

ENGLISH SPEAKING STRATEGIES USED BY THE HIGHER SPEAKING ACHIEVERS OF PESANTREN MODERN DARUL ISTIQAMAH BARABAI KALIMANTAN SELATAN

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Abstract

The study investigates English speaking strategies used by higher achievers at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah of Boys, focusing on their language learning strategies and proficiency. This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to understand English speaking strategies used by higher achievers at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah. The research subjects are three ninth-grade students, and a modified SILL questionnaire is used for data collection. The study aims to gain insights into the strategies employed by these students in English speaking. The results indicate that students utilize various strategies, with metacognitive and social strategies being the most frequently employed, while memory strategies are the least used. The findings differ from previous studies, possibly due to factors like age, gender, and language teaching methods at the Islamic boarding school. The school's emphasis on independent language skill development and motivating learning environment may impact strategy usage. Metacognitive strategies were found to be most frequently used, while memory strategies were less frequently employed. Recommendations are made for students to focus on using metacognitive strategies to enhance their speaking abilities, for teachers to tailor their teaching approaches based on students' strategies, and for future researchers to conduct in-depth studies and consider interviews to further explore English speaking learning strategies at the Pesantren.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, English Speaking Strategies, Higher Speaking Achievers, Pesantren Modern.

INTRODUCTION

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) has been defined by various researchers. In 1981, Rubin presented the initial definition of LLS, characterizing it as the methods or techniques employed by individuals while acquiring a language. Additionally, Oxford (1990) explains LLS as the particular procedures or tactics used by individual students to improve their comprehension, retention, acquisition, and application of knowledge in a foreign or second language. Moreover, a review of information on average student accomplishment, learning in Indonesia is still comparably poor, and research on strategies for learning, particularly English, is necessary (Ismiatun, 2018).

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) are classified into six classifications by Oxford (1990): memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Those strategies represent both direct and indirect influences on learners' behaviour and activities. Using a cognitive strategy, a student can directly produce new language materials through, for example, reasoning, analyzing, taking notes, summarizing, and formally practicing structures and sounds. A strategy known as metacognitive has more to do with organizing, planning, and assessing the information. Memory strategies help students in learning and retrieving information by using words, sounds, pictures, acronyms, rhymes, gestures, and combinations of some of them. When listening and reading,

students used the compensation strategies to make accurate assumptions based on the context. Affective strategies are tasks that assist in determining a learner's emotion and level of anxiousness. Social strategies reflect learners' interactions with others. These six categories are deliberately employed and organized by the learner.

An effective approach to acquire knowledge is through the utilization of a strategy. Strategies can provide a well-structured method to comprehend information. According to Chamot (2005, p.112), a general strategy is defined as a procedure that eases the process of learning tasks. Brown (2000:122; Daar, 2019, p.565) provided a definition of strategies as diverse approaches or methods employed to overcome specific challenges. According to Rubin et al. (1982; Chan, 2015, p.149), excellent language learners possess certain characteristics, such as being familiar with essential learning approaches, actively engaging in the language acquisition process, consistent and prolonged practice of language objectives, applying conversation based on language learning outcomes, and acknowledging the complexities of language learning. Based on the given explanation, it can be inferred that a strategy is a deliberately designed and structured approach used to perform a particular activity or action. It can be viewed as a plan, method, or sequence of actions with specific objectives or outcomes. Understanding our strategies holds significance, as being aware of our actions and processes enhances the effectiveness of our learning. By being conscious of the underlying learning processes in which we are engaged, we can optimize our learning experience. However, utilizing language learning strategies in a non-English speaking country is a remarkable endeavor. It involves a prolonged process that necessitates the adoption of effective strategies to ensure a more productive and efficient learning outcome (Ismiatun et al., 2019).

