

**STRATEGIES USED BY STUDENTS IN LEARNING PHONOLOGY:
A SURVEY AT THE SIXTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH
EDUCATION PROGRAM UNIVERSITY OF MATARAM
IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/2018**



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**ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
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**KEMENTERIAN RISET DAN TEKNOLOGI
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ABSTRACT

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This study is aimed to find out the strategies used by the sixth semester students of English Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Mataram in learning Phonology and the type of learning strategies that is dominantly used. This study applied descriptive qualitative design. The population of this research was the sixth-semester students of English Education Program at Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Mataram in the academic year of 2017/2018 insisting on 119 students in total. The samples were taken randomly through lottery method as one of the methods in doing random sampling technique. Thus, 20 % of students from the overall population were selected to be the sample of this research, that were 37 students. Questionnaire and interview were used to collect the data. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 stated by Oxford (1989). The result shows that in learning Phonology students dominantly used cognitive strategies (25.8%) followed by metacognitive strategies (25.5%), affective strategies (19.6%), compensation strategies (10.8%), memory strategies (10.6%), and the last one is social strategies (7.7%).

Keywords: Learning strategies, strategies in learning Phonology, Phonology

ABSTRAK

STRATEGI SISWA DALAM PEMBELAJARAN FONOLOGI: SEBUAH
SURVEI PADA MAHASISWA SEMESTER ENAM PROGRAM STUDI
PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS UNIVERSITAS MATARAM
TAHUN AJARAN 2017/2018

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan strategi belajar yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa semester enam program studi pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Mataram tahun ajaran 2017/2018 dan tipe strategi belajar yang paling dominan digunakan oleh mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah seluruh mahasiswa semester enam program studi pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Mataram tahun ajaran 2017/2018 yang secara keseluruhan berjumlah 119 mahasiswa. Adapun proses pengambilan sampel dilakukan secara acak melalui tehnik Random sampling (sampel acak) dengan metode lotre. Sehingga, 20% mahasiswa dari keseluruhan populasi dipilih sebagai sampel, yakni sejumlah 37 mahasiswa. Kuisisioner dan interview digunakan sebagai instrument dalam mengumpulkan data. Kuisisioner yang digunakan di dalam penelitian ini merupakan adaptasi dari kuisisioner Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 yang diciptakan oleh Oxford (1989). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dalam pembelajaran Fonologi, siswa lebih dominan menggunakan strategi kognitif dengan persentasi penggunaan 25.8%, diikuti oleh strategi meta-kognitif (25.5%), strategi afektif (19.6%), strategi kompensasi (10.8%), strategi memori (10.6%), dan yang terakhir adalah strategi sosial (7.7%).

Kata kunci: Strategi belajar, strategi pembelajaran Fonologi, Fonologi

INTRODUCTION

Learning a language especially English somehow means learning about some of its basic elements, such as vocabulary, grammar, phonology, and so on. Phonology as one of the basic elements in English plays an important role in learning a foreign language because learning a language means that we learn how to speak the language, and speaking a language means producing proper sounds in pronouncing the words.

Mastering phonology is a basic matter in learning a foreign language because through phonology mastery we will have what is called by “phonological awareness”. Phonological awareness is the ability to hear sounds that make up words in spoken language. According to Narr (2006), phonological awareness includes process of recognizing words that rhyme, deciding whether words begin or end with the same sounds, understanding that sounds can be manipulated to create new words, and separating words into their individual sounds, for that reason in the curriculum of English department program, phonology is taught as one of the compulsory subjects.

In fact, although phonology is taught as a compulsory subject for English department students, there are still some students who have difficulties learning phonology. Different individuals might find various parts of the phonology of English complicated-if not near impossible to grasp. The areas that are considered to be the most complex or confusing are stress on words, vowel and consonant sounds, combined sounds, physical attributes, translation between languages, phonemic symbols, intonation which affects meaning and rhythm.

However, there were some students who could encounter this problem and got good scores in phonology class. One of the reasons resulting in their success was the appropriate learning strategies they applied to learn phonology. As Oxford (1990) stated that in language learning process, strategies play a big role as a self-directed tool which helps a person to become more active in learning a

language (in Tohir, 2012). Appropriate language learning strategies will result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence.

Furthermore, based on this background, two research questions of this research are; a) What are the students' strategies in learning phonology? b) Which strategies are dominantly used by students in learning phonology?

