ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES USED BY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT IAIN ANTASARI BANJARMASIN

Drs. Saadillah, M.Pd

Lecturer of English Education Department at Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training IAIN Antasari, Banjarmasin

Hidayah Nor, M.Pd

Lecturer of English Education Department at Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training IAIN Antasari, Banjarmasin

ABSTRACT

Metacognitive strategies play important roles to develop skills in the process of learning a target language. This study investigated the metacognitive strategies and the frequency used by English Department students at IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin and determined how those metacognitive strategies were influenced by the learners' proficiency. 105 respondents who participated in this study were the first semester students in English Department. The subjects learned English as a foreign language and were at beginning level. The strategy use was assessed through a modified Indonesian translation version of the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (Oxford, 1990), and the proficiency was determined by the TOEFL Test. The data were distributed and analyzed using descriptive statistics. It can be concluded that the use of metacognitive strategies among the three categories (low, middle, and high) is quite different which is the most frequent metacognitive strategies used by students' middle category group with the Mean = 4.031, followed by students' high category group with the Mean = 3.765, and the least metacognitive strategies used by students' low category group Mean = 3.091. The types of meta-cognitive strategies that used by the students, including paying attention when someone is speaking English (88%), trying to find out how to be a better learner of English (85%), having clear goals for improving English skills (82%), noticing the mistakes (82%), thinking about their progress in learning English (67%) , trying to find as many ways as they can use their English (59 %), planning their schedule so they will have enough time to study English (57 %), looking for people whom they can talk to in English (52 %), and looking for opportunities to read as much as possible in English (35 %).

Key Words: Metacognitive Strategies, English Proficiency, TOEFL Test, English Department Students

Strategy as the representative of technique and method in teaching and learning process that has to be implemented toward the instructional objectives. Strategy can determine the success of language teaching and learning. An effective strategy can improve the classroom atmosphere and also make the teaching and learning process interesting and enjoyable (Gebhard, 2000: 39).

The term 'learning strategies' covers three aspects: first, learning strategies refer to language learning behaviors that the learners employ to regulate their learning. Second, refers to what the learners should know about the strategies used (strategies knowledge) and to be aware of the importance and to recognize what strategies are suitable to gain certain skills/knowledge. They need to pay attention to new ways of learning or learning methods which they are not accustomed to yet. Third, also refer to what the learners know about aspects of language learning other than the strategies they use. Such aspects are personal factors that facilitate second language learning and general principles of how to learn a second language successfully (Wenden, 1987:6) as cited in Suharmanto (2003:4).

O'Malley *et al*., (1985:285) clearly highlighted the importance of learning strategies by defining them as "any set of operations or steps used by a learner that will facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information." Language learning strategies are used to refer to a combination of learning and use strategies that can be further differentiated depending on whether they are metacognitive, cognitive, or socio/ affective strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 43).

There are various ways learners use to develop their skills in a second or foreign language. They apply different kinds of metacognitive strategies or specific actions and behavior to help them learn. According to Wenden and Rubin (1987), students who are good at languages might deal with second or foreign language learning in different ways from those who are less good. To understand the processes and the potential strategies, the research on language learning strategies has increasingly attracted educators. Numerous studies have investigated and explored language learning strategies use since the mid seventies (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Oxford, 1990; Green & Oxford, 1995; Goh & Foong, 1996; Kaylani 1996; Lee, 2003; Lee & Oxford, 2008). These studies have been conducted primarily to find out what metacognitive strategies learners use, as well as what factors (such as nationality, age, gender, motivation) affect these choices. The investigation of metacognitive strategies is very essential since it has improved our understanding of the processes students use to develop their skills in a second or foreign language.

Fogarty (1994) as cited in Vandergrift (2003:420) suggested that when students become aware of their own behavior, they become self-regulatory. Students' conscious awareness of planning, monitoring, and evaluation can ensure their successful completion of various listening tasks. When learners reflect upon their learning strategies, they become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve their learning while making use of interaction.

