

ISBN 978-602-95320-0-5



Seminar on English as an International Lingua Franca
AN INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

PROCEEDING

**Redefining English Studies
in Non-English Speaking Countries**

Sekolah Tinggi Bahasa Asing LIA Yogyakarta
Yogyakarta, August 13, 2009



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Proceeding

SELF – Seminar on English as an International Lingua Franca

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Edisi I, Agustus 2009

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ISBN 978-602-95320-0-5

Hak cipta dilindungi oleh undang-undang

Dilarang memperbanyak sebagian atau seluruh isi buku ini
dalam bentuk apapun, tanpa izin tertulis dari penerbit.

Preface

The third millennium has been significantly marked by at least two advances in civilization: open access to information and communication technology, and to post-modern or post-colonial culture. Alongside, the paradigms of naturalistic sciences and humanistic sciences are becoming more crystallized. The fact that English has been used as a language of diplomacy, education, science etc., shows that English no longer belongs to certain countries only. Its status as an international lingua franca has been widely accepted. All this makes it highly relevant for English studies in non-English speaking countries (most of them formerly colonized), for a redefinition.

The reality of non-English speaking countries, Indonesia being no exception, shows that most first-degree holders secure a job for the first time, unlike most master's degree holders who have had one already. This is another challenge to the traditional myth that college education remains classically generic, having little to do with employment requirements.

This first SELF (Seminar of English as an International Lingua Franca), therefore, takes **"Redefining English Studies in Non-English Speaking Countries"** as its theme. This seminar is for us who are concerned with English-related matters: teachers, lecturers, researchers, program designers and managers, even English students. It is a venue to share concepts, designs, and operations of English related disciplines (education, linguistics, and literature) that lead to higher autonomy, empowerment, and self-actualization, personal and social.

The Conference Committee

Welcome Address

From the Director

Honorable guests,
Seminar participants and presenters,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to LIA School of Foreign Languages!

Welcome to this seminar on English as an international lingua franca!

A management principle claims that motivated persons do their job well, empowered persons do their job well and for the wellbeing of the higher institution. An empowered English study program is concerned not only with its own good, but also with the wellbeing of the society it is located in, its nation citizens, even humanity. In the difficult time like ours this however, may sound illogical and over-ambitious. If we cannot take care of small things around us, why aspire for even bigger undertakings?

Yet, it may be part of the human mystery. What motivated persons do is inferior to what empowered persons do, but it may not be any easier. When empowered persons do their job, they may get better self-fulfillment than otherwise, thus the overall work may be done even better. The question is how we run our English study program not only with motivation, but with empowerment, hoping its more sustainable growth. It is to this end that this seminar is originally addressed to.

In the meantime we are aware that mountain climbing needs single steps to take. One can never get to the top without taking a first few starting single steps. The pleasure is ours therefore, to extend our sincere appreciation to dear presenters and participants, who contribute different ideas in this seminar, whether you are at the beginning steps, on the slope, or already at the mountain top.

This seminar would never happen had they been no synergy from different contributing parties. It is therefore also our

pleasure to extend our gratitude to helping institutions and individuals, to every member of the committee who has worked hard to make this seminar possible.

Again, thank you for your presence. Thank you for your spoken and written contributions to this seminar.

Let us wish ourselves success and a blessed day.

With best regards

J. Bismoko
Director, STBA LIA Yogyakarta
August 13, 2009

Table of Contents

Preface.....	iii
Welcome Address.....	iv
Table of Contents	vi
<i>Contributing Factors to L2 WTC among Indonesian Learners of English</i>	
Agus Darwanto	1
<i>Transferability: a Neglected Aspect of the Validity of a Test</i>	
Agus Widyanoro	25
<i>Developing Communicative EAP Course Designs for Economics Students of Satya Wacana Christian University</i>	
Anna Sriastuti, S.Pd.,M.Hum.....	35
<i>Dialogue Journal Writing</i>	
<i>Uses Spoken Features?</i>	
Arum Perwitasari.....	52
<i>Interpreting Poetry through Music: An Attempt to Redefine Poetry Teaching</i>	
Asih Sigit Padmanugraha	73
<i>Understanding Tense and Aspect of English through Short Story</i>	
Condro Nur Alim	93
<i>The Hyperreal in the Controversy surrounding the Newbery Award and Lois Lowry's The Giver</i>	
Elisa Dwi Wardani.....	109
<i>Is Ours English?</i>	
Francis Borgias Alip.....	123
<i>Reading: What holds the EFL Learners' Back?</i>	
Hanandyo Dardjito	132
<i>English Studies Re-Defined</i>	

