

English Proficiency and Language Learning Strategies Used by English Department Students at IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin

Sa'adillah
Nani Hizriani
Puji Sri Rahayu

Faculty of Tarbiyah & Teachers Training IAIN Antasari

This study is conducted to identify the type and frequency of language learning 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. A qualitative research method is employed in the study and the data is collected by using questionnaire, interview and documentation techniques. The collected data is analyzed qualitatively. The study result shows that the English Department students used various learning strategies — direct and indirect learning strategies, in their language learning process. It also indicates that a majority of the students applied the learning strategies in moderate frequency use. In addition, it is indicated that the correlation between language learning strategies and language proficiency is negative. Through this study, it is hoped that the 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.

Keywords: *Language Learning Strategies, English Proficiency*

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis dan frekuensi strategi pembelajaran bahasa yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Pendidikan, Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Pelatihan Guru dan untuk menentukan bagaimana strategi dipengaruhi oleh kemampuan para peserta didik. Metode penelitian kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian dan data yang dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan kuesioner, wawancara dan dokumentasi teknik. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis secara kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa Jurusan bahasa Inggris yang digunakan strategi pembelajaran berbagai pembelajaran strategi langsung dan tidak langsung, dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa mereka. Hal ini juga menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas siswa menerapkan strategi pembelajaran yang digunakan frekuensi moderat. Selain itu, menunjukkan bahwa korelasi antara strategi pembelajaran bahasa dan kemampuan bahasa negatif. Melalui penelitian ini, diharapkan para guru dapat memperoleh pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang bagaimana siswa belajar bahasa kedua atau asing, sehingga mereka dapat membantu siswa dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa dengan mempromosikan kesadaran strategi dan mendorong siswa untuk menggunakan strategi efektif.

Kata kunci: *Belajar Bahasa Strategi, Bahasa Inggris Proficiency*

Background of Study

There are various ways learners use to develop their skills in a second or foreign language. They apply different kinds of language learning strategies or specific 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 used since the mid seventies (Oxford & Nyikos, 1988; 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 strategies learners use, as well as what factors (such as nationality, age, gender, motivation) affect these

choices. The investigation of language learning 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.

Despite the increasing number of research on learning strategies, there have been few studies on the use of learning strategies among Indonesian students, especially undergraduate students in Banjarmasin. It is a fact that teachers are generally not aware of their students' language learning strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). They pay less attention to how their students learn and how they can guide the students to learn well. They just tend to focus on students' results in final without taking into account learning strategies as part of their instruction. Consequently, students are asked to do many tasks in the classrooms to perform better in the exams. Therefore, there is a need to conduct research on language learning strategies to help teachers learn and understand how strategies of their students are applied in learning a second or foreign language.

This study is conducted at English Education Department of Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training. It aims to identify the type and frequency of language learning 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.

Problem Statements

This study aims to identify the types and the frequency of language learning 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 language learning 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 language learning strategy and language proficiency?

Definition of Key Terms

1. English Proficiency: Linguistics proficiency of English in which an individual has the ability to perform and demonstrate English both accuracy and fluency, and use a variety of discourse strategies. The students' English proficiency in this study is determined based on their National Examination.
2. Language Learning Strategies: Steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. These learning strategies are applied by students to improve their progress in comprehending, internalizing and using the target language. These strategies include Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Meta-cognitive, Affective and Social strategies in language learning.

Significance of Research

The result of this research is expected to have advantages, such as

1. It will serve as information, consideration and input for English Education Department in increasing educational quality and establishing conditions to support students' learning.
2. It will develop awareness for English Lecturers about the importance Language Learning Strategies. As lectures play important role students' academic achievement, knowing students' language strategies will affect the quality of the students, and in a wider scope may contribute to the better image of English Education Department in the community.

Theoretical Framework

1. 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 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 transferable to new situational. 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.

2. Characteristics of Good Language Learners

It is important to identify some characteristics of good language learners since learning strategies cannot be separated from the learner point of view. Many aspects need to be taken into account when considering the qualities of good learners. Students' background, age, motivation, and their unique personality often influence their suc-

cess in learning a language. In general, Harmer (1998) mentioned that successful students possess some or all of the following characteristics.

a. A willingness to listen

Good learners listen to what's going on, not only in the sense of paying attention, but also in terms of really listening to the English that is being used with eagerness and intelligence.

b. A willingness to experiment

Many good learners are not afraid to experiment. They are prepared to take risks, to try things out and see how it works. They have enthusiasm to use the language.

c. A willingness to ask questions

Good learners usually are eager to ask questions to make some judgments from the information given.

d. A willingness to think about how to learn

Good learners invent their own strategies and study skills when they come to a lesson.

e. A willingness to accept correction

Good learners are prepared to be corrected if it helps them. They are keen to get feedback from the teacher and act upon what they are told.