The most essential of the four major linguistic abilities that must be properly acquired while learning a new language is speaking. The most essential aspect of learning a foreign language for most people is developing their speaking abilities, and success is viewed through being capable for dialogue in that language (Nunan, 1991, p.39). Similarly, Yunus (2010) emphasized that for the majority, particularly foreign language learners, the most crucial aspect of acquiring a second language is becoming proficient in speaking. Success is gauged by one's capacity to engage in conversations using the language. This skill holds significant value in society, serving as a fundamental means to share thoughts and express ideas in interpersonal interactions. Consequently, it becomes apparent that language serves as a means of communication. To become proficient in a language, a learner must be capable of effectively expressing themselves using that language. The ability to communicate clearly demonstrates the student's comprehension and competence in utilizing the language.

In recent decades, possessing foreign language skills, particularly English, has emerged as a crucial element for global competitiveness. This is due to the significant importance of English as one of the key international languages to acquire or study (Yunus, et al., 2023). In the realm of learning a foreign language, achieving proficiency in speaking poses a formidable challenge for learners. Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most difficult skills to master due to the considerable courage and preparation required to effectively communicate in an unfamiliar language. In connection with this, Brown (2004, p.172) categorizes speaking into five key components: grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and articulation. It is advisable for students to take note of these components. Before engaging in speaking, students must have a clear understanding of their intended message, drawing upon a multitude of ideas. Additionally, students should aim for accurate pronunciation to ensure their message is comprehensible to listeners. Furthermore, the ability to speak fluently and precisely hinges on a broad vocabulary and the skill to structure sentences in a manner that facilitates comprehension. When all these aspects are proficiently accomplished, students will be able to express themselves effectively, enabling their listeners to readily grasp the intended message. However, according to Khalidah et al. (2023) stated that speaking a foreign language presents a significant challenge for students, including younger generations. A common perception

among students is that speaking is the most arduous skill to acquire, mainly due to the fact that English is not commonly used as a daily language in Indonesia.

The development of speaking abilities is influenced by the language learning strategies employed by learners themselves. These strategies empower learners to take charge of their own learning process. Language learning strategies encompass purposeful actions taken by learners to enhance their personal learning experience (Oxford, 1990). Learners use various strategies such as engaging in conversations with partners, seeking corrections, and practicing speaking aloud to improve their speaking skills. These language learning strategies serve as valuable tools for active and intentional learning, ultimately leading to an enhancement in language proficiency (Dörnyei, 2005). Additionally, Oxford (1990, p.8) emphasized the pivotal role of effectively implementing language learning strategies in fostering the improvement of communication skills. It can be deduced that if inappropriate strategies are used, there will be no significant enhancement in communication proficiency. Therefore, learning strategies stand as one of the most crucial factors in determining the manner and the level of success with which learners acquire a foreign language.

The process for acquiring speaking abilities by employing specific methods are known as speaking learning strategies. The concept of speaking learning strategies set proposed by Oxford (1990) was applied in this study. Depending on the table below, Oxford indicates various learning strategies for speaking:

Table 1. Direct Strategies

Strategies Group	Strategy Set	Strategy
Memory Strategies	Developing conceptual connections	Implementing new vocabulary to a situation
Memory Strategies	Employing voices and visuals	Depiction auditory in memory
	Evaluate well	Structured evaluation
Cognitive Strategies	Implementing	Repeating
		Structured instruction for text and audio systems
		Understanding and applying structure and concepts
		Reorganizing
		Applying naturalism into application
	Getting and delivering messages	Utilizing materials to deliver and obtain messages
Analyzing and reasoning		Using logical deduction
		Converting
		Delivering
Compensation Strategies	Managing written and verbal challenges	Changing to the native tongue
		Obtaining support
		Utilizing acts or improvise
		Ignoring conversation completely or in part
		Choosing a subject
		Modifying or nearly defining the message
		Making up words
		Applying an acronym or synonym

Table II. Indirect Strategies

Strategies Group	Strategy Set	Strategy
	Creating your learning	Summary and relations to previous learning content

