

# STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING STRATEGIES AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN LUBUKLINGGAU

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## Abstract

The present study aims to describe the students' obstacles in learning English and their strategies in learning English at the senior high school. This study employs qualitative descriptive method. The data were collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interviews to get the naturality of the data. The study was conducted at SMA -Al -Ikhlash and SMA Negeri 8 Lubuklinggau, involving twenty students from both schools. The results indicate that many students of both schools have obstacles in learning English on pronunciation, understanding meaning, and grammar. Their learning strategies include social strategies, cognitive strategies, and meta-cognitive strategies.

**Keywords:** *Learning Strategies, English Mastery, Senior High School*

## INTRODUCTION

Lubuklinggau is one of developing cities at South Sumatra Province. All of the sector in this city has been working to gain the best result. Education becomes one of an important thing to support the success of the government in building Lubuklinggau city especially to face MEA or ASEAN Global Trade that has been starting in Asia, so English is one of the skills that must be mastery by Society especially professional worker.

English is close to other disciplines of knowledge because a lot of guidebooks written in English that must be understood by learners of English as global communication that is used to create cooperation between people or factory in the world. Crystal (2003), English is as a global language, which is widely used in various countries and in various fields. It can be at least understood almost everywhere among scholars and educated people. In Indonesia, English is taught since elementary to higher education level, each student in the classroom has differences of characteristics in learning English style namely: students are able to understand the material fast by listening from teachers' explanation and recording the teaching process which is called as the audio learning, or by reading the material directly toward practice (kinetics).

A learning style is a student's consistent way of responding to and using stimuli in the context of learning. Keefe (1979) defines learning styles as the "composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment." Stewart and Felicetti (1992)

define learning styles as those “educational conditions under which a student is most likely to learn.” Thus, learning styles are not really concerned with what learners learn, but rather how they prefer to learn. Learning strategy is a method or action someone in the learning process. According to Jasmina (2016), “learning strategies refer to Students’ self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions, which are systematically oriented toward the attainment of their goals”. Oxford (1991) states that language learning strategies are defined as steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. Suitable the discipline of knowledge which replaced in the research, this research focuses on students’ learning strategies in mastery English at a senior high school in Lubuklinggau city. It is very important to know by the writer about their students’ strategies in learning English, so the goal in teaching English can be reached well.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

English is international language to do communication between people with different language background, so it helps people to deal with several aspects namely education, economic, government and others else. In other words English as a bridge to facilitate people relationship with other in the world. English is never split with several disciplines of knowledge because a lot of information conveyed in English writing both paper book and online news, so people need to understand and master English well. In Indonesia, English is taught since elementary to university with differences level of age. Thus, this research focuses at students’ learning strategies in mastery English at a senior high school in Lubuklinggau city and the objective of this research are to describe the students’ obstacle in learning English and to know the students’ learning strategies. For the teachers, it is very important to know about their students’ characteristics in learning English.

Learning is one of the processes to improve someone’s knowledge that is gained from reading books, internet, and from the teacher.(Triyogo, 2016). After reading a book or ask from someone, the learner will increase their knowledge and it will memories in their brain. In learning English there are many obstacles that faced by Indonesia learner such as grammatical error, speaking, and listening because of English and Indonesia is different, so they must study hard and need learning strategies to master English well.

Language learning strategy is step that taken by people to compreance their learning. According to Oxford(1991) said that languauge learning strategies are defined as steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. The strategies can be done in side or out side of the classroom based on the students themselves. Oxfrond (1991) classifies language learning strategies into direct and indirect strategy. The category of direct strategies consist of memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies Than indirect strategies consist of metacoqnitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Language learning strategies also has several uses. There are more uses of LLS (a) to enhance language learning, (b) to perform pecified tasks, (c) to solve specific problem in language learning, (d) to make learning easier, faster and enjoyable, (e) to compensat for a defecit in learning (cohen, 2007). Based on the statement above can be seen that LLS is important to students

who want to increase their comprehension in learning a new language. It also depends on the students' mastery of the language. If students do not have strategies in learning a language, they will not master English fast and well.