The main purposes of this research are to find out the students' strategies in learning phonology and to find out the most dominant strategies used by Students of the Sixth Semester of English Education Program University of Mataram in Academic Year 2017/2018.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Language Learning Strategies

In language learning process, strategies play a big role as a self-directed tool which helps persons to become more active in learning a language so that they will have a good communicative competence. Appropriate language learning strategies will result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence (Oxford, 2003). O' Malley and Chamot (1990:1) define language learning strategies as specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students often use to improve their progress in developing second language skills (in Shi, 2017). In line with this Oxford (1990) in Deneme (2008) defines language learning strategy as the specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations.

Based on the statements above, strategies can be defined as any tools or tactics that learners employ to learn more effectively in order to get a better result during their learning process. Learning strategies are important because they become indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems in learning process, improve language skills in a better way, develop learner's communicative

competence and help students to be aware of the steps they should take and avoid in learning process.

The Classification of Language Learning Strategies

The classification of language learning strategies has been proposed by many scholars. Here are some classifications of language learning strategies.

- a. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classified Language Learning Strategies into three categories: a) Metacognitive strategies; b) Cognitive strategies; and c) Socio-affective strategies.
- b. Rubin (1987) classified Language Learning Strategies into three categories: a) Learning strategies (Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies); b) Communication strategies; and c) Social strategies.
- c. Stern (1992) classified Language Learning Strategies into five categories: a) Management and planning strategies; b) Cognitive strategies; c) Communicative-experiential strategies; d) Interpersonal strategies; and e) affective strategies.
- d. Oxford (1990) classified Language Learning Strategies into six categories: a) Memory strategies; b) Cognitive strategies; c) Compensation strategies; d) Meta-cognitive strategies; e) Affective strategies; and e) Social strategies.

Phonology

Phonology is one of the core fields that composes the discipline of linguistics, which is defined as the scientific study of language structure. A very brief explanation is that phonology is the study of sound structure in language, which is different from the study of sentence structure (Syntax) or word structure (Morphology), or how languages change over time (historical linguistic).

Phonology is different from phonetics although some people might say that those two fields are the same. One major difference between phonetics and phonology is the matter they concern. In dealing with phonetics, the concern is

focused on the inventory and structure of speech sounds (O' Grady and Dobrovolsky, 1989: 13). In the same manner, Odden (2005: 2) also stated that the discipline deals with the physical sounds of human language, which includes acoustic waveforms, duration, amplitude, frequencies, as well as the production of speech sound within vocal tract.

In contrast to phonetics that concerns about the actual physical sounds, phonology deals with abstract rules and principles of sound distribution and pattern in a language (Akmajian, et. al. 1985: 99). Thus, phonology investigates the rules that govern which sounds can be combined or co-occur with a certain sound, and also those which cannot. Hence, different from phonetics that deals with speech sound that can be found in all human languages, phonology is a language-specific study. The other thing is that generally Phonology concerns with the distribution of sound within language, rules for combining sounds, and variations in pronunciation.

According to Schaetzel (2009) there are some strategies that adult English learners can use in learning phonology:

1. Cultivate positive attitudes toward accuracy
2. Identify specific pronunciation features in English phonology that pose problems
3. Make ourselves aware of prosodic features of language
4. Focus on developing communicative competence

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted in order to find out what strategies that students actually applied in learning Phonology. Moreover, this study tried to reveal whether the strategy used by students in learning Phonology when they had Phonology class were actually affected by the teaching styles or teaching activities that the lecturers employed in the classroom or that the students applied their own strategies which went beyond what was taught in the classroom. Finally, this study uses Oxford's (1990) theory as a basic framework for analyzing the

types and dominant type of learning strategies employed by students of English Education Program in learning phonology.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The qualitative descriptive research design was used in this research due to the fact that the data collection is in the form of words which were obtained through some qualitative research techniques. In this research, the data were collected through questionnaire and interview aimed at obtaining valid information about the learners' strategies in learning phonology. The questionnaire containing 37 questions related to strategy in learning phonology were distributed to 37 students as respondents to be answered as honestly as possible in order to get the data. The questionnaire sheet was adapted from Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 by Oxford (1989). In the interview process, 20% of students from the sample were chosen randomly to be interviewed. Thus, 7 students were being interviewed for the data of this study. The answers to the questionnaire were scaled through Likert scale. In collecting qualitative data using questionnaire, there were some activities applied in this study such as prepared the questionnaire, asked students to fill in the questionnaire, and collected the questionnaire from the students after they were finished. The data from the questionnaire results were analyzed using the percentages formula, meanwhile in analyzing the interview results, there were some activities applied such as transcribing data, displaying data and drawing conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

From the result of the questionnaire, students employed all strategies proposed by Oxford (1990). Those strategies were metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, memory strategies, affective strategies, social strategies and compensation strategies. However, the uses of those strategies were arranged in different percentages.

