

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background of this study, research questions, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the clarification of key terms, and the organization of paper. In this chapter, any information to do with the importance of investigating the perceptions and practices of EFL learning strategies is fully presented.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the case of English language teaching in Indonesian context, most of English teachers still take full control about the learning and teaching process (Lengkanawati, 2017). Lengkanawati (2017) explains further that learning and teaching remains conventional in which an English teacher stands in front of the class and transfers knowledge to students. Consequently, the teachers seem not to provide the students with more learning opportunities.

Due to the more actively dominating EFL teachers in the classroom, the level of English proficiency of Indonesian learners is at stake. Regarding this, there is a heartbreaking finding from Hamied (2011, cited in Lengkanawati, 2017). He declares that English proficiency level of most senior high school students (almost 95%) were classified into novice and elementary levels as assessed by TOEIC administered by ITC, Jakarta (Hamied, 2011). Another problem is that the students lose their voices and remain passive during learning process (Gao, 2013, cited in Jiang, 2016; Lengkanawati, 2017).

In response to these unfavorable facts, Indonesian government states that teachers will no longer spoon-feed their students. In other words, the learning paradigm is supposed to be student-centered activities: gaining knowledge by themselves, providing and enhancing learning opportunities for the students (Gursoy, 2010, cited in Kubra, 2017). Thus, it is very essential that EFL teachers must condition the learning and teaching, bring strategies of language learning into the classroom, and teach the students how to use the strategies (Setiyadi, Sukirlan, & Mahpul, 2016).

The notion of language learning strategies, according to Wenden and Rubin (1987) and Oxford (1990), can be defined as “any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information”.

The strategies use can enhance learners’ language proficiency and make language learning more effective and more successful (Wenden & Rubin, 1987; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, cited in Chamorro & Paz, 2017; Chamot, 2009; Griffiths, 2013; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 102). Similarly, teachers introducing the use of language learning strategies to the students can promote autonomous language learning, a state of making the learners responsible for their own learning (Harmer, 2007; Lengkanawati, 2017).

After discussing the implications of language learning strategy use, it is worth-noting that teachers should be completely knowledgeable on language learning strategies before teaching them in the classroom (Kubra, 2017). In line with this, the teachers are required to introduce, model, and allow their students to make use of their own preferred strategies to complete the tasks (Chamot, 2009, cited in Chamorro & Paz, 2017, p. 104). After that, the teachers also need to monitor the effectiveness of the preferred strategies.

Favorably, it is declared that the level of ESL teachers’ awareness and knowledge on language learning strategies use is really high (Abed, 2011, p. 212). He continues that they have strength in identifying the very usable and effective strategies to be used in the classroom. On the other hand, there are a small number of studies involving EFL teachers on this topic, specifically the pre-service teachers (Peacock, 2001), compared to EFL students. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a study which investigates EFL pre-service teachers’ perceptions of EFL language strategies including the application of the strategies, and how the strategies are reflected in their teaching practices.

EFL teachers or pre-service teachers have their own strengths and weaknesses in the process of teaching and learning English. According to Wijirahayu’s study (2015), one of the strengths is that they all understand the feeling of teaching English in EFL context very well, which the learners should study hard to have English mastery. Besides that, the teachers are able to bring

back and share their prior experience of applying the learning strategies when they were still sitting and learning English at schools. From the reasons above, the study is extremely expected to shed a light on the instructional practices of EFL learning strategies.

Furthermore, this present study puts an emphasis on EFL teaching at Junior High School level, owing to the need of promoting interest and motivation of learning English to these lower secondary school students. Otherwise, they may lose their English-learning appetite in the early level of education. Apparently, this group of students are categorized as young learners. In line with this, Nunan (2011) states that “the term of young learner covers a chronological age span: from around 3 years of age to 15” (p. 2). Another reason being highlighted is that the practice of teaching English to young learners (TEYL) needs to introduce explicit strategy training, such as telling the purpose of the learning tasks and evaluating the effectiveness of the learning strategies they use to complete the tasks, as suggested by Kirsch (2012, p. 390). This issue is worth studying, since it is implicit strategy training which seems to be observed more frequently in the existing practices of teaching language learning strategies to young learners, as reported in Kirsch (2012).

1.2 Research Questions

This present study actually had intention to find out the following questions.

1. What are pre-service teachers’ perceptions of EFL learning strategies?
2. How do the student teachers teach the strategies in their English classrooms?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The details of the objectives are presented as follows.

1. To examine the perceptions of pre-service teachers towards EFL learning strategies.
2. To investigate the instructional practices of EFL learning strategies by pre-service teachers.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study examining pre-service teachers' perceptions and practices of teaching EFL learning strategies promotes their awareness and knowledge on the application of the strategies as tools to improve their future teaching practices.

The present study also provides a significant framework which may supervise the teacher educators in integrating strategy training in order to help learners attain better learning outcomes by employing strategic behaviors in their learning.

Moreover, the findings of this study are expected to shed a light on categories of more effective language learning strategies to be introduced to lower secondary school students or young learners.

1.5 Clarification of Key Terms

1. **Learning Strategy** can be defined as the steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. The implementation of strategies includes some degree of conscious awareness on the part of the learner (Oxford, 1990).
2. **Language Learning Strategy**, according to Wenden and Rubin (1987), is defined as any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information.
3. **Teaching/Instructional Practices** refers to a wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a class (*Education Reform*, 2014).
4. **Teachers' Perceptions of EFL learning strategies** refer to the thoughts or mental images teachers have about the use of EFL learning strategies, which are shaped by their prior knowledge or learning experiences.

1.6 Organization of the Paper

This recent research paper is presented in five chapters. This organization of paper is described further as follows:

Chapter 1 is Introduction. This chapter consists of background of the study elucidating the frameworks of this study, research questions, objectives of the

study, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter 2 is Literature Review. This chapter presents a variety of theoretical frameworks underlying the study: Language learning strategies (LLS), classification of language learning strategies (LLS), factors affecting language learning strategies (LLS) use, practices of language learning strategies, LLS practices in English for young learners (EYL) classroom, language learning strategies employed by young learners, teacher development and teacher's roles in teaching language learning strategies (LLS), and explicit strategy training models.

Chapter 3 is Research Methodology. This chapter presents the research design, site and participants of the study, data collection, research procedures, and the data analysis of this study.

Chapter 4 is Findings and Discussion. This chapter elaborates a number of facts as found in the study, and the interpretation of the findings in relation to the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2. The discussion of the research results is aimed at addressing the research questions.

Chapter 5 is Conclusion and Suggestions. This chapter presents the conclusion of the research outcomes and several suggestions for course designers, English teachers, and further researchers.