

THE RELATIONSHIP AND DIFFERENCES IN GENDER BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND STUDENTS' ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

This research was intended to find out: (1) the language learning strategies that are frequently used by the students; (2) whether or not there is any significant relationship between the use of language learning strategies and the English achievement of the students; (3) whether or not there is any significant difference in language learning strategies use due to gender; and (4) whether or not there is any significant difference of students' English achievement due to gender. This research applied correlational research which deals with two predictors and one criterion variable. The population of this research was the students of grade XI IPA of SMAN 1 Bajeng, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi Province. The sample was taken by using proportional stratified random sampling technique. Therefore, the sample consisted of 76 students which were divided 38 females and 38 males. The data of this research were collected through SILL questionnaire and the test. The data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS program version 20. Depending on the statistical results, the findings revealed that first of all, social strategies were the frequently language learning strategies used by the students and followed by metacognitive strategies. Second, there was no any significant relationship between language learning strategies (LLSs) and the English achievement of the students where the correlation coefficient was $r = -.182$ at $p > 0.05$. Third, there was no any significant difference in language learning strategies use due to gender where the computed t_{test} for the six types and the overall of language learning strategies (LLSs) were $t_{test} = .539, -1.077, .850, -1.078, -.693, -1.109, \text{ and } -.725$ at $p > 0.05$. Fourth, there was a significant difference of students' English achievement due to gender where $t_{test} = 3.24$ at $p < 0.05$. It indicated that female students more successful than male students in learning English.

Keywords: Gender, Language Learning Strategies, and Achievement

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui: (1) strategi pembelajaran bahasa yang sering digunakan oleh siswa; (2) apakah ada hubungan yang signifikan antara penggunaan strategi pembelajaran bahasa dan hasil belajar bahasa Inggris siswa; (3) apakah ada perbedaan yang signifikan dalam strategi pembelajaran bahasa yang digunakan yang disebabkan oleh jenis kelamin; dan (4) apakah ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara hasil belajar bahasa Inggris siswa yang disebabkan oleh jenis kelamin. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian korelasional yang membahas dua variabel prediktor dan satu variabel kriteria. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas XI IPA SMAN 1 Bajeng, Kabupaten Gowa, Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan. Sampel diambil dengan teknik *proportional stratified random sampling*. Oleh karena itu, sampel terdiri dari 76 siswa yang dibagi 38 perempuan dan 38 laki-laki. Data penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner SILL dan tes. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan inferensial melalui program SPSS versi 20. Berdasarkan pada hasil statistik, temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa pertama, strategi sosial adalah strategi pembelajaran bahasa yang sering digunakan oleh siswa dan diikuti oleh strategi metakognitif. Kedua, tidak ada hubungan yang signifikan antara strategi pembelajaran bahasa (LLSs) dan prestasi bahasa Inggris siswa dimana koefisien korelasinya adalah $r = 0,182$ pada $p > 0,05$. Ketiga, tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan dalam strategi

pembelajaran bahasa yang digunakan karena jenis kelamin di mana metode yang dihitung untuk enam jenis dan keseluruhan strategi pembelajaran bahasa (*LLSs*) adalah $t_{\text{test}} = 0,539, -1,077, 0,850, -1,078, -0,693, -1,109, \text{ dan } -0,725$ pada $p > 0,05$. Keempat, terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan dari hasil belajar bahasa Inggris siswa yang disebabkan oleh jenis kelamin dimana $t_{\text{test}} = 3,24$ pada $p < 0,05$. Ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa perempuan lebih berhasil daripada siswa laki-laki dalam belajar bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: *Gender, Strategi Belajar Bahasa, and Hasil Belajar*

INTRODUCTION

Many factors, both internal and external, influence the success of the students in learning foreign language, particularly learning English. Recently, many researchers try to find what makes students success at learning language, particularly learning English, and why some people are more effective at learning than others. The success in learning language is also influenced by strategies which are possessed by the students. Therefore, it assumes that to overcome the language barriers, the students need to utilize learning strategies.