J. Bismoko	140
<i>Promoting Learning Strategies for English Language Learners</i>	
Margana.....	151
<i>English Language in Indonesian Schools in the Era of Globalization</i>	
Mochtar Marhum.....	167
<i>The Implementation of Teaching – Learning Cycle in English for Hotel Training</i>	
R. Arief Nugroho	194
<i>Incorporating Research Process into English Program Design</i>	
<i>A Problem-Based Learning Framework</i>	
Rin Surtantini	212
<i>Teaching Students Thematic Progression Patterns to Improve Students' Writings : A Coherent Paragraph</i>	
Setyo Prasiyanto Cahyono	233
<i>Multimodality: An Approach to Bridge Literature and Life</i>	
Subur Laksmono Wardoyo, Ph.D.	248
<i>The Fallacies of a Genre Based Reading Approach</i>	
Subur Laksmono Wardoyo, Ph.D.	263
<i>Anxiety of English Learning and Learning Strategies' Influence to Speaking Ability</i>	
Yuni Utami Asih	276
Curriculum Vitae of the Presenters.....	295

Promoting Learning Strategies for English Language Learners

Margana

State University of Yogyakarta

Abstract

The success of learning English as a second or foreign language is primarily determined by two factors, namely external factors and internal factors. The external factors embody learner social status, social and physical environment, curriculum, teachers, language status, and others. Internal factors include learner physical health, motivation, age, interest, intelligence, and the like. Skehan in Ellis (2003) identifies four internal factors: language aptitude, motivation, language learning strategies, cognitive factors, and affective factors which include learner characters (extrovert or introvert), risk-taking, intelligence, field independence, and anxiety. In support of it, Cock (1991) proposes some internal factors which include aptitudes, affective variable, learning styles, and learning strategies. Of the internal factors, learning strategies are believed to be one of the significant factors to gain English language achievement on the ground that learning strategies can facilitate English language learners to deal with internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language (Oxford, 1990). Added to this, learning strategies can establish learners' self-regulated learning which serves an important role for acquiring English. Also, learning strategies can be used as tools for developing communicative competence. This drives English language teachers to encourage their learners to use appropriate learning strategies when they are involved in English language teaching and learning. This paper, therefore, deals with promoting learning strategies as a key to English language learners' success. It mainly explores three issues, namely (1) the nature of learning strategies, (2) the taxonomy of learning strategies, and (3) how to promote learning strategies in English language learning. Added to this, this paper also identifies a potentially useful theoretical framework of learning strategies proposed by some experts and selecting specific learning tactics that may be useful for second language learners when they are engaged in second language learning. To end up the discussion, final remarks are made.



1. Introduction

In learning English as a second language or foreign language, there are two determinant factors initiating the success of second language learning. The factors include external factors and internal factors (Ellis, 2003). External factors include physical and social environment or demographic variables, cultural setting, formal teaching, and the like. The internal factors, on the other hand, embody learner physical condition, aptitude, attitude toward second language, motivation, intelligence, learning styles, motivation, learning strategies and others. Of the internal factors, learning strategies are believed to be a determinant factor for the success of second or foreign language teaching and learning on the grounds that learning strategies are concerned with practical and operational efforts of how to handle the task. Added to this, learning strategies establish learner autonomous learning that is applicable to deal with any task that they face.

In lieu with the above statement, Wenden in Griffiths (2004: 1) quotes an old proverb which states: "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime". This proverb means that if the answers of the problems are given to students, the immediate problems are figured out. But if they are provided with strategies of how to work out the answers for themselves, they are fostered to administer their own learning. In short, learning strategies are very important for second language learners as learning strategies empower learners to activate their own learning management. Lessard-Clouton (1997) adds that learning strategies can enhance learner language learning and facilitate English language learners to establish language competence as manifested in the learners' language skills such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Considering the potential usefulness of language learning strategies as a language teaching and learning device, this paper presents the nature of learning strategies to be applied in English language teaching and learning (abbreviated ELTL). It primarily explores three issues, namely (1) the nature of learning strategies, (2) the taxonomy of learning strategies, and (3) how to promote learning strategies in ELTL. Added to this, this paper also identifies a potentially useful theoretical framework of

learning strategies proposed by some experts and selecting specific learning tactics that may be useful for second language learners when they are engaged in second language learning. To end up the discussion, a conclusion is made.