Metacognitive Strategies		Being attentive	
		Ignoring talking to concentrate on hearing	
	Arranging and planning your learning		Increasing awareness of language acquisition
			Structuring
			Determining learning objectives
			Recognizing the objective of a language assignment, consist of reading, listening, writing, and speaking
			Organizing for a language assignment
		Looking for possibilities to exercise	
Assessing your knowledge		Self-management	
		Self-evaluating	
Affective strategies	Reducing your anxieties	Utilizing respiration, mindfulness, or increasing relaxing	
		Utilizing sounds	
		Utilizing Humor	
	Improving yourself	Affirmative statements	
		Making calculated chances	
		Serviceable yourself	
	Discussions of your feeling level	Following your body's signals	
		Using a checklist	
		Create a language learning journal	

In a study by Amir (2018), language learning strategies among junior high school students in their English learning were investigated. A survey questionnaire was completed by 34 eighth-grade students, focusing on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The analysis revealed that students used strategies moderately across all skills, with reading strategies being the most commonly used, and speaking strategies being the least utilized. Another study conducted by Wahyuni (2019) delved into language learning strategies among Indonesian university students. Different proficiency levels showed varied preferences in strategies, with advanced and elementary students favoring compensation strategies, while intermediate students preferred metacognitive strategies. The research highlighted the significant impact of speaking skills on the effective implementation of strategies. Additionally, Puluhulawan et al. (2022) carried out research on learning strategies in a public speaking course. The study included three students with different scores, each utilizing cognitive, socio-affective, and meta-cognitive strategies. The high-average score student primarily employed cognitive strategies, such as watching and listening to English speeches on YouTube and Instagram, to enhance their public speaking proficiency.

In this study, the researcher conducted an extensive investigation at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah of Boys. The findings revealed that the students at this institution possess commendable language skills, mainly due to the requirement of using both English and Arabic languages. The students engage in English language activities twice a month as part of their daily routine. Additionally, every week, there are two speech activities, one featuring Indonesian and English speeches on Tuesday night, and the other focusing on Arabic speeches on Saturday night. Furthermore, the teachers actively provide vocabulary lessons to the students both in the classroom and in the dormitory. Given the information above, the researcher is particularly interested in analyzing the type of speaking learning strategies employed by the higher speaking achievers among the students at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah of Boys.

The aim of this research is to ascertain the strategies employed, identify the most frequently utilized strategies, and determine the less commonly used strategies by higher speaking achievers at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah in enhancing their speaking skills.

METHOD

Two main types of research design are Quantitative and Qualitative research. In this study, a qualitative descriptive research design was employed. Through qualitative descriptive research, the researcher aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon experienced by the research subjects in its entirety. The researcher sought to gather information on the English speaking strategies used by the higher speaking achievers of Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah.

This study was conducted at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah Barabai Kalimantan Selatan. The research subjects were students of ninth grade MTs Darul Istiqamah. Consists of 3 students who are categorized as the higher speaking achievers. The higher speaking achievers in this research are recommendations from teachers at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah. They are recommended because they are proficient in speaking English. According to the teacher (ustadz) he said that the goal of the students at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah is to reach an intermediate level of proficiency. However, the students chosen by the teacher (Ustadz) for this research are those who have a proficiency level above intermediate, and their achievements in English speeches.

The main research instrument utilized in this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire used in this research was adapted from Oxford's (1989) SILL questionnaire (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning) version 7.0, which was originally designed to evaluate the language learning strategies employed by foreign language learners. For this particular study, the researcher employed a translated version of the SILL questionnaire version 7.0 in the Indonesian language.

