

## **Implementation of Learning Strategies based on Reflective Learning Theory to Improve Students' Self-Efficacy in Learning English**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Self-Efficacy means the belief in one's capabilities to achieve a goal or an outcome. Efficacy beliefs play an influential motivational role in academic attainment. While Reflective learning can be described as tending to think deeply about the knowledge obtained by study. Reflection is the indication of deep learning because it helps students learn through reflection, precisely because of the established link between reflection and deeper learning. Reflective learning is closely related to improve Self-efficacy. Thus this article aims at elaborating the effective English learning strategies based on reflective learning theory to improve students' self-efficacy.

This paper proposes some actions, i.e. implementing oral reflective learning in action, oral reflective learning in action and written reflective learning. In improving the students' self-efficacy in learning in the forms of (1) the improvement of students' appreciation of social resources, (2) the improvement of students' courage in achieving academic performances, (3) the improvement of students' consistency for self-regulated learning, and (4) the improvement of students' social self-efficacy.

**Keywords:** Self-Efficacy, Reflective Learning, Improvement.

### **Introduction**

Indonesia regards English as a foreign language. According to Brown (2007: 134), foreign language contexts are those in which students do not have ready-made contexts for communication beyond their classroom. They may be obtainable through language clubs, special media opportunities, books, or an occasional tourist, but efforts must be made to create such opportunities. In short, English is taught in formal education and it is not used in daily communication in the society.

As a foreign language, English is taught in every level of education, from elementary level to university. English is taught as an optional subject in elementary school and as a compulsory subject in junior high school and senior high school. Based on the curriculum enacted by the government, the competence should be achieved by junior high school students are being able to express

meaning in the form of oral short functional text by using a variety of simple spoken language accurately, fluently, and acceptably to interact with the society. In other words, they are hoped to master in revealing a variety of questions related to the topic, responding to questions related to the topic, answering questions orally based on the information, asking for the daily activities in the right form of a tense determined, and expressing an opinion related to the topic.

Based on the statement above, the high school students are expected to master English for daily communication and for National Examination as well. However, most of the English teacher focus on National Examination, and pay a little attention for teaching English for communication. That is why many students are stuck in preparing the National Examination in under pressure situation. They cannot study English comfortably because they are afraid of being failed in the National Examination.

This situation happen to many schools. It can be proved by seeing the result of English lesson in the schools. Some of the students' achievements are below the KKM. KKM or Minimum Mastery Criteria is one of the indicators to determine the students' achievement. Besides, they tend to be passive when they are asked to respond in English orally.

When they are asked about the reasons, they said that they do not know how to learn English effectively. The lack of motivation in learning English made they have low self-efficacy.

### **Self-Efficacy**

Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercises influence over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1997: 79). Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes.

Self-efficacy can be reached using a strategy in learning. In other words, with the right strategy in learning, the students can have a good self-efficacy.

Language can only be properly understood as a reflection of human thinking processes. Language learning is conditioned by the way in which the mind observes, organizes and stores information. In other words, the key of successful language learning and teaching lies not in the analysis of the nature of language but in understanding the structures and processes of the mind (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 39).

Therefore, it needs a strategy to reach the ideal condition of language learning. Bandura (1986: 216) concludes that cooperative learning strategies have the dual outcome of improving both self-efficacy and academic achievement. One of the learning strategies which are suitable for self-efficacy and academic achievement is reflective learning.

Brown (2002: 121), states that children who are conceptually reflective tend to make fewer errors in reading than impulsive children. In another study, inductive reasoning was found to be more effective with reflective persons, suggesting that generally reflective persons could benefit more from inductive learning situations (Kagan in Brown, 2007: 127). Based on the two experts, it can be concluded that reflective learning was effective to improve students' achievement.

In line with the description above, reflective learning enhances metacognition processes such as self-efficacy, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-reaction and attribution ([www.shaanan.ac.il/shnaton/9/21.pdf](http://www.shaanan.ac.il/shnaton/9/21.pdf)). Self-efficacy deals with emotion. Reflection is a search for connections and the teacher has to seriously consider the role of emotion if the teacher wants to foster deep learning (Zull, 2002: 198).