The percentage of learning strategies employed by students in learning phonology can be seen as in the table below:

No.	Strategies	Sub-categories	Total number of students	Percentage
1	Memory Strategies	a. Creating mental linkages	14	10.6%
		b. Applying images and sound	20	
		c. Reviewing well	6	
		d. Employing actions	6	
			64	
2	Cognitive Strategies	a. Practicing	28	25.8%
		b. Repetition	0	
		c. Transfer	0	
		d. Grouping	11	
		e. Note taking	20	
		f. Inferencing	15	
		g. Imagery	0	
		h. Summarizing	8	
		i. Self-talk	24	
		j. Keyword	0	
		k. Auditory representation	32	
		l. Contextualization	17	
		m. Elaboration	0	
		n. Resourcing	0	
		o. Recombination	0	
			155	
3	Compensation strategy	a. Guessing intelligently	15	10.8%
		b. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	50	
			65	
4	Metacognitive strategy	a. Centering your learning	42	25.5%
		b. Arranging and planning your learning	32	
		c. Evaluating your learning	31	
		d. Setting goal	48	

			153	
5	Affective strategy	a. Lowering your anxiety	19	19.6%
		b. Encouraging yourself	44	
		c. Taking your emotional temperature	55	
			118	
6	Social strategies	a. Asking questions	15	7.7%
		b. Cooperating with others	31	
		c. Empathizing with others	0	
			46	
	TOTAL		601	100%

Table 1. Percentation of overall Students' learning strategies stated by Oxford.

On the other hand, the interview questions or guidelines were designed in order to find three things: difficulties students' had in learning phonology, the strategies they used to overcome those difficulties, and students' affective feeling while learning phonology.

From the interview result, all of the respondents said that they had problems or difficulties in learning Phonology. However, the problems they faced actually varied from each other. The most frequently problems appeared or difficulties faced by students while learning phonology were the sounds of English words, which includes the sounds combination and difference, the pronunciation, English phonetic transcription which is hard to be remembered and the book used in the classroom which is considered too old and difficult to be understood. However, there was one respondent who stated that her most difficult problems in learning Phonology were the lack of the resources and the learning orientation, which was considered to be too textbook dependent.

Although all of the students stated that Phonology was difficult, they actually conducted strategies while learning phonology in order to be successful learners in learning phonology and overcome the difficulties in phonology class

so at the end of the course they would pronounce English words correctly which might help them in the future as an English teacher. The most frequently used strategies while learning phonology were reading books or other additional resources such as journals or article, watching the video in English and everything related to phonology, and asking for help from friends who have a better understanding in phonology. Making a study group and a group discussion also became the strategies used by students in learning phonology.

Discussion

Learning Strategies Used by Students in Learning Phonology

This study found that the sixth semester students in English education program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education employed six types of strategies in learning Phonology, namely memory strategy (which relates to how students remember language), cognitive strategy (which relates to how students think about their learning), compensation strategy (which relates to how students make up for limited knowledge), metacognitive strategy (relates to how students manage their own learning), affective strategy(relates to students' feeling about their learning), and social strategy (involves learning by interaction with others). It is in line with Oxford's theory (1990) that learners employ many types of learning strategies in order to enhance their learning processes. Learning strategies were a personal matter which are considered would help students or language learners in developing their English. Based on the result of the questionnaire and interview, the use of strategies in learning Phonology can be explained as follows :

1. Direct strategies
 - a. Memory strategies

This study found that the use of memory strategies became the least strategy used by students in learning Phonology, although some students while being interviewed stated that one of the most difficult problems they faced in learning Phonology was the phonetic transcriptions that seemed hard to be memorized. The fact that, this

phenomenon is not merely because students did not apply memory strategy while learning Phonology, but because in some certain ways they were unaware of how often they actually employed memory strategies. The idea above is related to Oxford who (1990:40) stated that:

“Although memory strategies can be powerful contributors to language learning, some research shows that language students rarely report using these strategies. It might be that students simply do not use memory strategies very much, especially beyond elementary levels of language learning. However, an alternative explanation might be that they are unaware of how often they actually do employ memory strategies.”

b. Cognitive strategies

In this study, it is found that cognitive strategy becomes the most frequently strategy used by students in learning Phonology, by the percentage of users is 25.8% as seen in table 1. It is in line with Oxford (1990) statement saying that cognitive strategies are typically found to be the most popular strategies among language learners. Students employed practicing, repetition, grouping, note-taking, summarizing, self-talk, resourcing, inferencing, contextualization and auditory representation. However, learners did not employ transfer, imagery, keyword, elaboration, and recombination.

c. Compensation strategy

This study found that the use of compensation strategies places the 4th rank of the strategy used by students in learning Phonology. From table 1 the percentage use of memory strategy in learning Phonology is only 10.8% of the overall use of six types of learning strategy.

