RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY PEKANBARU SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND GENDER FACTORS

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Abstract: The main objective of this study was to investigate language-learning strategies used by students in senior high school at Pekanbaru. In addition, this study also examines the relationship between language learning strategies and gender factors. The respondents of the study were 400 Senior high school students in Pekanbaru. Data were collected by using Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford (1990a). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data; the research findings revealed that there are significant differences between genders. The implication of the study is that although students are aware of some language learning strategies, they may need to be explicitly taught to use them.

Key word: Language Learning Strategies, students' achievement and gender

English instruction in Indonesian context has been in line with the existence of this country. In the phase of 1945 until 1984 (almost forty years), the main target of learning English was to understand the reading passages with a strong support from vocabulary items terms and sentence structure. Grammar translation method (GTM) has dominated the teaching approach. Consequently, the teachers and the students concentrated to the pattern of the sentence (sentence formula) in order to acknowledge the existing ideas in the written text. In this era, it was really rare of the students to be able to speak and to in English.

Then, in the early of 1980's, the English instruction was highly evaluated. Brian Tomlinson (1990) summarized the English instruction setting was that after six years of learning English, most of the learners could not achieve it for communication. To cope with these huge permanent problems, the national curriculum team recommended switching the English instruction from pre-communicative activities to communicative active activities (William Littlewood 1980). In other words, the students should be able to use what they have got in the package of the knowledge of the language (listening, reading, structure, listening, vocabulary) in speaking and writing in the classroom or whenever possible (Garis-Garis Besar Program Pengajaran (GBPP)-Teaching and Learning Guideline 1984).

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Dealing with the language learning strategies used by the students, several recent studies have proved that the practices of language learning strategies (LLS) have made learning language (including English) more efficient and produced a positive effect on learners' language use (see Wenden & Rubin 1987: O'Malley & Chamot 1990: Chamot & O'Malley 1994; Oxford 1996; and Cohen 1998). In line with it, the right choice of LLS leads language learners to improve proficiency or achievement overall or in specific skill areas (see Wenden and Rubin 1987; Oxford & Crookall 1989; O'Malley & Chamot 1990).

In a special study as-the so-called the contract learning strategy (CLS) is also reported that this strategy also gives a positive effect on the achievement test for those who are serious and commitment to implement it (see Mashoub Abdul-Sadeq Aly (nd). The CLS is intentionally to be chosen by the Faculty of Education Benha University of Egypt in order the research subjects gain a positive attitude toward English.

In terms of choosing the LLS formulated by Oxford (1990), Abdolmehdi Riazi and Mohammed Rahimi (2005) have made their research findings. They concluded that metacognitive strategies shown in high frequency, followed by cognitive, compensation, and affective strategies in the medium level while memory and social strategies are in the lowest level user. For more than thirty years from the mid-1970s, learning strategies have been very careful defined by several researchers. For instance, some studies have been investigated about the use of learning strategies in a second language in the United States of America (Michael O'Malley and Anna Chamot and colleagues (O'Malley et. al. 1983, 1985a, 1987, 1989; Chamot & O'Malley 1986, 1987; O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Chamot et al. 1999). The ultimate goals of those studies were to gain communication strategies. The latest strategies are supported by three kinds learning strategies-metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socioaffective strategies.

In addition, other important information should also be underlined. Numerous research activities have been done dealt with the effectiveness of *using the learning strategies in term of the needs of language competence* (Oxford 1990 and H. Douglas Brown 2000). The findings were about the effective of listening skills using monitoring, elaborating, and inference (O'Malley, Chamot and Kupper 1989). Then, Anderson (1991) identified forty-seven different reading strategies. Bacon (1992) revealed that men and women differentially use the listening strategies.

The following was that several researchers investigated evidences about the useful of the learners' incorporating strategies into their acquisition process as the so-called classroom based or the textbook embedded training (strategies-based instruction)(McDonough 1999; Cohen 1998; Hill 198; and

Wenden 1992). Afterwards, the studies about cross-cultural variables were also conducted. The crucial finding was those variables assisted the learners to use the learning strategies (Oxford 1996, Oxford and Anderson 1995). Then, Lessard-Clouston (1997) made clear statements that learning strategies are involved in all learning except their contents and contexts. As a result, the learning strategies can be used to approach any subjects including language-English, in the classroom settings, and other informal learning environments (Danserau 1985; Weinsteain Goetz & Alexander 1988). Tarone (1983) based her definition on the context of the use of communication strategies in which mutual attempt of two interlocutors agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared.

