

Language Learning Strategies Used By Successful Students Of Senior High Schools In Dumai, Bengkalis, And Selat Panjang Riau Province

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between language learning strategies used by successful students of senior high schools in Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang based on type of school, and academic factors. In addition, this study also aims to identify the strategies used by the respondents to learn English in general, four language skills, vocabulary, and structure. The population of the study are all successful students from senior high schools in Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang. The number of the population is about 4000 students. Due to the homogenous characters of the population, the sample are taken randomly as big as 10 % or 400 students out of the population. The quantitative data are collected by using Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford; 1989) while interviewing section is conducted to 60 selected students taken from the sample in order to get the qualitative data. Descriptive and inferential statistics are used to analyze the data on the use of the language learning strategies (SILL). One-Way Anova is used to determine the differences of language learning strategies usage based on academic, and type of school. The findings show different language learning strategies among the students based on type of school, and academic factors. The students used social strategy (mean: 4.02) as the most effective strategy. The implication of the study is that language learning strategies should be taught in the classroom.

Key words: Language learning strategies, and Successful students.

Introduction

Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang are directly abutted on two nearest-neighbouring countries (Malaysia and Singapura) where the status of English is as a second language. Those countries use English as a language for official as well as trade, legal, and social. The society who live around the border area are connected each other in various activities either a formal state agenda or daily activities. Therefore, English as an international language is chosen as a way of communication.

High school students, as a part of society who live in the seaboard of Riau Province (Dumai, Bengkalis, and selat Panjang), plays an important role in term of association between various cities in Riau province with the communities in the two neighboring countries. In this case, successful students whose English achievements are up to eight until ten are basically able to communicate in English even though they have various difficulties in organizing words into sentences, choosing appropriate words, and setting the sentence intonation.

Language learning strategies have been used by the successful students to solve their learning difficulties and to improve their capability of four language skills, vocabulary, and grammar. The students often do some common ways like: a. seriously following the procedures of learning process, b. asking further explanation for any unclear materials, c. completing various tasks related to the topic, d. intensifying group discussions (Fakhri Ras; 2012), e. use new vocabulary in context, f. correcting errors made by classmates, g. sharing ideas in composing texts, h. accumulating important ideas before writing the texts.

Based on the above phenomenon, language learning strategies used by successful students must be thoroughly identified by using a valid measurement. In this case, strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) (Oxford; 1990) can be used as an effective test (quantitative). The obvious and measured recognition of language learning strategies can influence on successful students' language achievement. To identify the relationship between the strategies and the achievement, weak students' language learning strategies are used as comparison. Besides, the use of SILL is empowered by some questions in interview section (Qualitative). The combination between those two kinds of data collection techniques is expected to obviously identify the strategies used by the successful students in this research area.

Tarone (1983) bases her definition on the context of the use of communication strategies, in which two interlocutors agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared. Then she differentiates communication strategy from production strategy, in which one linguistic system is used efficiently and clearly. She also clarifies the distinction between communication and learning strategy, by which linguistic and socio-linguistic competence in the target language was developed.

Rubin (1975) defines language learning strategies as the techniques or devices that learners use to acquire second language knowledge. Stern (1975) calls them some general order of higher approaches to learning which govern the choice of specific techniques. Naiman et al. (1978) define LLS as more or less deliberate approaches to learning. Rubin (1987) states that LLS are sets of operations, steps, plans, and routines of what learners do to facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information to regulate learning. Wenden & Rubin (1987) refers to them as behaviours, where learners engage in and regulate the learning of a second language.

Chamot (1987) defines LLS as techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information. Ellis (1994) focuses on skills and language learning. Those two aspects are crucial in language learning strategies. Lan (2005) sees language learning strategies as terms applied to various behaviours used in learning: things people do that are relatively easy to change, vary according to their learning style, are effective or ineffective for specific situations, and are frequently under some level of conscious control. Some learning strategies are specific to each of the four language skills.

To summarise, constructing the definitions of language learning strategies includes various key elements, such as the context of using the strategies, the target of learning the language, and the suitable steps to be taken by the learners. These elements are reflected in the various LLS that have been formulated by experts such as Tarone (1983), Rubin (1975), Oxford (1989), Ellis (1994), and Lan (2005).

