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Students' Learning Strategies for Developing Speaking Ability

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Abstract

This study was done to study the learning strategies used by both low and high performance speaking students in developing their speaking skills as well as the differences between their learning strategies. The reason for conducting this research was that the competency of many students in speaking English was still considered unsatisfactory in Banda Aceh. We postulated that one aspect involved in the process of developing speaking skills was the learning strategies used by the learners. In this study, the data was collected through field research by means of documents, questionnaires, and interviews. The result of this study indicated that high performance speaking students had better balance in using all kinds of learning strategies (memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, affective, and social) for enhancing their speaking skills; the same could not be found with low performance speaking students. Besides, the high performance students employed more learning strategies consciously and appropriately compared to the low performance students. Based on the research results, it is suggested that students should be trained to be more aware of their own speaking learning strategies. They should use appropriate language learning strategies more consciously, purposefully, and frequently to be more successful in developing their speaking skills.

Keywords: Learning strategies, speaking skills, speaking performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In this age of globalization, English has increasingly become the medium in every domain of communication, both in local and global contexts. As a result, there is a

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demand for speakers who can use English effectively in every country. English is called the International Language and is also the second language of many countries in the world. In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language, for it is a language studied in an environment where it is not the primary means for daily interaction and the use of the language is restricted. Even though English is said to be difficult to learn and to use, it keeps attracting people to learn it.

Among the four key language skills, speaking is deemed to be the most important skill that must be mastered well in learning a new language. For most people mastering speaking skills is the single most important aspect of learning a foreign language, and success is measured in terms of the ability to carry on a conversation in that language (Nunan, 1991, p. 39). In addition, Patel and Jain (2008, p. 29) state that "the primary functions of language are communication, self-expression, and thinking". Hence, it is obvious that language is a means of communication. For a learner to master a language well, she/he must be able to speak that language. Speaking skill clearly indicates that the learner knows how to use that language.

However, speaking a foreign language is not an easy skill to be mastered by learners. Learners consider speaking as the most difficult skill since it needs great courage as well as preparation to speak well in the new language. Regarding this, Brown (2004, p. 172) says speaking has five components namely: grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and pronunciation. Students have to be aware of these components. Before they speak, they should know what they will say; therefore, they need to have many ideas in their mind about what they will say. In addition, students must be able to use correct pronunciation; otherwise it will be difficult for listeners to understand them. Moreover, in order to be able to speak fluently and correctly, they must have sufficient vocabulary and must be able to arrange their sentences so that they can be understood. If all these things are done well, the students surely will be able to speak well and their listeners will get the message easily.

In reality, the competency of senior high school students in Indonesia in speaking English is still a matter of concern. According to the recent curriculum, Curriculum 2013, students are expected to be able to express either transactional or interpersonal communication in a daily life context, for example expressing and responding to sympathy. This means that the curriculum objective of teaching speaking is to enable students to understand and use the language appropriately in accordance with the appropriate situation; for instance, expressing and responding to sympathy. However, many senior high school students still lack the capability to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings clearly. They surely face difficulties that hinder them to be competent at speaking; such as lack of vocabulary, poor or unusual pronunciation, and poor grammar (Heriansyah, 2012, p. 31). In fact, the time spent by the students to learn these skills is thought to be long enough. Furthermore, although there have been a variety of language teaching methods introduced at schools which emphasize the use of the English language in real life situations and for social interaction in order to develop the students' skills, the outcomes are still not satisfying.

The problem then is thought not only lie in the methods implemented. It can be assumed that some problems are with the students themselves because the most important factor in language learning is the language learner. Learners tend to blame teachers, conditions and teaching materials for their lack of success in becoming competent at speaking, whereas possibly the most important reason for their lack of success can be found in themselves. One of the aspects that are involved in the process

of developing speaking skills is the language learning strategies used by the learners themselves. This is how the learners learn by themselves. Learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning (Oxford, 1990, p. 1). Seeking out conversation partners, asking for correction, and practicing out loud are some examples of learning strategies used by learners to develop speaking skills. Language learning strategies constitute a useful tool kit for active and conscious learning, and these strategies pave the way toward greater language learning proficiency (Dörnyei, 2005). In addition, Oxford (1990, p. 8) also states that the use of appropriate language learning strategies is a major contribution for development of communicative competence. It can be assumed that if inappropriate strategies are applied it will not result in much improvement of proficiency to be communicatively competent. Thus, learning strategies are among the main factors that help to determine how, and how well, learners learn a foreign language.

