

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents an introduction of the paper. It covers the background of the study, the statements of problems, the aims of the study and the scope of the study. It then presents the significance of the study, the methodology, and the clarification of terms. The last part of this chapter provides the organization of the paper.

#### **1.1 Background**

In the practice of teaching and learning English, speaking is one of the fundamental skills to be developed as the function of language is to communicate. Among other skills, speaking has a critical function as a key for communication (Florez, 1999). Consequently, developing English speaking skills is indispensable for all learners to be able to effectively communicate in the language.

Communicating in a foreign language, in this case English, usually creates anxiety for learners. Sometimes the necessity to speak English in every classroom activity tends to create panic and fear among them. Oxford (1990) supports this by confirming that speaking can be, in fact, very frustrating for them. Yet, this fact does not eliminate the importance of the skill itself. Dubin and Olshtain (1991) as cited in Sesma (2008) say that English is the most requested language around the world since it is the language of a wider communication.

To have sufficient English speaking skill to successfully communicate using the language is, in fact, not an easy matter for most learners. Attempts to help learners in this matter have been developed among teachers and researchers. Interest has been shifting from what learners learn or the outcome for the language learning to how learners gain the language or referring to process orientation (Oxford, 1990). Language learning strategies (LLS) becomes part of this shifting interest since these strategies are an aspect in the learning process (see Dornyei, 2005; Takac, 2008).

Language learning strategies are an aspect to consider because these strategies are essential for developing communicative competence that is needed in speaking (Oxford, 1990). Developing language learning strategies is also a way to establish conscious learning as a tool in obtaining better proficiency especially in speaking. Language learning strategies as it is believed by Hsiao and Oxford (2002) is a “[...] useful tool kit for active and conscious learning, and that these strategies pave the way toward greater proficiency, learner autonomy, and self-regulation” (Dornyei, 2005:195).

According to Oxford (1990) language learning strategies are classified into six categories. They are memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Different learning strategies used by learners reflect learners’ variation in terms of gender, level of proficiency, learner’s belief etc. (Dornyei, 2005). The choice as well as the way of combining and sequencing language learning strategies can be different for each individual.

The need to give attention to individual's differences in learners, whether they are high or low achievers, reflects on the understanding of their language learning strategies. However, there must be some powerful strategies to use in learning, particularly in learning speaking because as Savile (2006) stated that not all strategies are equal. There are some strategies that are more effective than the others. Thus it is required to know which language learning strategies are used by successful learners or the high achievers, as they show that their learning is, somehow, effective.

Related to certain strategies to use in learning, previous studies have shown that good language learners are those who used particular strategies consistently, such as guessing meaning from the context (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1975; Rubin, 1975 as cited in Oxford, 2003). While in another study, it was found that poor learners used strategies in a random, unconnected, and uncontrolled manner (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Chamot et al., 1996, cited in Oxford 2003).

However it was found that a very few research has been done in accordance with learners' language learning strategies in learning particular skills, for example in learning speaking. Hsiao and Oxford (Maftoon *et all*, 2011), nevertheless, investigated that good language learners often concentrated on fluency rather than accuracy and looked for communicative opportunities since they realize that language is a means for communication. In terms of strategy use in learning speaking, Cabaysa and Baetiong (2010) found that metacognitive, social, affective, and compensation strategies are most used by the learners.

Carrying the issues stated above as the point of departure, the present study takes as its main view at the language learning strategies used by learners in learning speaking. Learners in an exemplary class were taken as participants to observe since learners in the exemplary class investigated have varied English speaking proficiency level. This is suitable for the purpose of the current study.

### **1.2 Statements of problems**

Regarding the issues mentioned earlier, the current study seeks to address the following questions.

1. What language learning strategies are employed by learners in an exemplary class of twelfth grade in one of senior high schools in Cimahi in learning speaking?
2. What are the differences of the language learning strategies used by the high achievers and the low achievers in speaking in an exemplary class of twelfth grade in one of Senior high schools in Cimahi?