Language learning strategy plays a significant role in L2/FL learning, due to the fact that language learning strategies can help students to facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information and increase self-confidence (Chang, Ching-Yi & Liu, Shu-Chen & Lee, Yi-Nian, 2007: 236). Therefore, the use of learning strategies suggests that students, whether consciously or unconsciously, utilize a variety of learning strategies. A good student tries to find ways to use these strategies to succeed in language learning. Furthermore, the use of appropriate language learning strategies can make the students easier in mastering English and increase their ability in learning English. Besides, language learning strategies help students become more autonomous.

According to Gavriilidou and Psaltou-Joycey (2009: 14-17), there are some factors influence the type and frequency of language learning strategy use, such as proficiency level, age, gender, motivation, learning style, field of study/career orientation, culture, beliefs, task requirements, language teaching method and language being learned. Research studies on the relationship between language learning strategies and gender have shown that in typical language learning strategies situations, the majority of these researches showed the different findings that are mentioned gender differences in learning strategy use have found that females use overall strategies than males, but the others showed that there is not any significant difference between males and females in using language learning strategies.

Hence, the research was intended to reveal the students' language learning strategies that are most frequently used, the relationship between the use of language learning strategies and the English achievement, the difference in language learning strategies use due to gender, and the difference of students' English achievement due to gender at SMAN 1 Bajeng, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Gender

The term of gender is mostly confused with sex. Gender is also mostly defined as same meaning with sex. According to Nyikos (2008: 73), gender as a broad term is often used to denote not only the biologically based, dichotomous variable of sex that is male and female but also the socially constructed roles (i.e., gender) which are created by the different ways in which the sexes are raised from birth and socialized

within a certain culture. Besides, Mahmud (2009: 21) gives the distinction between gender and sex. She states that gender is the characteristics of male and female formed by social and cultural factors that result perception or opinion about male and female role socially and culturally. Gender is nurture formed by human beings or society through the process of social and cultural. Meanwhile, sex is defined as biological characteristics of male and female. For instance, male has dick, moustache and does not have any womb. On the other side, female has vagina, gives a birth and has breast. Sex is nature given by God and it can not be interchangeable.

Many studies have investigated the relationship between language learning strategies (LLSs) and gender and significant differences have been reported by most studies focusing on the relationship between LLSs and gender. For example, Green and Oxford (1995) found that females use more social and affective strategies. Kato as cited in Chi-Him Tam (2013: 8) obtained the same result in her study examining a group of Japanese EFL (English as foreign Language) students.

2. Language Learning Strategies

Many researchers and experts have been defined language learning strategies from different points of view. As Wenden (1987: 7-8) states that learning strategies are the various operations that learners use in order to make sense of their learning. Additionally, Chamot (2005: 14) argues that learning strategies are the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal. Strategic learners have metacognitive knowledge about their own thinking and learning approaches, a good understanding of what a task entails, and the ability to orchestrate the strategies that best meet both the task demands and their own learning strengths.

On the other hand, Oxford (1990: 8) defines learning strategies as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning faster, more enjoyable, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations”. Beside that, O’Malley and Chamot (1990: 1) define learning strategies as “the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information”.

Oxford (1990: 14) presents a new system of language learning strategies which are divided into two major classes, namely direct and indirect strategies. These two classes are subdivided into a total of six groups. To be more specific, direct strategies were included by memory, cognitive and compensation strategies; and indirect strategies were included by metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

Memory strategies entail the mental processes for storing new information in the memory and for retrieving them when needed. Memory strategies are divided into four sets, namely creating mental linkage, applying images and sounds, reviewing well and employing action. Cognitive strategies entail conscious ways of handling the target language. Cognitive strategies are unified by a common function, such as manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner. There are four sets of cognitive strategies, namely practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output. Compensation strategies assist learners to overcome knowledge shortcomings to go on the communication. Compensation strategies are clustered into two sets, namely guessing intelligently, and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing.

Metacognitive strategies are steps that learners take to manage or regulate their learning. Metacognitive strategies include three strategy sets, namely centering your learning, arranging and planning your learning, and evaluating your learning.

