Language learning strategies employed by proficient EFL students in learning speaking skills

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study investigatres the language learning strategies utilized by two proficient EFL learners in learning speaking skills. The present descriptive case study probes and narrates the accounts of two proficient English speakers related to the language learning strategies they employed in learning speaking skills. The two proficient English speakers were perceived as credible and ellible sources for this study as they possess the required TOEFL score for proficient learners as indicated by the English Testing Service (ETS), which is around 543-627 in range. The data used in this study were obtained through four semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom meetings with the participats. A document in the form of participants' detailed learning schedules was also gathered to enhance data trustworthiness. Subsequently, the data collected were analysed thematically, generating seven categories of language learning strategies. Findings indicate that both participants utilized all seven strategies performed as the most frequently used strategy. It implies tht both participants often plan, arrange and evaluate their learning in advance. The study also found that few strategies were employed at the early stage of leanring and are no longer in use at present.

Language Learning strategies are sets of either deliberately or automatically chosen strategies used by learners in order to gain proficiency in a second or foreign language (Cohen, 2014; Griffith, 2008; Griffith, 2017; Macaro, 2001; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990: Rubin, 1975). The term Language Learning Strategy was introduced by Rubin (1975) as she brought the discussion to a wider audience. These strategies range from mental to physical processes, observable behaviour (Oxford, 2018). The sets of strategies

are often classified in numerous ways; however the most popular one is Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory of Language Learning, which segmented the strategies into six categories. These categories are memory strategies that help learners retain new language input; cognitive strategies which deal with the mental process; compensation strategies that would help learners' communication despite their language limitation; metacognitive strategies for planning and arranging the study process; social strategies to assist learners in gaining the most out of their social environment; and finally, the affective strategies which help the learner to boost learners' self-esteem. However, other experts also presented their strategies related to the process of learning Engish speaking skills under several categories and classifications, such as the pronunciation strategies coined by Peterson (2000), Academic Spoken English Strategies by Schroeder (2016), as well as the Deep and Surface strategies presented by Leaver, Ehrman, and Shekht (2005). Thus, all these combined strategies were used to enrich this study. Finally, the strategy categories used as a framework in this study are—memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social, affective, and fluency-oriented.

Table 1. Strategy Classification And The Underlying Theories

No	Strategy Classification	Underlying Theories
1	Memory Strategy	Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990
2	Cognitive Strategy	Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Nakatani, 2006
3	Compensation Strategy	Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990
4	Metacogntive Strategy	Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990
5	Social Strategy	Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990
6	Affective Strategy	Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Cohen, 2005; Schroeder, 2016
7	Fluency-Oriented Strategy	Nakatani, 2006; Peterson, 2000

The table above shows categories of language learning strategies derived from various experts. This category covers strategies students can use to improve their speaking skills. Language learning strategies are believed to significantly contribute to enabling language learners to acquire ability in a foireign or second language.

Numerous studies (e.g., Teng & Wu, 2023; Green & Oxford, 1995; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Magogwe, 2007; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Park, 1997; Peacock, 2001; Rao, 2016) have been done in investigating language learning strategies and the relation of those strategies to second/foreign language proficiency. The importance of using language learning strategies was also implied by a study by Griffith (2008) in which a higher frequency of language learning strategies was found in higher level students. This is aligned with the theories explaining that students who frequently employ

more language learning strategies would produce better results in the performance of their language use than the students who employ fewer strategies (Cohen, 2007; Qingquan, 2008). Thus, the language learning strategies utilized by good language learners would have a positive impact when the strategies are isolated and implemented by least competent learners (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

According to Oxford (1990), language learning strategies will be activated when there is a problem to solve, an objective to meet, or a language task to accomplish in all areas of language skills, such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Some previous studies (e.g. Gallagher-Brett, 2007; Gani, 2015; Ghufron, 2017; Kawai, 2008) revealed the significance of klanguage learning strategies in improving speaking skills. Zhou and Huang (2018) also show also show that learners who incorporate several strategies in learning tend to have better results in their speaking performances. This also aligns with a study by Nakatani (2006), which revealed that students with high oral proficiency tend to apply specific strategies. In their study, Naktani involved 400 Japanese students, tested, and explored the strategies for learning English as a foreign language. As a result, Nakatani developed eight specific strategies that learners use to improve their speaking skills.