This study is conducted at English Education Department of Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training. It aims to identify the type and frequency of metacognitive strategies used by English Education Department students Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training and to determine how the strategies are influenced by the learners' proficiency. Through this study, it is hoped that teachers might acquire better understanding of how students learn a second or foreign language, so that they can assist their students in the

language learning process by promoting awareness of the strategies and encourage the students to use the strategies effectively.

STATEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM
This study aims to identify the types and the frequency of metacognitive strategies used by English Education Department students Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training in Banjarmasin and to determine how they are influenced by the learners' proficiency. The research questions are determined as follows:
1. What metacognitive strategies are used by English Education Department students Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training, and how often do students use these strategies?
2. Is there any correlation between English Proficiency with metacognitive strategies used by students?

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Learning Strategies
The concept of learning strategies has become quite familiar to most professionals in teaching English as a second or foreign language. They have classified and defined learning strategies in some ways. Wenden and Rubin (1987:19) define learning strategies as "... any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information". Oxford (1990:1) states that learning strategies are "steps taken by students to enhance their own learning", while Griffith (2007:91) describes learning strategies as "activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning". According to Oxford (2004), Language Learning Strategies is defined as operations employed by the learner to aid the language acquisition, storage, retrieval and use the information, specific actions taken by the learner to make language learning more transfable to new situationsl. These learning strategies are applied by students to improve their progress in comprehending, internalizing and using the target language. In Oxford's view, strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence. Learning strategies make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more effective. In other words, learning strategies are essential to understanding how and how well the students learn a second or foreign language.

Types of Learning Strategies
In terms of the classification of language learning strategies, Wenden and Rubin (1987) identify three kinds of strategies which contribute directly or indirectly to language learning: learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies. First, learning strategies consist of cognitive strategies (the steps used in learning that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials, such as verification, inductive inference, deductive reasoning, practice, memorization and monitoring) and meta-cognitive strategies (These strategies are used to manage self-direct language learning such as planning, prioritizing, and self management). Second, communication strategies focus on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning

across or clarifying what the speaker intend. Next, social strategies provide exposure to the target language by creating opportunity to practice the language.

Furthermore, Oxford (1990) in her book Language Learning Strategies has developed a more comprehensive system of language learning strategies which are the basics of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). She has classified learning strategies into two main categories; direct and indirect strategies. Direct Strategies are language-learning strategies that directly involve target language. They are divided into three groups: memory strategies (these strategies relate to how students remember the target language concept without necessarily involving deep understanding), cognitive strategies (the mental strategies which relate to how students think about their learning), and compensation strategies (these strategies help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication). Each group processes the language differently for different purposes. Conversely, indirect strategies are used to support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language. There are three groups of indirect strategies: meta-cognitive strategies (these strategies help learners to manage their own learning), affective strategies (these strategies help learners to gain better control over their emotions, motivations, and attitudes toward language learning), and social strategies (they lead to increase interaction with the target language).

Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies help learners to regulate their learning. These strategies help learners manage themselves as learners, the general learning process and specific learning tasks. Metacognitive strategies helps individuals know themselves better as language learners since these include identifying one's own interest, needs and learning styles preference. Among the main metacognitive strategies are centering the learning (over viewing comprehensively a principle and a concept, paying attention), arranging and planning the learning (setting goals, identifying the purpose of a task, seeking practice opportunities), and evaluating the learning (self monitoring, and self-evaluating).

O'Malley *et al*. (1985:287) state that metacognitive is an expression to indicate an executive function, strategies which involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, observing of one's production or comprehension, correcting own mistakes, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. It refers to the activities learners use to plan, to monitor, and to evaluate their own learning.

Administer a strategy inventory

The most comprehensive instrument is Learning Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL) was designed by Professor Rebecca Oxford, now Director of the Program for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages at Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York. SILL questionnaire covers fifty separate strategies in six major categories. The SILL can be used in class for developing

awareness of strategies in the same way suggested earlier for the self-checklist on styles. It can also be an instrument that enlightens teacher about fifty different ways that the learners could become a little more successful in their language learning endeavor.

