Metacognitive Strategy Used by American Students in Learning Indonesian

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Abstract This research investigated the metacognitive strategy used by American students in learning Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*). The research objective was to identify certain learning behaviors such as the use of metacognitive strategy. The subjects were students of the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) program at the beginning level who were learning *Bahasa Indonesia* intensively for 8 weeks in the summer period in the BIPA Program at the Faculty the Letters, State University of Malang, Indonesia. Data were collected through (1) direct observation of the learning activities and (2) student interviews. The results showed that CLS students, as a representative sample of American students at the beginning level, demonstrate seven general types of learning behaviors when they learn *Bahasa Indonesia*. These are (1) anticipating; (2) planning; (3) controlling; (4) monitoring; (5) self-evaluating; (6) self-managing; and (7) self-reflecting.

Keywords: metacognitive strategy, american students, learning indonesian

1. Introduction

Metacognitive strategy is one of several language learning strategies used by students when they are learning a foreign language. This strategy is mostly used by adult students because they have knowledge and experiences to draw on. All adult students consciously and unconsciously use their knowledge and experiences in learning a foreign language. It is also believed that metacognitive strategy plays an important role in the process of learning a foreign language and affects learning outcomes. This condition was identified in American students who were learning Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*) in the BIPA (*Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing* – Indonesian for non-native speakers) Program at the Faculty of Letters of the State University of Malang, Indonesia. The study aimed to determine whether the subjects in the study, American adult learners, automatically used their knowledge and experiences in learning Indonesian by employing metacognitive strategy.

The use of language learning strategies is influenced by individual student differences, such as beliefs about language learning; affective states; general factors, language learning outcomes, and learning processes and mechanisms. Language learning strategies used by language learners have implications for the learning processes and the learning outcomes in second or foreign language acquisition. Learning strategies play an important role in the process of learning and determine the outcome of one's language learning. Learning strategies have implications for language teaching, as proven by a number of experts ([11]: 13; [18]: 63; [13]). Huda ([11]:

13), for example, states that the results of research in second language learning strategies have implications for language teaching. This statement is supported by Oxford ([18]: 63). Nyikos & Oxford and O'Malley & Chamot, [13] found that the use of language learning strategies is related to the language achievement and proficiency.

The use of language learning strategies is further related to cultural background [18], which affects the way language learners learn a language. Therefore, the strategy used by the students from different cultural backgrounds is also different when they are learning Indonesian. The diferences in the learning strategies used are also caused by the problems encountered during the processes in learning Indonesian as it has its own characteristics that differ from other languages.

The phenomenon of the increasing number of American students who are learning Indonesian in Indonesia has attracted better learning services designed for them. The researcher argues that when the teachers know the strategies, they will be able to help the students perform better. In the meantime, strategies used by Americans in learning Indonesian in Indonesia have not been well studied. Based on this phenomenon, it is necessary to investigate the strategies used by American students in learning Indonesian in Indonesia. Scientific information about the types of learning strategies used is needed by the teachers, the students, and the BIPA program managers. This research will further contribute theoretically and practically to the teaching and learning of Indonesian as a foreign language. Thus, this study investigated more details about the characteristics of the metacognitive strategy used by American Students in learning Indonesian. Therefore, this research focuses on the

students' behaviors as representative of the metacognitive strategy used.

2. Statement of the Problem

Due to lexical and grammatical differences between American English and Bahasa Indonesia (or between any two languages for that matter) as well as cultural differences experienced by the visiting students, students adopt specific language learning strategies in order to adequate to the foreign language and environment. These language learning strategies comprise behaviors and tools (See Section 5) that are employed when learning Bahasa Indonesia. These behaviors and tools are reflected in a number of indicators, which, in order to teach effectively, should be recognized and accommodated by the instructors.