Despite the numerous studies discussing the relationshship between language learning strategies and learners' proficiency (e.g., Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Peacock, 2001; Magogwe, 2007; Rao, 2012; Green & Oxford, 1995; Park, 1997) or specifically towards speaking skill (e.g. Gallagher-Brett, 2007; Gani, 2015; Ghufron, 2017; Kawai, 2008), I have found inadequacy regarding the number of in-depth research qualitatively about investigating the language learning strategies used by the proficient learners to promote speaking skills in particular. Nevertheless, English speaking skills have always been included in the objectives of English lessons for various levels in Indonesia. This could be seen in the government-issued English teacher books, which show that must communicate fluently and spontaneously in English. This is aligned with Wu & Miller's notion (2020), where they emphasise how English speaking skills are paramount to be learned since communications have now expanded beyond geographic bounderies and nationalities. Thus, this research fills the gap in speaking strategies research.

This research is underlined by the notion that proficient learners involve more strateagies in their learning. Thus, the excessive number of strategies they incoorporate in their learning might be isolated and implemented for the learners with lower proficiency to improve their English speaking skills. Therefore, in this specific study, I aim to explore and identify the language learning proficient EFl students use to promote speaking skills. The result of this paper might be beneficial for language learners in choosing

and combining the appropriate language learning strategies to assist them in independently learning speaking skills. Furthermore, this paper might also be a consideration for English teachers since there has been evidence that effective strategies can be taught to help learners increase their motivation and proficiency (Chamot, 2008; Green & Oxford, 1995; Macaro, 2001; Rubin, 2005; Rubin, 2013).

Therefore, this study aims to answer the research question: What language learning strategies do proficient English speakers employ to learn speaking skills?

METHOD
Research Design
The research was carried out using the qualitative case study to describe, explore, and investigate the language learning strategies used by proficient EFL learners in learning to speak. A case study was chosen by considering the need to seek rich data and understanding (Hamilton, 2013) of proficient EFL learners using language learning strategies to improve their speaking. This design is appropriate to be applied in this specific study since the case study would assist in an in-depth exploration seen from various perspectives with multiple complexity and uniqueness (Simons, 2009, which would be beneficial to answer the research questions of this study.

This was a pilot study in which I involved a smaller scope of participants and data collection. The main and full scope of the study will be carried out in my thesis paper with a more significant amount of participants.

Participants
Two participants were involved in this study; both are English learners who earned their degrees from the English Education Program. The first participant (Putra, pseudonym) actively participated in various English-speaking communities in and outside his university. He also sometimes teaches English to young learners in his activities in college. On top of that, Putra admits that he often gets exposed to English using various audio-video communication applications such as LinkBe and Cake, which he uses daily. The second participant (Putri, pseudonym) used to be a member of a university English debating club and was actively engaged in various competitions. The debate competitions were said to be one of her main attempts to practice English since she has the chance to communicate in a massive amount of time and with a myriad of topics in English. Putri also expressed that she likes to read books in her mother language (bahasa Indonesia) and in English.

The proficiency of both participants is measured by the mean of their scores in TOEFL. According to the English Testing Service (ETS), the TOEFL

score range for proficient users is 543-627. This is comparable to the ranges between the B2 (Upper-Intermediate) and C1 (advanced) levels in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Based on the CEFR description, English users at this level are able to understand a widely ranged demanding and long text while recognizing implicit meaning. Furthermore, the users also express themselves fluently and use the language flexibly for academic and professional purposes.

Data Collecting Techniques

The data collection instruments of this project involved four interviews in total, as well as a document analysis of one of the participants' learning schedule files, which was discovered later during one of the interviews. Initilaly the beginning, I asked for the participants willingness to participate in this study by proposing to them via phone calls. Once they agreed to the terms, we proceeded to the process of agreement, where each of the participants signed an informed consent form. Subsequently, the procedure of data collection was attempted. The details of those processes would be explained as follows:

The participants were provided several questions in the form of semi-structured interviews related to the language learning strategies they employ in improving speaking skills. The questions were derived from several strategy inventories postulated by various experts (e.g., Nakatani, 2006; Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Schroeder, 2016) and have been sorted into some categories named the memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and affective strategies. Further, these drafts of interview questions were judged by a scholar who is an expert in language learning strategy research.

