

Chapter V

Conclusions and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusions

This study investigates the language learning strategies employed by high, middle, and low achiever students in developing their speaking skills, as well as their reasons for employing certain language learning strategies. From the results and discussions in the previous chapters, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, regarding the language learning strategies employed by high, middle, and low achiever students in developing their speaking skills, the study figured out that all of the participants were active users of similar language learning strategies with high and low achiever students tended to employ meta-cognitive strategies the most for improving their speaking skill (as reported on Chart 1 (p. 71), and Chart 3 (p. 75)), while the middle achiever students tended to employ affective strategies the most to improve their speaking skill (as seen on Chart 2 (p. 73)).

As stated earlier, all of the participants had shown their full involvement in language learning since they were active users of language learning strategies. Based on this, all of the participants could be categorized as good language learners. This is consistent with Ghani (2003), who mentions that good language learners show full involvement in language learning.

However, as mentioned by Fadderholdt (cited in Hismanoglu, 1997), language learners who are capable of using a wide variety of language learning strategies appropriately can improve their language skills in a better way. Consistent with this

theory, this study revealed interesting findings in which high achiever students were using the widest variety of language learning strategies (as seen from the overall average use of LLS presented on Chart 1 (p.71), Chart 2 (p.73), and Chart 3 (p.75)). This might be one of the explanations why the high achiever students' English speaking skills were better than those of the middle and low achiever students.

Despite the fact that the high achiever students gained more successfully in developing their speaking skill compared to the middle and the lower achiever students, all of the participants had demonstrated their efforts to be able to speak fluently by, among others, employing several strategies such as memory, social, compensation, as well as cognitive strategies. The employment of these strategies were in line with Harmer's (2002: 269-271) theory concerning success in speaking fluently. Success in speaking fluently depends, among others, on the rapid processing skills. These skills contain language processing, interacting with others, as well as on the spot information processing (Harmer, 2002). All of the participants' efforts on language processing were seen from their employment of memory strategies; furthermore, their efforts on interacting with others were determined by their employment of social strategies; while, their efforts toward on the spot information processing can be seen from their employment of cognitive and compensation strategies.

Second, concerning the reasons why they employed those strategies, data indicated that all of the students employed memory strategies to effectively increase their ability in memorizing new words. Regarding the use of cognitive strategies, the low achievers employed them to understand the meaning of the new words, the middle achievers employed them to increase their pronunciation, and the high achievers

employed them to gain confidence when they were speaking in English. About the reason for using compensation strategies, all of the students stated that they employed these strategies to keep the conversation going. Concerning the use of meta-cognitive strategies, all of the students pointed out that they employed these strategies, among others, to avoid producing the same errors. Regarding the employment of affective strategies, the students put forward that they utilized them, among others, to gain self-confidence and to avoid losing their concentrations. Finally, concerning the use of social strategies, the low achievers employed these strategies in order to answer their curiosity on how native speakers interacted, and pronounced the words. The middle achievers, on the other hand, used these strategies to increase their fluency in speaking English. And the high achievers employed these strategies in order to converse properly with their English native speaker friends.

From the reasons that were pointed out by these students, it can be indicated that they employed certain language learning strategies consciously to assist their progress in developing English language skills, particularly speaking skill.

As suggested by some researchers, among others Oxford (1996) and Wenden (1990), the conscious use of language learning strategies makes good language learners. It means that all of the participants in this study could be categorized as good language learners.

However, there was a fact that the high achiever students were more successful in acquiring English speaking skill. This might take place because the high achiever students were able to utilize a more extensive variety of language learning strategies suitably. This was relevant with Fadderholdt's finding (1997 as cited in Hismanoglu,

1997), that language learners who are capable of using a wide variety of language learning strategies appropriately can improve their language skills in a better way.

5.2 Limitations

There are some limitations of the study; the first one is to do with the number of participants which were only six students participating. It would be much better if the research involved more participants to produce a higher reliability of the study. Even so, the findings concerning the relationship between the language learning strategies used and the students' English speaking skill achievements in this study were consistent with the findings of previous studies, such as those of Fadderholdt (cited in Hismanoglu, 1997), which revealed that language learners who were capable of using a wide variety of language learning strategies appropriately can improve their language skills in a better way. This led the researcher to feel secure that even though the number of participants was just a few but the data obtained were reliable.

The second limitation is that the study involved the researcher as the lecturer of the participants. There was consequently a possible loss of objectivity in every stage of the research, for example in terms of the data collections. In the interview stage, for instance, where the researcher acted as the interviewer, there was a potential for the students to try to please the interviewer who was also their lecturer. However, there were some steps taken to enhance objectivity in this stage. For example, by reminding the participants that they should answer the interview questions as honest as possible by emphasizing that there was no correct or incorrect answer in revealing their language learning strategies. The other step taken was by conducting the cross checking of the data

of the interviews in which the transcription of some interviews was sent back to the students to be checked and made clear if necessary.

The third limitation is in relation to the time and space limit. Even though the researcher was aware of some factors influencing the choice of LLS, such as motivation, gender, cultural background, attitude and beliefs, type of tasks, age and L2 stage, learning style, as well as tolerance and ambiguity (Oxford, 1990: 9), but this study has not got a chance to discuss those factors yet.

5.3 Suggestions

Based on the findings from the study, which may not be generalized to other settings, it is suggested that the language learning strategies be gradually but intensively introduced and implemented in developing English skills, particularly speaking skill. Training on the use of appropriate LLS is suggested to be put forward in English classes/courses.

The above statement could mean that the learners need to learn how to learn, and teachers need to learn how to facilitate the process. Although learning is part of human condition, conscious skill in self-directed learning and in strategy use must be sharpened through training. The learners cannot be spoon-fed if they desire and expect to reach an acceptable level of communicative competence.

The above suggestion came across the researcher after getting the interview data which revealed that the participants hardly ever had a chance to learn how to use language learning strategies effectively in developing their English skills, particularly speaking skill. One of the examples of how to train the participants is by teaching them to

do the note taking when they read or listen to some announcements/messages. By using the appropriate note taking, their integrated English skill would be developed.

The other suggestion is for the future study concerning the language learning strategies to develop speaking skill. This study does not focus on the factors influencing the choice of LLS. Further study may relate this study to several factors influencing the choice of LLS, such as motivation, gender, cultural background, attitude and beliefs, type of tasks, age and L2 stage, learning style, as well as tolerance and ambiguity.