Learning Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL)

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.
10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practice the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversations in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20. I try to find patterns in English.
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22. I try not to translate word for word.
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.
24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.
30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.

37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning English.
39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning dairy.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.
45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practice English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Previous Researches about Metacognitive Strategies

Many education studies have investigated metacognitive strategies since the 1970's, and this has also been a trend in second and foreign language education. Since the studies have been based on the distinction between good and poor learners, there are a number of studies about the relationship between strategy use and L2 proficiency. (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Kaylani, 1996; Goh & Foong, 1997; Lee, 2003; and Yang, 2007). These studies were conducted using SILL questionnaires as the main instrument in ESL/EFL contexts in different countries, such as USA (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), Jordan (Kaylani, 1996), China (Goh & Foong, 1997), Korea (Lee, 2003) and Taiwan (Yang, 2007).

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) conducted a study about variables affecting choice of language learning strategies in a major university in the Midwestern USA. They distributed SILL questionnaires to 1200 foreign language students and found that the greater strategy use was associated with learners' higher perceptions of proficiency in reading, listening and speaking. Using the same questionnaires Kaylani (1996) analysed 255 high school students in EFL context in Jordan. Different from Oxford and Nyikos who determined students' proficiency based on the learners' self-perceived proficiency, Kaylani used extensive language learning assessment to measure students' proficiency. The results of the study revealed that the use of memory, cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies was significantly higher for successful students than less successful ones. She also noticed that the successful strategy users had the ability to choose the strategy or complex of strategies that is suitable to the task.

The finding of Oxford and Nyikos (1989) and Kaylani (1996) were supported by Goh & Foong (1997) who carried out research in China. Based on the results of a standardised test, they divided 175 ESL students into three proficiency levels. They found that learners' proficiency influenced the strategy use, especially cognitive and compensation strategies. Lee (2003) in a study of 325 Korean secondary students also discovered a significant relationship between strategy use and students' proficiency. In her study, she

developed a close test to determine students' proficiency specifically in prepositions. Another study which attempts to investigate students' proficiency and learning strategies was conducted by Yang (2007) in Taiwan. She used the results of reading and listening mid-term exam of 451 junior college students to measure their proficiency. Based on the exam results, she divided them into high, intermediate and low English proficiency groups in the same way as Goh and Foong (1997). She found that more proficient students reported using strategies more often than less proficient students, and there were significant difference in cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive and social learning strategies used by students of different levels of language proficiency.

A research by Wenxia Zhang and Meihua Liu in 2008 entitled Investigating cognitive and metacognitive Strategy use during an English proficiency test reports on the results of a study of cognitive and metacognitive strategy use and its effect on the students' test performance at the tertiary level in a Chinese EFL context. 18- item survey involving 526 undergraduate non-English majors revealed that: (1) the students had a medium use of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies during the test; (2) cognitive and metacognitive strategy use was closely related to each other, but neither was a predictor for the other; and (3) though cognitive and metacognitive strategy use significantly correlated with the students' performance in certain parts of the proficiency test, only the metacognitive strategy of evaluating one's performance proved to be a positive predictor of the students' performance in listening and reading comprehension and the overall written test.

A research by Jorge E. Pineda in 2010 entitled Identifying Language Learning Strategies: An Exploratory Study which is a small scale, inductive, ethnographic study whose objective is to explore the language learning strategies used by the students of different languages at a language program at the university level. Students of English, French, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and German participate in the study. Three instruments are used to gather data: an open-ended questionnaire, a series of lesson observations, and a semi-structured interview. The students report the use of several strategies for the learning of grammar, reading, speaking, writing, and listening.