2. The Nature of Learning Strategies

As mentioned earlier, learning strategies as one of the significant factors in English language teaching and learning are concerned with learner efforts to achieve a success for English language learning or other tasks. Therefore, English language learners should be familiar with part of learning strategies and make use of them as a device to attain the target language concerned. In other words, English language learners should know the nature of the learning strategies as discussed below.

a. The Controversial Issues on the Term of Learning Strategies

The term *learning strategies* has been hotly debated by many experts such as Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) since the mid-seventies (Griffiths, 2004). Up to now there has not come to an agreement among the experts on the term *learning strategies* (O'Malley *et al*, 1985: 22) and the concept of language learning strategies itself remains unclear (Ellis, 2003: 529). For example, some experts tend to use learning behaviours (Wesche, 1977; Politzer and McGroarty, 1985), tactics (Seliger, 1984), and techniques (Stern, 1992) more or less (but not always exactly) synonymously with the term *strategies*. Wenden (1987:7) mentions a multi-purpose use of the term *learning strategies* to refer to all of the following issues: *techniques, tactics, potentially conscious plans, consciously employed operations, problem-solving procedures, etc.* Naiman *et al.* (1978), Stern (1983), and Seliger (1991) assume that *learning strategies* are seen as general learning approaches, with more specific learner actions receiving the name of *techniques* or *tactics*.

Of the above terms proposed, the term *learning strategies* is widely agreed by many experts to refer to techniques, behaviours, actions, thought process, problem solving, or study skills employed by target language learners to make language learning easier, faster, more self-directed, more

effective, and more transferable to a new situation (Oxford 1990), and enable language learners to be more independent, autonomous, lifelong learning (Ehrman *et al.*, 2003). Learning strategies mean learner efforts to do with language proficiency attainment. Added to this, the concept of learning strategies embodies learner's *conscious movement* toward a *language goal* (Oxford 1990). McDonough (1999) lists some aspects of learner strategies which include (1) learning and learning to learn a second language, (2) using the language, (3) communicating in the language, (4) compensating for lack of knowledge or break down of communication stagnancy, (5) having an exercise of language in macro-skill areas such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and (6) coping with difficult elements of language instruction such as classroom presentation and instruction, and taking tests. This implies that learner strategies are not only tools to assist English language learning, but they are also a means to serve many other purposes both in learning and making use of English in many aspects.

In reference to the above discussion, this paper uses the term *learning strategies* which are widely used by many experts such as O'Malley *et al.*, (1985); Oxford (1990); Ellis (2003); Griffiths (2004), and others. In addition, use of the term *learning strategies* sounds much more convenient to be applied in a language learning context as it does not deal with some particular tricks but it is more concerned with techniques, behaviours, actions, thought process, problem solving, or study skills owned by second language learners to gain success in second language learning. The term *strategies* embodies the concept of learning strategies or learner strategies (Macaro, 2004; Abhakorn, 2008).

b. The Notion of Learning Strategies

The meaning of learning strategies varies according to what perspectives the experts use in defining them. A broad definition of learning strategies, for example, is presented by Rubin (1975: 43) who states that learning strategies refer to "techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge". The sense of acquiring knowledge is broad in nature since it does not only deal with language, but it embodies any subjects targeted by learners. She further identifies two kinds of

learning strategies: those which contribute directly to learning, and those which contribute indirectly to learning. The direct learning strategies are divided into six types (clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice), and the indirect learning strategies consists of two types (creating opportunities for practice, production tricks). Further, Rubin (1975) includes communication strategies as part of production tricks which are potential to create a problem as learning strategies and communication strategies are two quite separate manifestations of language learner behaviours.

Some experts argue that the inclusion of communication strategies as part of learning strategies tends to be misleading as learning strategies and communication strategies are seen by some experts as two quite separate manifestations of language learner behaviours (Griffiths, 2004). According to Ellis (1986: 65), strategies for learning and strategies for using, including communication strategies or 'devices for compensating for inadequate resource', constitute quite different manifestations of a more general trend which he calls learner strategies. He argues that successful employment of communication strategies may actually prevent language learning since skilful compensation for lack of linguistic knowledge may hinder the need for learning.

To figure out the controversial issue, Brown in Griffiths (2004: 2) proposes a clear distinction between learning strategies and communication strategies on the grounds that 'communication is the output modality and learning is the input modality'. He suggests that, while a learner generally applies the same essential strategies (such as rule transference) utilized in learning a language to communicating in that language, there are other communication strategies such as avoidance or message abandonment which do not result in learning.