Since both lived in different cities, I conducted the interview via two Zoom and Whatsapp phone calls. The Zoom and Whatsapp calls were recorded with the consent of both participants. The interviews were conducted twice for each participant, which resulted in four interviews in total and was carried out for approximately two months. During the interview, Putra explained that he had written a schedule to regulate his learning. He uses this schedule every day to store and manage the time he devoted to learning

English. Moreover, he created this schedule to help him achieve his desired IELTS test results. Therefore, I gained his consent to analyze and involve the schedule as another data collection instrument in this study.

This case study was a pilot in which I involved smaller participants and data collection. The main and bigger study would be carried out in my thesis paper with more participants.

Data Analysis Procedures

The interviews were recorded using digital audio and then transcribed to gather first-hand as well as broader explanations about the language learning strategies. This process was assisted by several AI in terms of transcribing the audio in the beginning. However, the transcribed draft proceeded to be re-read and analyzed several times more to get the best and least error transcription. Subsequently, the transcribed dialogue was analyzed, where the data were coded and sorted under the strategies inventory created prior to the study. These categories are memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, social strategy, affective strategy, and fluency-oriented strategy.

Subsequently, the coded data from the interview and emerging document were analyzed systematically and thematically based on the previous category (Cohen & Marison, 2018) by comparing as well as contrasting the findings to existing theories to understand the language learning strategies used by proficient EFL learners in learning to speak. Finally, the analysis result is presented through narrative discussion, where I identified the themes and narrated the findings (Licthman, 2012).

FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed some phenomena that finally answer the proposed research question, which is to figure out the language learning strategies used by proficient students in learning speaking skills. From the research findings, it could be seen that both participants were actively engaging themselves with six language learning strategies (memory strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies, affective strategies, and fluency oriented strategies). However, none of the participant was reported to employ cognitive strategies. The possible reason and rationale behind these findings are included in the following discussion. Therefore, I would start by elaborating the findings according to the language learning strategy classification.

Memory strategies

Both of the participants of this research were reported to utilize only one memory strategy, which appeared to be the strategy of reviewing well. In reviewing new vocabulary, Putra revealed two strategies he used while learning to speak. In his initial stage of learning, Putra memorize the vocabulary by writing it down in his book and memorizing the vocabulary repeatedly, which he referred to as "traditional strategy". However, he admitted that he only employed this strategy until he found a new way to retain his vocabulary by using the help of online applications; LinkBe and

Cake. The process of memorizing English words was explained by him as follows:

> *I used to use the traditional way when I was still in high school by writing down every new vocabulary which I did not know the meaning of. Then, I tried to translate them on my notebooks and started to memorize them. Perhaps, it is around 10 vocabularies in a day. Finally, I started to try the more modern way in memorizing vocabularies by using Cake application which I downloaded in play store.*
>
> (*Putra*)

Putri, on the other hand, admitted that she memorized new vocabulary by writing them down and repeating them five times for each attempt; whenever she forgot the words, she would grab her note and review the vocabularys again for five times. Even though this strategy was referred to as "the traditional way" by Putra, Putri successfully employed this strategy, and by that, she could retain her vocabulary very well. This was explained by Putri as written below:

> *I usually try to repeat and remember the word 5 times. I don't know why I do it 5 times but it always work for me. After I memorize the words, I would repeat them again in the next time I forgot about the words.*
>
> (*Putri*)

Compensation Strategies
When confronting difficulties and gaps in understanding something in English, the participants used different strategies. Putra explained that he could not recall if he had ever encountered a situation where his partner did not understand his words. However, he claimed that had he been in that situation, he would have utilized his gesture to help him with the problem. On the other hand, Putri explained that her solution to overcoming limitation would depend on the interlocutor or the person she was speaking with. She stated that she would try to create circumlocutions or sentences that elaborated her point if she spoke with somebody with decent English. However, she explained that she would switch to Bahasa Indonesia (her mother tongue) when the interlocutor was still new to learning English. Her explanation is reported as follows:

> *It depends on who the interlocutor is. If I am speaking to somebody who speaks good English then I will try to explain it in another expression or I will find another word. But if I speak with somebody who just started learning English, I usually try to switch into Bahasa Indonesia.*
>
> (*Putri*)

Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognition appeared to be the strategy that was employed the most frequently by both of the participants. The participants were reported to use strategies such as arranging, planning, and evaluating their learning. In arranging and organizing their learning, Putra and Putri were engaging themselves in different types of strategies. Putra confirmed that he often seeks practice opportunities by maximizing the advantage of online applications, including the Cake app. This was elaborated by him as follows:

> *I have used so many applications and one of them is OmeTV. But finally, I ended up using LinkBe because I think this is the best application to speak with other people. This application connects people from around the world who want to learn English. So we can communicate with them freely.*
>
> *(Putra)*

In addition to using applications, Putra also revealed his other strategies by finding practice opportunities and creating them.

