Metacognitive Strategy and Its Interplay Towards Speaking Performance: A Case in SMPN 29 Buton

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ABSTRACT

Metacognitive strategies are important strategies in many areas of learning. The aims of this study were to find out the influence of metacognitive strategy in students of SMPN 29 BUTON' speaking performance, that is, to know the extent of correlation between metacognitive strategies and speaking performance and to know the types of metacognitive strategies used in speaking. The method of this study was a mixed method design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The types of metacognitive strategies used in speaking were first analyzed, which was followed by quantifying the correlation level between metacognitive strategies in speaking and the speaking performance. The instruments used in this study were speaking test and metacognitive strategy questionnaire. The population of this study was students of SMPN 29 BUTON in the academic year of 2020/2021. The results of this study indicated that the level of metacognitive strategy use in speaking performance of students of SMPN 29 BUTON and the level of their speaking performance are moderate (M = 2.03 and M = 63) as well as the correlation between metacognitive strategy and their speaking performance (R = 0.45 and probability value = 0.00). Furthermore, it was found the frequency of using several types of metacognitive strategies in planning and monitoring speaking was quite high, but not in metacognitive strategies for evaluation.
Keywords: Metacognitive Strategy; Speaking; Planning; Monitoring; Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Many factors both from within and outside a learner play roles in the effectiveness of learning. Learning strategy is among the many intrinsic factors that a learner may apply while learning. As it refers to an individual's approach to a task, the use of learning strategy is very crucial as it significantly contributes to the achievability of a learning outcome and the success of a learning process. The application of a learning strategy is thus a key for a learner to accomplish the learning goals of a specific task as well as enhance the general process of learning.

One strategy that has received much attention in learning and teaching is metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategy refers to individuals' awareness of what they know and do not know as well as the ability to monitor and control cognitive activities in their learning process. (Papaleontiou-Louca, 2003). An intensive study of literature points out to a direction that metacognitive learning strategy is regarded as the most important strategy of all other strategies for mainly two reasons. First, metacognitive strategies can induce the learners' independence in learning as they foster forethought and self-reflection (Hacker *et al.*, 2009; Boghian, 2016). They empower learners to take charge and have control over their own learning which include how they think and act as well as plan, execute, monitor, and evaluate their performance and outcomes of a task. The activities of planning, monitoring, and evaluating of a task are indeed metacognitive in nature (Proteroe & Clarke, 2008).

Second, the application of metacognitive strategies could cover broad areas of learning. Lai (2011), described the strategies are for multidimensional and general rather than for domain-specific skills. In language learning, they are useful in all virtual language learning situations and are applicable to all four language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing (Oxford, 1990) and a variety of other language learning areas.

A number of researchers report that that strategy can be used for enhancing students' vocabularies (Boulware-Goolden *et al.*, 2007; Zhao, 2009); grammar (Stephen & Singh, 2010; Esmaeili, 2010); reading (Ahmadi *et al.*, 2013, Zhang & Seepho, 2013); speaking (Lam, 2009; Tan & Tan, 2010); listening (Graham & Macaro, 2008; Coskun, 2010; Guo, 2012; Chang & Chang, 2014; Aguilera *et al.*, 2016); writing (Lv, 2010; Gafordeen & Abubakar, 2014); and critical thinking awareness (Sadeghi *et al.*, 2014).

The massive claim of the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies in vast areas of learning, however, raises some questions. Two main problems in regard with that are identified. First, each skill has its own characteristics, which can be peculiar or very different from one another (Powers, 2010; Mundhe, 2015). Generalization of a single strategy is, thus, worth questioning. For example, the main characteristic of receptive skills is to comprehend the use of language, while in productive skills, it is to perform the language. The differences in characteristics also occur within the same types of skills. In reading, a reader can always reread a text, while in listening, such repetition is not always possible. Likewise, in writing, a writer has relatively more time to think of and compose the sentences, while in speaking, fluency – ability to speak without much unnecessary pauses (Iswara *et al.,* 2012) –, is one of the main components to assess the speaking performance.

Second, in regard with that, research reports on different research topics and methods of the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies on reading are quite abundant. Yet, those in listening and speaking are more limited in light of the number of the published research reports that the current researcher exhaustively manages to obtain. Furthermore, studies whose focuses were on determining how strong speaking performance is actually influenced by metacognitive strategy are far limited. More of the studies were concerned with the giving of metacognitive strategy training to see its effect on speaking performance.

