
The Students' Learning Strategies in Learning a Foreign Language through a Controlled Natural Practice with Foreigners

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Abstract

This research aimed to describe the English learning strategies of English Education Study Program students inside and outside the classroom, how students used English in daily communication, and how students acted as tour guides in Yogyakarta. This qualitative research obtained the data from interview protocol and audio-visual recordings. The results showed that students were not aware of the language learning strategies used. Most students had difficulties in communicating by using English in the class because of their unsupported environment. However, they were able to communicate outside the classroom. They used memory and social strategies, followed by metacognitive and cognitive strategies. In these strategies, the participants gave a large second portion after the memory strategies. It showed that students still tended to be controlled by memory and awareness of the ability to use English. Affective strategies took the third sequence. Two strategies related to this social environment were applied by participants with different portions of the previous strategies.

Keywords

Controlled natural practice, English language, foreigners, learning strategies

Article History

Received 10 January 2023
Accepted 8 June 2023

How to Cite

Ningsih, R. W., Andriani, D., & Miharti, I. (2023). The students' learning strategies in learning a foreign language through a controlled natural practice with foreigners. *Indonesian Research Journal in Education | IRJE |*, 7(1), 148 – 157.
<https://doi.org/0.22437/irje.v7i1.26970>

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Introduction

This research was related to the controlled natural practice of students' communication outside the classroom. Speaking practice activities were conducted by students at the practice location or the location of an English language internship, and it was compared to participants' communication practice in the classroom. Therefore, controlled natural practice is a communication where most speakers use English to convey thoughts, ideas, to entertain, or convince others. According to Nunan and Carter (2001), speaking is reciprocal. People can respond to each other immediately. They also indicated that people could participate in the same oral interaction and varieties of equal speaking rights. Moreover, speaking is a physical situation of face-to-face interaction, and speakers must decide on their messages without taking time to check them over.

Students at *STKIP YPM Bangko*, especially in the English Education Study Program, used English when studying English subjects only without practicing it directly in everyday communication. Students' courage in communication by using English was very low. They were afraid to be laughed at by other people if they mispronounced or did not use appropriate vocabulary. The low ability to communicate in English occurred because most students are schooling in small areas with limited facilities and lack support from the surrounding environment, even though English has been learned since they were in middle school. They only dare using English in class, and sometimes some spoke English passively. Others preferred to be quiet than to communicate in English with each other. This problem was not only for middle school or high school students but also for English students at *STKIP Bangko*. They were afraid of practicing English, as they did not want to make any mistakes while communicating in English, and they felt shy using English during their interaction with another. In addition, embarrassment has arisen due to responses from the surrounding communities who did not support their desire to communicate using English. When they spoke in English with their friends, sometimes people assumed they were arrogant students who were deliberately communicating in English only to show their intelligence or to show off. It is an obstacle for students to hone their communication using English.

The controlled natural practice is a practice of direct communication by using English with foreigners from other countries and excluding domestic tourists. This research did not only limit foreigners to English native speakers but also from abroad, except Indonesian or domestic tourists. This research had been conducted in the interest of the researchers in the *STKIP Bangko* students' ability of English Education Study Programs in communication by using English and the strategies that students used when communicating in tourism training location in *D.I Yogyakarta*. The controlled natural practice can be observed by looking at the students' training videos. They contained the students' recording of communication activities in the internship location during training. The researchers observed students' English language learning strategies through their communication interaction with tourists using English by ignoring their grammar.

Moreover, the researchers gave much attention to language learning strategies that students used when they studied English for Specific Purposes for Tourism inside the

classroom and when they were at English for Specific Purposes for Tourism training outside the classroom. The strategies observed include cognitive, metacognitive, memory, compensatory, affective, and social strategies. Generally, this research aimed to see the students' strategies when learning English. It has caught the researchers' attention as one of the lecturers at *STKIP YPM Bangko*, where this research was conducted. It started with students' communication interaction in tourism training. Students were in two locations and two spots of *D.I Yogyakarta province*. They were both in tourist sites of Borobudur and Prambanan temple.