In order to collect the data, the researcher followed a series of steps. First, the necessary research permits were obtained from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. Next, the questionnaire was adapted for use in the study. This survey was derived from Oxford's (1989) SILL questionnaire (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning) version 7.0, designed specifically to evaluate language learning strategies employed by foreign language learners. While the original SILL questionnaire consisted of 50 statements, the researcher selected 36 statements for the purpose of investigating the English speaking strategies used by the higher speaking achievers. Following the adaptation of the questionnaire, it was administered to the participants. On February 14, 2023, the researcher distributed three printed questionnaires to three male 9th grade students at Pesantren Modern. With the assistance of a teacher (ustadz), the researcher gathered the students in the class. The questionnaire was then given directly to each student, and the researcher explained the process of filling it out. The students proceeded to complete the questionnaire together in the class, while the researcher waited for them. Once they finished, the researcher collected the filled-out questionnaires individually from each student.

Data analysis techniques in this study involve several steps. The first step is data reduction, which entails determining, focusing, eliminating, defining, and transforming the data found in written field notes or transcriptions (Miles et al., 1994, p.10). This includes enhancing the analysis, categorizing each issue with clear explanations, removing unnecessary details, and organizing the data. The data were gathered using questionnaires as the initial step in the data analysis technique. Subsequently, the researcher analyzed the data from the questionnaires to categorize the English speaking strategies used by the higher achievers, the most frequently used strategies, and the less frequently used ones. The second main flow of analysis is data display, involving the organized and condensed presentation of information to facilitate drawing conclusions and taking action (Miles et al., 1994, p.11). The researcher summarized the data obtained from the questionnaires to identify the English speaking strategies employed, most often employed, and less frequently employed by the higher speaking achievers. To present the research results clearly, the data was displayed using tables and pie charts. Descriptive writing was also employed by the researcher to further clarify the findings. The final step is conclusion/verification, which involves drawing inferences based on the data presented. Initial conclusions are considered temporary and subject to change if additional valid evidence supports alternative interpretations. However, when initial conclusions are supported by reliable and consistent evidence, they become highly credible. The researcher offered their own perspective and described the information based on the findings.

RESULTS

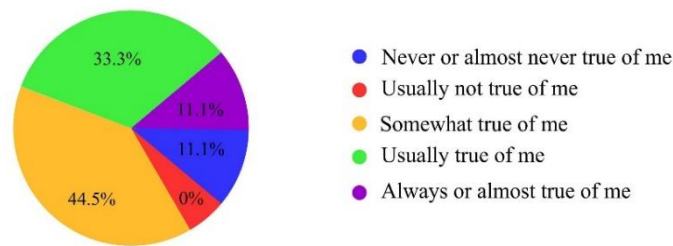
Findings cover three sections; English speaking strategies which are used by the higher achievers, English speaking strategies that are most often used by the higher achievers, and English speaking strategies that are less often used by the higher achievers. The results of the questionnaire are displayed in the pie charts below.

Memory strategies

Memory strategies have 3 questions from 36 questions. In memory strategies, the students sometimes prefer to use Memory strategies, it can be seen in picture 1 below.

Memory Strategies

9 responses



Picture 1. The results of Memory Strategies

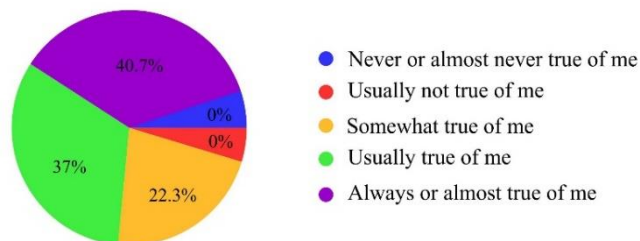
It shows that from 100%, the students always use memory strategies 11.1%, usually the students use memory strategies 33.3%, somewhat true of the students use memory strategies 44.5%, and the students never use memory strategies 11.1%

Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies have 9 questions from 36 questions. In cognitive strategies, the students almost prefer to use Cognitive Strategies, it can be seen in picture 2 below.

