Students' Learning Strategies in Oral Productions Across Speaking Proficiencies

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A B S T R A C T

Speaking skills are generally perceived as the measurement of the success of English Language Teaching (ELT), yet these skills are considered very hard to achieve. In fact, there have been different levels of speaking proficiencies among students. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the oral production learning strategies used by high and low proficiency English Education students. The design of this study was descriptive qualitative. Ten third semester English Education students of Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang were included. In collecting the data, the researchers used three instruments, especially a speaking test, documentation, questionnaires, and interview. The results show that the students with high speaking proficiency have higher motivation and use all kinds of strategies in the same frequency. Meanwhile, the students with low speaking proficiency use metacognitive, cognitive, and memory strategies. However, they did not use these strategies with the same frequency, where the lowest percentage of strategies used were affective and compensatory. The results suggest that students should choose learning strategies based on their needs. Students should use all learning strategies to improve their speaking skills. The implications and suggestions of the research are also discussed.

Introduction

The ability of oral productions can be measured as the success of language learning (Islam & Musdalifah, 2022). In speaking, there are five important elements: grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and also pronunciation (Brown, 2004). Regarding these elements, students need to have some strategies in their learning process to help in speaking proficiency. Strategy in learning can be described as actions, methods or techniques, as well as certain behaviors (Oxford, 1990) which may be different from one student to others (Haron et al., 2010). It means that learning strategies can be referred to as techniques or steps used by learners in practicing language activity (Dinsa et al., 2022). They can overcome difficulties in understanding the language in order to improve their learning (Loan, 2022). If learners consciously choose a learning strategy that suits their learning style, the strategy will be useful and purposeful self-regulation of learning.

Deshler and Schumaker (1993) and Loan (2022) say that learning strategies are the methods personals organize and use their abilities to research or complete any other obligations extra effectively and correctly both in school and non-educational environments. In order for college students to be able to recognize their learning system, it can be stated that they need to determine learning techniques (Sajedifard & Abedi, 2022). The mastery of strategies permits college students to examine on their personal to turn out to be unbiased college students. Rubin (1975) claims strategies as a set of techniques used by students to gain new learning. Thus, language learning strategies can

help students to learn languages more effectively. They can be identified as those used by "good" learners to learn how to learn.

Although many students in the English Education Department have been studying English for more than five years, they still have different levels of speaking ability. For example, some students are still not fluent in speaking, lacking enriched vocabulary, unsatisfactory pronunciation, and also struggling with grammar. Poor grammar includes students not spelling words correctly, using tenses correctly, and arranging sentences correctly. On the one hand, we can conclude that vocabulary is one of the factors that help students to master language skills. When they speak, they cannot communicate well without vocabulary. Therefore, it is very important to master the vocabulary, and the difference between the sounds of two languages is the common problem of learning English pronunciation. Some sounds in English do not exist in Indonesian. For example, unvoiced consonants: [ϴ], [tʃ], [ʃ] and voiced consonants: [ŋ], [ð], [dʒ], [ʒ]. Therefore, it will be difficult for English students to pronounce the sounds accurately. Since the most important aspect of language learning is by the students themselves, these problems depend on the students' own learning strategies.

Rubin (1975) claims that the characteristics of good language learners depend on their method of mastering. The use of mastering strategies will help to perceive successful and unsuccessful students. This study will discover the learning strategies of English Education Department students to improve their speaking skills. Students of both high and low overall speaking ability should find a better way to improve their speaking through knowledge of the mastery strategies. Some researchers have clarified that high-achieving and low-achieving students utilize different strategies. Chamot (2004) and Eliezer et al. (2022) show that differences between students who are more effective students and students who are less effective in learning depend on how the learning strategy is used and whether they fit into that strategy. Discovery of the study conforms to O'Malley and Chamot (1995) that appointed that the students with high performance in speaking observe a wider variety of strategies also engage them in greater ways to help them efficiently, and it was the effective ways for them; conversely, the student with low speaking performance has a less effective strategy. They have fewer strategies and do not show to successful tasks (Ate, 2022; Samperio, 2019).