Then, she differentiates the communication strategy from production strategy in which one linguistic system is used efficiently and clearly. The following, she also makes clear the distinction between communication strategy and learning strategy by which developing linguistic and socio-linguistic competence occurred in the target language. On the other hand, Tarone (1987) ascertains the impossibility of separating communication strategies and learning strategies because of the following reasons: (a) it is difficult to measure the individual's purposes whether it is communication or learning; (b) the purpose might be both; and (c) even if the person just wants to communicate and not to learn, learning often occurs anyway.

The other concept of learning strategies is about the specific action used by second language (L2) and/or foreign language (LF) learners to control, improve, enhance own learning or progress in developing L2 skills, or make learning easier, faster, or more enjoyable (Tamada 1997; Oxford 1996; Donato & McCormick 1994; Nyikos & Oxford 1993; O'Malley, Chamot & Cohen 1990; Oxford & Crookall 1990; Wenden & Rubin 1987). Those stated components aims at enhancing, facilitating or aiding own learning, acquiring and storing, retrieving and using information (Oxford 1996; Nyikos 1993; and Ehrman 1990).

A series of research activities dealt with the language learning strategies used by good learner has been conducted in the last four decades. The earliest study conducted by Rubin in 1975 and Stern (1975). Rubin concluded that good language learner has seven characteristics : (a) willing and accurate guesser, (b) having strong drive to communicate, (c) often inhibited and willing to appear foolish or making mistakes in order to learn or to communicate, (d) paying attentions to form by looking for linguistics patterns and by continually classifying, analyzing, and synthesizing linguistics information, (e) taking advantages of all practice opportunities, (f) monitoring his or her own speech as well as the speech of others and actively

participates even when he or she is not called on to perform, and (g) attending to meaning, not just to surface structure or grammar.

Similarly to Rubin's characteristics, Stern (1975) lists ten characteristics of good language learner that he or she has : (a) a positive learning strategy, (b) an active approach to the learning task, (c) a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and empathy with its speakers, (d) technical know-how of how to tackle a language, (e) strategies of experimentation and planning into an ordered system and of revising this system progressively, (f) constantly searching of meaning, (g) willingness to practice, (h) self-monitoring to critical sensitivity to language use, and (i) developing the target language more as a separate reference system and *learning to think in it*. Then, Naiman, Frohlich, and Todesco (1975) created other six strategies as keys to success: (a) selecting language situations that allow one's learning preferences to be used, (b) actively involving oneself in language learning, (c) seeing language as both a rule system and a communication tool, (d) extending and revising one's understanding of the language, (e) learning to think in language, and (f) addressing the effective demands of learning language.

In the period of eighties, numerous similar studies have also been conducted. First of all, Bialystok (1981) has set up the variety of learning strategies used by the learners like cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective, and compensation strategies. Then, Politzer (1983) determined the relationship between the strategies by the learners and their language achievement. In addition, he mentions that a given strategy is not suitable for all situations, purpose, or people. Besides, he also looks at other factors that *might relate to the language achievement like sex, course level, and* methodology. In the following years, Politzer and McGroarty (1985) investigated the reflection of general intelligence in which good language learning behaviors may be in the long run, be almost as elusive as good teaching behaviors, and each of the good behaviors may be differently appropriate for the various types of skills related to the purpose of second *language study*.

In addition, Tyacke and Mendelsohn (1986) figured out that good learners are the persons who actively utilize available resources, teacher, and classmates. The learners also employ clarification, memorization, monitoring and self-management strategies. On the other hands, the unsuccessful learners rejected to self-direct or reformulate earlier work, and have low self-esteem. *As the learners became more advanced, they tend to discard less productive* strategies and to match the strategy to the task.

Dealing with the comprehensive suggestions about the language learning strategies used by the learners, Oxford (1989) formulated her six

broad categories: metacognitive, affective, social, memory, cognitive, and compensation. She includes more details elements and examples how good language learners can employ these strategies in the language learning process. In relation to the degree of proficiency, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) found that the language learning strategies may influence the learners' language proficiency obtained in a second language.

In Indonesian context, Brian Tomlinson (1990) stated that the communicative approach modified to the strengthening of the teachers' work strategies replaces the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). The objective of replacement is to enable the secondary school students to use English whatever they have in real life context. This approach has brought significant change to students' behaviors in the classroom or out-of the class. Good students maximized to utilize the class schedule in order to enhance the knowledge of the language and to use it as well. Besides, they also took opportunities out of the classroom to practice the language. In this circumstance, the functional practice of English is the priority of learning the language. In line with it, Huang and Naerssen (1987) stated that the functional practice was the strategy that distinguished successful Chinese EFL learners from less successful ones.