Cognitive Strategies

27 responses



Picture 2. The results of Cognitive Strategies

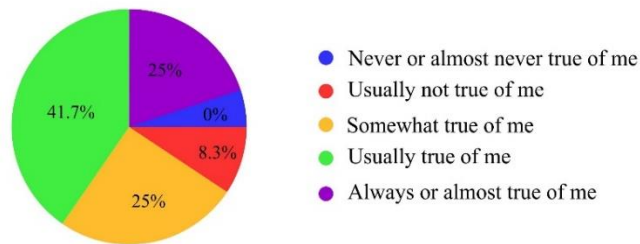
It shows that from 100%, the students always use cognitive strategies 40.7%, usually the students use cognitive strategies 37%, and somewhat true of the students use cognitive strategies 22.3%.

Compensation strategies

Compensation strategies have 4 questions from 36 questions. In compensation strategies, the students usually prefer to use Compensation strategies, it can be seen in picture 3 below.

Compensation Strategies

12 responses



Picture 3. The results of Compensation Strategies

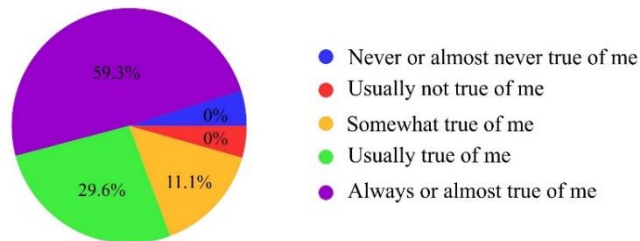
It shows that from 100%, the students always use compensation strategies 25%, usually the students use compensation strategies 41.7%, somewhat true of the students use compensation strategies 25%, and usually not true of the students use compensation strategies 8.3%.

Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies have 9 questions from 36 questions. In metacognitive strategies, the students almost prefer to use Metacognitive Strategies, it can be seen in picture 4 below.

Metacognitive Strategies

27 responses



Picture 4. The results of Metacognitive Strategies

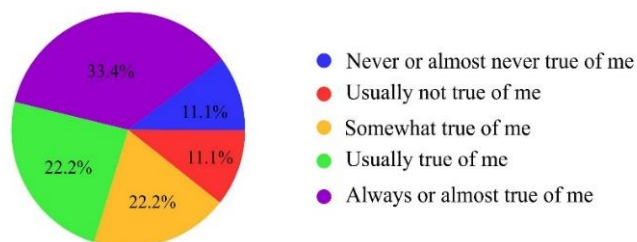
It shows that from 100%, the students always use metacognitive strategies 59.3%, usually the students use metacognitive strategies 29.6%, and somewhat true of the students use metacognitive strategies 11.1%.

Affective strategies

Affective strategies have 6 questions from 36 questions. In affective strategies, the students almost prefer to use affective strategies, but the students' also sometimes and usually prefer to use Affective strategies, it can be seen in picture 5 below.

Affective Strategies

18 responses

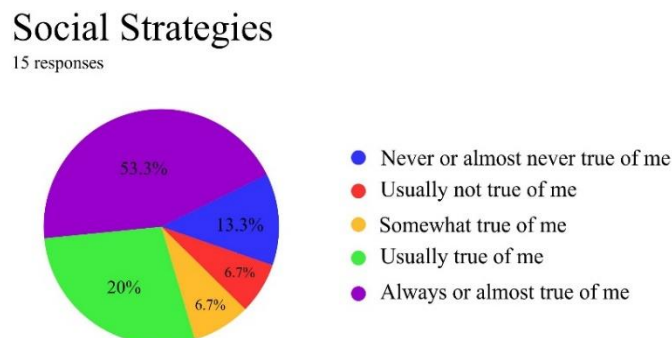


Picture 5. The results of Affective Strategies

It shows that from 100%, the students always use affective strategies 33.3%, usually the students use affective strategies 22.2%, somewhat true of the students use affective strategies 22.2%, usually not true of the students use affective strategies 11.1%, and the students never use affective strategies 11.1%.