In the grouping strategy developed by Oxford (1990), metacognitive strategies are learner behaviors associated with the technique or ways they do in assisting managers to examine the target language. Affective strategies are students associated with their emotional or attitudes such as confidence in understanding a 2nd language while; Social strategy leads to an enhanced collaboration of inexperienced persons with their peers in achieving study goals. Cognitive strategy is associated with the reasoning learner's technique to gain knowledge of a foreign language, memory strategy is utilized by students utilizing previous knowledge and learning experience. This learning strategy involves a lot of reminiscence and processing getting to know that make use of memory. Compensation strategy is used to assist students to overcome some difficulties in the language. Oxford (1990) added the Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). This inventory explains the types of language learning strategies that students observe to facilitate their mastery of a new language. All language learners especially students of English Education Department employ the kinds of language techniques of their gaining knowledge of activity (Daflizar et al., 2022; Dos Santos, 2022; Lee, 2010). They have multiple approaches to become better in speaking, and teachers influence students'

positive attitudes in using strategies (Fadlan et al., 2023), so it should be implemented in English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum (Fitriyani et al., 2023).

The previous studies indicate that students tend to use different strategies in accomplishing speaking tasks or activities. However, the strategies in speaking activities employed by students with different levels of speaking proficiencies are still of importance to investigate further to see how speaking proficiencies stimulate the strategies used by students. Therefore, by comparing the learning strategies used by high and low proficient students to improve their speaking skills, the present research focuses on how students use their strategies to improve their speaking skills.

This study has benefits for university students who want to know and learn about what are the good strategies that they can use to master speaking skills. The research questions of this study are: (1) What are the mastering strategies used by English Education Department students with high performance in speaking to improve their speaking competence? (2) What are the learning strategies used by English Education Department students with low overall performance in speaking to improve their speaking skills? Consequently, the cause of this research turned into created to know the language learning strategies employed by English Education Department students with high and low speaking performance to develop their speaking proficiencies. Thus, studying the strategies used by students with different levels of proficiency may lead to new knowledge that strategies may be influenced by how students challenge their oral production tasks and what level of proficiency they belong to.

Research Method

This study was descriptive in nature, with the aim of describing the language learning strategies of speaking used by students of the English Education Department with high and low speaking achievement. The data were collected from the documents of the lecturer who taught the students when they were in the speaking class of the department. The participants of the research were 10 semester III students of English Education Department of Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang. The researchers used three instruments to collect the data: documentation, questionnaire, and interview. Meanwhile, the speaking test was administered by the lecturer of the speaking course.

A speaking test was used to identify the capacity of English Education students who were high and low performers overall. The researchers requested documentation in the form of a video speaking test from the lecturer who taught Academic Speaking. In order to determine the students' speaking ability, the researchers used a Speaking Scoring Rubric. The scores relate to pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency during the speaking test. In addition, to distinguish between high and low performers in speaking, the following criterion is used: high performers have scores ≥80, while low performers have scores below 80.

The type of questionnaire tailored by Oxford (1990) known as the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). In this study, SILL Model 7.0 with 50 items was used as an instrument to assess the language learning techniques used by the students. 36 items were selected as an instrument to assess the language learning strategies used by the students to improve their speaking potential. The SILL questionnaire is divided into six parts; each phase gives an explanation of the types of strategies needed in learning English. They are memory strategies (remembering extra efficiently), cognitive strategies (using all mental procedures), compensatory strategies (compensating for lack of knowledge), metacognitive strategies (managing and comparing learning), affective

strategies (managing one's emotions) and social strategies (learning with other people). The questionnaires relate to speaking skills. All items have five-point Likert scale responses: 1 = never or almost never, 2 = not usually, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always or almost always.Sub-sections may differ according to the type of research approach used. If there are sequential procedures or steps, they can be given a notation (number or letter) according to their position.