Self-efficacy is commonly defined as the belief in one's capabilities to achieve a goal or an outcome. Students with a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves with difficult tasks and be intrinsically motivated. These students will put forth a high degree of effort in order to meet their commitments, and attribute failure to things which are in their control, rather than blaming external factors. Self-efficacious students also recover quickly from setbacks, and ultimately are likely to achieve their personal goals. Students with low self-efficacy, on the other hand, believe they cannot be successful and thus are less likely to make a concerted, extended effort and may consider challenging tasks as threats that are to be avoided (Bandura, 1997: 214). Thus, students with poor self-efficacy have low aspirations which may result in disappointing academic performances becoming part of a self-fulfilling feedback cycle.

According to Schunk et al., (2010: 139), self-efficacy bears some similarity to task-specific self-concept and self-perceptions of competence (Pajares & Schunk, 2002; Schunk & Pajares, 2005 in <http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/affective/efficacy.html>). Self-efficacy represents people's judgements of their capabilities in the same way that Eccles and Wigfield represent task-specific self-concept and Harter represents self-perceptions of competence. There are, however, some important differences. First, the definition of self-efficacy includes "organize and execute courses of action," which represents the theory's more specific and situational view of perceived competence in terms of including the behavioral actions or cognitive skills that are necessary for competent performance in a given domain (Bong, 2001; Bong & Clark, 1999; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Miller, 1995). For example, self-efficacy would not be merely a self-recognition of being good in school but rather explicit judgements of having the skills for finding main ideas in passages of varying levels of difficulty, correctly subtracting fractions in different problems, composing different types of paragraphs, performing various chemistry lab experiments, and so forth.

A second aspect that distinguishes self-efficacy from self-concept and self-competence is that it is used in reference to some types of goal ("attain designated types of performance"). Again, this reflects the more situational perspective of self-efficacy in contrast to the personality and developmental heritage of expectancy-value and perceptions-of-competence research (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). In support of this perspective, Smith and Fouad (1999) in Schunk et al., (2010: 139) found that self-efficacy, goals, and outcome expectations are specific to subject areas and show little generalizations across areas.

According to Bandura (1997: 79), there are four sources of self-efficacy. Teachers can use strategies to build self-efficacy in various ways.

- a. **Mastery experiences** - Students' successful experiences boost self-efficacy, while failures erode it. This is the most robust source of self-efficacy.

- b. **Vicarious experience** - Observing a peer succeed at a task can strengthen beliefs in one's own abilities.
- c. **Verbal persuasion** - Teachers can boost self-efficacy with credible communication and feedback to guide the student through the task or motivate them to make their best effort.
- d. **Emotional state** – A positive mood can boost one's beliefs in self-efficacy, while anxiety can undermine it. A certain level of emotional stimulation can create an energizing feeling that can contribute to strong performances. Teachers can help by reducing stressful situations and lowering anxiety surrounding events like exams or presentations.

#### *The Significance of Students' Self-Efficacy in Teaching and Learning Process*

Efficacy beliefs play an influential motivational role in academic attainment. The extent to which such factors as level of cognitive ability, prior educational preparation and attainment, gender and attitudes toward academic activities influence academic performance is partly dependent on how much they affect efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997: 216).

Moreover, Bandura (1997: 214) emphasizes that children who had the stronger belief in their efficacy were quicker to discard faulty strategies, solved more problems, chose to rework more of those they failed, and did so more accurately than children of equal ability who doubted their efficacy.

In line with Bandura, Schunk (2010: 141) states that in the academic domain, students' self-efficacy beliefs are likely to be highly related to their outcome expectations. When self-efficacy perceptions are high, individuals will engage in tasks that foster the development of their skills and capabilities.

Self-efficacy is strongly related to effort and task persistence (Bandura in Schunk, 2010: 142). Individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs are likely to exert effort in the face of difficulty and persist at a task when they have the requisite skills. Salomon in Schunk (2010: 142) found that students high in self-efficacy were more likely to be cognitively engaged in learning when the task was perceived as difficult but less likely to be effortful and less cognitively engaged when the task was deemed easy.

