

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Learning Strategy

2.1.1 Definition

English was acclaimed as International language, which means, all university students have to do some effort to master it in order to be a qualified graduate. In order to master the language, students have to arrange a set of effort that usually called as learning strategy (LS). According to Schumaker and Deshler (1992), learning strategy is one's way to organizing a set of skill to accomplish a task successfully and efficiently.

Other expert, Weinstein and Mayer (1986) defined learning LS as how learners' think and behave during learning process that can affect his/her information encoding process. Later Mayer (1988) defined LS as "behaviors of a learner that are intended to influence how the learner processes information". These definitions clearly stated that LS has very close relationship with behavior, where the learner hopes the behavior can be a tool to help them process the information.

Indeed, definition about learning strategy can be different from one expert to another because they have different point of view. But, from those definition mentioned before, one can infer one concept about learning strategy, it is a set of behavior to process the information in order

to accomplish a task. Behavior can be described as any sets of operations, steps, plans or routines (Wenden and Rubin, 1987). Processing information is related with (but not restricted) to obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information (Wenden and Rubin, 1987), and “task” can be described (but not restricted) as comprehend, learn, or retain new information (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990).

2.1.2 Types of Learning Strategy

Whilst there is no unanimous agreement about the exact types of leaning strategy, at least there are 3 experts that have tried to give explanation. First, from O’Malley et al (1985), has said that there are 3 types of learning strategies:

1. Metacognitive Strategy.

Metacognitive is an expression to indicate an execute function, strategies which involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, observing of one’s production or comprehension, correcting your own mistakes, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed.

According to Pierre Paul Gagne et al. (2009), metacognition enables students to be more active in their learning, i.e., to mobilize all of their resources in order to have successful learning experiences. In order to do this, they must know how they learn and be aware of the steps that are followed and the means that are used to acquire knowledge, solve problems, and perform tasks. For instance, a student

may realize that mastering grammar by doing the repetitive task from a book is a boring activity. On the other hand, he realizes that speaking and watching movies in English is far more enjoyable. He also realizes that in speaking activity, he can practice the grammar, and also get feedback from other people. From those situations, if he watches movie in English and do speaking activity a lot, he is considered as a student that employ the metacognitive activity, because he knows how to study (based on his need and style), and also aware about the step and implication of his learning activity.

The most important point from Gagne's explanation is, one must know how he/she learn and be aware of the steps that are followed, which can be describe to easier explanation as knowing oneself best strategy to learn. Knowing the best strategy for oneself is very important because a strategy may work for someone but not for other. If a teacher uses metacognitive in the class, it means that he/she has to teach how to study.

2. Cognitive Strategy

Cognitive strategy, also called as "procedural prompt" is a strategy to develop students' ability in order to solve complex problem (Rosenshine, 1997). If a teacher uses cognitive strategy in the class, it means that he/she is the main role to teach the student about the material and task, and how to deal in order to finish the task.

According to Brown (2007) Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself' (p.134). Repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, and inferencing are among the most important cognitive strategies.

3. Social/ affective Strategy

Social learning is defined as learning through observation of other peoples' behaviors. It is a process of social change in which people learn from each other in ways that one can get benefit from wider social context, allowing any individuals to pick up new behaviors by observing what people are doing within that environment. One example of social strategy is when students doing peer evaluation.

The second opinion about types of learning strategy was described by Rubin (1987) in which he classified it into three types. The description of each type is described below.

1. Learning strategy, that further divided into two categories, Cognitive Learning Strategy and Metacognitive Learning Strategy. Cognitive strategy can be translated into any activity that related to solve the problem, analyzing of a concept, transforming of an information or synthetizing of a learning material. Whereas Metacognitive Strategy has close relationship with what kind of step to solve the problem, make analysis, or synthetizing of learning material based on one's need,

capability, resources, and style. Although those two strategies have their different meaning and practice, they have one common aim, to develop the language system by the learner.

2. Communication strategy, which doesn't have direct relationship with language learning activity, but still holds its importance. Communication strategy is needed in order to successfully conduct a conversation, get the information, or clarify what the speaker's intended. Communication strategy will show its importance when it comes to solve a problem during conversation, or when things become complicated like misunderstanding during conversation.
3. Social strategy is a strategy that also doesn't have direct relationship with language learning activity, but still has its importance. Social strategy may not directly relate with obtaining, storing, retrieving or using a certain language aspect, but the importance is still there, it is a strategy that can be used as catalyst when someone learn a language. Social strategy will act as a media for the learning to practice his/her language proficiency in real world. Practicing in real world will trigger the communication strategy (because it's inevitable to avoid any problem during conversation), and also can be a measurement about one's language mastery, that can be a guidance to whether or not boost the cognitive and metacognitive activity.