In regard with that, this current study is aimed to find out the level of correlation between metacognitive strategy and speaking performance to fulfill the gap of the lack of study of metacognitive strategy in speaking. Knowing such extent of correlation is

very useful to determine how strong speaking performance is influenced by metacognitive strategy so as to predict their causality. Besides, the types of metacognitive strategies used in speaking performance are also found out. Speaking is chosen to be the skill under investigation based on the reasons that it is the skill regarded as the most important skill of all other skills. Many English learners perceive that the mastery of English is mainly judged from their speaking performance (Brown, 1994; Richards, 2015) and success in learning a language is commonly measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language. Therefore, the purposes of this study were to find out the types of metacognitive strategies as well as to determine the extent of students' metacognitive strategies and speaking performance and their correlation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The design of this research was a mixed method design, involving a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The types of metacognitive strategies used by the participants were first qualitatively described and the quantification of the level of the correlation between metacognitive strategies and the participants' speaking performance were then made. The specific design of this current study was furthermore of sequential explanatory design as the data of the participants' speaking performance was first collected and analyzed in terms of its normality prior to the collection of the data of the questionnaire.

Population and Sample

The population of this current study was students of SMPN 29 BUTON in the academic year of 2020/2021. The reason for selecting them as the study population was prompted by the research findings (Yassi, 2010), revealing that the average level of the speaking competence of the students was in the category of *lower*. The population of this study was the whole students of class IX of 42 students of 2 classes.

Technique of Data Analysis

Data of this research were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative analysis involved univariate and bivariate analysis. In univariate analysis, the scores from speaking test and metacognitive strategy use were quantified and described in terms of their normality, frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviation. There are two important things to do in this analysis, scoring the data of the test and categorizing the level. In bivariate analysis, the level of correlation between students' metacognitive strategy and speaking performance was quantified and the hypotheses were tested. Qualitative analysis involved the exploration of the participants' responses as recorded and transcribed to explore the types of metacognitive strategies that the participants used in their speaking performance.

Participants' speaking test was scored using the speaking rubric developed by the researcher in which each question was maximally scored 100 and minimally 0 as each question contains five components that are assessed and each component score maximally 4 and minimally 0. Since there are five questions in the test, the total maximum score that a participant may have is 100 and the minimal score is 0 so as to meet the category of speaking performance level that is adopted in this study. Further, questionnaire was scored. The maximum score for each statement in the questionnaire

was 5 and the minimum was 1. As there were 40 statements, the total maximum score that a participant may have was 200, and the minimum was 100. After quantifying the total score of a participant, the mean score for the participant was quantified. Upon scoring, the data were all categorized based on the some of the categorization adopted in this study.

Results And Findings

The distribution of the frequency and **percentage of the participants' scores on the use of metacognitive strategy is presented in the Table 1, as follows:**

Table 1. The distribution of frequency and percentage of the participants' scores on the use of metacognitive strategy

Score	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1.47	1	7.1
2.43	1	7.1
2.48	1	7.1
2.72	3	21.4
2.75	1	7.1
2.80	1	7.1
3.07	1	7.1
3.18	2	14.3
3.23	1	7.1
3.60	2	14.3
Total	14	100.0

Table 2. The distribution of the level of participants' use of metacognitive strategies on speaking

Mean Score	Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
4.5 – 5.0	Very high	0	0
3.5 – 4.49	High	2	14.3
2.5 – 3.49	Moderate	9	64.3
1.5 – 2.49	Low	2	14.3
1.0 – 1.49	Very low	1	7.1
Total		14	100

Table 3. The **distribution of frequency and percentage of the participants' speaking performance scores**

Score	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
25.00	1	7.1
45.00	1	7.1
48.00	1	7.1
57.00	2	14.3
57.67	1	7.1
58.67	1	7.1
59.00	1	7.1
61.00	1	7.1
63.00	2	14.3
65.67	1	7.1
83.67	1	7.1
84.00	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0

Table 4. The distribution of the level of the participants' speaking performance

Score	Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
85 – 100	Very high	-	-
65 – 84	High	3	21.43
55 – 64	Moderate	8	57.17
35 – 54	Low	2	14.3
0 – 34	Very low	1	7.1
	Total	14	100

Table 5. The hypothesis testing of the correlation between metacognitive strategy use and speaking performance

Variable	Correlation coefficient	Conf. level	P. value	Interpretation
Metacognitive strategy use and speaking performance	0.972	0.05	0.000	H_0 was rejected H_1 was accepted