The results of these studies seem to have agreement that successful L2 learners, compared with their less successful classmates, used more learning strategies and applied them more frequently. Also, the researchers from these studies agreed that more proficient learners employ a wider range of strategies more efficiently than less proficient learners. However, there are dissimilarities in terms of the ways they determined students' proficiency, for instance Oxford and Nikes (1989) was only based on the learners' self-perceived proficiency, while Lee (2003) assessed the students based on a close test in grammar. From their findings, the most frequent types of strategies use were diverse as well. Kaylani (1996) for example, found that more successful learners used memory, cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies frequently; on the other hand Yang (2007) mentioned compensation and social learning strategies as significant strategies used by more proficient students. Based on these studies, the writer investigated English proficiency and metacognitive strategies used by English Education Department students Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH
Research Design

This is a qualitative research. Qualitative research aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. The qualitative method investigates the *why* and *how* of decision making, not just *what*, *where*, *when*. Qualitative methods produce information only on the particular cases studied, and any more general conclusions are only propositions (informed assertions)

Research Location
This research is conducted at English Education Department Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

Subject
The subjects of this study are a group of Education Department students who are in the first semester Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

Data
The data needed are the types and the frequency of metacognitive strategies used by English Education Department students Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training in Banjarmasin.

Technique of Data collection
The techniques of data collection will be used in this study are test, questionaire, interview, and documentation.
a. Test
   This is used to obtain the data about Students' English Proficiency. The test used is a TOEFL Prediction test.
b. Questionaire
   This is used to gain the data about the types and the frequency of language learning strategies used by English Education Department students Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training in Banjarmasin. To collect the data for this study, the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL, version 7.0) for speakers of other languages learning English designed by Oxford (1990) is used. In this case, short explanations and examples to particular statements in the questionnaire are given in order to make the participants easier to understand.
c. Interview
   Basically, this technique is used to cross check the data gained from questionaire and to dig more detail information about the strategies used by the students
d. Documentation
   This is used to get the information about students' English proficiency based on TOEFL Prediction Test

Data Analysis
After the data are collected, the researchers classified them based on the problem statement and then analyse them qualitately so that all data can be used to answer the probing questions systematically. Oxford's criteria (1990) used for evaluating the degree of strategy use frequency are: low frequency use (1.0-2.49), moderate frequency

use (2.5-3.49), and high frequency use (3.5-5.0). SILL data are analyzed to report the types and the frequency of strategies used by the subjects through descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations and t-test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
This part deals with the result of the study based on some facts found in the data. It covers the metacognitive strategy and its frequncy used by the first semester students of English department and the correlation between English Proficiency with metacognitive strategies used by students.

The metacognitive strategies and its frequency used.

The first research problem posed in this paper is the metacognitive strategy and its frequency used by the first semester students of English department. There are 105 students involved in this research. The SILL questionnaire was distributed to find out the answer of the research question.

Table 1. Mean score and standard deviation of low category students in using metacognitive strategies

Strategy	Mean	SD
Meta-cognitive	3.091	0.913
Affective	3.285	1.095
Cognitive	3.261	0.895
Memory	3.063	0.942
Compensation	3.138	1.009
Social	3.323	0.968
Overall	**3.193**	**0.970**

From the table above, we can see that the overall mean of students learning strategies of low category is 3.193 which indicate the use of language learning strategies is relative fair. The frequency of Meta-cognitive strategies used by the students is Mean = 3.091 with standard deviation 0.913.

Table 2. Means score and standard deviation of middle category students in using metacognitive strategies

Strategy	Mean	SD
Meta-cognitive	4.031	0.888
Affective	3.623	1.164
Cognitive	3.302	0.967
Memory	3.196	1.024
Compensation	3.247	1.147
Social	3.395	1.072
Overall	**3.465**	**1.043**

From the table above, we can see that the overall mean of students learning strategies of middle category is 3.465 which indicate the use of language learning strategies is relative fair. Meta-cognitive strategies are the most frequent strategies used by the students with the Mean = 4.031 and standard deviation 0.888.

Table 3. Means score and standard deviation of high category students in using metacognitive strategies

Strategy	Mean	SD
Meta-cognitive	3.765	1.065
Affective	3.180	1.155
Cognitive	3.122	1.051
Memory	3.022	1.041
Compensation	3.157	1.185
Social	3.104	1.034
Overall	**3.225**	**1.088**

From the table above, we can see that the overall mean of students learning strategies of high category is 3.225 which indicate the use of language learning strategies is relative fair. Meta-cognitive strategies are the most frequent strategies used by the students with the Mean = 3.765 and standard deviation 1.065.