The third opinion about types of learning strategy was stated by Oxford's (1990), which classified the learning strategy into two main

types: *direct and indirect strategies*. Oxford gives quite detailed description about direct and indirect strategies, as follow :

1. Direct strategy, that further divided into Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation strategy. Memory has its importance when it comes to storing and recalling information whenever it needed. Cognitive strategy shown its importance when dealing with certain information that have to be handle. Whereas Compensation strategy will help the student to continue using the target language even though there are missing knowledges.
2. Indirect strategy, that further divided into Metacognitive, Affective and Social strategy. Indirect strategy doesn't have direct relationship with language learning activity, but still has its importance, namely in supporting the learner in terms of managing the learning activity in the long run. As learning English is a long and daunting task, one has to know how to manage the learning resources, as well as keep the focus, conduct the evaluation, find opportunities to learn and practice, and lowering the anxiety that may happen especially during the practice time (Oxford, 1990).

Moreover, those three indirect strategies have their own function. Metacognitive strategy is needed to make sure a student knows how to make a plan, setting goals, find learning opportunities, how to do self-evaluating, and more importantly, how to do the self-monitoring to understand how many materials have been mastered. On the other side, the

Affective strategy will help a student to manager his/her motivation in the long run, managing the emotion especially when dealing with difficulties and provide good path about how to build good attitude during learning process (not easy to give up, for example). Usage of affective strategy, will help a student in big way to make sure that he/she will not give up easily, because it's understandable that learning English is a long process with lots of difficulties ahead. The last strategy, is called social. Social strategy act as a catalyst to fasten the learning process by facilitate the learner in active communication activity. The communication activity can be used as a media to practice and more importantly, for seeking help from others.

2.2 English Proficiency Test

2.2.1 The Nature of EPT test

As clearly stated in its name, the English Proficiency test is a test to measure one's ability in English. The first formal English proficiency test is recorded in 1960' which called "Test of English as a Foreign Language". Now the name of the test is shortened to TOEFL (but still has the same meaning). In its first inception around 1960', TOEFL is described as "a test to assess the English proficiency of nonnative speakers of the language who intend to study in institution where English is the language instruction" (ETS team, 2011).

At the first stages of TOEFL development (1964 – 1979), the TOEFL test is constructed by using discrete component of language. The test contains multiple choice items to assess vocabulary, reading

comprehension, listening comprehension and knowledge of correct English structure and Grammar. At the second stages of TOEFL development (1979 – 2005) two others additional test have been added, namely writing ability and speaking ability. From 2005 until now, the test is considered in its third stage of development which required the integration of receptive and productive skills such as listening, reading and writing or speaking, as well multiple-choice items for listening and reading (ETS team, 2011).

2.2.2 Kinds of TOEFL test

English Proficiency Test (EPT) by Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto is a proficiency test to measure one's skill in English. The EPT test itself is developed by using TOEFL test as the standard in terms of test structure and skills that will be measured. The TOEFL test indeed, also inspired other kind of proficiency test conducted by other organization around the world. Each known proficiency test is described as follow :

- 1) TOEFL iBT (Internet Based Test) conducted by ETS (Educational Testing Service), is the most well-known English proficiency test. The test measures one's ability to use and understand English at the university level. The test contains reading, listening, speaking and writing skills, all of them are delivered, and done by using internet (ets.org, 2018)

- 2) IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is a test that assesses one's abilities in listening, reading, writing and speaking, which established since 1989. The developers of the test are British Council, International Development Program Education, and Cambridge Assessment English (ielts.org, 2018).
- 3) TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) developed by ETS, is a test to assess English language skills needed in the workplace. The test contains listening, reading, speaking and writing test (ets.org, 2018).
- 4) AcEPT (Academic English Proficiency Test) is an English proficiency test developed by Universitas Gadjah Mada as the requirement to enter the postgraduate and doctoral education. The test contains listening, vocabulary, grammar and structures, reading comprehension, and composing skills.
- 5) EPT test (English Proficiency Test), is a test to measure students' ability in English. The test is constructed based on TOEFL test by ETS so it contains listening, structure and reading, but without writing and speaking test. The test is conducted and administered by English Teacher Department of UMP.