The results of the analysis showed that the statements in the questionnaire were valid and reliable. The value of Cronbach's alpha (0.985) is higher than 0.6. It means

that all of the statements of the questionnaire were valid and reliable. The participant's scores on the questionnaire of the use of metacognitive strategies were quite various. The highest score was 3.60 (N = 2 or 14.3%) and the lowest score was 1.47 (N = 1 or 7.1%). The score that the participants scored most was 2.73 (N = 3 or 21.4%) (see Table 1). Besides, the probability value of the participants' scores on metacognitive strategy use was greater (0.130) than the significance level (0.05). It means that the participants' scores were normally distributed or homogenous throughout the sample. The distribution of the level of the participants' use of metacognitive strategies on speaking was various. There was no participants with very high level of use of metacognitive strategies on speaking (N = 0). Majority of them use metacognitive strategies on moderate level (N = 9 or 64.3). A few of them have high (N = 2 or 14.3) and low level of use (N = 2 or 14.3%). Only one participant (N =1 or 7.1%) used metacognitive strategies in speaking on very low level (see Table 2).

In case with the questionnaire analysis result, it was shown that the mean score of metacognitive strategy use for all of the participants (N = 14) was 2.85. Based on the categorization used in this current study, it was indicated that overall the participants' use of metacognitive strategy on speaking was in moderate level. Further, based on its standard deviation (SD =0.542), the moderate level was representative for the whole sample. The participant's scores on speaking performance are quite various. The highest score was 84 (N = 1 or 7.1%) and the lowest score was 25 (N = 1 or 7.1%) (see Table 3). The distribution of the level of participants' speaking performance was quite various. There was no participants with very high level of speaking performance (N = 0). Majority of them were on moderate level (N = 8 or 57.17%). Very few of them have high speaking performance level (N = 3 or 21.43%)). A few of them also were on low level (N = 2 or 14.3%) and only one participant (N =1 or 7.1%) with very low level of speaking performance (see Table 4). The hypothesis testing indicated by the probability value of the correlation between speaking performance and metacognitive strategy use was lower (0.000) than the significance level (0.05), showing that the H_1 of this study was accepted and the H_0 was rejected. It means that speaking performance was significantly correlated with metacognitive strategy use (see Table 5).

DISCUSSION

This study showed that the level of correlation between the participants' speaking performance and their metacognitive strategy use was in very high level (r = 0.972, P.value = 0.000). It means that the use of metacognitive strategies significantly influences the speaking performance of the participants. The more metacognitive strategies are used, the higher the level of the participants' speaking performance. Furthermore, some of the following strategies are used by the participants.

Taking some time to process the statement or the question is the first metacognitive strategy indicated to be of use by the participants of this study. Regarding the extent of its use, this strategy counts to be a type of strategy that the participants are generally aware of using to plan their speaking. The participants seemed to be aware of using this strategy in planning speaking for two reasons. First it is to ensure comprehension. As observed, majority of the participants in this study took some time before uttering their first response. Some participants literally said nothing for quite a while in the very first beginning but thinking, while some others took a deep breath or uttered fillers "*like..um,..uh...well..*, and *okey*" in such a prolonged way prior to the production of their first response.

By taking some time to process the statement or the question, the participants can make sure of their understanding of the statement or question. Comprehending the statement or question is very critical in speaking because such comprehension precedes the production of language (Ziane, 2012). Speaking without prior appropriate comprehension can make communication ineffective. The responses that are delivered are very likely to be out of topic and causes confusion (Alhasan, 2012). In addition, by using this strategy, the general content of the speakers' responses can be planned. While processing the statement or the question, the speakers are also mentally preparing points to talk to within their responses as well as the way they develop the response, such as what supports to give for each point so as the responses can be adequate enough.

The exploration of the use of this strategy as indicated by the data of this study points out at an understanding that the awareness of using this strategy seems to be related with the level of the speaking performance. As examined, all high proficient participants in this study, as indicated by their scores in speaking performance, reported to use this strategy only sometimes, while all of the less proficient participants to use it more frequently than do the high proficient participants. Further, as observed during the speaking test, this strategy seemed to be also related with the types of question or statement. This strategy was used more frequently by both high and less proficient participants when dealing with the statement or question of something more conceptual. As noticed, when asked about the statement regarding the value of always telling the truth in our life and the role of luck in success, participants including the high proficient ones seemed to take more time rather than that they did for other statements because value of something is always complex to judge (Gill, 2013).