The tourism apprenticeship is one of the courses that gives participants and all students an option in an English Education Study Program where later they cannot only become a teacher but can also be another profession such as tour guide. It is in line with the *KKNI* framework of Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 8 of 2012, which is an embodiment of the quality and identity of the Indonesian nation concerning the national education system, the national job training system, and the national equality assessment system in which Indonesia has to produce human resources from learning achievements, national equality owned by every Indonesian worker in creating quality work and contributions in their respective fields of work. This course is also expected to make students more creative in finding employment besides becoming a teacher. This course also has the potential to work in hospitality and other tourism.

In this current research, the researchers intended to discover the language learning strategies used by students of English Education Study Program. It was different from [Oxford and Cohen \(1992\)](#) which only classified the terms of learning strategies and discussed differences of language learning terms in terminology. Meanwhile, the research conducted by the researchers at this time emphasized the English learning strategies, where the researchers looked at what strategies were used when ESP for Tourism lectures in the classroom and when they communicate with foreign speakers at the training location. The language learning strategies in the classroom here mean how students used strategies in the ESP for Tourism lectures when learning English outside the classroom and how students learn English strategies while communicating with foreign speakers at the training location.

Literature Review

The acquisition of a second language or foreign language (English) student in this research was carried out by arousing the students' motivation to be willing and interested in learning it. Since English is not used daily to communicate with students' community environment, language acquisition for students of *STKIP Bangko* is done by continuing to practice both inside and outside the classroom. ESP for Tourism training is one subject that is considered capable of helping students to master English as a foreign language. The training location is also a concern for students to get more opportunities to communicate with foreign speakers, so they are expected to get English faster. If there are many opportunities, fluency will be better ([Chaer, 2003](#)).

Additionally, [Krashen \(2002\)](#) is concerned with the monitor theory of adult language acquisition. In this theory, he said that adults have two independent systems for developing ability in a second language. The acquisition of subconscious language and conscious

language learning and the system is interconnected in a definite way. The acquisition of the subconscious seems much more important. This research was a statement about the theory and implications of monitor theory on acquiring a second language practice. In this research, he defines the language learning acquisition of a second language and presents the monitor model for second language learning for adults.

The research investigated language learning strategies used in English for Specific Purposes context that focuses on hotel management students by Zewdie (2015). The primary purpose of this research is to compare the language learning strategies used between high achieving students and underachieving students of hotel management students who attended the English for Specific Purposes (English for Hospitality), and it develops some conclusions for educators who teach English on English for Hospitality. The English for Specific Purposes proficiency test was to participants based on their proficiency test scores. In addition, the participants were divided into two groups where one group had a high-performing student, and the other was a low-performing group. The overall student outcomes showed that metacognitive strategies were used more frequently than other strategies. A compensation strategy was the second strategy used simultaneously with the social strategy. Cognitive strategies and memory strategies were the fourth and fifth strategies used by each student. Judging from the high and low achievements that show the same amount of English students' learning time per week while they were at school, high achieving students spent more wisely by being more active in generating language, as well as their second language use practices stand out when they showcase their speaking ability by using a second language / foreign language.

The English for Specific Purposes context in this research was devoted to tourism. English for Specific Purposes in this research focused on practical activities carried out by students in the tourist locations where these locations were visited by tourists from abroad. The specific goal of English for Specific Purposes for Tourism is to train courageous students in communicating with foreign speakers using English.

Students of English for Specific Purposes in *STKIP YPM Bangko* had similarities with English for Specific Purposes studied by Burdova (2007), which are both focused on tourism activities. However, the participants of this research were not tourism and hospitality students but English education students who were prepared and expected to be English teachers. Meanwhile, English for Specific Purposes for Tourism subjects in higher education where researchers conducted the research are subjects that aim to provide different nuances to the students so that after completing the lecture later, they would not only focus on the teaching profession but can also move to tourism as a tour guide for foreign tourists.