Ellis ([8]: 703) describes differences between foreign language acquisition and second language acquisition. One such difference is the frequency of language use inside and outside the classroom. For Indonesians living in Indonesia, Bahasa Indonesia is most commonly acquired as a first language or learned as a second language, resulting in greater language use outside the classroom. Conversely, American students in the CLS program learn Bahasa Indonesia as a foreign language, resulting in differences in learning processes and outcomes.

Based on the phenomena mentioned above, the aim of this research is to identify the metacognitive language learning strategies used by American students in learning Indonesian in Indonesia. If the strategies are identified, the indicators can be recognized by the teachers, facilitating individual learning.

3. Review of Literature

Many researchers classify language learning strategies into different categories or taxonomies. Those classifications can be identified into seven criteria: (1) direct strategy vs. indirect strategy [17]; (2) main strategy vs. support strategy; (3) primary strategy vs. non-primary strategy; (4) syntactic strategy vs. semantic strategy; (5) social strategy vs. non-social strategy; (6) cognitive strategy vs. metacognitive strategy; and (7) cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategy [11]. However, among all of those strategies, the most well known language learning strategies are cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective [4,5,14].

The term "metacognitive strategy" has been defined by many researchers. Rubin [24] stated that metacognitive strategy is used to oversee, regulate, or self-directed language learning. These strategies involve various processes as planning, prioritising, setting goals, and self-management. In line with Rubin, O'Malley [12] defines metacognitive strategy as a term to express executive function, strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Moreover, according to Hismanoglu [10], the main metacognitive strategies included advance organization, directed attention, selective attention, self-management,

functional planning, self-monitoring, delayed production, and self-evaluation. Hismanoglu's statement confirms Oxford's [17] idea that metacognitive strategy is related to how students manage their own learning. In addition, Felder and Solomon ([9]: 2) mention that metacognitive strategy is a strategy that involves planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after activity is completed.

Metacognitive strategy is learning behaviors that appear during the learning process. The term "behaviors" in the use of learning strategies is supported by Stern [21] who states that strategy is best reserved for general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner, leaving "techniques" as the term to refer to particular forms of observable learning behaviors. Weinstein and Mayer also argue that learning strategies are the behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learners' encoding process. This is unlike Oxford [16], who identifies "learning strategies" as an attitude or action and strongly states that language learning strategies are behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed, and enjoyable. The use of "behavior" is also confirmed by Cohen ([3]:15), who states that language learning strategies, being specific actions, behaviors, tactics, or techniques, facilitate the learning of the target language by the language learner.

In short, based on the literature review discussed above, it can be summarized that metacognitive strategy is a student's learning behavior to assist their foreign-language learning process. It also help them to use their knowledge and experiences to overcome the problems that occur in the process of a foreign language learning.

4. Research Method

The subjects for this research were the American students participating the Critical Language Scholarship program (CLS) at the beginner level at BIPA program at the Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, Indonesia. The subjects consisted of five students from the 2011 session and 6 students from the 2012 session. They studied *Bahasa Indonesia* intensively for eight weeks during the CLS program which was held between mid-June and mid-August. The data were collected through oral interviews with the students throughout the duration of the CLS program as well as through written surveys collected at the midpoint and at the end of the program. A total of 33 student statements were analyzed. 24 of the 33 statements were from informal oral interviews conducted after the researcher observed the student in class; interview questions pertained to the activities conducted in class. (It is important to note that the researcher observed each student well beyond the classroom; students were observed during cultural excursions, during class breaks, during elective classes, and during other social activities on and around campus.) Nine of the 33 statements were from written surveys; the statements were in response to a question asking for general feedback from the students.

Statements identifying related behaviors were then grouped into categories, as described below.

5. Findings

Based on the data analysis, it was found that the use of metacognitive strategies are reflected into 12 types of learning behaviors. Those learning behaviors are: (1) anticipating the learning difficulties; (2) setting the goals of learning; (3) planning functionally; (4) controlling the goal of learning; (5) controlling the learning activities; (6) monitoring comprehension; (7) monitoring production; (8) monitoring the strategies used; (9) self-evaluating the learning process; (10) self-evaluating the learning progress; (11) self-managing; and (12) self-reflecting.

