.00	3.05
20	3.55	3.40
21	3.20	3.20
22	4.12	3.60
23	3.84	3.40
24	3.92	3.32
25	3.94	3.60
26	3.33	3.23
27	3.33	3.23
28	3.34	3.36
29	3.10	3.26
30	3.10	3.25

By analyzing the data shown in Table 1 through SPSS software, the following result was obtained:

Table 2
Correlations

Variables		VAR00001	VAR00002
VAR00001	Pearson Correlation	1	.776(**)
	N	30	30
VAR00002	Pearson Correlation	.776(**)	1
	N	30	30

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Based on Table 2, it was interpreted that:

1) There is a positive and marked correlation between between students' language learning strategies use and students' academic performance because observed r is 0.776 (which lies between 0.70 and 0.90 (Burns, 1995: 183)
2) The correlation between students' language learning strategies use and students' academic performance is significant because observed r (0.776) is greater than critical r (0.554)at tle significance level of 0.01 (2-tailed).
3) The shared variance is r^2 is 0.602. It means that the students' academic performance is accounted for by language learning strategies use.

E. Conclusion and Suggestion

There is a strong and significant correlation between students learning strategy use and academic performance. In addition, 60.2 percent of students' academic performance is influenced by their language learning strategies use. This study concludes that language learing strategies use is a very important factor of students' learning process for its use enhances students academic performance. Therefore, teachers can help low achievers to improve their academic performance by applying language learning strategies in every task which teachers give to the students.

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