Based on the results of a preliminary study at a high school in Banda Aceh, it was found that students used a variety of learning strategies to enhance their progress in developing speaking skills. It was also discovered that each student from different levels uses different language learning strategies which they considered helpful to them. In accordance with this, Ellis (1986, p. 183) claims that the proficiency level of the learner influences his choice of strategy. Some of the students confirmed that their strategies give greater impact toward their learning process. Meanwhile, there were also several students who thought that their strategies only gave a small contribution; hence their learning may not have improved significantly.

A study by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) reveals that more effective (higher proficiency) students generally use a greater variety of strategies and use them in ways that help the student complete language tasks more successfully; conversely, less effective (low proficiency) students not only have fewer strategies but also frequently use strategies that are inappropriate to the task or that do not lead to successful task completion. Studies by O'Malley and Chamot (1989) and Gu and Johnson (1996) (cited in Cabaysa & Baetiong, 2010 p. 24) also prove that successful learners made use of combinations of strategies. This is supported by a study conducted by Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012) that shows the higher the level the learners are at, the greater the number of strategies they use.

Hence, this present study was undertaken to further explore the language learning strategies used by students with high and low speaking performances in developing their speaking skills. It is expected that knowing more about the language learning strategies will enable both teachers and students to find better solutions for the problem the students have in developing their speaking skills.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background described above, this research focuses on the following two questions: (1) What are the learning strategies used by learners with low performance in speaking to improve their speaking abilities? (2) What are the learning strategies used by learners with high performance in speaking to improve their speaking abilities?

Accordingly, the research objectives in this study are to find out the learning strategies used by learners with high and low speaking performance to develop their speaking ability.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Speaking

Speaking is an ability to orally express opinions, thoughts, facts and feelings to other people, animals and even to oneself. According to Nunan (2003, p. 48) (cited in Mart, 2012, p. 91) Speaking is a productive oral skill which consists of constructing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. In a slightly different statement, Brown (2004, p. 140) points out that “speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information”. In speaking, the students learn how to organize ideas, arrange sentences, and express language in spoken form with good pronunciation and comprehensible language. They must also learn about how to deliver the meaning of the language according to the context they are speaking.

2.2 Language Learning Strategies

All language learners use language learning strategies in their learning process. Learning strategies are commonly defined as the operations or processes which are consciously (or unconsciously) selected and employed by the learner to learn the target language or facilitate a language task (White 1999, cited in Hurd & Lewis 2008, p. 9). Aside from that, Chamot (1987, cited in Macaro, 2001, p. 17) defines Learning Strategies as techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information. From the many different strategies, there are many options from which learners consciously select in order to optimize their chances of success in achieving their goals in learning and using the language. Learners employ language learning strategies consciously when processing new information and performing tasks. These strategies help them to comprehend better and quicker. Therefore, language learning strategies are fundamental to success in learning a new language.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 1) state that “learning strategies are special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information”. Oxford (1990, p. 8) also points out learning strategies are specific actions taken by learners to help their own learning, to make the learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable. By employing the right strategies, the process of learning the language will improve significantly. Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved, faster language proficiency. Language learning strategies play an important role in the process of learning language.

In brief, learning strategies can be seen as special ways of processing information that are used by learners to improve comprehension, learning, or retention of the information. Learning strategies are used by learners to help them understand new information better and to help them solve language problems. Learners have to recognize the power of consciously using language learning strategies in order to make learning quicker, easier, more effective, more efficient, and more fun.

2.3 Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies have been classified by many researchers; see for examples by Rubin, (1987), Oxford, (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot, (1990). Rubin (1987, as cited in Zare, 2012, p. 164) categorizes language learning strategies into three main groups: learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies. Learning strategies include all strategies that are directly related to learning (cognitive) or those which indirectly involve the learning process (metacognitive). Cognitive strategies comprise clarification, practice, memorizing, and monitoring. Planning, setting goals and self-management belong to metacognitive strategies. While communication strategies are strategies that less directly relate to language learning since their focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying the speaker's intention. Communication strategies are used by speakers to overcome communication difficulties. Social strategies are those activities learners engage in which provide them opportunities to practice their knowledge.

