CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Gender Differences

1. Definition of Gender Differences

Gender is considered to be the social, cultural, and psychological construct (McElhinny, 2003) that are laid upon the males and females. There is also some distinction between sex and gender. Sex refers to psychological, biological and anatomic features that cannot change whereas gender roles can change according to society norms and expectation.

According to Butler (1990), there are facts of biology and gender is a phenomenon which is brought into being when it is performed. In her own words, “Gender is the repeated stylization of body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural kind of being” (Butler, 1990, p.32). Gender is therefore not something you acquire once and for all at an early stage of life, but an ongoing accomplishment produced by your repeated actions (Cameron, 2004). The definition of gender given by FAO (1997) is the relation between men and women, both perceptual and material. Gender is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but it is constructed socially.
Gender refers to a set of qualities and behaviors expected from a female or male by society. Gender is the difference between women and men resulted from cultural and social expectation. No matter a man and woman are from the same society or they are of different cultural background, the differences they display in general are reflected though their respective constrains, views, opportunities, needs, roles and responsibilities.

In short, every society has a distinct gender identity and any individual living in them may or may not comply with the presumed identity. Gender which is composed of culturally constructed male identity and female identity, not biological differences between females and males.

B. Language Learning Strategies

1. Definition of Language Learning Strategies

Learning strategy which comes from the word strategy is originally from the ancient Greek word strategia, it indicates generalship or the art of war. There are many definitions about language learning strategies. Some of researcher state that learning strategies tend to be mental processes over which students have conscious control and which they can choose to use when performing tasks. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) also stated that learning strategies are linked to the learner’s active contribution to their learning and some effective learning skill to acquire.
language. In other words, learners may use strategies through active learning to acquire language.

According to Nunan (1991), “learning strategy as the mental processes learners utilizes to learn the language.” Furthermore, Chamot (2005) in further identified learning strategies as procedures that assist a learning task. Oxford (1990) defined learning strategies as the specific action, behaviors, or methods to help learners to learn more effectively.

In conclusion, based on the explanation above about learning strategies, it can be concluded that learning strategies could be the method, steps, operations, mental processes or procedures used to help students to comprehend, remember, and store new information.

2. The Use of Language Learning Strategies

The use of language learning strategies for the learners can develop the learners’ competence in the second or foreign language. Strategies are used by the learners in order to cope with difficulties in communicating in second or foreign language.

Language learning strategies are important for the learners in order to make a good language learner. According to Stern (1975), for good learners, personal style is great importance, as well as an active approach to the learning task, a tolerant approach to target language, and empathy with the speaker. Stern also mentioned the importance of
technical know-how of how to tackle a language, the importance of experimentation and planning strategies in an attempt to develop the target language into an ordered system, and the willingness to constantly revise that system. Oxford (1990; 154) describe that language learning strategies are important for language learning increase. The learning strategies are tools for active, self-directed involvement which is essential for developing learning competence.

In addition, language learning strategies is important to be developed. The learners who use language learning strategies appropriately can help them self to become a good learner in achieving learning competence.

3. Classification of Language Learning Strategy

Learning strategy was categorized into two categories by Rubin (1981). Rubin divided learning strategy as direct strategies which are directly related to language learning and indirect strategies which are indirectly related to language learning. The direct strategies consist of clarification/ verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing, deductive reasoning, and practice. Moreover, indirect strategies consist of creating opportunities for practice and production tricks.

There are six classifications of learning strategy based on Oxford (1990). The learning strategies are divided into six subcategories. These
six subcategories are memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Oxford (1995) also divided the system into two main classes; they are direct strategies and indirect strategies. First, direct strategies concern the learning of language itself and mental processing of language directly. The three subcategories are memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. Memory strategies help the learners store new information in their memories and retrieve it later. Cognitive strategies can enable learners to understand the operation and the translations of the learning materials or input. Using cognitive strategies, such as repeating, summarizing, using resources and recombining, those can help learners to learn and produce a new language. Compensation strategies help learners overcome knowledge limitations in the four skills, such as making a guess when listening and reading, or using synonyms while speaking and writing.

Second, indirect categories concern the general management of learning without involving the target language directly. The three subcategories are metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies are high-order learning strategies which are aimed at planning, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring, and self-evolution. In affective categories learners can help their self to monitor the emotion, attitudes, and motivation related to language learning. The last one of these subcategories is social strategies; social
strategies help learners through interactions with others to get input and practice. In other words, it involves learners’ actions in the language learning process such as asking question, cooperating with others, initiating conversation, and developing empathy.

There are many researchers who have described successful language learners and their strategies. One of findings among them is that successful language learners in general use more and better learning strategies than do poorer learners (Oxford, 1989: 87).

Gender of the learners makes a significant difference in learning a second or foreign language. Gender as a variable in the use of language learning strategies reported that significant sex differences almost always occurred in a single direction, which is showing the greater use of language learning strategies by females. Females used social learning strategies significantly than males were reported by Politzer (1983: 62).

4. The Factors Affecting for Choosing Learning Strategy

There are many factors which affect the learners in choosing or using learning strategies, the use of learning strategy related to tasks, learning stage, age, gender, individual style, contexts, and cultural differences. There are several studies have been examined, the correlation between learning strategies uses and these variables. As a research conducted by Ehrman (1989), they investigated the correlation between learning strategies and other factors such as learners’ characteristics, sex.
differences, and cognitive style. The results showed that there is a significant correlation between learning strategies and sex differences. Women use the learning strategies more frequent than men.