This study revealed that most of the students employed some actions to overcome their problems in learning Phonology. As Oxford (1990) stated that good language learners were aware and created a good investment for their language learning development. Good language learners manage to overcome their learning limitations. To overcome problems in learning Phonology, students employed some

actions such as asking for bits of help from the lecturer or friend which shows 24.3% of use, read books or journals and watch videos about Phonology. By seeing the actions of asking questions to friends or lecturer, it can be inferred that students were fond of cooperating with others to get a deeper understanding of learning Phonology.

2. Indirect strategies

a. Metacognitive strategy

This study found that the use of compensation strategies places the 2nd rank of the strategy used by students in learning Phonology. From table 1 the percentage used of memory strategy in learning Phonology is only 25.5% of the overall used of six types of learning strategy.

It means that most of the students set a goal while learning English, including Phonology, that is to be a better learner of English. Students also tried to pay attention and listen attentively to the lecturer's lecture or their friend's presentation in Phonology class. In this case, it indicated that learners employed centering learning. However, not many students plan their learning in learning Phonology.

b. Affective strategy

Based on the result of the interview, most of the students felt anxious while learning phonology. However, they could manage their anxiety by employing some strategies. From the questionnaire and interview, there were some affective strategies used by students in learning phonology such as using progressive relaxation shown in questionnaire item number 27 (I try to relax while learning phonology) with 27% percentage of use, encouraging themselves by making positive statement shown in questionnaire item number 28 (I try to be brave whenever I feel afraid while doing presentation in phonology class) with 32.4% percentage of use, reading the books before coming to the class, as stated by the students *"When I feel very anxious. So I learn more, I read the book again and again. I read the book many times until I got the point"* and asking for help from friends or

lecturer, as stated by the students *“I ask for my friend’s help to solve it.”*

It can be seen from the interview result, that somehow students combined cognitive strategy and social strategy to help them to overcome their negative affective feeling in learning Phonology.

c. Social strategy

This study found that the use of social strategies places the 6th rank of the strategy used by students in learning Phonology. From table 4.1.2.1 the percentage used of memory strategy in learning Phonology is only 7.7% of the overall use of six types of learning strategy. Based on the results of the questionnaire and interview, students asked questions to obtain clarification related to Phonology materials either inside or outside of the classroom. The use of asking questions as one of the social strategies aspect in learning a language, including Phonology, can be beneficial for students. The idea above is related to Oxford (1990: 145) who stated that:

“One of the most basic social interactions is asking questions, an action from which learners gain great benefit. Asking questions helps learners get closer to the intended meaning and thus aids their understanding. It also helps learners encourage their conversation partners to provide larger quantities of “input” in the target language and indicates interest and involvement.”

The Dominant Strategies Used by Students in Learning Phonology

It is clearly seen from Table 1 that the most frequently used strategy was the cognitive strategy, followed by metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, compensation strategy, memory strategy, and the last one is the social strategy. Cognitive strategy from direct strategy appeared as the most frequently used strategy in learning phonology with 25.8% percentages used. Metacognitive strategy became the second most frequently used strategy with 25.5% percentage of use, followed by affective strategy 19.6%, compensation strategy 10.8%, memory strategy 10.6%, and the last one was social strategy 7.7%.

Cognitive strategy from direct strategy appeared as the most frequently used strategy in learning phonology. It is in line with Oxford (1990) statement saying that cognitive strategies are typically found to be the most popular strategies among language learners. From the questionnaire, the activities that students mostly used in using this strategy was watching English language TV shows, video from Youtube, movie or any other kinds of videos spoken in English with 64.9% (24 students) of students chose always, 21.6% (8 students) of students chose often, 10.8% (4 students) of students chose often sometimes, 0% of students chose seldom and only one student chose never.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The study found that students used many strategies both direct and indirect in learning Phonology. The learners tended to employ cognitive strategies from direct strategy as the most dominant strategy used by students in learning phonology with percentages use is 25.8%. Metacognitive strategy became the second most frequently strategy used with 25.5% percentage of use, followed by effective strategy 19.6%, compensation strategy 10.8%, memory strategy 10.6%, and the last one was social strategy 7.7%.

Suggestions

Based on the results and discussion of this research, there are some suggestions the researcher intends to convey:

1. The next researcher should conduct a deeper study on how learning styles influence the use of strategies in learning Phonology.
2. Provide more references and literatures related to the ideal strategies to learn Phonology.
3. Lecturers who teach Phonology should not only focus on teaching the theory of Phonology but also teach the students how to pronounce the words correctly based on the phonetic transcription, and there should be a practice session for Phonology class.

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