

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher presents some points. Those are background of the study, problem of the study, objective of the study, significance of the study, Scope and Limitation; and definition of the key terms.

A. Background of the study

The topic of differences among learners is one of focus studies in second language acquisition. The study investigates why some learners are more successful than others by examining those differences. According to the psychological perspective, those differences include age, sex, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality, learning strategies and so on. Some have been studying further and one of them is the differences on the use of language learning strategies.

Learning strategies are techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information¹. In this case, it is related to the language learning only, and then it is called as language learning strategy. Furthermore, the language learning strategies consist of many items of strategies. SLA said that learners with the differences in language learning strategies use will be different in L2 outcomes too, for example the achievement or the proficiency. However, it does not mean that there are good or bad strategies because

¹ Anna Uhl Chamot, "The learning strategies of ESL", *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*, ed. Anita Wenden, et. al. (UK: Prentice-Hall International Ltd, 1987), 71.

Cohen said those strategies have the potential to be used effectively². It may be not appropriate to one learner but it may be to others.

That condition has been identified by a lot of studies. And their findings are almost the same that the use language learning strategies leads to better proficiency or achievement in mastering the target language. Green and Oxford (1995) also showed the same, language learning strategies of all kinds were used more frequently by more proficient learners³. And so did to Griffiths' study (2003), it found that there was a strong correlation between the use of learning strategies and language proficiency⁴. And there were another study too which have the same result.

However, there are some gaps here. Kitakawa's study (2008) mentioned rather different⁵. According to him, the relationship between variation and frequency of strategy use and proficiency are not stable, but they are different depending on learning contexts. Besides, the assessment of the use of learning strategies in those studies above, almost all of them used SILL (strategy inventory for language learning) questionnaire by Rebecca Oxford. The study from Hsiao and Oxford (2002) revealed some suggestions regarding the use of the SILL in assessing the learners' strategy use and the result showed that

² Neil J. Anderson, "L2 Learning Strategies", *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, ed. E. Hinkel (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 762.

³ Green and Oxford, "A Closer Look at Learning Strategies, L2 Proficiency, and Gender", *TESOL Quarterly*, 29/2 (1995), 261.

⁴ Pezhman Zare, "Language Learning Strategies among EFL/ESL Learners: A review of Literature", *International Journal of Humaniora and Social Science*, 2/5 (March, 2012), 167.

⁵ Kitakawa, "An Experimental Study of Language Learning Strategies: Particular Focus on Patterns of Strategy Use by Japanese University Learners of English", *Iwate University Repository: Bulletin of Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 17 (2008), 149.

another assessment should be considered⁶. Those suggestions are for example differentiating strategies for using a language (“language use strategies”) from strategies for learning it (“language learning strategies”) and ensuring that the language skills are should be obvious in each strategy item.

Unlike the SILL, the LSUII (language strategy use inventory and index) by Cohen, Oxford and Chi (2002) uses the six categories of language learning strategies based on six skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing, vocabulary and translation). Each category of strategy based on the skills area then are divided into some categories which differ between strategies for using a language from strategies for learning it. Therefore, the LSUII is supposed to be more representing the learners’ strategy use. Besides, since the assessment of English proficiency used in this study is TOEFL, the items of strategies in the LSUII are supposed to be easier to be adapted.

Based on background of the study above, the researcher will conduct a study entitled THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE USE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.

B. Problem of the Study

Based on background of the study above, the researcher formulates the problems: Do the learners who have the more variety on the use of language learning strategies have the higher English proficiency?

⁶ Tsung-Yuan Hsiao and Rebecca L. Oxford, “Comparing Theories of Language Learning Strategies: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis”, *The Modern Language Journal*, 86/3, (2002), 368.

C. Objective of the Study

The objective of this study based on the problem of the study above is to know whether or not the learners who have more variety on the use of language learning strategies use have the higher English proficiency.

D. Hypothesis

The researcher formulates the hypothesis as follow: the learners who have more variety on the use of language learning strategies have the higher English proficiency.

E. Significance of the Study

1. For the teachers

From the background of the study above, it can be supposed that this study is useful, not only for the learners but also the teachers. The teachers will realize that the use of language learning strategies which is appropriate to the learners will give the learning and teaching process becomes more efficient. Besides, the teachers can motivate the learners to find out their appropriate strategies effectively or develop them so that it can be better and more efficient.

2. For the learners

All of learners may want to be the successful learners. The result of this study may help them to get it efficiently through the appropriate language learning strategy use. As what stated before, by knowing the appropriate strategies, the learners are supposed to get a better, easier and more effective learning especially in the second language or foreign language learning.

Besides, by knowing some strategies invented in the LSUII, it can be supposed that the learners can be motivated to develop their language learning strategies.

F. Scope and Limitation

This study has the scope. The scope focuses only on the eighth semester or above of English Department who have passed the TOEFL course 2013. However, there is a limitation here. There is no standardized test which is administered to English Department in the place where this study is conducted. It makes the researcher takes the score of TOEFL which was administered by the teacher of TOEFL course 2013.

G. Definition of Key Terms

1. The Use of Language learning strategy

The use of language learning strategies here is defined as any purposeful techniques or any learning activities which are used by the learners in learning the target language so that they can effectively gain their goal as the successful learners. Those strategies are appropriate to the learners and they use them purposefully.

2. English proficiency

Proficient means able to do something well. So the English proficiency means learners who are able to master their English involved the skills in English. One of the common standardized tests of English proficiency is TOEFL.