Affective strategies are strategies that help learners gain control over their emotions, attitudes, and motivations related to language learning. Affective strategies were divided into lowering your anxiety, encouraging yourself, and taking your emotional temperature. Social strategies are actions that facilitate language learning through interactions with others. There are three sets of social strategies and each set comprising two specific strategies, such as asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others.

Language learning strategies can be identified through various self-report procedures. Chamot (2005: 113-115) defines four strategies such as interview, questionnaires, diaries and journals, and think-aloud protocol. Beside that, there are many factors are found in research to influence learning strategy choice. They are proficiency level, age, gender, motivation, learning style, field of study/career orientation, culture, beliefs, task requirements, language teaching method and language being learned (Gavriilidou and Psaltou-Joycey, 2009: 14-17).

3. Achievement

Achievement is something that has been accomplished successfully by means of exertion, skill and practice. Gay, *et al.* (2006: 128) stated that achievement test measures the current status of individuals with respect to proficiency in given areas of knowledge or skill. Standardized achievement tests are carefully developed to include measurement of objectives common to many school systems. They measure knowledge of facts, concepts and principles. An individual's level of achievement is compared to the norm, or average score, for his or her grade or age level. Standardized achievement tests typically cover a number of different curriculum areas, such as reading, vocabulary, language, and mathematics.

Besides, an achievement test is related directly to classroom lessons, units or even a total curriculum. Achievement tests are limited to particular material covered in a curriculum within a particular time frame, and are offered a course has covered the objectives in question. Achievement tests can also serve as indicators of features that a student need to work on in the future, but the primary role of an achievement test is to determine acquisition of course objectives at the end of a period of instruction (Brown, 1994: 259; Brown, 2001: 391).

METHODOLOGY

The participants were 76 second grade-XI IPA students of SMAN 1 Bajeng which were selected by using proportional stratified random sampling technique. Of the 76 students, 38 were male and 38 were female. There were two kinds of instruments used to collect the data in this research. The first was questionnaire which was SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) version 7.0 which is developed by Rebecca Oxford (1990). It was presented or translated in Bahasa Indonesia and it was adapted and modified by Weda (2005). It consisted of 40 items which comprise 6 categories, namely memory strategies (item 1-6), cognitive strategies (item 7-16), compensation strategies (item 17-21), metacognitive strategies (item 22-30), affective strategies (item 31-35), and social strategies (item 36-40). It was organized into 5-point responses on modified Likert scale ranging from: 1 = "Never or almost never true of me"; 2 = "Usually not true of me"; 3 = "Somewhat true of me"; 4 = "Usually true of me"; and 5 = "Always or almost always true of me".

The second instrument was the test which was used to identify and find out the students' achievement in learning English. The test included four test elements, namely grammatical structure, vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension. Therefore, the test consisted of 40-multiple choice items which are divided 10 questions for each test element.

After piloting the instruments used in this research, the reliability of each instrument was calculated. Reliability means that the scores from an instrument are stable and consistent. Furthermore, scores should be nearly the same when the researchers administer the instrument multiple times at different times (Creswell, 2008: 169). Besides, Gay, *et al.* (2006: 139) state that reliability means dependability or trustworthiness. Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring. The SILL questionnaire had an alpha coefficient of 0.901. On the other hand, the test had an alpha coefficient of 0.76.

The data, which elicited from the questionnaire (SILL) and the test, were analyzed by SPSS version 20 for windows. The data were analyzed by applying descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (such as Correlational analysis, independent t-test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)). To be more specific, firstly, descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, mean score and standard deviation were computed to display the students' overall responses to the SILL questionnaire. Secondly, correlational analysis, which is applied Bivariate correlation analysis, was used to find out the relationship between the use of language learning strategies and the English achievement of the students. Independent t-test was used to find out and to determine significant difference and variation in mean strategy use and English achievement by gender.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Students' Language Learning Strategies that Are Frequently Used

The data obtained from the SILL questionnaire were analyzed by using descriptive statistics with SPSS 20 version for windows, and the analysis was followed by applying Duncan's Multiple Range Test. The table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation (SD), degree, rank of language learning strategies.