Table 1. Specification of Questionnaire Item

No	Language Learning Strategy	Total Item	Number of items
1.	Memory Strategies	6	1-6
2.	Cognitive Strategies	6	7-12
3.	Compensation Strategies	6	13-18
4.	Metacognitive Strategies	6	19-24
5.	Affective Strategies	6	25-30
6.	Social Strategies	6	30-36

The researchers distributed interviews to both high and low speaking students to find out what they did to improve their pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and fluency. One interview was used to identify the approaches that students in the English Education Department used in mastering technique to develop their speaking potential. In this situation, the researcher contacted the students of the English Education Department one by one and then transcribed the students' responses.

Result
Findings from Speaking Performance

For speaking performance, the researchers focused on 10 students, which are five students with high performance and five students with low speaking performance. In order to know the students who are high and low in overall speaking performance, the researchers analysed the students' video assignments from the teacher using the speaking rubric. The researchers used the scoring rubric to score the students' speaking. To determine the criteria of the students' speaking performance, the researchers used the intervals of excellent (80-100), very good (70-79), sufficient (60-69). The students who have excellent criteria with an interval of 80-100 are classified as high students, while the students who have criteria below 80 are classified as low students. Furthermore, the researchers can decide the students who are high and low in speaking competence.

Table 2. The Students' Speaking Performance Result

Students	Criteria				Result	Score	Criteria
	Flue.	Pron.	Vocab.	Gram.			
Student 1	3	3	4	3	13	65	Low
Student 2	5	5	5	4	19	95	High
Student 3	3	3	4	3	13	65	Low
Student 4	3	2	4	3	12	60	Low
Student 5	5	4	5	5	19	95	High
Student 6	4	3	4	4	15	75	Low
Student 7	5	4	5	5	19	95	High
Student 8	2	3	4	3	12	60	Low
Student 9	5	5	4	4	18	90	High
Student 10	4	5	5	4	18	90	High

Flue: Fluency, Pron: Pronunciation, Vocab: Vocabulary, Gram: Grammar

Table 2 shows the different results of the students' performance through their speaking skills in English. Students 2, 5, 7, 9, 10 scored 80-100 in the speaking test. Therefore, they were classified as students with high speaking ability. They get the score because they can make a good level of description and good in pronunciation, fluency, grammar and vocabulary when they speak. Meanwhile, 5 students got a score of 60-75, namely students 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, so they were categorised as students with low speaking proficiency. The students still had some weaknesses in their fluency, but were good enough in pronunciation and grammar. They are not as good as the students who get 80 to 100, but their speaking skills are good enough.

Findings from Questionnaire

Based on the results from the questionnaires, the researcher found that the common and interpretation that used by high and low students in learning strategies are different. Cognitive strategies (M=27.2) are most frequently used by the students who had high performance in speaking. On the other hand, metacognitive strategies are most frequently used by the low achievers in oral proficiency (M=24.2). Meanwhile, the low speaking students showed low rates of affective strategy (M=17.2), followed by compensation strategy with an average (M=18.8). These could be interpreted as being used 'sometimes'. Also the social strategy with an average (M=20.2), the cognitive strategy with an average (M=20.6) and the highest is the memory strategy with an average (M=21.0). This can be interpreted as 'usually' used. Furthermore, the results obtained from students with high overall speaking performance indicate that for cognitive strategy the average is (M=27.2), metacognitive has an average (M=26.6), social strategy (M=24.8), compensation strategy (M=24.0), the average of memory strategy is (M=23.0) and the lowest is an average (M=22.4) for affective strategy. These could be interpreted as 'usually' used. The results of the use of learning strategies by the students of the English Education Department can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Strategy Inventory Language Learning Result

Type of Learning Strategies	High Students		Low Students	
	Average (Mean)	Interpretation	Average (Mean)	Interpretation
Memory strategies	23.0	Usually used	21.0	Usually used
Cognitive strategies	27.2	Always/almost used	20.6	Usually used
Compensation Strategies	24.0	Usually used	18.8	Sometimes used
Metacognitive Strategies	26.6	Always/almost used	24.4	Usually used
Affective Strategies	22.4	Usually used	17.2	Sometimes used
Social Strategies	24.8	Usually used	20.2	Usually used

Findings from Interview

In order to improve pronunciation, the scholars with high speaking ability responded that they practiced accent by repeating and imitating the sounds of words or

phrases, using a dictionary or paying attention to native speakers, watching English movies and additionally movies on YouTube and Instagram that include mastering about pronunciation in English, in addition to consulting by using dictionaries both in written and audio sources, along with Google translate, U-dictionary to realize how a word is pronounced. Meanwhile, the scholars with low speaking ability tended to frequently ask their friends how to pronounce words effectively. They practice English by watching English films and using English song lyrics. They also have commands to copy the sentences, focusing on how the actors and singers say the words. Some of them have also practiced pronunciation using a dictionary. They learned how to pronounce phrases.