2.2.3 Content

English Proficiency Test in English Department is a paper-based test to measure the students' ability in listening, structure and reading. The test is arranged based on TOEFL test by ETS. Based on the test sheet from the

department, there are 140 test items in which they have to finish it all in 135 minutes (2 hours, 15 minutes). The test items are arranged as follow: part 1 for listening, part 2 for structure and part 3 for reading.

EPT test is arranged based on TOEFL test format sans writing and speaking. The part one contains 50 items listening test, which divided into 3 sub parts. The 3-parts distribution is designed to create a test item that started with the easiest one, and then gradually become more difficult. The sub part from listening section is described as follow :

- a. Sub part 1 : one short conversation for one item
- b. Sub part 2 : one longer conversation for several numbers
- c. Sub part 3 : one, long and complex conversation for several numbers

The students have to be aware that there is no repetition for any conversation, nor write anything on the test sheet or answer sheet. Therefore, it's a quite good test to know students' listening ability.

The part two contains 40 items structure test, which divided into two sub parts described as follow:

- a. Sub part 1 : item number 1 – 15 for multiple choice
- b. Sub part 2 : item number 16 – 40 for error recognition from a sentence.

There is no exact guidance about what kind of grammar that will be tested, so the students have to be quite fluent with almost all form of grammar in order to get high score. All students have to be aware that all

40 items have to be done in only 25 minutes, so they only have less than one minute for each number. The combination of wide range of tested material and relatively short amount of time to do it all is a good method to assess student's ability in structure.

The part 3 contains reading test, which constructed using 5 articles, with 10 questions followed each article. The article is long, and accommodates many aspects of social and scientific knowledge. The questions that followed after every article are schematically structured to accommodate question of synonym (or antonym), main idea and specific information. The students are given only 55 minutes to read the article and do 50 items, which means they have to manage the time well. The combination of wide range text theme, and short amount of time to do all items, will show students' ability in reading.

Based on the description above, one can fully understand that the level of difficulty and complexity of EPT test is quite high. The high level of difficulty is being purposeful for measuring students' proficiency in English ability. The use of EPT (or TOEFL test) as the indicator of one's English ability is strengthened by the result study from Ling, Powers and Adler (2014) which shows that TOEFL test can be a good interpretation/indicator of one's English-language proficiency.

After the test is conducted, the score usually announced after several days from the test date. The score of EPT test is adopted from "the old scale paper-based test", with the 670 as the highest possible score. The

minimum score for the English Department student to pass is 500. The certificate itself will valid for 2 years. If a student has expired certificate, but he/she is not graduate yet, he/she have to re-take the test, because the certificate is a compulsory requirement for graduation.

2.3 Previous Study

Some previous studies are conducted to know what is the learning strategy (LS) from English Foreign Language (EFL) students. Nguyen (2017) conducted a research that shows some interesting results. One strategy which used by the students is called as “word by word translation”. In this research, “word by word translation” means translating every word to understand a text. The word by word translation strategy actually makes students cannot understand a text quickly, and make them a slow learner, but they still use it anyway because that is the strategy taught by their teacher.

Nguyen’s research also reveals different kind of strategy employed by the student. Some students said that they write a word ten times in order to remember it, just to realize that in the end, that kind of strategy did not help them in learning process. Other students reported that they have done grammar exercise a lot, but they felt that they still could not use it in real world practice, especially in conversation. Lastly, other students also said that they re-write words several times until they remember the spelling of the words. But the result was almost the same, it did not help them to master the material well.

The conclusion from Nguyen's research is almost all students in his research use memorization strategy, because they just want to pass the examination. When doing memorization strategy, students do the learning strategy that they get from school, like doing the exercise, remembering word, re-writing sentence, and translating word by word. Students rarely do different strategy other than the strategy that has been taught by the teacher in class. The teacher also plays a main role as the resource of the knowledge. By referring from the student behavior and the theory of learning strategy, many students in Nguyen's research can be said to generally use memory and cognitive strategy.

Other research has been conducted by Gerami and Baiglou in 2011 to examine the learning strategies used by successful and unsuccessful Iranian EFL students in TOEFL test. The research was done by surveying 200 students, 100 from them are able to pass TOEFL test successfully, and the other 100 are failed in the same test. The survey used Strategy Inventory for Language Learning ESL/EFL (SILL) from Oxford (1990).