Language learning strategies

The language learning strategies of the students are how learners learn to master and understand the foreign language that they are learning. Many adult learners who study English become desperate because they do not feel significant progress. They also often feel frustrated and lose the motivation to learn English because they are not satisfied with how the teacher teaches or the subject matter they are getting. Afterward, the failure to communicate using English by students is often caused by them. In achieving success in

learning English, students must have strategies for achieving learning outcomes, especially in the acquisition of the English that they want.

Language learning strategies to acquire English are more attention to fostering interest in learning languages so that they can communicate using English with foreign speakers at tourism training locations supported by ESP for Tourism courses. Ideally, language learning strategies refer to the discovery of language learning strategies themselves when students carry out tourism training, and problem-solving in the field is essential for learning the further language at STKIP Bangko, especially those who take ESP for Tourism training courses. The experience of students at STKIP Bangko who have conducted tourism training will be used as a reference for those who have not gone into the field. Language learning strategies are an integral part that can influence learning outcomes achievement. The success or failure of learning objectives can be influenced by language learning strategies applied by students.

Language learning strategies consist of principles, methods, and techniques (procedures) to help the students to achieve learning objectives. The principle is also called a foundation. According to [Larsen-Freeman \(2000\)](#), the learning principle represented the theoretical framework of the method. In other words, the learning principle is the theoretical framework of a learning method. The theoretical framework is the theories that guide how a method is viewed in terms of 1) the material to be studied, 2) the learning procedure, 3) the teacher, and 4) the students. The learning principle comes from theories that develop in the relevant field. The language learning principle is sourced from theories relevant to language learning, such as 1) learning theory, 2) language learning theory, 3) language theory, and 4) psychological theory.

The theoretical framework in this research is English for Tourism which is a course in the sixth semester. This course is in the form of lectures that are carried out in the classroom, followed by training for Tourism as a continuation course that is carried out in a tourist area determined by the program manager under the existing curriculum. The theoretical framework in this research is English for Tourism, which is a course in the sixth semester. This course is in the form of lectures that are carried out in the classroom, followed by training for tourism as a continuation course that is carried out in a tourist area determined by the program manager appropriate with the English curriculum in STKIP Bangko. Furthermore, discussing language learning strategies, LLS is taken from [Oxford \(1990\)](#). Some things are discussed as described in the previous paragraph, such as direct strategies (memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies) and indirect strategies (metacognitive strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies).

Methodology

Research design, site, and participants

This research used a qualitative research design. It aimed at describing data that arises from the research subjects studied. This research focused on English learning strategies used by students of English Education Study Programs inside and outside the classroom (natural practice) in STKIP Bangko. According to [Creswell \(2010\)](#), qualitative

research is a method for exploring and understanding the meaning of several individuals or groups of people related to social or humanitarian problems. The primary purpose of qualitative research is to understand phenomena or social phenomena by focusing more on a complete picture of the phenomenon being studied than to describe it into interrelated variables. It is expected to obtain a deep understanding of phenomena to produce a theory subsequently. This research starts with students' skill problems in communicating using English in class on ESP for Tourism. Meanwhile, based on the experience and monitoring of several batches of students who have participated in tourism training in Yogyakarta, the training participants could communicate with foreign tourists, and it was very contradictory to the situation when they were in English class.

Data collection and analysis

In this research, the researchers conducted research on a group of students in the seventh semester who took English for Specific Purposes for tourism training in the tourist area of Yogyakarta for 35 days. The qualitative data were obtained from direct observations inside the classroom, observations through audio-visual outside the classroom, and audio-visual students during training in the field.

The researchers conducted a guided interview. The researchers who became the interviewers had a detailed list of questions that would be asked to participants through interview protocol. There was a total of twenty questions that have been prepared by the researchers for the six English learning strategies. One participant needed approximately 30 minutes to answer all the questions in the interview. The interview session started at ten in the morning to twelve. The interviewers interviewed three or four participants every day, and this session started at ten in the morning to twelve.