### **1.3 Aims of the study**

Related to the issues investigated, the aims of the present study are

1. To examine what learning strategies employed by learners in an exemplary class of twelfth grade in one of senior high schools in Cimahi in learning speaking.

2. To discover the differences of the language learning strategies used by the high achievers and the low achievers in speaking in an exemplary class of twelfth grade in one of senior high schools in Cimahi.

#### **1.4 Scope of the study**

The present study focuses on the language learning strategies in learning speaking used by learners in an exemplary class in one of senior high schools in Cimahi and the differences of the language learning strategies used by the high achievers and low achievers in speaking.

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The present study is expected to bring benefits in several aspects.

##### **1. Theoretical benefits**

1. Provide information for further research regarding language learning strategies used by learners in an exemplary class in learning speaking.
2. Provide information for further research regarding differences of language learning strategies used by high achievers and low achievers in learning speaking

##### **2. Practical benefits**

1. Provide information on what learning strategies that are used by learners in an exemplary class in one of senior high schools in Cimahi in learning speaking.

2. Provide information on language learning strategies used by the high achievers of speaking skills in an exemplary class in one of senior high schools in Cimahi in learning speaking.
3. Provide information on language learning strategies used by the low achievers of speaking skills in an exemplary class in one of senior high schools in Cimahi in learning speaking.
4. Provide information on differences between the use of language learning strategies by the high achievers and low achievers in learning speaking.

### **3. Professional benefits**

1. Provide considerable information for further strategy training in learning speaking.

## **1.6 Methodology**

A descriptive study is chosen to be employed in the current study. This particular type of study as Fraenkel and Walen (2006) suggest is expected to describe situations as completely and carefully as possible.

The present study also employs a mixed method design as a means to provide answers to the recent issues investigated. Mixed method, quantitative and qualitative design as Cresswel (2010) states is a research design that collects and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study.



The data in the present study are collected from different data sources containing both qualitative and quantitative data. The data are obtained by questionnaire, score recording and interviews. The Questionnaire and the score recording contain quantitative data, while the interviews contain qualitative data. These different data types require different analyzing processes to be employed. Hence mixed method design is applied. The more thorough explanation is provided in chapter III.

## **1.7 Clarification of terms**

To avoid misconception, clarification of terms in the present study is provided as follow.

### **1. Language learning strategy**

Oxford (1990) states that language learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations. The concept of learning strategies covers ways that learners use to enhance their capability and skill level as well as their effectiveness in learning.

To avoid misconception of classification of learning strategies that has invoked different perceptions in experts' beliefs, the classification of learning strategies in this paper is classified in terms of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Oxford 1990).

## **2. English Speaking skills**

English speaking skills in the present study refer to skills that are involved in English speaking activity. The skills stress the function of language as a means for communication.

## **3. High achievers**

High achievers are identified as learners who are successful in their foreign language learning (Chamot *et all.*, 1999). In the present study, they are seen more specifically from their English speaking scores that they get. In the present study, the high achievers are five learners who get the highest score in the speaking test.

## **4. Low achievers**

Low achievers are in the opposite sides of the high achievers. In the present study, they refer to learners who have lower English speaking scores. They are five learners who get the lowest score in the speaking test.

## **1.8 Organization of the paper**

The paper has been divided into five parts that is organized based on the following sequence:

### **Chapter I**

The paper begins with chapter one that provides an introduction of the paper. It consists of the research background, the statements of problems, the aims of the study, the significance of the study, and the scope of the research. Subsequently,



the research methodology is presented in this chapter followed by the clarification of terms and the organization of the paper.

## **Chapter II**

This section covers the theoretical foundation consisting of the framework of language learning strategies as well as the relationship of the strategies to speaking skills. This chapter also provides review of previous studies and synthesis.

## **Chapter III**

Chapter Three presents the methodology used consisting of the research design, the research site and participants, the data collection technique, the data collection procedure, and the data analyses.

## **Chapter IV**

This section presents the findings related to the statements of problems mentioned in chapter one followed by the discussion.

## **Chapter V**

This last chapter covers the conclusion and the suggestions given towards the recent issues.