In learning English there are four skills that must be mastered by students: namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is not easy to master quickly, but each student has strategies to make it easier in learning English. Listening to English conversation is very difficult for people whose second language is not English or people who use English as the first foreign language. It is very difficult to be a listener because the words and pronunciation are different, so one needs a new habit to listen to English in daily life to develop their comprehension in listening. Listening provides the aural input that serves as the basis for language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication.

To enhance listening skills, there are many strategies that can be used by students, for instance, listening to English songs, watching English television channels, etc. To understand the difference between active and passive listening, students need direct instruction on strategies that work (Vandergrift, 1999; Goh, 2008; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). Listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified by how the listener processes the input.

Speaking is a process of sending a message to another person about an idea, news, or other things. According to Henry G. Tarigan (1981:15) speaking is a skill of conveying words or sounds of articulation to express or to deliver ideas, opinions, or feelings. Speaking is a means to communicate with other people; it can be done in monologues or dialogues. So, the role of speaking in human life is so important, because humans cannot live normally without communicating with other people. Speaking is so much a part of daily life that people take it for granted. The average person produces tens of thousands of words a day, although some people, like auctioneers or politicians, may produce even more than that. So natural and integral is speaking that people forget how they once struggled to achieve this ability—until, that is, they have to learn how to do it all over again in a foreign language (Scott Thornbury, 2005). Many English students complain that they understand English, but don't feel confident enough to join a conversation. According to (Beare, 2015) said that people whose mother tongue is not English need to learn more to become fluent in speaking English, kinds of methods and strategies to do to master English well. Register use refers to the "tone" of voice and words that you choose when speaking to others. Appropriate register use can help you develop a good rapport with other speakers.

In developing writing skills, implicit and explicit skills are needed. In the process of writing activity such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, and publishing. In this activity, the writer will collect ideas and then arrange them into a good composition and it is in order to get a writing product. (Lestari, 2018). In line with these ideas of writing some learning strategies in writing are proposed from Oxford (1991) in the following list.

- a. Memory Strategies (Grouping, Placing new word into context)

- b. Cognitive Strategies (Formally practicing with a writing system, Recognizing and using formula and pattern, Practicing naturalistically, Repeating, Using resources of sending a message, Translating, Talking notes, Summarizing.
- c. Metacognitive Strategies (Arranging and planning the learning)

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study is a case study. The writers employed a qualitative method. According to (Stangor, 2011:15), qualitative research is descriptive research that focuses in observing and describing events as they occur, with the goal capturing all the richness of everyday behavior with the hope of discovering and understanding phenomena that might have been missed if only more cursory examination had been used. According to Cropley in (Triyogo, 2018), qualitative method is a method to observe nature to the human's habit. The qualitative approach seeks to understand phenomena, whereas the quantitative approach seeks to explain them. This means that: (a) The goal of qualitative research is emic: to describe and analyze the world as it is experienced, interpreted and understood by people in the course of their everyday lives. (b) It is frequently micro-analytic. (c) It is often (although not always) focused on a specific problem in a specific situation.

Twenty students from two senior high schools in Lubuklinggau were involved. They are from SMA Al Ikhlas dan SMA N 8 Lubuklinggau. In collecting the data, writers used focus group discussion (FGD) and interviews. FGD is sometimes referred to as "group interviews", the moderator does not ask a question of each focus group participant in turn, but, rather facilitates group discussion, activities encouraging group member to interact with each other. Silverman in (Triyogo, 2018)

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The writers took the data through FGD and interviews. The FGD and interviews were done to reveal the students' difficulties in learning English as well as their learning strategies.