The second strategy is formulating the first response using typical responses. This is also an extensive strategy used by the participants in planning speaking. This strategy seems to be used frequently as it can help the participants give an immediate response. As recorded, more participants began their responses saying, "*I agree with...*", "*I disagree if...*","*I totally agree with...*" and "I *rather agree with...*" For example, a participant (initial NM) when asked of her opinion regarding "*higher education means a better carrier*" began his response saying, "*I agree with the statement because...*" Expressions such as "*I agree*" or "*disagree with*" or the like are very typical first responses in the questions asking agreement or disagreement as used in this study. In addition to helping participants to give an immediate response, using typical responses to begin a response usually also serves as a starting point for the response to go further as happened with many participants in this study (Ashoorpour & Azhari, 2014). As recorded, many participants continued to elaborate their responses right after saying their agreement or disagreement as to why they agree or disagree. From the situations explained above, the use of typical responses to formulate the first response is indeed a very helpful strategy as it can help put the speakers at ease. As understood, being at ease in a situation can enhance learner's learning as it can help lower the learners' anxiety so as to increase their willingness to communicate (Tavakoli, 2014). Further, like in the strategy of taking time to process the statement or the questions, the extent of the use of this strategy seems to be also influenced by the level of the participants' speaking performance. As found out, this strategy was much frequently reported to be used by participants with less level of speaking performance ranging from moderate to very low level. Meanwhile, all participants with high level of speaking did not always begin their responses with such typical responses. More often than not, they would

begin their response in other ways. For example, high proficient participant (initial RF) rather than saying straightly his choice, began his response saying, "*if you ask me about that, it depends on the situation where I am at*" , when asking of his preference of working in the office or at home.

Along with that strategy, outlining the problems associated with the statement or the question is also one of the strategies used by the participants. By this strategy, the content of the participant's response will have a kind of introduction, body, and conclusion, in which problems will be first outlined in the introductory part. The participants would first introduce that there is a kind of problem associated with choosing one kind of position either to agree or disagree. After that, they can move to their own preference while considering the possibility of other preference under different circumstances. Therefore, outlining the problem associated with the statement is a useful strategy in planning the development of the topic of the response.

One benefit of outlining the problem in the first place is that it can help the participants to maximize the amount of the content of their responses as they will have more general points to elaborate so they can talk longer. Besides, the participants' responses can be arranged in such a clearer structure. For example, a participant (initial RF) whose level of speaking is high as indicated by his score began his response by saying "*Is it really okay to tell the truth in our daily life or our daily activities*? *If you ask me about that, I think it is not always easy to say whether we must always tell the truth or not...*". By saying this sentence, the participant was actually trying to introduce the problem or the complexity associated with the question concerning whether he agreed or disagreed that someone must always tell the truth. Further, he said, "*...to some extent, I would say we have to because people will respect us..*", but in some cases, sometimes ,*...we can say something which is slightly not true...*" as the body of his responses. In the last he said, "*...so, I personally would say there are some reasons why we should be dishonest.* The use of transitional word "*so*", clearly marks the end or the conclusion of his talk.

However, this strategy seems not to be a strategy that the majority of the participants is likely to use. One hypothesis for that is the use of this strategy is also correlated with the participants' level of the speaking, in which more proficient participants may opt for a more-structured way of talking rather than the less proficient speakers. The less proficient speakers may not have an adequate skill to develop the responses in such a structured sequence. Thus, the strategy of first outlining the problem associated with the statement or the question is only prominent for high proficient participants. ACTFL speaking proficiency guidelines (Ahmad *et al.*, 2012) addresses this phenomenon appropriately. In this guideline, it is explained that one of the major different features between the talk of low and high proficient speakers is observed in the way they arrange ideas to put in such a flow that can be easily attended to.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research result, it can be concluded. There are six types of metacognitive strategies that students of SMPN 29 BUTON used in the level of correlation between the their speaking performance and metacognitive strategies are very high and significant. It means that the more metacognitive strategies used in planning, monitoring, and evaluating, the higher the speaking performance is. Further researches are strongly suggested to be conducted on account of this research in the area of other types of speaking in relation with metacognitive strategies. The type of

speaking that is encouraged to be further researched on is interactive type of speaking in which the participants are allowed to interact with others, at least with the interviewer to study the participants' metacognitive strategy. Another research area that is suggested to be conducted is the design of instruction to improve metacognitive evaluating strategies under the design of classroom action research. This is important so as to find out how metacognitive evaluating strategies that the participants of this study lacked can be improved.

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