Data collection through recording devices was carried out by the researchers in the field. The data contained the activities of participants who acted as tour guides, especially guides for foreign tourism/tourism from Europe. The recording was obtained from the training participants. Therefore, the researchers only collected the audio-visual recordings from them and did not go to the field where the student worked. Each participant had a different number of recordings and duration.

The participants consisted of six male and eight female students. There were no special provisions to choose these participants. In this research, the researchers more easily determined participants because the class consisted of only one class. Participants in this research were students in the seventh semester. As a requirement, the students studied were those who had taken English for Specific Purposes for Tourism courses in the sixth semester and graduated.

The analysis of the data used in this research was based on questions and research objectives. Analysis was carried out through data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and data storage or verification. The purpose of this research specifically was to discover the students' learning strategies who learn ESP for Tourism in the classroom and outside of the classroom (training for tourism course), and also wanted to understand what problems were encountered and faced by students in learning ESP for tourism both inside and outside the classroom (training tourism) and explored what students did in overcome

the problems in ESP for Tourism they faced inside and outside the classroom (tourism training). These English learning strategies referred to the Oxford classification of learning language strategies. They were cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, memory strategies, compensation strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

The researchers used a sampling technique. It was a non-random sampling / a non-probability sampling. Here, the researchers used a purposive sampling to determine the participants to be analyzed by using the sample selection criteria, namely inclusion, which is the criteria that were desired by the researchers based on the research objectives and exclusion is the specific criteria that cause prospective participants who met the inclusion criteria must be excluded from the research group. The participants in this research were students in the sixth semester who took English for Specific Purposes for Tourism courses. These participants were chosen because their characters matched the type of research. This research aimed to find out the strategies for learning English inside and outside the classroom for English for Specific Purposes students for Tourism, and it will continue with field practice/training for Tourism in the internship location in Yogyakarta.

In this research, the participants spent for 35 days as tour guides at an internship location. During the training, participants did their work without being monitored directly. In other words, there were no specific treatments for the research subject or the context in which the research was conducted. All training activities took place naturally. In this research, the researchers conducted direct observation in the classroom and outdoor observations in the form of audio-visual in depth. It means that if the two observations were carried out, the researchers captured the meaning not only from the expression but also implication.

The research focused on students who had taken English for Specific Purposes for Tourism courses and those who had undertaken tourism training at STKIP YPM Bangko. This research focused on English language learning strategies by students for English for Specific Purposes for Tourism classes, and the researchers analyzed the learning strategies used by them while studying inside and outside the classrooms in the form of tourism training related to their speaking performance in communication with foreigners as their partners.

Findings and Discussion

The researchers observed the English for Specific Purposes for Tourism class and conducted an analysis based on Oxford's classification of language learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). Some themes that arose were related to English learning strategies based on Oxford's classification of language learning strategies, which were presented in groups of language learning strategies for participants through the interview.

The questions in the interview protocol were discussed through memory-related strategies, cognitive strategies, compensatory strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Most participants used memory strategies in language learning. It can be seen from their enthusiasm when learning in the classroom and based on the results of interviews conducted by the researchers, that they easily remembered the materials when they were displayed on a slide, and this contrasts with the opinion of Oxford

(1990) that memory learning strategies used by learners by utilizing prior learning knowledge and experience. This learning strategy involves a lot of memory and learning processes that use memory.

The interview results showed that the participants always tried to motivate themselves to learn English, even though some were still afraid of speaking English. Affective domains determine the success of students learning. People with no interest in certain subjects find it difficult to achieve optimal learning success. Someone who is interested in a subject is expected to achieve optimal learning outcomes. Affective dimensions often refer to as emotional dimensions. Various studies show that emotions (affective) have a dominant influence on the success of learners (Jensen, 2008). Affective strategies relate to learners' emotions which play a role in helping them overcome emotions, motivation, and attitudes related to learning. These strategies can reduce students' anxiety, support themselves and measure their emotional temperature.