> *I established a community called ESC (English Speaking Club) in English Education Department Students Association (community for students majoring in English). I created my own program and started to open a member recruitment to gather people who love to speak in English.*
>
> *(Putra)*

In terms of planning his learning, Putra presented to me his daily schedule, which he always does every single day to achieve his targeted English proficiency. Putra admitted that he did all this planning to improve his IELTS band score. The schedule he arranged is attached as follows:

Figure 1. Putra's English Learning Schedules

The schedule created by Putra explained his attempt to arrange the activities that he followed every single day. The schedule involved overall English skills such as listening, reading, speaking and writing. From his schedule, I can infer that the learning speaking schedule was done most often with three times frequency each week. Meanwhile, other skills like listening, reading, and writing were trained twice weekly.

After several periods of learning, Putra claimed that he regularly evaluates his learning, which also indicates the use of metacognitive strategies; evaluating learning. When trying to evaluate himself, Putra did it both with the help of his friend and by conducting self-evaluating through the filmora application. He described the strategies used as follows:

> *Sometimes I called my friends to give the questions related to IELTS speaking test and I would answer the question. In the end, I would ask them to give me feedback. Other times, I picked a topic for myself and I record myself speaking by using filmora video recorder. I talked for about 20 minutes and identify the grammatical and pronunciation errors that I made.*
>
> *(Putra)*

Similar to what Putra has conducted in arranging his learning, Putri was also reported to employ metacognitive strategies such as planning and organizing her schedule. However, the strategies were only utilized by Putri in her initial college years, which means she has not employed the strategies anymore in recent times. When she was in her beginning years of college, she prepared 30 minutes to 1 hour of her time to practice her English. She would engage herself with English-related sources (books, movies, etc.). Her explanation was provided as follows:

> *I used to devote thirty minutes up to to one hour to practice my English every night. I would put my phone away for a while and I would try to focus on improving my English at that time. I tried to do many activities. Sometimes I watch or doing speaking practice with my-self or read English books and any activities related to English*
>
> *(Putri)*

In evaluating her learning, Putri revealed that she conducts the evaluation by her self, which is also referred to as a self-evaluating strategy. Her strategy use is explained as follows:

> *Sometimes I try to measure by my-self. Actually you can feel it. Whenever you finish speaking, I think you can reflect how good your speaking was. Like whether I did so many mistakes or no.*
>
> *(Putri)*

Affective Strategies

Encouraging one self is one of the criteria of affective strategy. Both Putra and Putri reportedly utilize several affective strategies, such as lowering their anxiety and encouraging themselves while learning to speak. Putra stated that he often felt worried whenever he made mistakes in speaking English. Therefore, he employs one of the affective strategies, which is giving him some time and trying to speak slowly without making any pauses. Similar to what Putra felt, Putri admitted that she also often felt worried and somehow discouraged whenever she was nervous. Therefore, she was also employing similar strategy, which is to take everything slowly and to try reducing her anxiety while speaking English. In addition to lowering her anxiety, Putri also said that she often encouraged herself by giving positive affirmation and remembering the reason why she learned English in the first place. She admitted that utilizing the strategy that way would help her get back on track.

Social Strategies

From the analysis, the participants were found to use several social strategies, such as cooperating with friends, asking for clarification or correction, and empathizing with others by developing cultural understanding. Putra recounted that he often enrolled himself in several English speaking clubs while studying in college despite several challenges he had to encounter. This was explained to him as follows:

> *I also join ELC (English Language Community) in 2018 where we had a weekly gathering to practice our English every Saturday afternoon. I also participated in English Zone but only for several meetings because we were required to pay at that time and I was still in college so I did not have enough money at that time (laughing).*
>
> *(Putra)*