Wenden (1987) classifies language learning strategies into at least six elements: (a) specific actions or techniques, (b) observable activities, (c) problem-oriented characteristic, (d) direct or indirect contribution to learning, (e) automatic application after prolonged and repeated usage, and (f) behaviours that are amenable to change. Similarly, Lessard-Clouston (1997) created four reference criteria: (a) learner-generated activities (steps taken by the learners), (b) learner-enhanced language learning or help in developing language competence, (c) learners' visible actions (behaviours, steps, techniques, etc.) or unseen things (thought and mental processes), and (d) the involvement of information and memory of the learners.

According to Oxford (1990b), language learning strategies (a) contribute to the main goal of communicative competence, (b) allow learners to become self-directed, (c) expand the role of teachers, (d) are problem-oriented, (e) are specific actions taken by the learner, (f) involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive, (g) support learning directly or indirectly, (h) are not always observable, (i) are often conscious, (j) can be taught, (k) are flexible, and (l) are influenced by various factors.

Cohen (1996) suggests that language learning strategies (a) have the explicit goal of assisting learners in improving their knowledge; (b) include cognitive processing strategies, strategies for solidifying newly acquired language patterns, and strategies to determine the

amount of cognitive energy needed; (c) encompass language performance and communication strategies; and (d) can be further differentiated into cognitive, metacognitive, affective, or social.

Several models of language learning strategies have been formulated by the experts. Lots of elements that are related to the language learning have been discussed in the models. Bialystok (1978) created two broad LLS categories, each of which has two subcategories. The first, formal strategies, covers observation and formal training; and the second, functional strategies, includes inference and functional training. Bialystok (1981) said that observation strategy is used to increase the skill of language pattern (identifying the language mistakes).

O'Malley & Chamot (1990) divide language learning strategies into three categories: metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective. *Metacognitive strategies* refer to the executive skills required in planning for learning, thinking about the ongoing learning processes, monitoring one's production or comprehension, and evaluating one's learning after an activity is completed. Self-monitoring, self-evaluation, advance organisation, self-management, and selective attention can be classified under metacognitive strategy.

Oxford (1990b) provides the most extensive classification of LLS developed so far, although it is not radically different from the other models. In fact, Oxford's taxonomy overlaps with that of O'Malley (1990) to a great extent. For instance, the cognitive strategies category in O'Malley's classification seems to cover both the cognitive and memory strategies in Oxford's. Moreover, while O'Malley puts socio-affective strategies in one category, Oxford splits them into two. A significant difference in Oxford's classification, however, is the addition of compensation strategies, which do not appear in any of the previous major classification systems. Oxford's taxonomy consists of two main categories: direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are behaviours that involve the use of the target language, which directly facilitates language learning.

Discussion

There are two factors that may influence the language learning strategies; academic background and type of school. Thus, this study focuses on discussing the language learning strategies by successful students of Senior High Schools in Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang Riau Province based on academic background and type of school. In addition, this study also aims to identify the preferred activities of the respondents to learn English in general, four language skills, vocabulary, and structure.

This study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. The population are all successful students from 14 state senior high schools and 14 private senior high schools in Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang Riau Province. The number of the population is about 4000 students. Due to the homogenous character of the population in term of their academic background, the sample is taken randomly as big as 10 % out of the population, that is about, 400 successful students. The quantitative data are collected by using Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford; 1989) while interviewing section is conducted to 60 selected students taken from the sample in order to get the qualitative data.

Table 1: The Distribution of Respondents by Academic Background

No	Academic Stream	Frequency	Percent
1	Natural Science	140	35.0
2	Social Science	140	35.0
3	Language Science	120	30.0
Total		400	100.0

Table 2: The Distribution of Respondents by Type of School

No	Type of School	Frequency	Percent
1	State School	200	50.0

2	Private School	200	50.0
Total		400	100.0

Descriptive and inferential statistics are used to analyze the data on the use of the language learning strategies (SILL). The descriptive statistics is used to present the language learning strategies used by the successful students. The inferential statistics, in this case, One-Way Anova is used to determine the differences of language learning strategies usage based on academic stream and type of schools. Then, the collected qualitative data is presented in the form of list of preferred activities to learn English in general, four language skills, vocabulary, and structure.