In addition, Rubin and Thomson (1982 cited in brown 2001, p.209) listed some criteria of good language learners. These characteristics are believed to contribute student's success in learning a target language. **Good language learners:**

1. Find their own way, taking of their learning.
2. Organize information about language.
3. Are creative, developing a 'feel' for the language by experimenting with its grammar and words.
4. Make their own opportunities for practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom.

5. Learn to live with uncertainty by not getting flustered and by continuing to talk or listen without understanding.
6. Use mnemonics and other memory strategies to recall what has been learned.
7. Make errors work for them and not against themselves.
8. Use linguistics knowledge, including knowledge of their first language, in learning a second language.
9. Use contextual cues to help them in comprehension.
10. Learn to make intelligent guesses.
11. Learn chunks of language as wholes and formalized routines help them perform 'beyond their competence'.
12. Learn certain tricks that help to keep conversation going.
13. Learn certain production strategies to fill in gaps in their own competence.
14. Learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

Since these characteristics are not based on empirical studies, but rather on the collective observations of teachers and learners themselves, it does not take for granted that all successful learners demonstrate all of these characteristics. However, it was recognized that more successful learners typically employed more strategies and did so with greater frequency, more awareness and better ability to describe their strategy use. Besides, more successful learners normally understand which strategies fitted the particular language tasks they were attempting and they are better at combining strategies as needed.

3. 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-directed 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 basis 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).

These are classification of Language Learning Strategies from Oxford (1990), which is later supported by Hismanoglu (2000):

a. Direct Strategies

Direct Strategies are language-learning strategies that directly involve Target Language. They are divided into three groups: Memory Strategies, Cognitive Strategies and Compensation Strategies.

1. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies help learners' link one target language concept without necessarily involving deep understanding. These strategies are useful for memorizing information in an orderly string (e.g. acronyms) in various ways. Memory strategies reflect very simple principles, such as creating mental linkages (grouping, associating/elaborating, placing new words into a context), applying images and sounds (using imagery/picture and keywords, representing sounds in memory), reviewing, and employing action (using physical response/mechanical techniques).

2. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are the mental strategies learners use to make sense of their learning. These strategies help learners make and strengthen association between new and already known information and facilitate the mental restructuring of information. Cognitive strategies include Practicing (repeating, practicing sounds, recognizing formulas, recombining), receiving and sending messages strategies, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output (taking notes, summarizing, highlighting) are among the most important cognitive strategies.

3. Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication. These strategies help learners make up for missing knowledge when using English in oral

and written communication. These strategies consist of guessing intelligently, and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (using physical gestures, switching to the mother tongue, getting help, avoiding communication partially or totally, coining words, using a synonyms and circumlocution). When compensation strategies employed for language use, they simultaneously aid language learning and provide an immediate opportunity for incidental learning.

b. Indirect Strategies

Indirect Strategies are used to support and manage language learning without directly involving the Target Language. Indirect strategies are also divided into three groups: Metacognitive strategies, Affective strategies and Social strategies.

1. 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).

2. Affective Strategies

Affective Strategies are concerned with the learner's emotions, motivations, and values. These strategies include identifying one's feeling such as anxiety, anger and contentment and becoming aware of learning circumstances or tasks that evoke them. These strategies are; lowering the anxiety (using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, meditation,

music and praying), encouraging themselves (making positive statements, rewarding themselves), and taking the emotional temperature (writing a language diary, discussing their feeling with someone else).

Negative attitudes and beliefs can reduce learners' motivation and harm language learning, while positive attitude and beliefs can do the reverse. Using the affective strategies to examine beliefs and attitudes is therefore useful for learning any language, the teacher and the language classroom.

3. Social Strategies

Social Strategies lead to increased interaction with the target language. These strategies facilitate learning with others and help learners understand the culture of the language they are learning. Social Strategies include asking questions (asking for correction or classification), cooperating with others (with native speakers or peers), and empathizing with others (developing cultural understanding, becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings).

It can be seen that students can use these strategies, which are closely related to each other, for all of the language areas-reading, listening, writing, and speaking-as well as the retention of vocabulary and content information.

c. 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 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 word.
6. I use flashcards to remember a new English word.
7. I physically act out new English word.
8. I review English Lesson often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering there location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.
10. I say or wright new English words several times.
11. I try talk like native English speaker.
12. I practice the sound of the 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, massages letters or reports in English.
18. I firsts skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back reading 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 word, 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 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 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 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 when ever I fell 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.