Besides the quantity of effort, the quality of effort in terms of the use of the deeper processing strategies and general cognitive engagement of learning has been strongly linked to self-efficacy. Pintrich De Groot in Schunk (2010: 142) found that junior high students high in efficacy were more likely to report using various cognitive and self-regulatory learning strategies. Schunk (2010: 142) found that self-efficacious students mastered various academic tasks better than students with weaker self-efficacy. In addition, these studies showed that efficacy was a significant predictor of learning and achievement, even after prior achievement and cognitive skills were taken into consideration.

#### **Reflective Learning**

According to Hornby (1995: 960), reflective is defined as tending to think deeply about things; while learning is knowledge obtained by study. Reflective learning can be described as tending to think deeply about the knowledge obtained by study. Reflection is the indication of deep learning because it helps students learn through reflection, precisely because of the established link between reflection and deeper learning. As well as facilitating

learning and monitoring learning, the intention is to produce graduates who have acquired the habit of reflection as a means of continuing to learn and grow in their profession. Reflection can lead to: personal growth professional growth, and meaningful change.

Another definition of reflection also proposed by Rittle-Johnson in Muijs and Reynolds (2011: 81). He stated reflection as getting pupils to think about the way they solve problems, the strategies they use, and whether or not these are effective. This is called 'metacognition', reflection on one's own learning. Self-reflection is an important part of learning strategies, and one strategy that has been found to help learning is self-explanation, whereby students verbalize their own learning and understanding.

As quoted from <http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/medicine/reflective/3.xml>, reflection can help the students to:

- a) Better understand their strengths and weaknesses
- b) Identify and question their underlying values and beliefs
- c) Acknowledge and challenge possible assumptions on which they base their ideas, feelings and actions
- d) Recognize areas of potential bias or discrimination
- e) Acknowledge their fears
- f) Identify possible inadequacies or areas for improvement.

Beside advantages, <http://www.shotuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Reflective-learning-and-SHOT.pdf> also defines the disadvantages of reflective learning such as:

- a) May become more introspective and anxious
- b) Time consuming
- c) Lack of experience can affect reflection
- d) Need to recognize when you need help and how to get it

#### *Steps in applying reflective learning*

There are several ways in conducting reflective learning. Those will be summarized below:

##### 1. Oral Reflective Learning

According to Schon in Zeichner & Liston (2011: 14), reflection can be seen in two time frames. First, reflection can occur before and after an action – and this is what he has called *reflection-on-action*. In teaching, reflection-on-action occurs before a lesson when we plan for and think about our lesson and after instruction when we consider what occurred. And reflection can also occur during the action as well. Frequently, practitioners have reflective conversations with the situations while they are engaged in their efforts. That is, practitioners attempt to frame and solve problems on the spot. When teaching, we frequently encounter an unexpected student reaction or perception. While we are teaching we attempt to adjust our instruction to take into account these reactions. Schon called this *reflection-in-action*. According to Schon, reflective practitioners reflect both "in" and "on" action.

##### 2. Written Reflective Learning

Fink (2003: 116) proposed three strategies for implementing powerful forms of active learning. One of them is promote in-depth reflective

writing on the learning process. This recommendation is based on two beliefs. The first is that writing, when viewed as a process and when done properly, has a unique ability to develop the interior life of the writer. The second belief is that the act of focusing students' attention on the learning process will make them more aware of themselves as learners and will thereby begin the process of developing their ability to create meaning in their lives.

Furthermore, he suggested three forms of reflective writing which are being used more and more by teachers who want to promote reflective learning. These are one-minute papers, regular journal writing, and learning portfolios.

*A brief form of reflective writing: one-minute papers.* Several writers (Angelo and Cross in Fink (2003)) have suggested the use of one-minute papers as a way of quickly and easily getting students to reflect on their learning and to do so in a way that is easily shared with the teacher. At the end of an individual class session or at last class of a weekly sequence, the teacher asks students to take a piece of paper and write a short answer to a question. The question can vary but is often one of the following:

- a. What was the muddiest point in today's lecture?
- b. What was the most important idea you encountered in class this week?
- c. In your own words, how would you describe the relationship between topic X and Y?
- d. What important questions remain unanswered for you?

*An intermediate form of reflective writing: journal, diaries, and learning logs.* A more extended kind of writing comes in the forms of journals, diaries, and learning logs. In general, these call for students to keep a running commentary during a whole course (or some other extended learning experience). Usually the teacher collects these periodically, reads them, makes comments on them, and returns them. Again, this kind of writing prompts students to reflect on their meaning of their learning experience. The main difference between this and the one-minute papers is that course-long journal writing allows students more opportunity to connect and build on their interpretation of the whole learning experience.