Other characteristics of good language learners are those who are less anxious, spent more effort, regard the foreign language as less difficult, and used more language learning strategies (Banya & Chang 1997). Then, Mohammed Amin Embi (2000) noted that good learners are those who seek and take opportunities to use the target language in natural or authentic situations in and out of the classroom.

In contrast to the strategies of successful learners, at least, there are several studies have been noted. Abdullah Hussein El-Saleh El-Omari (2002) stated that less effective students are also familiar with some learning strategies. Moreover, they can tell about mental processes for foreign language study. Dealing with the improvement that should be made, several researchers recommend the necessity of conducting instructional sequences (Hosenfield et al. 1988; Jones et al. 1987; O'Malley & Chamot n.d.; Weinstein & Underwood 1995). The sequences might include the steps: identifying students' current strategies, assessing their strategy needs, planning strategy instruction, directing teaching of strategies for different learning skills, providing extensive opportunities to practice using the strategies, evaluating strategy use, and helping students transfer strategies to new tasks (Chamot & Kupper 1989).

In addition, Van and Abraham (1990) explored that unsuccessful learners have emerged as active strategy users, though they sometimes apply strategies inappropriately. Then, Cohen & Aphek (1980); Hosenfield (1984)

tried to improve the learners' performance through a training of using the strategies of more successful peers. Besides, O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Marzanares, Kupper & Russo (1985) also run the similar elaborative training study. The training only results a slight gain improvement.

The latest finding is supported by Tyacke (1991). She states the change might only occur on adult learners at superficial level even though the learners are given a better study skill or better learning management. Further, she still claimed that the training is an important activity to carry out to make the learners more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Then, the capability to adapt to new matters is the key for most successful learners to make possible change (Abdullah Hussein El-Saleh El-Omari 2002).

RESEARCH METODOLOGY
The Questionnaire-Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL-Version ©)

Numerous researchers have used the questionnaire to investigate language learning strategies (e.g Naiman et al. 1978; Rubin 1981; Politzer 1983; Ramirez 1986; McGoarty 1987, 1988; Oxford 1989; Oxford & Nyikos 1989; Oxford & Burry Stock 1995; Cohen 1996). First of all, Politzer (1983) has developed the work of Naiman et al. (1978) and Rubin (1981). Then, modified work done by Politzer has been used by Ramirez (1986) when he conducts a research on language learning strategies of 150 adolescents studying French in various setting in New York schools.

McGoarty (1987, 1988) also uses questionnaire to examine the language learning strategies of American college students of French, German, Spanish and ESL. Oxford & Nyikos (1989) use the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as the main instrument along with other instruments in which 1200 undergraduates take part in. Oxford and Burry Stock (1995) stated that the questionnaire is the most efficient and comprehensive method to assess the frequency of language learning strategies. The latest statement is supported by Cohen (1996). He mentions that questionnaire is among the self-report data that frequently asks the learners to describe the way they usually learn and use a language.

In this study, the "self-report" questionnaire was also used. The questionnaire is an important research instrument to be used in Indonesian context because of the following reasons: 1. to see whether the target population-Pekanbaru upper secondary school students- is able to report on their language learning strategies, 2. to see if the questionnaire suits and supports the purpose of the study, and 3. to validate the Indonesian version of the questionnaire adopted from Oxford (1990).

The adopted questionnaire-as the so-called Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)-contains two parts: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Each of which has three broad strategies. The direct strategies have memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. Then, the indirect strategies have metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. The memory strategies cover four components: creating mental linkage, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action. The cognitive strategies consist of other four components: practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for in put and output. The compensation strategies include two components: guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing. The metacognitive strategies cover three components: centering your learning, arranging and planning your learning, and evaluating your learning. The affective strategies consist of other three components: lowering your anxiety, encouraging yourself, and taking your emotional temperature. The social strategies also consist of three components: asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others.