Table 1. The Mean, SD, Degree, Rank of Language Learning Strategies

Strategies	Mean	SD	Degree	Rank
Social	3.59	.87	High	1
Metacognitive	3.42	.91	Medium	2
Cognitive	3.04	.69	Medium	3
Affective	2.94	.72	Medium	4
Memory	2.76	.84	Medium	5
Compensation	2.64	.67	Medium	6
Total Score	3.09	.61	Medium	

Based on the table 1, it shows that the descriptive statistics analysis for the total score with respect to overall strategies use (M=3.09) indicated that the students at SMAN 1 Bajeng were medium strategies users. It is apparent that the students reported having, respectively, high to medium proficiency of use of each of the six categories with mean ranging between M=3.59 and M=2.64.

Table 2 The Result of Strategies Employed by the Students at SMAN 1 Bajeng Duncan

LLSs	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05			
		1	2	3	4
Compensation	76	2.64			
Memory	76	2.76	2.76		
Affective	76		2.94	2.94	
Cognitive	76			3.04	
Metacognitive	76				3.42
Social	76				3.59
Sig.		.358	.152	.431	.187

As shown in the table 2, the highest frequently used strategy was social strategies. It means that this strategy is also the highest level of usage with mean 3.59. Then, it was followed by metacognitive, cognitive, affective, and memory strategies, while compensation strategies ranked the lowest mean 2.64. Furthermore, the result revealed that the social and metacognitive strategies are the frequently strategies that were used by the students. Then, compensation strategies are the least frequent strategies that were used by the students.

This result was congruent with the general results of previous related finding of the language learning studies, especially in Indonesian context which was conducted by Weda (2005) who found that social strategies marked the highest usage or the most frequently used strategies followed by metacognitive strategies, and compensation strategies was the least frequent. The research results were also found by Shmais (2003) and Abbasian, *et al.* (2012) which indicated that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently strategies used, meanwhile compensation and affective strategies were the least frequently strategies used. On the other hand, the result of this current research was different with the research results were found by Zare (2010), Yilmaz (2010), Min (2012) and FatemehZarei (2013). These results showed that compensation strategies were mostly frequently strategies used. Meanwhile, the least frequently strategies used were affective and social strategies.

2. The Relationship between Language Learning Strategies and the English Achievement

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Coefficient between LLSs and English Achievement

		Correlations	
		LLSs	EA
LLSs	Pearson Correlation	1	.182
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.116
	N	76	76
EA	Pearson Correlation	.182	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.116	
	N	76	76

The result of the Pearson Correlation analysis between language learning strategies and the English achievement of the students at SMAN 1 Bajeng was $r = .182$ at $p > 0.05$. Therefore, it indicated that through the interpretation of degree correlation coefficient that the score was in low degree, ranging from less than ± 0.35 . Furthermore, the result indicates that the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted which means that there was no significant relationship between language learning strategies (LLSs) and the English achievement of the students.

The result of this research was congruent with the result findings of the research, which was conducted by Maulina (2013), where the result concluded that there was not significant correlation between LLSs used by both successful and unsuccessful male and female students and their English achievement.

On the other hand, this result showed the difference result with the research was found by Aslan (2009) which found that there was a positive correlation between strategy use and achievement. The findings revealed that higher achieving students employed more language learning strategies. Beside that, Indonesian context, Nur Biati (2014) also found that there was positive correlation between learning strategies and English achievement of the second year students of SMA 12 Makassar.

3. The Difference in Language Learning Strategies Use due to Gender

Table 4. The Results of t-test for the Differences in Strategy Use According to Gender Variable

Strategies	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	sig.
Memory	Male	38	2.81	.77	.539	.465
	Female	38	2.71	.92		
Cognitive	Male	38	2.96	.74	-1.077	.132
	Female	38	3.13	.63		
Compensation	Male	38	2.71	.63	.850	.364
	Female	38	2.57	.71		
Metacognitive	Male	38	3.31	.75	-1.078	.084
	Female	38	3.53	1.04		
Affective	Male	38	2.88	.69	-.693	.359
	Female	38	3.00	.76		
Social	Male	38	3.48	.85	-1.109	.540
	Female	38	3.70	.87		
Total	Male	38	3.04	.55	-.725	.295
	Female	38	3.14	.67		

Based on the table 4, the computed t-test of the six types of language learning strategies and the total score were respectively (.539, -1.077, .850, -1.078, -.693, -1.109, and -.725) at $p > 0.05$. These results show that the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted. This matter indicated that there was no significant difference in language learning strategies use due to gender. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no main effect for gender on strategy use.