Putra also believed that engaging himself with Western culture, or the culture in which the language comes from, would improve his skills in speaking English. This was conducted by watching English movies in order to understand their culture. Putra argued that empathizing with the culture helped him gain comprehensive understanding towards native speakers' way in speaking the language. To help him do so, he used the help of Cake application. Putra elaborated his strategy as follows:

> *I watch videos from Cake application, and in some videos, the video explains about how native speakers use phrases to express their sadness, and their happiness. I think learning the culture of the language is important. For example, when we speak or ask questions in English, we need to know the polite form of the question.*

(Putra)

Similar to what Putra stated, Putri also agreed upon the importance of understanding the culture of the native speakers in helping her to gain better speaking skills. This was reported by her as follows:

> *Yes I think it is very helpful whenever you want to learn in English because it will make you easier to understand what they speak. Whenever you try to understand the culture, you will know how they pronounce it in their daily life.*

Fluency-oriented strategies

Putra and Putri reported that fluency-oriented strategies are not the main strategies they employed, though they still agreed upon their significance. Putra argued that intonation, pronunciation and other fluency skills would be obtained during practice, which implied that these skills do not need to be exercised in special strategies. To him, the most important thing is that the communication runs well. This argument was reflected by his answer as follows:

> *I never practice my intonation or pronunciation even though it is important. But I think it has occurred naturally whenever we speak. So it would be improved simultaneously whenever we practice our speaking fluency. We still have to learn pronunciation but it is not the most important thing. The most important is how our speaking partner can understand us.*

(Putra)

In accordance with Putra's argument, Putri also reflects a similar idea by stating that fluency-oriented strategies should never be a burden for those who are still in the initial stage of learning English. However, Putri admitted that she practised her fluency skills by getting used to English material by watching movies. This was recounted by her as follows:

> *I think fluency and pronunciation is important in speaking English. But for beginner I think you don't have to worry about it because what you need to improve is your speaking English first. I practice my pronunciation, fluency and intonation by watching. Because form watching I can understand how native speakers pronounce words correctly and I can know how they pronounce in different intonation or situation.*

(Putri)

DISCUSSION

This research found that both participants were reported to employ several language learning strategies. These strategies are memory, compensation, metacognitive, affective, social, and fluency-oriented strategies, with memory strategies becoming the most frequently used by the participants.

Research done by Qingquan (2008) once revealed that less proficient students mostly use metacognitice strategies since they want more exposure to their peers with better speaking skills. However, this research found that participatns with proficient English skills often employ metacognition. According to Oxford (1990), metacognitive strategies are used to plan and direct someone in learning a language. Therefore, the finding implies the significance of metacognitive strategies to assist proficient learners in learning English. This is in accordance with the studies done by prior researchers (Oxford, 1992; Philip, 1991; Wu, 2008), where metacognitive strategies were reported to be used with the greatest frequency by successful learners. Metacognitive strategies are beneficial to language learners since they help them self-regulate their learning (Lehmann & Ifenthaler, 2014). The deliberate knowledge owned by students related to their cognitive process, which is referred to as metacognitive awareness, has often been linked to the success of learning and great influence in achieving learning goals (Dunlosky & Lipko, 2007; Teng et al., 2021; Pintrich, 2002; Whiley et al., 2005).

The next most frequently used strategies employed by the participants are social. These strategies include cooperating with friends, asking for clarification, and empathizing with others by understanding the cultural background of the language. The importance of employing social language learning strategies is emphasized by Fillmore (1979), which signified that language cannot be learned without input, which is mostly found in social settings. Therefore, social strategies are paramount in improving learners' proficiency in English. The result is also aligned with previous inquiries (Oxford, 1992; Philip, 1991; Wharton, 2000), where social strategies is the reported strategy to be used most frequently. Hong-Nam & Leavell (2006) revealed in their study that students with higher proficiency or who are at an advanced level tend to employ social strategies more with the assumption that they are more confident; thus, they seek more interaction and socialization with peers and other people. However, Gani (2015) also proposed some contrasting ideas, whose study findings revealed that less proficient students use the social strategy more than advanced learners. Nevertheless, it could indicate that this strategy is favourable to both proficient and less proficient students as it is more applicable and can be easily accessed by the students (Wu, 2008).