To improve their grammar, high achievers use all kinds of strategies, including memorizing tenses and remembering grammar styles. They also study dictionaries and grammar books and try to work on practice problems, and one of them likes to take grammar notes and reread them. Next, in order to improve their vocabulary, each of the high and low students chose memorization strategies. First, they used online dictionary including U-dictionary, discovered the meaning of words in dictionary, read English book, and then the students should try to memorize and practice the words or phrases. They also take quizzes on books, online dictionary or Instagram, listen to music and watch English films with full subtitles. Students with low overall proficiency, on the other hand, reported that paying attention to melody and studying lyrics became their approach to improving their vocabulary. In order to improve their vocabulary, they also made a list of phrases or words they had recently heard in English, and if they found unfamiliar phrases, they could ask a friend or look up the meaning in a dictionary.   In order to become fluent in English, both high and low achievers used positive strategies. The high achievers said that they practiced a lot of speaking in English, wrote something in English in a notebook, tried to speak English to themselves every day and talked to friends and native speakers. They also read English books, sang English songs and watched English films. Conversely, students with low speaking ability tended to listen to English songs and try to memorize the lyrics. Students can become familiar with the language and communicate more fluently by doing these things. In addition, they also said that they had conversation practice with their classmates.

The latter is an effort to have a higher comprehension of spoken English; students try to understand each other when speaking English. Students with high speaking potential tended to ask their companions for clarification, to speak slowly and use simple phrases, to pay more attention to others and also to stare at their gestures or body language if they found it difficult to understand what was being said. They also chose to clarify what they were saying by using synonyms and even local language to make sure that their speech was understood. They also used gestures and body language to reflect the words or phrases being said, and asked for correction of their conversation partner's knowledge. Meanwhile, the students who were low in speaking performance emphasized that they used common words, used language especially the mother tongue and English, used gestures, spoke slowly and repeated words to make sure their friends understood what they were saying.

Table 4. Students' Learning Strategies Used in Developing Speaking Ability

Respondent	Strategy Applied by the Students	Category
Student 1	Finding out the new words in dictionary Saying or write English words several times Watching the Western or English movies	Cognitive Strategy
	Remembering English words	Memory Strategy
	Needing a friend to correct English Learning a lot how to speak English	Social Strategy
	Paying attention when someone is speaking English.	Metacognitive Strategy
Student 2	Using online or offline dictionary to find the new words then memorize them Writing a new word and practice making sentences in English Watching English movies or TV show in English Practicing speaking English a lot Learning more about grammar arrangement Writing something in the notebook in English Listening to a native speaker and trying to speak like them	Cognitive Strategy
	Paying attention when someone speaking English	Metacognitive Strategy
	Asking for help to re-explain Reading books, novels in English	Social Strategy
Student 3	Asking friends to speak in English Reading English books	Social Strategy
	Practicing to speak in English Repeating pronunciation of the words	Cognitive Strategy
	Mixing mother tongue and English when speaking	Compensation Strategy
Student 4	Looking up dictionary Taking notes about tenses Trying to write in English Listening to English songs	Cognitive strategy
	Memorizing new words or sentences in English	Memory Strategy
	Asking friends and speaking slowly in English	Social Strategy
Student 5	Watching English videos on the internet, TV show, or movies Listening to the native speaker Listening to English songs Repeating the sound of words in English	Cognitive Strategy

