

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND THEIR THINKING STYLES USE

Nasukhah

(Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP Unisma)

Nasukhah97@gmail.com

Abstract: Many students feel difficult in learning English so that makes them very lazy and they are not interested in English. To be able to understand English easily, students have to employ the appropriate learning strategy and thinking style. Therefore, this study focuses on language learning strategies and thinking styles. Both of them are very helpful for beginner or students. This study aimed to find out what is the most language learning strategies and thinking styles that are usually applied by students when they are in learning process and to find out the relationship between language learning strategies and thinking styles. This study used quantitative method. The researcher took students of the eleventh graders of MA Almaarif Singosari. The linguistic major students as the participants consisting of 47 students from two classes. Questionnaire is the instrument of this study. To analyze the data, the researcher used SPSS version 20. The finding of the study indicated that metacognitive strategy is type of strategy mostly used at mean point 5.97 and executive style is mostly applied by students at mean point 3.78. There is a correlation between language learning strategies and thinking styles at significant value .001. It can be summed up that metacognitive is the dominant strategy and executive is the style the most used by students and also there is a relationship between language learning strategies and thinking styles.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, Thinking Styles

INTRODUCTION

Many schools in Indonesia enact English as the main and important lesson in junior and senior high school. Even English language used and applied in the schools or daily activities. Moreover, many Islamic boarding schools are commonly used Arabic as an everyday language. It turns out, English is also practiced in daily activities as Arabic like Pondok Pesantren Mambaus Sholihin, Pondok Modern Gontor Darussalam, and so on. From that habit, students who do not like English have to try to understand and apply English as their daily language. English language is international language which is used by people around the world. Crystal (1997) (Cited in Gunantar, 2016) states that the number

of people in the world who communicates in English with international speakers are increasing compared to speakers of other languages. There are many ways and factors to learn English easily. Every people or students have different ways and manner how they can improve their English skill. They have their own strategy on how they can improve their ability. The students' environment is also very influential in the language learning process of the students. By knowing their language learning strategies, students can get the information easily and make their learning process more effective because learning strategy has a big influence on the learning process. Cohen (2011) (Cited in Irgatoglu, 2018) also provides that learners construct their meaning by using language learning strategies which directly affect learning.

In general, learning strategies are specific actions or behaviors applied and done by students to improve their learning process (Oxford, 1990:11). As we know, language learning strategies are steps that we use to learn and improve English skill. Not only that, according to Horwitz in Oxford (2017:16), learning strategies are activities or techniques that learners can use to improve or enhance their target language ability. It can be said that students can resolve their difficulties when they know their own learning strategy. Every student have different strategy to reach understanding and solve their problem that is why students must be able to learn and comprehend themselves because they cannot depend on others. Not too different with O'Malley and Chamot (1990:1) who illustrate learning strategies are special thoughts or behaviors which are used by individuals use to help them in understanding, learning, or retaining new information. It means that appropriate learning strategies can make the students better. Rubin (1975:43) (cited in Griffiths & Cansiz, 2015) defines learning strategies are the methods, techniques or tools which a learners use to acquire knowledge.

Richards & Schmidt (2002:301) states that learning strategies can be applied to simple things such as learning a new words, or more challenging tasks that involve language comprehension and production. Not too different with Cohen (2017:12) that language learning strategies include strategies for identifying the material that needs to be learned, differentiating it from various

materials, and grouping it for easier and simpler learning. Another definition that is not much different from Oxford and Schramm (2008:48) (cited in Huang, 2015) note that language learning strategies are “a specific plans, actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that used by the individual learners, with a certain level of awareness to enhance their progress in developing a second or foreign language skills.” It means that strategy is the learning method used by learners to apply how to learn and track their progress toward achieving the purpose of learning. Next, Griffiths (2008:87) says language learning strategies are activities chosen by learners with the purpose to organize their own language learning. Wenden and Rubin (1987:19) define learning strategies are set of steps, plans, action, and routines that the learner used to facilitate them in obtaining and using information. It means that learning strategies are some ways to do to catch the information from others. It can be some steps, plans or daily activities.

The successful learning process is not only from a good learning strategy, but also depends on students’ thinking styles. Sternberg (1997:8) states that a style is a way of thinking. It is not an ability but people use a preferred way to find the abilities they have. It means that ability is something that they can do but style is something that they like to do. Students do something by using styles that make them comfortable. Thus, they would be quick in expanding the material understanding. Students think and use style freely as they wish, allowing them to think clearly so it is very helpful and beneficial for themselves. Thinking has a very important role of the learning process. By understanding diversity of students’ thinking styles, teachers can ensure that students understand what teachers teach, even though the teachers and the students’ styles are very different.