Furthermore, the results of this research appear similarity with the research findings which were conducted by Salem cited in özyilmaz (2012: 13) which state that there was no difference between male and females in terms of using learning strategies. Besides that, Rahimi, *et al.* (2008) found that gender difference has no significant effect on participants' overall use of LLSs, which indicates that the males and females showed a slight non-significant mean difference in their use of overall strategy use. In addition, Shmais (2003) also found that gender had no significant differences on the use of strategies used by the students at An-Najah National University in Palestine.

On the other hand, the results of this research different with the research results which mentioned that there were significant differences among males and females in using some specific learning strategies. For example, Zare (2010) found that the overall use of language learning strategies significantly varied according to gender. Beside that Kaur and Embi (2011) also found that there was a significant difference in the overall of strategies between male and female students. Female students tend to use overall language learning strategies more often than male students in learning English language.

4. The Difference of Students' English Achievement due to Gender

An independent sample t-test was applied to the data set containing the test averages due to gender of the students. In this particular analysis along with the statistical analyses carried out throughout the research the statistical significance level was accepted to be $\alpha < 0.05$ for the independent sample findings. These results are presented in table 5 and 6.

Table 5. The Result of Descriptive Statistics of the Male and Female students for English Achievement Averages

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
English Achievement	Male	38	68.28	10.46	1.69
	Female	38	75.78	9.65	1.56

As shown in table 5, the mean values of female (M= 75.78) was higher than the scores of male (M= 68.28). To examine the difference between two groups (male and female students) and see the significance level, it is necessary to consult the results of Independent Sample Tests, which are presented in table 6.

Table 6. The Results of Independent Sample Test of the Male and Female Students for English Achievement Average

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
English Achievement	Equal variances assumed	.023	.879	3.24	74	.002	7.50	2.31	-12.10	2.89
	Equal variances not assumed			3.24	73.530	.002	7.50	2.31	-12.10	2.89

As a result in table 6, it shows that the t-test was 3.24 at $p (.002) < 0.05$. Consequently, it described that the difference in English achievement averages of male and female students was significant; which indicated the findings showing that female students were more successful ($M= 75.78$) than male students ($M= 68.28$) according to their English achievement averages was significant. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected.

Considering to the result of this research, this finding was supported with the relevant research which was conducted by Aslan (2009). He found that there was a connection between gender and achievement which mentioned by the difference in midterm averages of female and males was significant. The achievement test results average of the female students was higher than the average scores of the male students, and the difference was proved to be significant with the follow up statistical procedures.

CONCLUSIONS

The students at SMAN 1 Bajeng were high to medium users of strategies. Furthermore, social strategies marked the highest usage or the frequently used strategies followed by metacognitive strategies, and compensation strategies was the least frequently strategies used by the students.

There was no any significant relationship between language learning strategies (LLSs) and the English achievement of the students at SMAN 1 Bajeng, where the result of correlational analysis shows that the correlation coefficient $r = .182$ at $p > 0.05$. It indicated that language learning strategies was not statistically significant influence the students' English achievement in learning English.

In addition, the results showed that the results of independent sample t-test for the six types and the overall of language learning strategies which the computed t_{test} were respectively (.539, -1.077, .850, -1.078, -.693, -1.109, and -.725) at $p > 0.05$. Therefore, it was concluded that there was no any significant difference in language learning strategies use due to gender. It means that gender had no significant differences on the use of strategies used by the students at SMAN 1 Bajeng.

In addition, there was a significant difference of students' English achievement due to gender at SMAN 1 Bajeng, where $t_{test} = 3.24$ at $p < 0.05$. It indicated that the findings showing that female students were more successful than male students.

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