a. Quantitative Findings

Ho 1; There is no significant difference of language learning usage by Academic Stream.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA of Academic Stream across Language Learning Strategies

Dependent Variable	Stream	Mean	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Memory	Natural	3.49	Between Groups	1.406	2	.703	8.448	.000
	Social	3.41	Within Groups	33.044	397	.083		
	Language	3.56	Total	34.450	399			
	Total	3.48						
Cognitive	Natural	3.73	Between Groups	.805	2	.403	5.924	.003
	Social	3.68	Within Groups	26.979	397	.068		
	Language	3.79	Total	27.785	399			
	Total	3.73						
Compensation	Natural	3.71	Between Groups	.357	2	.179	1.440	.238
	Social	3.67	Within Groups	49.259	397	.124		
	Language	3.74	Total	49.616	399			
	Total	3.70						
Metacognitive	Natural	3.95	Between Groups	1.865	2	.932	6.939	.001
	Social	3.90	Within Groups	53.338	397	.134		
	Language	4.07	Total	55.202	399			
	Total	3.97						
Affective	Natural	3.66	Between Groups	.109	2	.055	.431	.650
	Social	3.67	Within Groups	50.331	397	.127		
	Language	3.70	Total	50.440	399			
	Total	3.68						
Social	Natural	4.00	Between Groups	.044	2	.022	.192	.825
	Social	4.03	Within Groups	45.457	397	.115		
	Language	4.02	Total	45.501	399			
	Total	4.02						
LLS	Natural	3.75	Between Groups	.642	2	.321	7.052	.001
	Social	3.71	Within Groups	18.060	397	.045		
	Language	3.81	Total	18.701	399			
	Total	3.75						

Table 3 presents the result of One-Way ANOVA of academic stream. The findings show that there is no significant difference by academic stream in memory ($F = .707$, $\text{sig.} = .588$ [$> .05$]), compensation ($F = .833$, $\text{sig.} = .505$ [$> .05$]), metacognitive ($F = .999$, $\text{sig.} = .408$ [$> .05$]), affective ($F = 1.600$, $\text{sig.} = .173$ [$> .05$]), and social strategy ($F = .605$, $\text{sig.} = .659$ [$> .05$]). However, there are significant differences by academic stream in cognitive strategy ($F = 2.736$, $\text{sig.} = .029$ [$< .05$]) and overall language learning strategies ($F = 2.638$, $\text{sig.} = .034$ [$< .05$]). Thus, H_0 is rejected. Post-Hoc test results are displayed in table 4.

Table 4
Post-Hoc Test of One-Way ANOVA on the Differences in Language Learning Strategies
between Students according to Academic Stream

Dependent Variable	(I) Stream	(J) Stream	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Memory	Natural	Social	.07714*	.03448	.026
		Language	-.06998	.03589	.052
	Social	Natural	-.07714*	.03448	.026
		Language	-.14712*	.03589	.000
	Language	Natural	.06998	.03589	.052
		Social	.14712*	.03589	.000
Cognitive	Natural	Social	.04807	.03116	.124
		Language	-.06349	.03243	.051
	Social	Natural	-.04807	.03116	.124
		Language	-.11156*	.03243	.001
	Language	Natural	.06349	.03243	.051
		Social	.11156*	.03243	.001
Metacognitive	Natural	Social	.05250	.04381	.231
		Language	-.11482*	.04560	.012
	Social	Natural	-.05250	.04381	.231
		Language	-.16732*	.04560	.000
	Language	Natural	.11482*	.04560	.012
		Social	.16732*	.04560	.000
LLS	Natural	Social	.03671	.02549	.151
		Language	-.06236*	.02653	.019
	Social	Natural	-.03671	.02549	.151
		Language	-.09907*	.02653	.000
	Language	Natural	.06236*	.02653	.019
		Social	.09907*	.02653	.000

Table 4 shows significant differences in memori strategy between social, natural ($DF = -.07714$, $\text{sig.} = .026$ [$< .05$]) and language students ($DF = -.14712$, $\text{sig.} = .000$ [$< .05$]). Besides, a significant difference also occurs in cognitive strategy between social and language students ($DF = -.11156$, $\text{sig.} = .001$ [$< .05$]). Moreover, language students use metacognitive strategy more often than natural ($DF = -.11482$, $\text{sig.} = .012$ [$< .05$]) and social students ($DF = -.16732$, $\text{sig.} = .000$ [$< .05$]). Similarly, the language students use overall strategy more often than the natural ($DF = -.06236$, $\text{sig.} = .019$ [$< .05$]) and social students ($DF = -.09907$, $\text{sig.} = .000$ [$< .05$]). Therefore, Thus, H_0 is rejected.