### ***Students' difficulties in learning English***

English is an international language has become a compulsory subject in the senior high school in Indonesia, of course, there was a lot of obstacles faced by students' in learning this subject. It also was one of the challenging subjects for students because of a lot of differences with Indonesia. Based on the discussion on the subject, it can be shown below:

The writers found that English was a difficult subject for many students. They said English is difficult in terms of spelling and grammar. A student named Iknatia from SMA Al- ikhlas also said that ahe had difficulties in using certain verb such as irregular verb. She felt confused deciding the verb in the sentence, the changing of verb when used in different tenses. Another student said that

English was difficult in spoken like the word R spelling “AR”, I spelling “AI”. At SMA N 8 found the different statement came from Intan; she said that the word in English is always changing and she had difficulties namely word “blue book”, in her brine in writing sentence in English always change the word.

From SMA Negeri 8, a student called Anwar said that he often feels very confused in understanding grammatical components, especially when he wrote or spoke, he felt confuse about what tenses he should use.

From the data collected, it can be concluded that all of the students faced the difficulties in spoken English word both in the reading material and speaking material. Students also said that grammar is quite challenging to master. It was also caused by the limited portion of time for learning English in the school. The teachers were also occupied by administrative work load. Thus, they could not have sufficient time to design learning that was more fun and motivating to help learners understand English well.

### ***Students' Strategies to Mastery English***

English is a foreign language in Indonesia which is taught at formal and informal school. Students who learn English found several obstacles previously mentioned above. However, FGD and interviews, those students also have certain learning strategies to increase their English. The writers categorized students' strategies into six: meta-cognitive, memory, compensatory, effective and social strategies (Oxford, 2003).

Each student has a different strategy to increase his or her English competence. The results of FGD and interviews revealed that social strategy is chosen by 80 % of the students in learning English. They asked other people such as friend and their teacher if they did not understand certain topic or English components. A student from SMA Al-Iklas Latifah said, *“I am interested learning English but until now, I cannot mastery well, so if I have a problem such as speaking how to utterance I ask my friend or my teacher.”* Another student named Diana said also said, *“I have a problem in spoken of a word so I tried to speak with friend routine each Sunday morning at the boarding school.”* From SMA N 8 Lubuklinggau, a student named Pranata said, *“when I read English text and found a new word which I did not the meaning, I tried to ask with my friend.”* Another student called Sanah said that she had a problem in writing, reading and speaking so the best way asked my friend. She almost did not understand the basis of learning English.

The next strategy used by the students is cognitive strategy, which reached 18 %. The students tried to solve their problem by opening dictionary, searching material online and others. For example from SMA AL-Ikhlās, a student said she has a problem in uttering English word, so she always spoke English vowel clearly and listening English song and sing it. That was to check whether her pronunciation is correct or not and to add new vocabulary. From SMA N 8 Lubuklinggau, a student said she has a problem in writing when the teacher read English text (dictation). She has a strategy by listening English song and writing the lyric based on what she heard and matching it. Students who employed the

cognitive strategy are active and independent students in improving their own English competence.

Meta-cognitive strategy is also used by some students. A student from SMA AL Ikhlas said she has a problem in reading and writing. She tried to open dictionary if she found a new word and read how to spoke, and she asked her friend to correct her pronunciation. There were students' strategies in learning English at the Senior high school in Lubuklinggau. Each student has a different strategy in enriching their English ability.

## CONCLUSION

English is a foreign language in Indonesia that must be mastered by the student especially in high school level as it is one of the compulsory lessons. This study reveals several students' obstacles and strategies in learning English. Based on the data collected through FGD and interviews, it is shown that all of the students at both senior high schools have an obstacle in learning English on pronunciation as well as understanding meaning and grammatical components. Some students also felt unconfident in speaking English and have a growing perception that English was a difficult lesson. The students' strategies found are: social strategies, cognitive strategies, and meta-cognitive strategies. The results indicate that it is very important for teachers to understand the character of students in learning English and develop appropriate teaching strategies to accommodate the students' various need and difficulties in learning English.

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