The result from Gerami and Baiglou's research shows that successful students in TOEFL test use wider range of learning activity and strategy than the unsuccessful one. Moreover, they also use metacognitive and social strategy more often than the failed students. By using metacognitive learning strategy a lot, it means that successful students know the best method to learn that suit their need and ability. The fact that they know the best method for them, drive them to use wider range of LS that may never been taught in

school. The addition of social strategy also helps them a lot because they tend to intentionally seek out opportunities to interact with other language users in order to enhance their proficiency of the target language.

On the other side, failed students generally use narrower range of LS, and tend to use cognitive strategy more often, combined with less social strategy. They seem to only use LS taught in school, like do the exercise, remembering vocabulary, read a text (if only they have to), and study when the examination is in sight. They also rarely seek for help from other in order to raise their English proficiency level. The combination of narrower range of LS and less social activity is probably caused by the motivation from most of them that only want to learn English to pass the exam. On the opposite side, the successful students learn English because they want to be proficient in it, which can be the reason why they are willing to do more LS.

More interesting research has been conducted by Al-Adwani (2017). He studied the language learning strategy preference among EFL students in the college of basic education in Kuwait. The research also conducted by using survey method that employed the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning ESL/EFL (SILL) to systematically create the questionnaire. The SILL is constructed based on the learning strategy theory from Oxford (1990).

The research clearly shows that frequency of learning strategies used by students who were in the high level of proficiency was always higher than those of the participants in the lower level. It means, the higher-level students

use all of six learning strategies stated by Oxford (1990), those are memory, compensation, meta-cognitive, cognitive, affective, and social strategy.

Generally, the lower level students tend to use only some of the strategies. Actually, some of the lower level students also use all the strategy but always in lower frequency. From the research, the conclusion is, the higher level student not only using all LS, but also using all of them more frequently. The conclusion is in line with the research by Gerami and Baiglou (2011) that stated successful EFL students used a wider range of LS and also using different strategy compared to the unsuccessful peers.

Form the explanation provides by research above, there are some important points that can be concluded. The research conducted by Gerami & Baiglou and Al-dwani clearly show that successful EFL students use wider range of learning strategies. They do not stick to one or two strategy, and willing to do more efforts in order to be fluent in English. Moreover, they not only do wider range of learning strategy, but employ it in higher frequency than the unsuccessful students. Whereas, research conducted by Nguyen shows that students that only employ narrow range of learning strategy are likely getting stuck in progress and may lead to learning difficulty, hence, they are more susceptible to failure.

From all previous study mentioned above, the result confirm that language learning strategy is an important aspect in order to help the student master the language, especially when it comes to get high TOEFL test. Students that able to use more strategy in the language learning process have better chance to

have better score that can be a good indicator to his/her proficiency. However, Oxford (1990) reveals that, the choice of learning strategies is influenced by some factors, such as gender, student's degree of awareness, the task involved, motivational drive, student's learning style, and ethnicity. Oxford's opinion can be used as the foundation to do SILL locally, so the test can reveal based on the actual condition of the students in a specific location and situation. Students from other area/ country may have different choice for the strategy because they may have different learning environment.

This research is conducted to focus on respondents in Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto that have low exposure of English language, but have high EPT score. The low exposure of English language is caused by the fact that English is only spoken in specific forum/ place or situation, for instance, inside the class in English Department, in International Seminar, or when the respondent become buddy to accompany overseas students that stay in Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto. Moreover, students may have studied English from elementary school, and continue to learn it all the way to Senior High School, but their chance to practice English in real world is limited because most people don't use English in real, day to day conversation (hence, English is considered as foreign language).

2.4 Basic Assumption

The importance of LS is unquestionable, because without strategy, one will wonder what is the next step to do. When it comes to learn a language, learning strategy will help students a lot because learning strategy is about

“approaches or technique” (Oxford, 1990) that can be used to learn many things, including English. So every student has to know the importance and also types of LS in the hope of they will do it in their English language acquiring process.

The types of LS are different from one expert to the other. O’Malley (1985) stated that there are 3 types of LS : metacognitive, cognitive and social. Rubin (1987) described LS into 3 types : learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies. Oxford (1990) said that there are 2 types : direct and indirect, which further divided into six subtypes : memory, cognitive, compensation (for direct) and metacognitive, affective, social (for indirect).

While the types of LS are different among expert, it is believed that EPT-high achievers are use wide range of strategies, and especially, they use metacognitive strategy a lot. The metacognitive strategy may become the most used strategy (among the others) because it means they know their best learning activities that work form them. So, the basic assumption in this research is, the EPT-high achievers use all the learning strategy stated by Oxford (1990), with Metacognitive Strategy as the most used one among others