Oxford (1990, p. 14-16) differentiates language learning strategies into six groups: (1) memory strategies: strategies that help learners store and retrieve new information, (2) cognitive strategies: strategies that enable learners to understand and produce new language by many different means, (3) compensation strategies: strategies that aid learners in overcoming knowledge gaps and continuing to communicate authentically, (4) affective strategies: strategies that help develop self-confidence, (5) metacognitive strategies: strategies that help learners to regulate their own cognitive abilities and to focus, plan, and evaluate their progress as they move toward communicative competence, and (6) social strategies: strategies that provide increased interaction and more empathetic understanding. She adds that all appropriate language learning strategies contribute to the main goal: becoming communicatively competent.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 44-45) also divide language learning strategies into three types, namely: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies. By metacognitive strategies, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) mean strategies applied to plan for learning and thinking about the learning process, monitoring production and comprehension as well as evaluation after the completion of an activity. Cognitive strategies involve the direct manipulation of learning techniques, e.g. repetition, translation, deduction, etc. The final group of strategies involves socio-affective strategies which deal with social transactions and social activities.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research study was conducted at High School No. 3 or *Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri* (SMAN) 3 in Banda Aceh. The subjects of this study were the second year students at SMAN 3 Banda Aceh who had either low or high speaking performance results. The reason why we chose students from the second year was because they had been learning English for a longer period of time and had had several years of experience in learning speaking. The students were from four classes; namely XI IA 5, XI IA 6, XI IS 1, and XI IS 2. We chose these classes because the classes were supervised by one teacher. The focus of the study was on 16 students, selected from all 4 classes, 4 students from each class. There were thus 8 students for each criterion (low or high speaking performance). The selection was done according to the information

from the teacher that the students selected had given either high or low speaking performances. It was based on the students' speaking achievements noted by the teacher during the teaching/learning processes. The students were considered high performers according to certain indicators: they easily mastered new content being talked about. Then, they spoke smoothly. This meant that they did not have many *ums*, *ahs* or word repetitions. They not only used good grammar, but also had good pronunciation and intonation. Furthermore, they used good speaking skills such as voice projection, vocal variety, expression, eye contact, and appropriate body language gestures. Contrariwise, the low performers were hesitant to speak due to the fact that they had not mastered the ability to speak well. They made much use of *ums*, *ahs* and word repetition. They also had problems with speaking accuracy; used inappropriate pronunciation, intonation, and also often incorrect grammar. These were the indicators characteristic of the low speaking performance students.

In order to collect the data needed for this study, questionnaires and interviews were the main instruments used. Ary, et al. (2010, p. 442) further point out that qualitative researchers may use also use written documents or other artifacts to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study. We used students' achievement records prepared by the teacher for getting prior information about the high and low performing students' speaking ability. All documents needed were collected and interpreted to verify the students selected for this research.

For the questionnaire, we used The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 containing 50 items as an instrument for assessing language learning strategies used by the learners. It was developed by Oxford (1990). 30 items were selected as instruments for assessing the language learning strategies used by the learners in improving their speaking skills. The questionnaire consisted of six parts: (a) remembering more effectively (memory strategies), (b) using mental processes (cognitive strategies), (c) compensating for missing knowledge (compensation strategies), (d) organizing and evaluating learning (metacognitive strategies), (e) managing emotions (affective strategies), and (f) learning with others (social strategies). The SILL's 5-point scale was ranged from "never or almost never" to "always or almost always". The overall average indicated how often the learner tended to use the learning strategies in general, while averages for each part of the SILL indicated which strategy group(s) the learner tended to use most frequently.

We also conducted interviews with both students who had high and low speaking performance. This was conducted to confirm the subjects' learning strategies. We used an interview involving self-observation which enabled the learners to think about what they generally do when faced with a familiar language task. The interviews were done in Indonesian. The responses were transcribed and translated into English.

The subjects were asked 5 questions, namely:

- (1) What do you do to improve your pronunciation?
- (2) What do you do to improve your vocabulary?
- (3) What do you do to make your grammar better?
- (4) What do you do to improve your fluency in speaking?
- (5) What do you do to improve your comprehension in speaking?

During the interview, data was recorded using a hand-phone recorder.