With regard to the above debate, it is not necessary to intensely argue the difference between learning strategies and communication strategies. As far as the writer concerns, the communication strategies can be used as a device to deal with language development. Therefore, communication strategies can be part of learning strategies. Tarone (1980) suggests that by

assisting language learners to express what they want or need to express, communication strategies can assist them to develop their language. Even if the communication is not perfect in grammatical or lexical terms, in the process of activating the language for communication, the language learners are exposed to language input which may result in learning and which therefore may be regarded as part of learning strategies.

In relation to the meaning of learning strategies, Tarone in Ellis (2003) defines learning strategies as an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language and to incorporate these into one's inter-language competence. More specific definition is presented by Rigney, (1978), O'Malley et al. (1985:23), who state that learning strategies refer to 'operations or steps used by a learner that facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information'. Oxford (1989) defines language learning strategies as behaviours or actions employed by language learners to achieve the success of learning language and to drive them to be self-directed. Another definition is offered by Ellis (2003). He claims that learning strategies refer to '*both general approaches and specific actions or techniques to learn an L2*' or that '*some strategies are behavioural while others are mental*'. He adds that some elements are observable while others are not observable.

As a working framework of this paper, the writer adopts the definition of learning strategies from O'Malley et al. (1985) and Oxford (1990) who state that learning strategies refer to 'operations employed by second language learners to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information'.

3. The Taxonomy of Learning Strategies

In terms of the taxonomy of learning strategies, some experts have different classification according to what perspectives the experts have. For example, O'Malley et al. in Ellis (2003) develop taxonomy of learning strategies that are divided into three major types of strategy in accordance with the information-processing model. The three types of strategy include (1) meta-cognitive strategies, (2) cognitive strategies, and (3) social/affective strategies. The meta-cognitive strategies refer to

activating learner knowledge about cognitive processes and making an attempt to manage language learning activities with the utilization of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. In other words, meta-cognitive strategies are concerned with knowing about learning. Cognitive strategies concern 'the steps or operations employed in problem-solving that demand direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials' (Ellis, 2003: 536). Social/affective strategies mean 'the ways in which learners elect to interact with their teachers, other learners, their parents, and native speakers' (Ellis, 2003: 536). The meta-cognitive and cognitive categories have the same concept with Rubin's indirect and direct strategies. The addition of the social mediation category was a significant attempt in the path of acknowledging the importance of interactional strategies in language learning.

Further, O'Malley et al. in Ellis (2003) identify some aspects of the three categories. The meta-cognitive strategy, for example, consists of eight aspects. They include (1) advanced organizers, (2) directed attention, (3) selective attention, (4) self-management, (5) advance preparation, (6) self-monitoring, (7) delayed production, and (8) self-evaluation. Cognitive strategy embodies the following sub-strategies: (1) repetition, (2) re-sourcing, (3) directed physical response, (4) translation, (5) grouping, (6) note-taking, (7) deduction, (8) recombination, (9) imagery, (10) auditory representation, (11) key wording, (12) contextualization, (13) elaboration, (14) transfer, and (15) inferencing. The social/affective strategy consists of (1) cooperation and (2) question for clarification.

A classification of learning strategies is also conducted by Oxford (1990) who identifies learning strategies into two categories, namely (1) direct strategies, and (2) indirect strategies. The former refers to 'strategies that directly activate the target language in the sense that language learners require mental processing of the language' (Oxford, 1990:37), while the latter 'provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy and other means' (Oxford, 1990:151). The direct strategies are divided into three sub-categories, namely (1) memory strategy, (2) cognitive

strategy, and (3) comprehensive strategy. Each sub-category is divided into further levels. For example, the cognitive strategy embodies five different types of behaviour which include (1) repeating, (2) formally practicing, (3) recognizing and using formula, (4) recombining, and (5) practicing naturalistically. The indirect strategies are broken down into three sub-categories, namely (1) meta-cognitive strategy, (2) affective strategy, and (3) social strategy.

Some experts utter that Oxford's taxonomy is 'perhaps the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies' (Ellis, 2003: 539), but to some extent it is still of necessity to be selective since 'dozens and perhaps hundreds of such strategies exist' (Oxford, Lavine and Crookall, 1989: 29). Oxford (1990) admits that there is somewhat overlapping categories. She gives an example of the meta-cognitive strategy of planning, which involves reasoning which might also be regarded as a cognitive strategy. She also realizes that it is very difficult to identify whether a compensation strategy such as looking for synonyms when the exact word is unknown is a learning strategy or a communication strategy.