	Memorizing phrases in English Using online dictionary and remember new words	Memory Strategy
	Trying to speak English with friends or talk to yourself Reading more English book	Social Strategy
	Paying attention when someone speaks in English.	Metacognitive strategy
Student 6	Looking up dictionary Looking English movies	Cognitive Strategy
	Reading English books	Social Strategy
	Using body language or gesture while speaking in English	Compensation Strategy
Student 7	Taking note of English songs Watching English movies Writing notes, messages in English Creating summaries in English Practicing and apply English words	Cognitive Strategy
	Memorizing words or phrases in English	Memory Strategy
	Paying attention when someone speaks English	Metacognitive Strategy
	Practicing English with friends	Social Strategy
Student 8	Practicing with friends in English Asking friends	Social Strategy
	Paying attention to friends when speak in English	Metacognitive Strategy
	Making guesses to understand new English words	Compensation Strategy
Student 9	Using online dictionary Trying to speak like a native speaker Practice making sentence in English Trying to start a conversation in English Listening carefully to native English speaker	Cognitive Strategy
	Memorizing the tenses formula	Memory Strategy
	Trying to speak English with friend Trying to talk with outsiders (native speaker0 Reading English books	Social Strategy
	Using gesture	Compensation Strategy
Student 10	Writing several notes in English Trying to practice English every day by talking to yourself Listening to English songs Watching movies with English subtitles Repeating words or sentences	Cognitive Strategy

Reviewing English lessons	Memory Strategy
Paying more attention to friends when speaking.	Metacognitive Strategy

The results of the interviews in Table 4 confirmed that there were differences and similarities in the strategies used by the English Language Learners with high and low overall speaking proficiency. The students with high speaking proficiency used 30 strategies in their learning. Whereas the students with low speaking proficiency applied 15 strategies in their learning. It shows that high performers used more strategies than low performers.

The most common strategies used by English learners are using a dictionary to find and memorise new words, saying or writing English words several times, watching English films, writing new words and practising making sentences in English, practising speaking a lot, listening to a native speaker and repeating words or sentences. These strategies fall into the cognitive category. The second most used strategy is the social strategy; the students used reading books and novels in English, asking for help to re-explain, learning a lot how to speak English with friends, needing help from friends to correct English, trying to speak English with friends or talking to yourself, having a conversation in English with a friend, trying to talk with native speakers. The next strategy is memorisation strategy; students memorise English words, memorise new words or sentences in English, find grammar patterns and memorise them, memorise sentences in English and review English lessons. The fourth strategy is compensation. Students use a mixture of their mother tongue and English when speaking, they also use body language or gestures when speaking in English, and they make guesses to understand new English words. The last strategy used by the students is the metacognitive strategy. For example, they pay attention to their friends when they speak English and also review the English lessons.

Discussion

From the end results of the questionnaires, the researchers observed that the learning strategies implemented by the high students in speaking overall performance had a higher balance in their learning strategies. They implemented memory strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, social strategy, and cognitive strategies in studying their speaking. As a result, in order to find out the safe techniques used by the scholars, the researcher focused on the strategies that had the highest mean score. It indicates that they used of these strategies. The language learning strategies carried out by high students in speaking performances are cognitive, metacognitive, social, compensation, memory, and affective strategy. This finding was supported by previous finding of Trialoka et al. (2017), who found that second semester college students most regularly appointed cognitive strategies. Mahdi (2018) also found that the cognitive and memorizing strategies scored were the highest averaged compared to the opposing strategies. In addition, there were other present studies that had similarity with these studies, including a study by Prabawa (2016) that showed that the learners with high speaking performance used six strategies as provided by using Oxford(Oxford, 1990) particularly; memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The results of the studies are consistent with Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012), who found that a successful language learner demonstrates extra consistency in using effective strategies, and a successful language learner demonstrates extra

consistency in using effective strategies. Their findings confirmed that a hit inexperienced individuals implemented more strategies and used them extra frequently, based entirely on their performance areas. However, this result contrasted with the findings of previous research by Fajrina (2015), who found that high speaking proficiency students always use metacognitive strategies. At the same time, memory, cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies were not so often used. On the other hand, students with high speaking performance had the same balance in applying strategies where successful students follow metacognitive strategies to the maximum and are high method customers (Gerami & Baighlou, 2011; Sajedifard & Abedi, 2022; Zou & Lertlit, 2022).