The procedure for data analysis for this research study was as follows. First, after collecting the documents from the teachers, we noted and categorized the students with high or low speaking performance to identify the subjects for this research. Second, the

data from the questionnaires and the interviews was gathered and translated into the target language. Third, the data were further coded to classify the learners' learning strategies. Fourth, the data was grouped into language learning strategies used by low and high speaking performance learners. Then, it was analyzed based on high performing learners' language learning strategies, low performing learner's language learning strategies, and the differences between the language learning strategies used by both groups of learners. Fifth, the results of the document interpretation, questionnaire, and interviews were described in the form of a narrative. Finally, the sixth step was to draw brief conclusions of the research findings.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Data from Questionnaire

From the questionnaire, we categorized the results into the two levels of learners. Learners with low performance in speaking showed low rates concerning cognitive strategy with an average of 3.07, followed by affective strategy with an average of 3.20, memory strategy with an average of 3.40, and metacognitive strategy also with 3.40. These could be interpreted as 'sometimes' used. Finally, the rate for social strategy with an average of 3.50, and compensation strategy with an average of 3.60 could be interpreted as 'usually' used.

On the other hand, the results obtained from high speaking performance students showed an average of 3.50 for affective strategy, an average of 4.05 for memory strategy, an average of 4.06 for cognitive strategy, an average of 4.06 for compensation strategy, an average of 4.10 for social strategy, and an average of 4.30 for metacognitive strategy. These numbers showed that the high performance learners usually used all the learning strategies mentioned in SILL.

Table 1 below illustrates the results and averages of the students' language learning strategies in developing speaking.

Table 1. Strategy Inventory Language Learning results.

<i>Parts of Learning Strategies</i>	<i>High Learners</i>		<i>Low Learners</i>	
	<i>Average</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
A (Memory Strategy)	4.05	Usually used	3.40	Sometimes used
B (Cognitive Strategy)	4.06	Usually used	3.07	Sometimes used
C (Compensation Strategy)	4.06	Usually used	3.60	Usually used
D (Metacognitive Strategy)	4.30	Usually used	3.40	Sometimes used
E (Affective Strategy)	3.50	Usually used	3.20	Sometimes used
F (Social Strategy)	4.10	Usually used	3.50	Usually used

4.2 Data from Interviews

In terms of enhancing pronunciation, the students with high speaking performance responded that they trained their accent by repeating and imitating sounds of words, listened to native speakers talk as well as to songs, and watched English movies. They added that they consulted dictionaries both in written and audio sources, such as Google Translate, to know how a word was pronounced. Some of them read English books and sang the lyrics to English songs. They also exchanged notes and, asked their teachers

and friends to speak with them in English. Meanwhile, the students with low speaking performance tended to ask their friends how to pronounce words correctly. Some of them also practiced pronouncing words repeatedly. Others learned from English movies. They focused on how the actors pronounced words, and thus they had references to repeat the words that they had heard. Aside from that, there were also students who generally looked up a dictionary to know how words were pronounced. One student stated that he often paid much attention to the way his teacher talks in English.

When it came to the strategies to enrich vocabulary, both high and low speaking performance students chose memorization. They firstly watched English movies with English subtitles. That way, they encountered new vocabulary, looked up the meaning in a dictionary, and then they could try to memorize and practice the word. They also frequently memorized and practiced speaking lists of words. However, different from low speaking performance students, high speaking performance students tended to use the words learnt in daily life. Moreover, high performance students added that they memorized words by reading online articles and predicting meanings based on the reading context. They also responded that they used to communicate with friends in the social media where they found and learned some new words. Low speaking performance students, on the other hand, stated that listening to music as well as reading the lyrics was their strategies to enrich their vocabulary. Some of the low performance students encountered new words from reading books. If they met an unfamiliar word, they would take a note and later look up a dictionary to get the exact meaning.

To make their grammar better, high performance students used various strategies such as memorizing tenses and grammar patterns, along with the basic formula involved in sentence creation. They reviewed school lessons, asked questions to and answered questions from their friends, focused on English speakers writings and talks and then imitated them. Some preferred to read articles or books in English and note the grammar. Other students spent some of their time reading grammar books and other verbal materials containing grammar patterns, such as dictionaries, and asked their teachers for explanations when they faced difficulties. Finally, they used and reviewed the basic formula they had learned to practice making sentences. Just like high performance students, low performance students also reviewed their school lessons, memorized the formula for sentences and practiced speaking sentences. The students also learned grammar by reading books. They would ask a friend if they had difficulties. There were also students who said that they learned from making mistakes.