A style is the way students think according to what they like (Sternberg, 1997: 19). Students think about something that makes them more enjoyable so that they can accept every lesson and material well. Recognizing of thinking styles helps people or students to adapt their thinking to the different thinking styles which makes them faster in capturing material. Thinking is a process in which a students’ abilities increase through psychological interactions with the skills possessed and acquired by students in developing new structures, rules, and beliefs (Qatami, 2001) (Cited in Aljojo, 2017). Thinking styles becomes an

intermediary of knowledge to capture the important aspects (Verbeke, Belschak, Bakker, & Dietz, 2008) (cited in Groza, Locander, & Howlett, 2016). Thinking styles is in intermediary used by students to expand knowledge by using every student's style.

Thinking style is a preferred way of thinking. It is not an ability, but more precisely how we use abilities in a preferred style (Sternberg, 1997). Apart from that, thinking styles reflect the ways people prefer to organize information they will use (Sternberg, 1988, 1997) (cited in Groza, Locander, & Howlett, 2016). As we know that style refers to how someone likes to do something. Something that is done comfortably and freely will produce a good result. As well as students' thinking styles, students will be better when they understand a material with their own styles. Sternberg (1997:18) argues that whatever happens to us depends not only on how well we think, but also on how well we think. Moreover, thinking style is a concept used to describe the way individuals think, perceive, and get or remember information. It is the way students show that they prefer to use the abilities to solve problems and to process information.

Meanwhile, language learning strategies and thinking styles can be properly implemented with teachers' help because teachers can help students to find the appropriate learning strategies and thinking styles it will make students become independent in the learning process. As a study by the Kamehameha Schools Pacific Policy Research Center (2010) (cited in Khotimah, Widiati, Mustofa, & Ubaidillah) indicates that teachers need to be able to assist students in becoming independent learners in 21st century education. The aim of this research is to find out what language learning strategies and thinking styles that are mostly used by students and to find out the significant relationship between language learning strategies and thinking styles of the eleventh graders of MA Almaarif Singosari. The researcher chose this research because the majority of the students in this school stay in Islamic boarding School where they practice Arabic more and prefer Arabic lesson rather than English. The researcher formulated the research questions as follows:

1. What language learning strategies are mostly used by the eleventh graders of MA Almaarif Singosari?

2. What thinking styles are mostly used by the eleventh graders of MA Almaarif Singosari?
3. Is there any relationship between language learning strategies and thinking styles of the eleventh graders of MA Almaarif Singosari?

METHOD

There are two types of research methods; quantitative and qualitative. The researcher used the quantitative methods in this study. According to Creswell (2012:12), there are three types of quantitative research design; experimental, correlational, and survey design. From all the types of quantitative research design, the researcher uses a correlational design to collect and analyze the data. Correlational research involves collecting data to determine the degree of relationship exists between two or more variables that can be measured (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 1987:204). According to Creswell (2012:338), a correlation is a statistical test to determine the tendency or pattern that vary consistently for two or more variables. In this study, there are two variables that are: language learning strategies (X) and thinking styles (Y). The purpose of correlational study is to determine relations among variables.

In this study, the researcher chose students of MA Almaarif Singosari. There are three majors in this school; science, social, and linguistic major in MA Almaarif Singosari. The researcher chose the students of the 11th grade of Linguistic major as participants of this study. The total participants were 47 students from two classes that are XI IBB 1 and XI IBB 2. Instrument is needed by the researcher because it is a tool to collect the data. The researcher used questionnaire to collect the data of the study. There are two questionnaires are used in this study. One is SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) is a tool which used by students and teachers to know and to assess the particular language learning strategies that are used by the students in learning a foreign language. There are two version of the SILL. Version 5.1 (80 items) is used for native English speakers learning a foreign language, and version 7.0 (50 items) is used by non-English speakers who are learning English. Of course in this study, the researcher uses the SILL version 7.0 because the participants were EFL

learners. It has six scales, and the researcher took two items on each scale to rate the students' language learning strategies. The other is Sternberg-Wagner Self-Assessment Inventory (Sternberg, 1997). The inventory has 13 kinds, with eight items on each kind and the researcher took only one item on each kind to rate the students' thinking styles.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher showed the description of the data got from the questionnaire. The data got from two classes of linguistic major which consists of 47 students at eleventh grade. The researcher used SPSS version 20 to calculate the result in this study. It will be described in the following.