Nationalities, ethnicities and motivation also have affection in choosing learning strategy. Motivation can affect learners for using learning strategies. Based on the previous research by Nyikos (1989) learners’ self-reported motivation principally determined their learning strategy use. Participants with high motivation were described as using learning strategies more frequently than participants with low motivation did. There are also numerous studies which have been conducted to examine the relationship between learning strategy and nationality and ethnicity (Gao, 2006; Hong-Nam & Leavel, 2006; Liyanage, Birch, & Grimbeek, 2004; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wharton, 200; Yang, 2007; Oxford & Burry, 1995). For example, the study of Oxford & Burry (1995) and Wharton (2000), all of their researches indicated that cultural background was related to the use of choices of language learning strategies. Different nationalities and ethnicities of learners may create different learning strategies.

The other factor is gender. As mentioned before gender also has influence in choosing learning strategies. There are some researches that were conducted to measure the influence of gender in learning strategy and its relationship. The research conducted by (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Hong-Nam & Leael, 2006; Nisbet et al, 2005;
Most of the studies showed that female learners employed more learning strategies than male learners did. For instance, Ghee and Oxford (1995) conducted the survey method research to investigate the language learning strategy use of university students at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, and explored gender differences in learning strategy use. The results of the research indicate that female use more learning strategies than men did. Female used memory strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies more often than males did.

In short, most of the prior research showed differences between males and females in the use of learning strategies, with the females’ overall dominance in frequency and range of strategies. Although most of studies have shown the differences of learning strategies between males and females, some studies showed that there are no significant different learning strategies between males and females.

5. The Study of Language Learning Strategy

In the 1970’s, the significant of individual variation in language learning strategies was firstly noticed by the researcher. There have been many researcher have studied about the factor related to the choice of
language learning strategies. According to (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) there are some factors influenced in choosing language learning strategy include degree of metacognitive awareness, sex or gender, level of language learning, language being learned, personality type, learning style, aptitude and language teaching methods. On the research by Nyikos and Ehrman (1998) presented that females use a far wider range of language learning strategies than males. Moreover, they offer evidence that females usually employ social strategies which contribute strongly to development of communicative competence.

Green and Oxford (1995) conducted the survey method research to investigate the language learning strategy use of university students at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, and explored gender differences in learning strategy use. The results of the research indicate that female use more learning strategies than men did.

On the research conducted by Bozinovic & Sindik (2011) about gender differences in the use of learning strategies revealed that there is statistically significant difference in the frequency of strategy use. The findings of the research revealed that female learners use all learning strategies more frequently than their male counterparts.

There are numerous study have been made by some researcher about learning strategies by (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Green & Oxford, 1995; Peacock, 2001; Peacock & ho, 2003; Wong, 2005). For
instance, Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) investigated the language learning strategy use of learners with different cultural and linguistic background enrolled in a college Intensive English Program (IEP). They found that the most preferred language learning strategies for participant were metacognitive strategies followed by social strategies, compensation strategies and memory strategies. The other research conducted by Khalil (2005) investigated language learning strategies of 370 university EFL students in Palestine and explored the effects of students with different proficiency level and gender on strategy use. Khalil also found that the most frequently strategies were metacognitive and social strategies.

In addition, according to some research, gender affects the choice of language learning strategies (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). In spite of that, there is still need further study about the gender differences and learning strategy to get the clearer explanation about it.

C. Gender Differences and Language Learning Strategy

The relation between language learning and gender differences has become one of the major issues since early 1970s. Considering to the gender differences in language learning, females more often used rigorous adverbs, more conjunction such as but, and more modal auxiliary verbs such as could than males. In the other hand, males were using slang, longer words, more articles, and more references to location. Aliakbari &
Mahjub, 2010 also stated that in conversations, males dominate in mixed-gender conversations; they try to be more active during the talk and the conversation practice. It is also supported by Sunderland (1998) that found that males talked more, however females were engaged in conversations more sophisticatedly and they were active in creating and taking advantage of learning opportunities with which their teacher provided them. Males learners are claimed to have a more negative view and less aptitude towards foreign language than female (Week, 2011). Take a look from the amount of talk; males usually talk much more than females in public communications. In contrast to that females talk much more in their family than males do.

In a study of university student learning foreign languages by Oxford and Nyikos (1998), gender was found to have great impacts on strategy choice. Females were found to use certain strategies more than males. It is also supported by the recent study on learning strategies by Hashemi (2011), the result of his study stated that female use more affective and compensation strategies when compared to males.

Most studies found that female learners use more learning strategies than male learners. The study by Green and Oxford (1995) employed the survey method to investigate the language learning strategy use of university students at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, and explored gender differences in strategy use. The sample consisted of
374 learners. The result indicated that females used more learning strategies than males did.

According to Dongyue (2004), he carried a quite interesting research on the correlation between language proficiency, gender, and strategy use. The research findings indicate that there are statistically significant gender differences in memory, affective of females.

Based on the explanation before, it can be concluded that gender differences are important in language learning strategies. There are differences in the use of language learning strategies caused by gender differences.

D. Basic Assumption

Language learning strategies are the method, steps, operations, mental processes or procedures used to help students to comprehend, remember, and store new information. As stated by Nunan (1991) that language learning strategy as the mental processes learners utilizes to learn the language. There are many factors which affect the use of learning strategies, the use of learning strategy related to tasks, learning stage, age, gender, individual style, contexts, and cultural differences.

In the some research that conducted to measure the influence of gender in learning strategy and its relationship. The research conducted by (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995; Khalil, 2005; Oxford &
Burry stock, 1995; Peng, 2001; Tercanlioglu, 2004; Whaarton, 2000). Most of the studies showed that female learners employed more learning strategies than male learners did. For instance, Gree and Oxford (1995) conducted the survey method research to investigate the language learning strategy use of university students at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, and explored gender differences in learning strategy use. The results of the research indicate that female use more types of learning strategies than men did. In short, most of the prior research showed significant differences between males and females in the use of learning strategies.