The researcher can conclude that the use of metacognitive strategies among the three categories (low, middle, and high) is quite different which is the most frequent metacognitive strategies used by students' middle category group with the Mean = 4.031, followed by students' high category group with the Mean = 3.765, and the least metacognitive strategies used by students' low category group Mean = 3.091.

Table 4. The frequent of metacognitive strategies used by students

No	Metacognitive Strategies used by Students	The frequency % (out of 105)
1.	Paying attention when someone is speaking English	88 %
2	Trying to find out how to be a better learner of English	85%
3	Having clear goals for improving English skills	82 %
4	Noticing the mistakes	82 %
5	Thinking about their progress in learning English	67%
6	Trying to find as many ways as they can use their English	59%
7	Planning their schedule so they will have enough time to study English	57 %
8	Looking for people whom they can talk to in English	52%
9	Looking for opportunities to read as much as possible in English	35%

As can be seen from Table 2, the students had high frequencies of using learning strategies in developing their language skills. The result is taken from the total respondents who selected 'often' and 'very often". Among the types of language learning strategies, meta-cognitive strategies were the most frequent strategies since

there were nine strategies used by the students where the questions from SILL are from number 30 to number 38, including paying attention when someone is speaking English (88%), trying to find out how to be a better learner of English (85%), having clear goals for improving English skills (82%), noticing the mistakes (82%), thinking about their progress in learning English (67%) , trying to find as many ways as they can use their English (59 %), planning their schedule so they will have enough time to study English (57 %), looking for people whom they can talk to in English (52 %), and looking for opportunities to read as much as possible in English (35 %).

The employment of the three metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring and evaluation) in learning is referred to learner autonomy in language learning. Metacognitive strategies are intended to give students better access to learning process, to help students activate and actualize the learning process by examining it on personal individual learners.

Correlation between the metacognitive strategy and the language proficiency
This research also try to find out whether or not metacognitive strategy has correlation with language proficiency. To get the students' language profiency score, TOEFL prediction test was administered. The score of the students range from 226 -470. The mean score of students' TOEFL prediction was 355 (fair category) with 34 of standar deviation. After doing correlation study between Language learning strategy and language proficiency, it was found out that the level of correlation **is -0,10**. This showed that the correlation between metacognitive Strategy and Language Proficiency is **negative**. The more varied the strategy used, the score of language proficiency is lower.

The results of this study do not support previous studies (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Kaylani, 1996; Goh & Foong, 1997; Lee, 2003; and Yang, 2007) that successful second language learners used more learning strategies and applied the strategies more frequently compared with their less successful classmates. The results might be due to several reasons. First, the subjects in this study learned English as a foreign language with very limited exposure to the target language. They studied English in restricted number of contact hours. They also had very minimal opportunities with a variety of interactive practices in the target language.

CONCLUSION
This study examined the types and the frequency of metacognitive strategies used English Department students in Banjarmasin and determined how the strategies were influenced by the learners' proficiency.

It can be concluded that the use of metacognitive strategies among the three categories (low, middle, and high) is quite different which is the most frequent metacognitive strategies used by students' middle category group with the Mean = 4.031, followed by students' high category group with the Mean = 3.765, and the least metacognitive strategies used by students' low category group Mean = 3.091.

The types of meta-cognitive strategies that used by the students, including paying attention when someone is speaking English (88%), trying to find out how to be a better learner of English (85%), having clear goals for improving English skills (82%),

noticing the mistakes (82%), thinking about their progress in learning English (67%) , trying to find as many ways as they can use their English (59 %), planning their schedule so they will have enough time to study English (57 %), looking for people whom they can talk to in English (52 %), and looking for opportunities to read as much as possible in English (35 %).

This research also found out that the level of correlation **is -0,10**. This showed that the correlation between metacognitive Strategy and Language Proficiency is **negative**. The more varied the metacognitive strategy used, the score of language proficiency is lower.

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