The population of this study is all third students of Pekanbaru Senior High School/upper secondary level. Those students have learned English for six academic years (three years in lower secondary level and other three years in upper secondary level). The total number of the population are 5.895 students of state general schools, private general schools, state vocational schools (engineering and entrepreneurship) and private vocational schools (engineering and entrepreneurship). The population has numerous characters like social background (gender and ethnics), situational schools, academic background, and economic background. * Kicjie and Morgan (1970) said that the sample size is purposively taken from each factor and sub-factors. The questionnaires have been distributed to more than 361 students (400 students) in order to get the appropriate number of the sample size.

Data collection procedure administering questionnaire-strategy inventory for language learning (sill-version ©)

The permission letter from supervisors (supervisor 1 and supervisor 2) and the concerned offices in Riau Province and Pekanbaru Municipality are very important in carrying out this study. The issued permission letters are given to the secondary school headmasters in order they cooperate with the researcher in collecting the needed data. The researcher himself handles the distribution and collection of the questionnaires to and from the subjects in their schools. The time of the distribution has been negotiated with English teachers so that their classes are not be disturbed.

Before distributing the questionnaires, the research subjects have been briefed by the researcher about the purpose and the expected values of the research. The research subjects have also been told that their responses remain anonymous and that they should respond as honestly as possible to show what they mainly do to learn English. Specifically, they have also been told that there are no right or wrong answers or responses. They have been given an example of how to respond to 1-5 Likert Scale together with questionnaire which was translated into Indonesian language to ensure the respondents understand and avoid wasting time on explaining the meaning of the items. Then, the researcher remains in the classroom to ensure seriousness and attend any inquiry by the subjects. The school principals and English teachers have been invited to accompany the researcher, and if possible, talk to the students about the importance of doing research and responding honestly.

Interviews have been conducted to selected research subjects. They are ten students from five sub-ethnics (Riau Malay, Minangkabau, Java, Batak, and China). They are assigned to another venue (like school library, counselor's office, or any other vacant room) soon after the questionnaires have been collected. Their responses have been completely noted. Before asking questions, the interviewees were given the background questions to fill in. The questions are similar to those in the questionnaires. One by one has been called in the interview sessions. In group or pair interview, it might be difficult to identify who say what, or individual students may tend to dominate the discussion (Mohammed Amin Embi 1996; Abdullah Hussein El-Saleh El-Omari 2002).

To analyze the collected data, several procedures have been followed. First of all, scoring the response of the respondents in the given questionnaires, and interviews. Afterwards, (RQ) is used to show the differences between male and female and language learning strategies.

The questionnaire use is Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The SILL is produced by Oxford 1990. Each statement has five choices : 1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Generally not true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Generally true of me; and 5. Always or almost always true of me. The answer of the respondent has been scored as the following. The choice 1 is scored 1, 2 is 2, 3 is 3, 4 is 4, and 5 is 5. The SILL consists of 6 parts (Part A, Part B, Part C, Part D, Part E, and Part E) with 50 statements. The sum of the whole parts is divided 50 in order to get the average of the respondent's response.

The descriptive statistics has been used in order to get the central tendency (mean, median, and mode) of the response of the respondents in using the category of language learning strategies constructed in RQ 1 (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies,

metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies) (Oxford 1990). The same statistics has also been used in analyzing the respondents' response in interviews.

Table 4.1 Distributions of Respondents by Gender

No	Gender	Frequency	Percent
1.	Male	204	51.0
2.	Female	196	49.0
	Total	400	100.0

The findings displayed in Table 4.1 showed that male students who involved in this research is 175 (45 %) and female students is 225 (55 %) and total of respondents are 400 students.

4.1 Language Learning Strategies Used based on Gender

Table shows that none of the female students show any significant mean scores compared to the male students who obtained significant scores in Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive and Affective strategies. The male learners obtained mean scores of 3.25, 3.50, 4.05, and 3.71 for Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Affective strategies respectively. Compensation strategies and Social strategies show an almost identical mean score for both sexes. The female students had mean scores of 3.20, and 3.23 respectively, while the male students obtained mean scores of 3.18 and 3.22 for Compensation and Social Strategies respectively. These results did not match those of Oxford and Nyikos (1989) who discovered that female college students contrasted with male students in their study of gender differences of strategy use. The former use more compensation strategies.

Research by Oxford et.al. (1993) also found that female learners tend to use more affective strategies than male learners. Green and Oxford (1995) also found that female students use more memory strategies than male students, but show no difference in cognitive and compensation strategies. The reasons why the results in this study showed a different picture to the previous research could be due to the population and their level proficiency in English. For example in the case of Green and Oxford (1995), the subjects came from three different course levels, namely Pre-basic, Basic, and the Intermediate. Another factor which could have influenced the results in their study is that the research and the SILL test were given to the students in their native language, whereas this study was conducted in an Indonesian context in which English is used as a foreign language. Apart from that, male students in this study were assumed to have a better foundation for English than female

students because some of them have taken English courses before entering the university.