*An extended form of reflective writing: learning portfolios.* The concepts of having students create learning portfolios is a natural extension of the idea of reflective writing. In his opinion, the concept of learning portfolios is one of the more powerful fact that it simultaneously integrates and promotes all three of the main components of instructional design: significant learning goals, active learning activities, and educative feedback and assessment.

Besides writing diaries or journal, there is a simpler way of reflective learning. That is by giving tick (√) in the form given by the teacher. It can be found in the end of each chapter of the book provided by BSNP. BSNP or Board of National Education Standard is an institution which responsible for the quality of the Education Standard. The reflective check-list form is included as the students' reflective form and as a tool to determine whether the student will attend the remedial or not.

### **Learning English**

There are many definitions of learning. According to Brown (2007: 7), learning is acquiring or getting knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience or institution. An educational psychologist would define learning as "a change in an individual caused by experience" (Slavin in Brown, 2007). Then the definition is extracted as follows:

- e. Learning is acquisition or "getting"
- f. Learning is retention of information or skill
- g. Retention implies storage system, memory and cognitive organization.
- h. Learning involves active, conscious focus on and acting upon events outside or inside organism
- i. Learning is relatively permanent, but subject to forgetting
- j. Learning involves some form of practice, perhaps reinforced practice
- k. Learning is a change in behavior

English has different uses and functions in many countries. It can be considered as a mother tongue or first language, as a second language or as a foreign language. Richards (1985: 2) asserts that in countries where English functions as an official language, it is usually referred to as a second language. In countries where English is not regarded as a second language, English is described as a foreign language. It is usually the first foreign language studied at school or college.

### **Learning Strategies**

Strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned design for controlling and manipulating certain information (Brown, 2007). Oxford & Ehrman in Brown (2007: 119) defined second language learning strategies as "specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques ... used by students to enhance their own learning." They are contextualized "battle plans" that might vary from moment to moment, or from one situation to another, or even from one culture to another. Chamot in Brown (2007: 132) defines strategies quite broadly as "procedures that facilitate a learning task.... Strategies are most often conscious and goal driven."

Typically, strategies were divided into three main categories, they are metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies is a term used in information-processing theory to indicate an "executive" function, strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed (Purpura in Brown, 2007). Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Socio-affective strategies have to do with social-mediating activity and interacting with others.

On the basis of the literature review above, self-efficacy does matter in determining one's achievement. Thus, the teacher should be aware of this issue and create a strategy to improve the students' self-efficacy. After all self-efficacy is an important thing for being had by the students. The objectives and the goals of teaching – learning process can be reached by the students when they have their own self-efficacy.

One of the teacher's efforts for improving the students' efficacy is by applying a suitable learning strategy. Based on some researches, it is noted that teaching strategies can make a difference to students' self-efficacy. A particular learning strategy leads the students to expect optimum achievement. One of the important aspects in viewing oneself as a successful learner is self-control over strategies use.

In selecting the learning strategies, the teacher should be aware of the strategies employed in the classroom which enable all students to improve their self-efficacy. One of the strategies that is acceptable to all students is reflective learning. Being reflective, the students will have a good understanding of themselves, their strength and weaknesses, and it will give good impact on their self-confidence. Reflective learning can be done both by the students themselves and the students collaborate with their teacher. In this learning, there is an adequate involvement among teacher and students. The teacher asks his/ her students a feedback of his/ her teaching way and their learning process, so that among the teacher and students can evaluate their teaching-learning process together. The time when there is an interaction among teacher and students, actually there is a process of a two-ways communication about the way of teaching-learning.

Beside comments on teacher's way of teaching, reflective learning also evaluates the students' work. Based on the feedback given by the teacher, the students will feel being appreciated and it will improve the students' motivation and self-efficacy. Based on the facts, the students' self-efficacy can be improved by the teacher who applies reflective learning.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the discussion above, it can be inferred that self-efficacy plays an important role in teaching and learning process. In short, the teacher should be aware of students' self-efficacy, which points should be optimized and which should be improved through suitable learning strategies.

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