In order to familiarize themselves with English and to make their fluency better, high and low performance students employed certain strategies. High performance students said that they spoke to people including their classmates and native speakers. They tried to use English language in their daily life. That was why they tried to initiate conversations by firstly starting to speak in English. We also found that some of them even practiced by talking to themselves to have the opportunity to use English. They chose to stay in contact with English culture by watching, listening, and reading things in English. To try to feel comfortable when using English was one of the strategies used. Conversely, low performance students tended to memorize sentences and tried to repeat those sentences frequently. By doing those things over and over, they could become familiar and be able to speak more fluently. They also mentioned that they practiced speaking with friends in English.

Meanwhile, to have better comprehension of spoken English, students proposed answers based on two situations. One was when they tried to understand others, and the other one was how to make others understand them. Students with high speaking performance tended to ask their partners to use synonyms, speak slowly, use simple words, predicted meaning, asked for help, delayed their speech by paying more attention to their partners, observing their gestures and body languages if they found it hard to understand what was being said. While to make sure their speech were understood, they would choose to explain clearly what they said by using synonyms and even native language. They also used gestures and body language, repeated words or sentences being said, and asked for confirmation of their speaking partners understanding. On the other hand, students with low speaking performance asserted that they used common words, switched the language to their mother tongue, used gestures, spoke slowly, and repeated words to make sure their speaking partners understood what they said. If they did not understand what their partners were saying, they asked for help from their friends and tried to pay more attention to their partner's articulation of words, their partner's lips, and their body language. Besides, they sometimes asked for clarification if they were not sure of the meaning of what had been said.

Table 2 shows the kinds of students' learning strategies used in developing speaking abilities.

Table 2. Kinds of students' learning strategies used in developing speaking abilities.

<i>Learning strategies used by high speaking performance students</i>	<i>Learning strategies used by low speaking performance students</i>
1. Train personal accent in English	1. Ask friends to speak in English
2. Repeat the sounds of words in English	2. Practice pronouncing words in English
3. Listen carefully to native English speakers	3. Get a friend to correct her English
4. Listen to English songs	4. Watch movies in English
5. Try to speak English with friends	5. Look up a dictionary
6. Imitate native speakers' pronunciation	6. Pay attention to the teachers
7. Try to say new English words repeatedly	7. Try to speak English frequently
8. Read out loud in English	8. Memorize lists of new words
9. Look up new words in a dictionary	9. Listen to songs in English
10. Watch English movies	10. Often listen to audio, talks, etc., in English
11. Use Google Translate to learn the correct pronunciation in English	11. Read books in English
12. Ask friends for advice in English	12. Review school lessons in English
13. Ask teachers for advice in English	13. Try to write in English
14. Consult a dictionary to learn correct pronunciation in English	14. Practice arranging words in English
15. Review notebooks in English	15. Create sentences in English
16. Read English novels	16. Remember the formula for sentences
17. Interact with friends in social media	17. Learn from personal mistakes
18. Memorize lists of English words	18. Memorize sentences in English
19. Apply new English words in daily life	19. Practice with friends in English
20. Read English non-fiction books	20. Try to repeat words in English frequently
21. Predict meanings in English	21. Use common English words while talking
22. Read English articles	22. Use native language in English
23. Review lessons in English repeatedly	23. Repeat words in English
24. Analyze English people's writing and talks	24. Speak slowly in English
25. Read grammar books in English	25. Use gestures in English
26. Memorize tenses in English	26. Ask for clarification in English

Table 2 continued...

27. Read books and figure out the patterns	27. Use familiar words in English
28. Learn patterns of speech in English from a dictionary	28. Pay attention to articulation in English
29. Practice making sentences in English	29. Use body language whilst speaking English
30. Analyze grammar in articles in English	-
31. Memorize the formulae for tenses	-
32. Stay in touch with English culture	-
33. Speak with friends in English	-
34. Talk to yourself in English	-
35. Start conversations in English	-
36. Feel comfortable to speak in English	-
37. Practice speaking in English diligently	-
38. Implement & use English in daily life	-
39. Master new words along with meanings and use them with correct grammar	-
40. Use synonyms in English	-
41. Speak more slowly in English	-
42. Use simpler words in English	-
43. Pay more attention in English	-
44. Try to interpret exact meanings.	-
45. Use gestures and/or body language	-
46. Focus on body language in English	-
47. Listen to speakers more attentively	-
48. Make predictions about meanings	-
49. Ask speakers in English to repeat	-
50. Ask speakers to use simpler language	-
51. Explain clearly to speaking partners	-
52. Repeat words and/or sentences heard	-
53. Confirm speaking partners understanding in English	-

The information from interviews in Table 2 showed that there were 53 kinds of speaking strategies implemented by the high speaking performance students; whilst the low speaking performance students only mentioned 29 strategies.