Ho 2; There is no significant difference of language learning usage by Type of School.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA of Type of School across Language Learning Strategies

Variable	Type of School	Mean	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Memory	State	3.47	Between Groups	.029	1	.029	.330	.566
	Private	3.49	Within Groups	34.421	398	.086		
	Total	3.48	Total	34.450	399			
Cognitive	State	3.74	Between Groups	.042	1	.042	.609	.436
	Private	3.72	Within Groups	27.742	398	.070		
	Total	3.73	Total	27.785	399			
Compensation	State	3.68	Between Groups	.284	1	.284	2.288	.131
	Private	3.73	Within Groups	49.333	398	.124		
	Total	3.70	Total	49.616	399			
Metacognitive	State	3.94	Between Groups	.312	1	.312	2.266	.133
	Private	4.00	Within Groups	54.890	398	.138		
	Total	3.97	Total	55.203	399			
Affective	State	3.61	Between Groups	1.797	1	1.797	14.703	.000
	Private	3.74	Within Groups	48.643	398	.122		
	Total	3.68	Total	50.440	399			
Social	State	4.03	Between Groups	.098	1	.098	.856	.355
	Private	4.00	Within Groups	45.403	398	.114		
	Total	4.02	Total	45.501	399			
LLS	State	3.74	Between Groups	.068	1	.068	1.444	.230
	Private	3.77	Within Groups	18.634	398	.047		
	Total	3.75	Total	18.701	399			

Table 5 displays the result of One-Way ANOVA of type of school. The findings show that there is no significant difference by both state and private school in memory ($F = .330$, $sig. = .566$ [$> .05$]), cognitive ($F = .609$, $sig. = .436$ [$> .05$]), compensation ($F = 2.288$, $sig. = .131$ [$> .05$]), metacognitive ($F = 2.266$, $sig. = .133$ [$> .05$]), social ($F = .856$, $sig. = .355$ [$> .05$]), and overall language strategies ($F = 1.444$, $sig. = .230$ [$< .05$]).

However, there is a significant difference by type of school in affective strategy ($F = 14.703$, $sig. = .000$ [$< .05$]). ($F = 2.736$, $sig. = .029$ [$< .05$]). The private school students use affective strategy more often than the state school students. Therefore, H_0 is rejected.

b. Qualitative Findings

English is generally learnt by successful students by using various strategies. Table 6 displays the strategies used by successful students of senior high schools in Dumai, Bengkalis, and Selat Panjang based on academic stream and type of school which were listed through interview section.

Table 6: Strategies used by successful students to learn English in General

Factor	Indicator	Strategy
Academic Stream	Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussing lessons with English teacher and friends by using English language Joining an English course
	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussing lessons with English teacher and friends by using English language

	Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to improve writing, reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar skills of English • Being active in various activities of English language learning • Discussing lessons with English teacher and friends by using English language • Practicing English in the Classroom • Keep Studying English outside of school as well as inside • Joining an English course • Forming a group of English studying
Type of School	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing lessons with English teacher and friends by using English language • Keep Studying English outside of school as well as inside
	Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing English in the Classroom • Joining an English course • Forming a group of English studying • Trying to improve writing, reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar skills of English • Being active in various activities of English language learning

Table 7: Strategies used by successful students to four language skills, vocabulary, and structure by Academic Stream

Variable	Strategy by Academic Stream		
	Natural science	Social science	Language science
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrating to the spoken text • Doing exercise at home • Giving suggestion and critics • Listening to the English songs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing exercise of listening materials • Finding the speaker's idea • Taking notes while listening to the speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following tests of English listening (TOEFL, TOEIC, Etc) • Concentrating to the spoken text • Taking notes while listening to the speakers • Preparing vocabulary as many as needed • Watching movies
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriching Vocabulary • Joining English Club • Following teachers instruction • Practicing speaking with native speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing speaking with native speaker • Joining conversation course of English • Trying to speak English as often as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing speaking with native speaker • Speaking English everyday • Take an English course • Practicing speaking English in front of a mirror • Keep studying English pronunciation
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading English Novel • Answering questions based on the texts • Discussing reading tasks in group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering questions based on the texts • Consulting to a dictionary for unfamiliar words • Writing small notes of vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing reading tasks in group • Answering questions based on the texts • Asking teachers for appropriate techniques of comprehending texts • Reading English book • Underlining difficult words in the text

Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Diary by using English • Making an article of fun story using English • Writing English sentences ever day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing short story of English • Enriching vocabulary mastery • Learning how to make good sentences, paragraphs, and essays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Diary by using English • Making an article of fun story using English • Writing English sentences ever day • Correcting errors of essay writing
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorizing at least 10 new vocabularies everyday • Finding the meaning of unfamiliar words • Reading English texts as many as possible • Correcting mistakes • Practicing English vocabulary with friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading English texts as many as possible • Practicing English vocabulary with friends • Writing notes of important vocabulary • Finding antonym or synonym of difficult words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding the meaning of unfamiliar words • Memorizing at least 10 new vocabularies everyday
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correcting Mistakes • Joining English course • Doing exercises of structure regularly • Finding sources of structure materials • Discussing structure lessons with English teachers and friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing exercises of structure regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sentences based on the correct structure of English language • Correcting Mistakes • Joining English course • Doing exercises of structure regularly • Finding sources of structure materials • Discussing structure lessons with English teachers and friends

Table 8: Strategies used by successful students to four language skills, vocabulary, and structure by Type of School

Variable	Strategy by Type of School	
	State	Private
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking notes while listening to the speakers • Concentrating to the spoken text • Doing exercise at home • Giving suggestion and critics • Listening to the English songs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following tests of English listening (TOEFL, TOEIC, Etc) • Finding the speaker's idea • Concentrating to the spoken text • Taking notes while listening to the speakers • Preparing vocabulary as many as needed • Watching movies
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriching Vocabulary • Joining English Club • Following teachers instruction • Practicing speaking with native speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing speaking with native speaker • Speaking English everyday • Take an English course • Practicing speaking English in front of a mirror • Keep studying English pronunciation • Joining conversation course of English • Trying to speak English as often as possible
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading English Novel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing small notes of vocabulary

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering questions based on the texts • Discussing reading tasks in group • Consulting to a dictionary for unfamiliar words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing reading tasks in group • Answering questions based on the texts • Asking teachers for appropriate techniques of comprehending texts • Reading English book • Underlining difficult words in the text
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriching vocabulary mastery • Learning how to make good sentences, paragraphs, and essays • Writing Diary by using English • Making an article of fun story using English • Writing English sentences ever day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Diary by using English • Making an article of fun story using English • Writing English sentences ever day • Correcting errors of essay writing • Writing short story of English
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorizing at least 10 new vocabularies everyday • Finding the meaning of unfamiliar words • Reading English texts as many as possible • Correcting mistakes • Practicing English vocabulary with friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding the meaning of unfamiliar words • Memorizing at least 10 new vocabularies everyday • Reading English texts as many as possible • Practicing English vocabulary with friends • Writing notes of important vocabulary • Finding antonym or synonym of difficult words
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correcting Mistakes • Joining English course • Doing exercises of structure regularly • Finding sources of structure materials • Discussing structure lessons with English teachers and friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sentences based on the correct structure of English language • Correcting Mistakes • Joining English course • Doing exercises of structure regularly • Finding sources of structure materials • Discussing structure lessons with English teachers and friends

Conclusion

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the successful students' learning strategies at high level (mean of LLS: 3.75). The students use different strategies viewed from academic and type of school factors. In addition, they prefer various strategies to improve their ability of listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and structure. Based on academic stream, language students use more strategies rather than the other two streams. Similarly, viewed from type of school, the state school students use language learning strategy differently to the private school students. The private students prefer more various strategies to improve their English than the state school students. These findings offer an important input to educators to be able to encourage more effective strategies for the social students as well as those in state schools. The findings also provide some insight for further researches to explore language learning strategies employed by high achievers in a more detailed manner.

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