Beside metacognitive and social strategies, both participants also reported employing other strategies, such as memory, with more or less equal frequency. The attempt employed by Putra and Putri to take advantage of their written notes in memorizing vocabulary is very useful. This type of memory strategy is advocated as a way for learners to take full control of their vocabulary learning, which would lead them to successfully improve their vocabulary (Fowle, 2002; Laufer & Nation, 1999; Schmitt & Schmitt, 1993;

Walters & Bozkurt, 2009). Memory strategies were also reported to be the most frequently used strategy in a study by Wael et al. (2018), where the participants commonly use imagery and visual connections to enhance their skills in memorizing words in the target language. As also reported in findings, Putra was reported to incorporate multimedia technology such as Cake application in memorizing vocabularies. This strategy, where students use technology assistance to employ memory, significantly improves learners' vocabulary mastery (Rahimi & Allahyari, 2019). Further, the strategy utilized by Putri in which she repeated the words five times infers a strategy called "oral repetition" which has been proven to retain learners' vocabulary (Chou, 2022).

Other strategies operated by both participants that are related to their limitation in speaking are called compensation strategies. According to Oxford (1990), compensation strategies are the direct strategy, which isinvolves more detail and production in learning the language. From the interview result, the participants tend to elaborate their sentences and involve meaning manipulation or being referred to as "interactional meaning" (Poulisse, 1987). The finding that emerged in this study is aligned with the inquiry conducted by Taheri (2020), where they indicated that students with higher proficiency tend to use a compensation strategy more compared to another existing strategy since advanced students often rely on their abilities to make up for the deficiencies they have while communicating in English. In addition to the meaning elaboration, one of the participants, Putri, was also reported to switch to her mother tongue whenever their speaking partners (still in initial learning) could not catch their sentences. This strategy is beneficial and regarded as a cooperative social strategy since it is perceived to work hand in hand with social strategy (Stickler & Lewis, 2008).

The use of affective and fluency-oriented strategies is also found in both participants, even though the number of attempts is less frequent than that of other previously mentioned strategies. Anxiety has a terrible impact on learners' speaking skills (Woodrow, 2006). Therefore, learners might use affective strategies to reduce their anxiety. In lowering their anxiety, Putri and Putra were reported to take some time to catch their breath and encourage themselves by giving positive affirmations. According to Oxford (1990), lowering anxiety with the help of affective strategies might improve learners' performance in speaking. In addition to affective strategies, both participants are reported to employ fluency-oriented strategies rarely. This argument arose since they believed fluency would be automatically improved whenever they interact and use the language in their communication. Nevertheless, Putra and Putri believed fluency-oriented strategies still significantly improve learners' speaking skills (Nakatani, 2005). Therefore, they integrated several

activities, such as watching English movies, listening to English songs and communicating with others in order to improve their fluency.

However, I could not indicate the use of cognitive strategies by any of the participants. This finding could lead to several interpretations. One of them is related to learners' consciousness in using the strategies. According to Marcro (2001), all cognitive strategies fall in the middle of his subconscious-conscious continuum (see Chapter II). Therefore, some memory strategies might have been employed by the participants, but they were not able to describe them since they are considered quite natural, automatized, and difficult to articulate. Nevertheless, cognitive strategies are very important, as reported by several studies, where cognitive strategies have become one of the most frequently used strategies to improve student English proficiency (Oxford, 1992; Philip, 1991; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Wharton, 2000).

CONCLUSION

After elaborating on the findings and their analysis, we have now come to the conclusion section to summarize the research. Consistent with several theories posted previously elsewhere in this paper, the participants who are proficient users of English with TOEFL scores of 563 and 550 (in line with the B2-C1 level of CEFR proficiency) are reported to utilize five categories of language learning strategies such as memory, compensation, metacognitive, affective, social, and fluency-oriented strategies. The most used strategies among all groups are the metacognitive strategy, and social strategies. Meanwhile, the use of cognitive strategy is found to be absent. This finding explains that the participant considered a good language learner employs the strategies described by theories with peculiar activities and frequency.

I also found several interesting findings, such as some strategies that are no longer used as time passes. This finding might suggest further research to investigate the language learning strategy change in good language learners to seek out the change of strategy use over time in learners. However, this study was minimal since there were only two participants involved. Thus, the studies to come should include a bigger number of learners in order to obtain more enriched data and results. Finally, this research might also be a consideration for language learners to consider specific language learning strategies to be used in improving speaking skills as well as for teachers who aim to teach appropriate and efficient language learning strategies to improve students' proficiency.

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