Table 1: The Number of Students' Language Learning Strategies

Items	Category	Never	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Always
1	Memory	1	28	12	6	-
2	Memory	5	23	9	8	2
3	Cognitive	8	19	8	11	1
4	Cognitive	1	17	18	8	3
5	Compensation	3	14	18	9	3
6	Compensation	11	15	7	9	5
7	Metacognitive	1	9	17	7	13
8	Metacognitive	12	16	7	7	5
9	Affective	4	12	18	7	6
10	Affective	7	13	12	7	8
11	Social	1	10	16	12	8
12	Social	8	30	4	4	1

Table 2: The Number of Students' Thinking Styles

Items	Category	Never	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Always
1	Legislative	-	13	13	11	10
2	Executive	1	7	13	6	20
3	Judicial	1	19	12	14	10
4	Monarchic	4	7	11	17	8
5	Hierarchic	3	15	16	9	4
6	Oligarchic	3	15	15	12	2
7	Anarchic	-	10	17	7	13
8	Global	7	19	8	8	5
9	Local	1	14	12	13	7
10	External	-	10	13	9	15
11	Internal	-	13	15	11	8
12	Liberal	2	17	13	11	4
13	Conservative	-	13	15	10	9

Language Learning Strategies and Thinking Styles

Based on SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) and TSI (Thinking Style Inventory) Questionnaire, there are six kinds of language learning strategies and 13 kinds of thinking styles used by the students of MA Almaarif Singosari. The data shows that each student has different kinds of language learning strategies and thinking styles. The data are clearly presented in the Table 3 and 4

Table 3: The Percentage and Frequency Table of Students' Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies	Frequency	Score	Percentage
Memory	7	237	15%
Cognitive	8	255	16%
Compensation	8	259	17%
Metacognitive	8	281	18%
Affective	8	277	18%
Social	8	258	16%
Total	47	1567	100%

Based on the Table 3, the data shows that memory strategy 15% (7 students), cognitive strategy 16% (8 students), compensation strategy 17% (8 students), metacognitive strategy 18% (8 students), affective strategy 18% (8 students), social strategy 16% (8 students). Metacognitive strategy included as the most dominantly are used by students, because it has the highest score.

Table 4: The Percentage and Frequency Table of Students' Thinking Styles

Thinking Styles	Frequency	Score	Percentage
Legislative	4	159	8%
Executive	4	178	9%
Judicial	4	163	8%
Monarchic	4	159	8%
Hierarchic	3	137	7%
Oligarchic	3	136	7%
Anarchic	4	164	8%
Global	3	126	6%
Local	3	152	8%
External	4	170	9%
Internal	4	155	8%
Liberal	3	139	7%
Conservative	4	156	8%
Total	47	1994	100%

In the Table 4, the data shows that legislative 8% (4 students), executive 9% (4 students), judicial 8% (4 students), monarchic 8% (4 students), hierarchic 7% (3 students), oligarchic 7% (3 students), anarchic 8% (4 students), global 6% (3 students), local 8% (3 students), external 9% (4 students), internal 8% (4 students), liberal 7% (3 students), and conservative 8% (4 students). Executive and external have the same percentage, but scores both of them are different. Executive has the higher score than external. Then, executive is the most thinking style used by students.

The Mean Score of Language Learning Strategies and Thinking Styles

The researcher calculated the mean score from six categories of language learning strategies and the mean score from thirteen kinds of thinking styles. The data are shown in the following table.

Table 5: The Mean Score of Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies	Mean
Memory	5.04
Cognitive	5.42
Compensation	5.51
Metacognitive	5.97
Affective	5.89
Social	5.48

Based on the Table 5 above, it can be seen that metacognitive strategy is mostly used by students which gained mean score 5.97. It was followed by affective with 5.89, compensation 5.51, social 5.48, cognitive 5.42, and the last is memory strategy 5.04.

Table 6: The Mean Score of Thinking Styles

Thinking Styles	Mean
Legislative	3.38
Executive	3.78
Judicial	3.46
Monarchic	3.38
Hierarchic	2.91
Oligarchic	2.89
Anarchic	3.48
Global	2.68
Local	3.23
External	3.61
Internal	3.29
Liberal	2.29
Conservative	3.31

The average of thirteen kinds of thinking styles is illustrated in Table 6. Based on the result above, executive has the highest mean score at point 3.78. It is followed by the mean score in sequence that is external 3.61, anarchic 3.48, and judicial 3.46, legislative and monarchic have the same mean scores at point 3.38, conservative 3.31, internal 3.29, local 3.23, hierarchic 2.91, oligarchic 2.98, global 2.68, and the last that is the lowest mean score is liberal with 2.29.