Social strategies

Social strategies have 5 questions from 36 questions. In social strategies, the students almost prefer to use social strategies. It can be seen in picture 6 below.



Picture 6. The results of Social Strategies

It shows that from 100%, the students always use social strategies 53.3%, usually the students use social strategies 20%, somewhat true of the students use social strategies 6.7%, usually not true of the students use social strategies 6.7%, and the students never use social strategies 13.3%.

Depending on the results above, it can be said that the students employed the English speaking strategies that were provided by Oxford namely: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Moreover, the higher speaking achievers mostly used metacognitive strategies as they English speaking strategies. While, memory strategies were the less used strategies by the higher speaking achievers.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings from the questionnaire on English speaking learning strategies used by higher speaking achievers at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah of Boys is as follows: Metacognitive strategies were highly prominent among the students, with 100% of respondents using these strategies. Among them, 59.3% always used metacognitive strategies, 29.6% usually used metacognitive strategies, and 11.1% sometimes employed metacognitive strategies. Social strategies also showed significant utilization, with 100% of students implementing social strategies. Among them, 53.3% always used social strategies, 20% usually used social strategies, 13.3% never used social strategies, 6.7% sometimes used social strategies, and 6.7% rarely used social strategies. Cognitive strategies were widely adopted, with 100% of students incorporating cognitive strategies. Among them, 40.7% always used cognitive strategies, 37% usually used cognitive strategies, and 22.3% sometimes employed cognitive strategies. Compensation strategies were employed by all students, with 100% utilization. Among them, 41.7% usually used compensation strategies, 25% always used compensation strategies, 25% sometimes used compensation strategies, and 8.3% rarely used compensation strategies. Affective strategies were present in all students' strategies, with 100% implementation. Among them, 33.3% always used affective strategies, 22.2% usually used affective strategies, 22.2% sometimes employed affective strategies, 11.1% rarely used affective strategies, and 11.1% never used affective strategies. Memory strategies were also observed, with 100% usage. Among them, 44.5% sometimes used memory strategies, 33.3% usually used memory strategies, 11.1% rarely used memory strategies, and 11.1% never used memory strategies.

As mentioned in introduction, a strategy refers to a deliberately planned and established pattern for performing a specific activity or action. Oxford (1990) proposed several learning strategies

that proved beneficial for improving speaking skills, including memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Based on the results obtained, it becomes evident that all students enhanced their English speaking proficiency by employing the strategies suggested by Oxford (1990).

With regard to students' English speaking strategies used by the higher speaking achievers, the researcher found interesting results towards English speaking strategies used by the higher speaking achievers. Metacognitive strategies and social strategies are strategies that students always use when speaking English, both of which have a percentage above 50%. Metacognitive strategies have 59.3% and the social strategies have 53.3%. It indicates that higher speaking achievers are more often assisted by using social strategies, and higher speaking achievers are most frequently assisted by employing metacognitive strategies in their English speaking abilities. According to Oxford (1990, p.136), metacognitive strategies are actions that go beyond basic cognitive tools, enabling learners to effectively manage and organize their own learning process. Coordinating, setting objectives, analyzing tasks, and designing language assignments are examples of metacognitive strategies that assist learners in organizing and planning their language acquisition accurately and successfully (Oxford, 1990, p.136).

In the other hand, the higher speaking achievers at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah of Boys used memory strategies and affective strategies less frequently. In memory strategies, 11.1% of students always used memory strategies, 33.3% usually used memory strategies, 44.5% sometimes used memory strategies, and 11.1% never used memory strategies. As for affective strategies, 33.3% of students always used affective strategies, 22.2% usually used affective strategies, 22.2% sometimes used affective strategies, 11.1% usually did not use affective strategies, and 11.1% never used affective strategies. These results indicate that higher speaking achievers are rarely supported by affective strategies and are less supported by memory strategies to improve their English speaking abilities. Oxford (1990, p.37) explains that memory strategies, such as grouping or using imagery, play a specific role in helping students store and retrieve new knowledge. These strategies, known as mnemonics, are particularly valuable for learning foreign languages, especially for memorizing English vocabulary. On the other hand, Oxford (1990, p.39) mentions that while some teachers believe acquiring new words is easy, language learners often struggle to recall the extensive vocabulary required to achieve fluency.