These findings indicated that students succeeded in arousing, understanding, storing, and gaining new knowledge about learning foreign languages, especially learning English for Specific Purposes. Problems that students faced in class were compensation strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. First, compensation strategies, where this strategy becomes the root of improving communication. In other words, when students had a problem with this strategy, which will have an impact on the smoothness of participants' talking or communicating in the classroom.

Second, the affective strategy is part of an indirect strategy. This strategy plays a role in regulating emotions, motivation, and attitudes. In observing this strategy, participants were less able to motivate themselves to learn English on ESP for Tourism subjects. They also experienced a crisis of confidence, so most of them did not dare to use the English words they had just learned because they were afraid of making mistakes in communicating. The problem root faced by participants in this strategy apart from lack of self-confidence. They also did not list vocabulary, including new words in English, when studying ESP for Tourism.

Third, a social strategy is also part of an indirect strategy. Social strategies are also essential for students to interact with others to facilitate the acquiring new languages process. Overall, this strategy does not directly help students to learn new languages without involving the target language indirectly. Problems that affect the participants' communication ability in English are the interaction of the classroom environment. In the classroom, participants rarely used English to communicate with other participants or lecturers in English for Specific Purposes. When there was a subject matter that participants did not understand, they asked by using Indonesian. When there was an opportunity to communicate by using English, they did not try to participate in the communication.

The problem that often arises is that participants sometimes had difficulties in communicating in English. The most common problem is that participants often did not speak English fluently because they were not accustomed to communicating by using English. Two participants often seemed to think first about what they were going to talk about. The third is the lack of vocabulary they had.

It means there were almost no problems in the field faced by participants when they practiced communicating by using English which they acted as a tour guide. It concluded

that the environment contributed to the participants' success in communicating by using English. The social environment that supports and encourages participants to communicate by using English is one of the factors that made participants able to communicate with foreigners by using English. It can be concluded that the practice and environment of the participant are the most essential things in practicing English. The English area is a strong way to practice speaking skills. When vocabulary is a problem in speaking, there is one way that might be able to help them by having an easy-to-carry pocketbook.

During this research, the researchers found something different, namely as long as participants took part in an ESP for Tourism internship in a designated location, almost all participants who were afraid and were not confident in communicating in English have now turned out to be able to communicate with foreign speakers at internship location and become a good tour guide, conveying and sharing any relevant information in English after following the ESP class. It is because they know the tasks and responsibilities given by tourism managers well. Furthermore, the researchers found the emergence of participants' motivation and enthusiasm in communicating with foreign speakers because the environment in which they stayed was very supportive for them to inspire and bring courage to use English communicatively in explaining the history of tourist locations to foreigners that they guide.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this research is the language learning strategies that occur in the class are the memory strategies. Most participants liked this strategy. In the field or internship locations, participants seemed to have motivation to be able to communicate with foreigners. In addition, the environment has an essential role in this practice, and it is also driven by the situation and conditions when participants spoke in English. Furthermore, the strategies that were often used by participants were cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies. The two strategies complemented each other. For cognitive strategies, participants were required to understand the history of the tourist sites of the Borobudur and Prambanan temples. The metacognitive strategy was the participants' awareness to be a good tour guide for visitors.

The use of learning strategies serves to maintain continuity of communication. With the continuity of communication, students can get the opportunity to practice by using language to improve their competence. Language learning strategies are used by students because of their limited ability, especially the ability to understand and use the speech forms needed in the communication process. Language learning strategies discussed in this research are expected to be able to overcome the problems of other students who will do the same internship practice later.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

Acknowledgment

Our appreciation goes to the Chancellors, Head of English Education Study Program, and Head of LP3M of Universitas Merangin who have encouraged and provided the opportunity to conduct research.

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