Different from the above categorization, Cohen (2003) offers four main strategy classification schemes. The first classification is determined *by goal* either to learn a language or to use a language. The second classification is *by language skill*, which includes four macro language skills broken down into two receptive skills (listening and reading) and two productive skills (speaking and writing), and also micro language skills which are determinant aspects in learning second language. The micro-language skills include vocabulary, grammar, spelling, pronunciation, and others. The third classification is *by function* as offered in detail by Oxford (1990). The classification embodies six functional groups of language learning strategies. They are *memory strategy* (how learners remember language), *cognitive strategy* (how learners think about their learning), *compensation strategy* (how learners make up for limited knowledge), *meta-cognitive strategy* (how learners manage their own learning), *affective strategy* (how learners activate their feelings) and *social strategies* (how learners involve learning by interaction with others). The categories of language learning strategies have

some interrelations. These six categories underlie the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) used by Oxford and others for a great deal of research in the learning strategy field). The following presents the classification of learning strategies in reference to three perspectives: by goal, by language skill, and by function.

By Skill	By Goal	By Function	Example
Listening	Language learning strategies: conscious processes learners select in order to learn language	Memory strategy	Using keywords
Reading		Cognitive strategy	Taking notes, summarizing
Writing	Language use strategies: Conscious processes learners select in order to use language	Metacognitive strategy	Organizing, self- monitoring, self- evaluation
Speaking		Social strategy	Asking for correction
		Compensation strategy	Coining words
		Affective strategy	Relaxing

Table 1 Classification and Examples of Learner Strategies

Dornyei (2005) argues that the lack of a specific classification of individual strategies; for example, memory strategies and cognitive strategies seems to be overlapping. Second language learners may employ a full set of strategies to carry out a task, or they may utilize a combination of strategies which is complicated to fit into any of the existing categories. However, the definitions and classifications of learner strategies proposed by some experts assist in developing tools to assess learner strategies such as the SILL or Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990).

In reference to the above classification of learning strategies, the writer believes that the categorization of learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990) is more comprehensive. For this reason, it is recommended that such a categorization of learning strategies be applied on English language teaching and learning.

4. Empirical Studies on Language Learning Strategies

Research on learning strategies has been conducted by a great number of researchers. They come to a conclusion that learning strategies play a significant role in the target language learning. Rubin in Griffiths (2004), for example, reports that successful language learners had strong desire to engage in communication with the use of target language, to predict when they are unsure, and were not afraid of being wrong when they use the target language. He adds that successful language learners tend to practise and monitor their own language and use of language by others. In support of the above study, Stern (1975) conducted research on identifying the characteristics of good language learners. He reports that good language learners have (1) a personal learning style or positive learning strategies, (2) an active approach to the learning task, (3) a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language which is empathetic with its speakers, (4) technical know-how about how to tackle a language, (5) strategies of experimentation and planning with the object of developing the new language into an ordered system with progressive revision, (6) a technique for constantly searching for meaning, (7) willingness to practise, (8) willingness to use the language in real communication, (9) critically sensitive self-monitoring in language use and (10) an ability to develop the target language more and more as a separate reference system while learning to think about it.

O'Malley *et al.* in Oxford (1989) conducted research on learning strategies employed by 70 high school students who were classified as beginning and intermediate students. The findings reported that intermediate students tended to use more meta-cognitive strategies than those with beginning level proficiency; whereas, beginning level students used cognitive strategies more than intermediate level students. Overall, both beginning and intermediate level students tended to use more cognitive, than meta-cognitive strategies. The findings of this study can be interpreted that the beginning level students use more strategies than the intermediate students.

Ehrman and Oxford (1995) conducted research on the relationship between end-of-course proficiency and a number of

variables including language learning strategies. The results of their study report that cognitive strategies are believed to be the only kinds of strategies which provide a significant positive contribution to the success in the target language learning.

Another study was conducted by Griffiths (2003) revealing that there is a positive correlation between course level and reported frequency of language learning strategy use. In a study involving 348 students in a private language school in New Zealand, she found that language learning strategies were more frequently employed by advanced students than elementary students. In reference to the patterns of language learning strategy use which emerged from the data, higher level students performed highly frequent use of strategies relating to interaction with others, to vocabulary, to reading, to the tolerance of ambiguity, to language systems, to the management of feelings, to the management of learning and to the utilization of available resources.