Correlation Result

The researcher used SPSS 20 to find out the correlation results between language learning strategies and thinking styles. The data is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Correlations

		Language Learning Strategies	Thinking Styles
Language Learning Strategies	Pearson Correlation	1	,470**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,001
	N	47	47
Thinking Styles	Pearson Correlation	,470**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	
	N	47	47

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the table of Pearson correlation above, r_{count} is 0.470. It means that r_{count} is in the third level as moderate correlation (0.40 – 0.599) the correlation between two variables is moderate. The significant value is .001 which means that the correlation between two variables is significant. It can be said that there is correlation between students' language learning strategies and their thinking styles.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and data analysis above, the researcher concluded that metacognitive becomes the most dominant language learning strategy widely used by students of eleventh graders in linguistic major at point 5.97. And then, executive has the highest mean score which means that it was one kind of thinking styles that mostly applied at point 3.78. Furthermore, according to the table in the previous chapter, it summed up that learning strategies and thinking styles have a significant correlation in language learning with significant value .001.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the language learning strategies and thinking styles are the basis of every students to be the main success in language learning. To improve students' language learning strategies, it is necessary to practice more about how to use the learning strategies themselves. In addition, students also need to recognize their learning strategies so that the learning process might be effective.

The suggestion for teachers, this research can enhance teachers' insights regarding various learning strategies, models, approaches, and techniques in teaching and learning English. Teachers are expected to be able to design teaching models to adapt various students' language learning strategies and thinking styles in the teaching and learning process. For students, students have to know what learning strategies and what thinking styles that can make them improve their skills and increase their abilities. Both are very important and helpful in reaching a higher level of English comprehension. For readers, this research may help the readers to improve their knowledge about English teaching and learning. They will know several problems that have to solve in learning. For next researchers, it can examine further, critically, and comprehensively that is closest related to this investigation to reveal many aspects in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

REFERENCES

- Aljojo, Nahla. 2017. Differences in Styles of Thinking “In Light of Sternberg's Theory”: A Case Study of Different Educational Levels in Saudi Arabia. *JOTSE*, 2017 – 7(3): 333-346
- Cohen, Andrew. D. 2017. *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group
- Creswell, John. W. 2012. *Educational Research ; Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Pearson.
- Gay, L.R., Mills, G.E. & Airasian, Peter. 2012. *Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Applications*. Pearson.
- Gunantar, D.A. 2016. The Impact of English as an International Language on English Language Teaching in Indonesia. *LANGUAGE CIRCLE: Journal of Language and Literature*, X/2 (April 2016) at <http://journal.unnes.ac.id>
- Griffiths, Carol & Cansiz, Gokhan. 2015. Language learning strategies: An holistic view. *SSLT (Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching)*. Vol 473-493
- Griffiths, Carol. 2008. *Lessons from Good Language Learners*. Cambridge University Press.
- Groza, M.D., Locander, D.A., & Howlett, C.H. 2016. Linking Thinking Styles to Sales Performance: The Importance of Creativity and Subjective Knowledge.
- Huang, I-Chen. 2015. *Language Learner Strategies and English Proficiency of College Freshmen in Taiwan: A Mixed-Methods Study*. Springer
- Irgatoglu, A. (2018). Avoiding the Use of L1 in Foreign Language Reading Comprehension Activities. *Language Teaching and Educational Research (LATER)*, 1(1). 52-56
- Khotimah, K., Widiati, U., Mustofa, M. & Ubaidillah, M.F. 2019. Autonomous English Learning: Teachers’ and Students’ perceptions. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*. Vol. 9 No.2, September 2019, pp. 371-381
- O’Malley, J.M. & Chamot, A.U. 1990. *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge University Press

Oxford, Rebecca. L. 1990. Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know.

Oxford, Rebecca. L. 2017. Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies: Self-Regulation in Context Second Edition. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

Richards, Jack. C & Schmidt, Richards. 2002. Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. Pearson Education Limited

Sternberg, R.J. 1997. Thinking Style. Cambridge University Press.

Wenden, A. & Rubin, J. 1987. Learners Strategies in Language Learning. Practice Hall, New Jersey