The high college students prefer cognitive strategy because this category can include imitation of native speakers, which can help learners "improve their pronunciation and their use of structures, vocabulary, idioms, intonation, gestures and styles"(Oxford, 1990) Cognitive strategies used to help students include practice, repetition, formal practice with sounds and writing systems, use of formulas and patterns, and additional translation. Oxford (1990) claims that all language inexperienced persons use study strategies, but more a hit learners use them extra consciously, more correctly, more purposefully and extra frequently.

Based on the data above, the students with high speaking ability used all kinds of strategies. They applied more strategies than low speaking ability students in the same level frequently. The high students in speaking competition have better motivation and they are more aware about improving their strategies used in growing speaking potential. The most common strategies used by high students speaking performance continuously is training their English consisting of trying to speak English with friends, listening to a native speaker and trying to talk like them, practicing making sentences in English, trying to speak with outsiders (native speakers) by way of using the Internet, repeating the sounds of words in English, memorizing words and grammar patterns, reviewing English book. Based on analyze the data, the scholars with low in speaking performance were generally used memory strategy, cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy and social strategy.

Meanwhile, compensation strategy and affective strategy were not used so often. The low students in overall speaking performance frequently used metacognitive strategy with the highest score of 24.4, followed by memory strategy, cognitive strategy, social strategy, compensation strategy, and the lowest 17.2 specifically affective strategy. The result of this study also has the same finding with study done by Cabaysa and Baetiong (2010) that shows metacognitive strategies as the strategies mainly used by the students. The other previous research found different result about unsuccessful students in speaking skill. Gerami and Baighlou (2011) have found that the average of cognitive strategies used by successful and unsuccessful college students is almost identical. They use cognitive strategies moderately. Cognitive strategy is the best or highest category for unsuccessful students. Marhaban et al. (2021) found that within EFL learning context, the unsuccessful learners used compensation strategies significantly more often than their successful counterparts.

This research establishes that the high speaking ability students seem to be more aware of their language needs. Consequently, they tended to use techniques or strategies that would help them to master the target language through practicing, reasoning, and reading/analyzing, and strategies that would allow them to control their acquisition of knowledge by making plans, strategies, and comparing results. Thus, the students with low speaking performance should have strong motivation and cover all kinds of strategies

in learning speaking as specified by Oxford. However, good learners are categorized to have some aspect such as being able to guess accurately, have a strong force to speak with others, willing to make mistakes, recognize on form by searching for patterns and analyzing, take gain of all practice opportunities, monitor their speech as well as that of others and take note of that means. This can be a guideline for learners with low speaking performance.

Conclusion

The language gaining knowledge of techniques implemented by high college students in speaking overall performance were cognitive, metacognitive, social, compensation, memory, affective, affective strategy. They used 30 strategies to improve their speaking skills. The students always practised speaking in English in everyday life, using online dictionary, watching English movies, reviewing English books, writing notes in English, listening to native speakers, trying to speak like native speakers, paying attention when other people speak English and they tried to use their English in real life by using technology (Internet). On the other hand, the low proficient students used 15 strategies. The strategies that were frequently used by them were; metacognitive, memory, cognitive, social. The first one is the metacognitive strategy. The students tend to plan, organise and set their learning goals, they also listen and watch the speaker who has good in speaking. The second is memory strategy. The students wrote a new English word in their notebook and they tried to put it in their sentences to remember it. The last one is the social strategy. They usually ask a friend to correct their English. In addition, they also used other strategies such as affective and compensatory strategies, but infrequently. Therefore, the different strategies used by high and low students in speaking performance do not have the same average scores and motivations for learning, while the interpretations are almost the same.

This research may have some limitations, such as the number of respondents who participated, so a more thorough study involving more participants and different demographics, such as different countries, is strongly suggested. It is also challenging to investigate how different student learning styles affect strategies and learning outcomes in speaking classes. In addition, a study on the use of artificial intelligence can be explored to investigate whether different levels of students' speaking skills stimulate students' critical thinking.

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