This study compared its results with three previous studies. Amir (2018) focused on language learning strategies of junior high school students in Bandung and found that reading strategies were used the most, while speaking strategies were used the least. Wahyuni (2019) explored language learning strategies of Indonesian university students and identified preferences for specific strategies based on proficiency levels, with affective strategies being significantly influenced by speaking skills. Puluhulawan et al. (2022) investigated learning strategies in a public speaking course and found that high-average scoring students mainly utilized cognitive strategies. In contrast, the current study examined English speaking learning strategies used by higher speaking achievers at Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah of Boys. The strategies employed by these achievers were all based on Oxford's (1990) proposals, with metacognitive strategies being the most frequently used and memory strategies being used less often. These results differed from the previous studies, which had different target groups and focused on various language learning contexts. The present study adds valuable insights into the specific strategies employed by higher speaking achievers to enhance their English speaking abilities.

The research findings indicate that the results are not consistent with previous studies. There are various factors influencing why these findings differ from the earlier ones. Oxford (1989) identifies numerous factors that affect the choice of learning strategies, including the particular language being learned, the duration of learning, the level of consciousness or awareness, age, gender, affective aspects such as attitudes and motivation levels, language learning objectives, motivational

orientation, individual personality traits, overall personality type, preferred learning style, aptitude, career goals, national origin, the teaching methods utilized, and the demands of the learning tasks.

Furthermore, the differences in research findings could be attributed to age, gender, and language teaching methods at the Islamic boarding school. Previous studies involved university students as research subjects, while this study focused on junior high school students. Age-related factors may have influenced the variation in strategies used. Additionally, gender played a role in the findings, with females employing social learning strategies more frequently than males. Darul Istiqamah Islamic boarding school emphasized independent development of English language skills and provided support through speech, debate, and vocabulary programs, fostering high motivation among students. This motivation, coupled with the teaching methods and learning environment, influences the use of language learning strategies among the students. In conclusion, the unique context and characteristics of the Islamic boarding school contribute to the differing research findings in this study compared to previous ones.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

After analyzing the findings and discussions presented in the previous chapter, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions for this study:

Firstly, the English speaking strategies employed by the higher speaking achievers at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah were determined using questionnaire results presented through pie charts and percentages. The findings indicated that these higher speaking achievers utilized a range of strategies, including metacognitive strategies, social strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, affective strategies, and memory strategies.

Secondly, the most frequently used English speaking strategies by the higher speaking achievers at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah were identified based on the questionnaire results. It was observed that metacognitive strategies were the strategies most commonly employed by these higher speaking achievers.

Lastly, the English speaking strategies that were less frequently used by the higher speaking achievers at Pondok Pesantren Modern Darul Istiqamah were also identified. The analysis of the questionnaire data led to the conclusion that memory strategies were the least utilized by these higher speaking achievers.

And the suggestions in this study are as follows: (1) for the students, the study suggested using metacognitive strategies, more English-language tasks, and improving time planning skills to enhance students' English-speaking abilities. (2) for the teachers, teachers can utilize the study's findings on students' learning strategies, especially metacognitive strategies, to enhance classroom teaching methods and materials. Motivating students to use metacognitive strategies can lead to improved speaking skills, ultimately improving the overall teaching and learning experience. (3) for future researchers, future researchers are advised to conduct an in-depth study on English speaking learning strategies at Pesantren Modern. Interviews could be used for data collection in future research to gain further insights. However, this study currently lacks an extensive explanation of the factors influencing English speaking learning strategies at Pesantren Modern.

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