4. Previous Research about Language Learning Strategies

Many education studies have investigated language learning 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 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) analyzed 225 high school students in EFL context in Jordan. Different from Oxford and Nyikos who determined students' pro-

iciency 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 standardized test, she 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 specially 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.

The results of these studies seem to have agreement that successful L2 learners, compared with their less successful classmate, used more learning strategies

and applied them more frequently. Also, the researchers from these studies agreed that more 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, I investigated English proficiency and language learning strategies used by English Education Department students Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training.

Research Method

1. 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 method produce information only on the particular cases studied, and any more general conclusions are only propositions (informed assertions).

2. Research Location

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

3. Subject

This subject of this study is a group of Education Department students who are in the first semester Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

4. Data

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

5. Technique of Data collection

The techniques of data collection will be used in this study are questionnaire, 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. Questionnaire

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 language 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.

6. Data Analysis

After the data are collected, the researchers will classify them based on the problem statement and then analyze them qualitatively 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, and standard deviation and correlation test.

Findings and Discussion

a. The language learning strategies used by English department students

Students of English Department used various strategies that are classified into direct learning strategies (memory, cognitive and compensation) and indirect learning strategies (metacognitive, affective and social).

The distribution of language learning strategies frequency used by English Department students is as follows:

Table 1. Means score and standard deviation of the SILL.

Strategy	Mean	SD
Meta-cognitive	3.89	0.96
Affective	3.36	1.15
Social	3.27	1.03
Cognitive	3.23	0.98
Compensation	3.18	1.12
Memory	3.09	1.01
Overall	3.34	1.04

The results of the questionnaire indicate that a majority of the students applied language learning strategies in moderate frequency use. As shown in table 1, the overall mean of students learning strategies is 3.34 which indicates the use of language learning strategies is relative fair. Meta-cognitive

strategies are the most frequent strategies used by the students (M = 3.89), followed by affective (M = 3.36), social (M = 3.27), cognitive (M = 3.23), and compensation (M = 3.18). On the other hand, memory strategies are the least strategies since the mean is 3.09.

Table 2. The type and frequency of using language learning strategies

No.	A. The most frequent types (often and very often)	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	Think about my progress in learning English	67%
6	Try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English	60%
7	Encourage my self to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake	60%
8	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English	59%
9	Noticing if they are nervous when using English	59%
10	Asking for help	59%
11	Trying to find as many ways as they can use their English	59%
12	Practicing the sound of English	59%
13	Plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English	57%
14	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make Guess	56%
15	If I do not understand something in English, I ask other person to slow down or say it again	56%
16	Try to find pattern in English	55%
17	Watch English Language TV shows spoken in English	55%

As can be seen from Table 2, the students had low 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 five strategies 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%), and trying to find as many ways as they can use their English (59%), Plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English (57%), and think about the progress (66%).

Meta-cognitive strategies were followed by cognitive strategies such as practicing the sound of English (59%). In term of social strategies, there were 59% of respondents answered that they asked for help, and 56% asked to slow down or say the word again when they did not understand something in English. Guessing the meaning to understand unfamiliar words (56%) is the most frequent compensation strategies used by the students.

2. Correlation between the language learning strategy and the language proficiency

This research also tries to find out whether language learning strategy has correlation with language proficiency. 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 Language Learning Strategy and Language Proficiency is **negative**. The more varied the strategy used, the score of language proficiency is lower.

Discussion

From the results of the study, the students apparently had very low frequencies of using learning strategies in developing their language skills. It was found that only 17 strategies applied frequently by the students. These frequent strategies from the total respondents who selected 'often' and 'very often' were still in small percentages since the percentages were below than 50%. Conversely, there were a number of strategies which were seldom or never used by the students in high percentages. Moreover, the students tended to use more indirect strategies than direct strategies. Some of them used indirect strategies such as paying attention when someone is speaking English, trying to find out how to be a better learner of English, having clear goals for improving their English skills, noticing the mistakes, and trying to find as many ways as they can use their English. Some direct

strategies applied by the students include looking for similar words in their own language practicing the sound of English, guessing the meaning to understand unfamiliar words.

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.

Moreover, it is common in Indonesia that English teachers still practice conventional methods in teaching, such as grammar translation method. Students are not encouraged to do communication oriented exercise which can stimulate them learn English well.

Conclusion

This study examined the types and the frequency of language learning strategies used English Department students in Banjarmasin and determined how the strategies were influenced by the learners' proficiency. The results indicate that most of the students used language learning strategies in moderate frequencies. It also found that there was negative correlation in language learning strategies used by the students.

Suggestion

It is thought that teachers should have some guidance and training to teach the target language communicatively so they can promote awareness of the strategies and encourage their students to use the strategies effectively.

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