Table 4.2   Language learning Strategy Used according to Gender

Strategy Categories	Mean Score		Total
	Male	**Female**	
Memory	3.9003	3.9042	3.9022
Cognitive	3.8757	3.8659	3.8709
Compensation	3.8742	3.9039	3.8888
Metacognitive	4.0120	3.9892	4.0008
Affective	4.0931	4.0910	4.0921
Social	3.9502	3.9184	3.9346
Mean score	3.9395	3.9329	3.9362

In this case the differences mean score between gender is not so significant, from the table displayed we can see that in mean score for male is 3.9003 and female students is 3.9042. In cognitive strategy male students got 3.8757 and female students got 3.8659. In compensation strategy male students got 3. 8742 and female students got 3.9039. if we see metacognitive strategies mean score for male students is 4.0120 and female students is 3.9892 followed by affective strategy which mean score for male students is 4.0931 and female students is 4.0910 and then followed by social strategy which male students got 3.9502 and female students is 3.9184.

Table 4.2 shows the mean strategy used for each of the six categories. The means for the six strategy groups fell within the range of 3.13 to 3.92, which is classified by Oxford (1990a) as medium use. The metacognitive strategies gathered the highest mean, followed by affective, cognitive, social and memory. Table 4.14 presents these findings.

Table 4.3   Rank Order of Usage in Each of the Six Strategy Categories

Strategy Categories	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank Order Of usage
Memory	3.9022	0.0521	Fourth
Cognitive	3.8709	0.0728	Second
Compensation	3.8888	0.0733	First
Metacognitive	4.0008	0.0579	Third
Affective	4.0921	0.0233	Fifth
Social	3.9346	0.0188	Sixth

The findings show that the two categories with the highest means are Compensation (mean of 3.88) and Cognitive (mean of 3.87). This indicates that the students actively overview and link what they know with already known material, they also pay attention and delay speech production to focus on listening. Students also tend to find out about language learning, organizing, setting their goals and objectives, and seeking opportunities to practice English with other students. In terms of affective strategies, they attempt to lower their anxiety, encourage themselves to learn English such as making positive statements, taking risks wisely and giving a reward or treat to themselves when they do well in English.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Variation of Language Learning Strategy by Category Use Based on Gender

The ANOVA results as presented in Table 4.4 describe different patterns of variation according to gender in the learner's overall strategy use and their use of the six strategy categories applied. The information in Table 4.6 indicates that apart from Memory and Metacognitive strategies, there is no significant difference in the use of LLS between male and female students in each of the other four strategy categories. On the other hand, except in Affective and Social strategies, this finding together with the results for Cognitive and Compensation strategies are similar to the findings of Green and Oxford (1995). In their study, there was a significant difference between male and female students in the use of Memory strategies, but no difference in Cognitive and Compensation strategies. The results for Metacognitive, Affective and Social strategies are the same in both studies, namely there is a significant difference by gender (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Variation of Language Learning Strategy by Category Use based on Gender

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Language Learning Strategies	Male	204	3.9395	.17769	.01244
	Female	196	3.9329	.17328	.01238

* $P < 0.05$

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Based on the data, the gender distribution of the respondents who are participated in the study is 204 (51%) male students and 196 (49%) are female students. The t-test results presented in Table 4.2 show that the mean score for male students was higher than the female students (significant level 0.05). It revealed that the use of learning strategies among the students did not show any significant difference between male and female students, even though there is a significant difference between gender and strategy categories in terms of cognitive and compensation, metacognitive and social strategies. In general, there is no significant difference between gender and overall strategy use. It can not be said that this research strategy use is not dependent on students' gender. This new finding supports the finding by Kim (1995). In the Korean study, Kim (1995) found that there is no significant difference in the strategy used by males and females of adult Korean ESL learners. In addition, the study by Lee (1994) also found that there were no gender differences in the strategy use of Korean high school and college students, although there were differences for middle school as mentioned above. Oh (1996) asserted that there was no relationship between gender and the choice of strategies in his study for fishery college students in Pusan. According to him, both male and female students were interested enough to take English as an optimal subject. Therefore, learning strategies were used frequently regardless of gender. This strong interest might diminish sex differences in the use of learning strategies.

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