In reference to the above empirical studies, the writer believes that it is misleading to generalize that successful language learners only administer single strategy when they are involved in target language learning. In fact, successful language learners use a series of strategies, matching those strategies to their own learning style and personality and to the demands of the task in the context of cultural influences. Optimal learners find ways to modify their strategy use to their individual needs and requirements. They then develop combinations of strategies that work for them (Oxford 1990). With regards to this idea, learning strategies are of great importance to be promoted to English language learners in order that they can select the appropriate learning strategies and render them to gain the target language learned.

5. Promoting Learning Strategies in English Language Teaching Learning

In relation to learning strategies, some English teachers may question whether learning strategies are teachable or learnable. The answer of the question is simple, namely *yes, of course*. This is based on some theories and previous intervention

research conducted by many experts. Chamot and O'Malley (1994) state that learners' knowledge of strategies can be established through the process of *scaffolding* which drives teachers not only to give direct instructions to students but also facilitate students to select appropriate strategies in learning and using English. Oxford (1990) suggests that English teachers should assist their students to learn strategies in language classroom. Cohen & Weaver (1998) claim that strategy training confers positive impacts- on the improvement of students' language learning performance and attitudes. Added to this, Oxford and Ehrman (1995) believe that the more a foreign language classroom can develop into a language experience situation, the more likely the students apply language learning strategies at a high level, and the more they gain English language proficiency. In short, classroom context serves an important role in the use of learner learning strategies leading to their high achievement on English language proficiency.

To deal with strategies training, Abhakorn (2008) urges that English teachers have to provide English language learners with a repertoire of learning strategies, enabling them to personally select the appropriate strategies that meet their specific language tasks. Bialystok in Cook (2001) claims that providing strategy-training assists students to be aware of strategies in general rather than specific strategies. This implies learning strategies have to be promoted to students on the grounds that conscious attention to learning strategies is beneficial to gain the success of learning English.

With regard to how important the learning strategies in foreign language learning are, many experts urge that learning strategies should be explicitly or implicitly embedded in English language teaching and learning (Chamot, 2004). In this case, English teachers play an important role to establish student learning strategies in English learning and teaching process for the sake of developing self-directed language learning on the part of students (Williams and Burden, 1997). Teachers are not only concerned with what knowledge and skills the students have to learn, but more importantly teachers have to emphasize on how to learn the knowledge of language and language skills. Teachers can activate their learning strategies in some part of

teaching, for example, scaffolding, developing language tasks and materials, selecting methods and techniques of English language teaching and learning, developing media, conducting assessments, designing assignments for students, and others. Teachers have to minimize their classroom dominance when they are engaged in ELTL. Once students become active and self-directed learners, they gain greater confidence, involvement, and language proficiency.

To deal with strategies training, Cohen (2003) promotes a variety of educational attempts such as cooperative teaching, strategy workshop, peer tutoring, sub-language skills-based teaching (SLSB), and strategies-based instruction (SBI). He states that such a variety of instructional models are aimed at establishing learner awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in language learning, and (2) developing responsibility of their own learning or autonomous learning. Of the instructional models, the SBI model is believed to have an advantage over the others on the grounds that it deals with integrating strategies training into foreign language classroom (Cohen, 2003). Such a model is categorized as a learner-centered approach activating learning strategies in English language teaching and learning. The following presents some steps to be applied when English teachers use the SBI model. The steps include (1) eliciting additional examples from students with regard to students' own learning experience, (2) leading small-group and whole-class discussion about strategies, (3) encouraging students to experiment with a broad range of strategies, and (4) integrating strategies into everyday class materials, explicitly and implicitly embedding them into the language tasks to provide for contextualized strategy practice.

6. Conclusions

With regard to the above discussion, learning strategies are of great importance for English language learners to maximally gain English language proficiency. Therefore, English teachers should give an emphasis on how institutionalize language learning strategies on the part of students that can immediately establish students' self-regulated learning. In other words, English language teachers are encouraged not only what

to be learned but also how to learn the target language. In addition, English teachers have to provide their students with a variety of teaching models such as awareness training, strategy workshop, peer tutoring, sub-language-skills-based instruction, strategies-based instruction, and the like to expand learners repertoire of language learning strategies which are aimed at developing learner responsibility or learner autonomy.

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ISBN 978-602-95320-0-5



978-602-95320-0-5