5. DISCUSSION

From the result of the questionnaires, we noted that the learning strategies most often used by the students with low speaking performance were usually compensation and social strategies. Meanwhile, memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies were not so often used. On the other hand, students with high speaking performance had a better balance in the learning strategies they used. That is, these students employed memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies with much the same degree of frequency. Moreover, the other strategies of metacognitive, affective, and social, were also used more equally. In other words, high performance speaking students had more balance in the learning and practicing strategies that they used; this was not found in the strategies used by the low speaking performance students. As shown in Table 1, all kinds of strategies were usually employed by the high speaking performance students in learning and practicing speaking. This means that successful language learners demonstrated greater consistency in applying more effective

strategies. The findings of the present study are in line with Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012) and Pei-Shi (2012) which showed that the higher the level that learners are at, the greater the number of strategies they will apply. Oxford (1990) also claims that all language learners' use learning strategies, but more successful learners use them more consciously, more appropriately, more purposefully and more frequently.

These results indicate that high speaking performance students seem to be more aware of their language needs; thus, they tended to utilize strategies that would help them master the target language through practicing, reasoning and analyzing, as well as strategies that allow them to control their own learning through planning strategies and evaluating results. Moreover, these learners spent a great deal of time exercising to get control over their emotions and attitudes through increasing their motivation levels.

Furthermore, through the data gathered from the interviews, it became apparent that students with high speaking performance used more learning strategies than those with low speaking performance. Table 2 showed 53 strategies of the high speaking performance students whilst the low performance students only employed 29. In accordance with this, the studies by O'Malley and Chamot (1989) and Gu and Johnson (1996) (cited in Cabaysa & Baetiong, 2010, p. 24) revealed that successful learners made use of combinations of strategies. Aside from that, high performance students did not only use more strategies, but they also used them differently. In line with this, Brown (2001, p. 210) argues successful language learners are usually people who know how to manipulate learning strategies in their day-to-day encounters with the language.

The data also indicated that low performance students sometimes applied strategies that were not very effective for completing certain language tasks such as enhancing pronunciation by reading a dictionary and improving fluency by memorizing a sentence. On the other hand, high speaking performance students used a larger number of strategies appropriately so that they could accomplish various language tasks. The findings of the study correspond with that of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) who state that more effective (high speaking performance) students generally use a greater variety of strategies and use them in more ways to help them complete language tasks more successfully; conversely, less effective (low speaking performance) students not only have fewer strategies but also frequently use strategies that are inappropriate to the task at hand and which does not lead to successful task completion. In brief, the use of appropriate language learning strategies gave a greater contribution for the development of competence in speaking.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The research findings showed that high speaking performance students used more learning strategies compared to those with low speaking performance. They employed 53 strategies to help them enhance their speaking abilities, whilst the low performance students only used 29 strategies. Some of the learning strategies employed mostly by high speaking performance students were: (1) listening to English songs/audio (cognitive), (2) watching English movies (cognitive), (3) reading English books/novels (cognitive/metacognitive), (4) reciting song lyrics (cognitive/ metacognitive), (5) analyzing English articles, (6) reviewing lessons (cognitive) , (7) practicing with friends (social/metacognitive), (8) talking to themselves in English (metacognitive), (9) using synonyms in English (compensation), and (10) repeating words or sentences with

their conversation partners to achieve better understanding (compensation). In addition, they were more aware and more creative in using these strategies which made them more successful in completing language tasks.

On the other hand, the strategies that were frequently used by low speaking performance students were: (1) looking up the dictionary (memory), (2) asking friends (social), (3) practicing pronunciation (cognitive), (4) using native language (compensation strategy), and (5) memorizing sentences (memory). However, from the strategies mentioned, there were several which seemed not very effective to complete the language tasks. This showed low performance students used learning strategies less consciously, and less appropriately. In other words, they seemed to use strategies without being able to identify them.

If it is seen from frequency, high speaking performance students usually used all six strategy aspects namely memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies for enhancing their speaking skills more equally. They had more balance in their use of the various strategies. Meanwhile, the low performance students tended to focus more on employing compensation and social strategies than on memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies to enhance their speaking skills. Thus, the low performance speaking students need to focus more on improving other learning speaking strategies and not be too focused on only compensation and social strategies.

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