The 12 types of learning behaviors above can be classified into 7 kinds of general learning behaviors. These are anticipating, planning, controlling, monitoring, self-evaluating, self-managing, and self-reflecting.

5.1. Anticipating

The first general learning behavior used by students at the beginner level in learning Indonesian was anticipating. Anticipating the learning problems is the specific behavior of metacognitive strategy used by the students. It was shown by the data and description from students that "I have almost everything with me for class, but I don't have a dictionary. Do you know where I can buy a dictionary? I need one. It would be good if I can get an electronic dictionary." The findings showed that students anticipate the learning problems by preparing themselves beforehand and preparing the learning media that are going to be used.

5.2. Planning

The second general learning behavior used by students is planning. It is divided into two kinds of specific behavior in planning. These are (1) planning beforehand (initial planning) and (2) planning functionally. An example of planning beforehand showed by the data was *"....boleh mengajar saya nanti waktu topik politik di Indonesia? Saya mau tahu kata-kata politik dan nama political parties or organisation di Indonesia. Saya suka politik karena saya mahasiswa political science di Amerika. Nanti saya mau bicara politik di bahasa Indonesia"*, which in English means, "could you please teach me about politics in Indoensia? I want to learn some specific words related to politics and political parties or organizations in Indonesia. I like politics because I am a student of political science in the United States. I want to talk about politics in Indonesia". From the data, it can be described that the students tried to set learning goals and plan before and after learning activities. An example of planning functionally showed by the data: *"Boleh belajar BI untuk telepon? Saya mau tahu cara sopan orang Indonesia bicara di telepon. Saya juga mau tahu kata-kata BI untuk telepon",* which in English means "may I learn how to call someone? I want to know the polite way to talk with an Indonesian on the telephone. I also want to know some words about how to call someone." It can be described that the students who tried to focus on learning materials ignored those which were not relevant with their needs.

5.3. Controlling

The third general learning behavior used by the students is Controlling. Two specific behaviors shown by the data are (1) controlling the goal of learning and (2) controlling the learning activities. An example of controlling the goal of the learning showed by the data: *"Saya mau belajar berbicara bahasa Indonesia formal dan informal. Berdua adalah penting. Saya mau tahu kata-kata formal dan informal di bahasa Indonesia. Tapi sekarang saya mau informal",* which in English means "I want to learn how to speak in Bahasa Indonesia whether it is formal or Informal. Both of them are important. I want to learn which words are formal and which words are informal (so that I can speak formally), but now I want to learn informal". The data described that students try to relate their learning goal and learning materials. An example of controlling the learning activities shown by the data: *"Saya senang belajar di coffee dengan tutor-tutor. Bagus sekali belajar di coffee karena santai. Tutor-tutor juga senang karena kedang-kedang saya membayar makan dan minum untuk mereka",* which in English means "I like studying in a cafe with my tutors. It is nice because I can enjoy myself there. The tutors also happy because sometimes I pay for their food and drink." It can be described that students select learning activities which are appropriate for their personalities.

5.4. Monitoring

Monitoring is the fourth characteristic of metacognitive strategies used by students. There are three specific behaviors of monitoring shown by the data: (1) monitoring the comprehension; (2) monitoring the production; and (3) monitoring the strategies used.

An example of monitoring the comprehension shown by the data: *"Kedang-kedang saya belajar BI melihat film Indonesia atau melihat TV di rumah. Melihat TV biasanya saya mengerti sedikit, tetapi melihat film saya mengerti lebih baik karena ada subtitle",* which in English means "Sometimes I learn by watching Indonesian movies or watching TV at home. Sometimes I only understand a little bit while watching TV, but when watching movies with subtitles I understand much more." It can be described that students could therefore monitor their understanding in listening and reading. An example of monitoring the production showed by the data: *"Maaf, apa nama sopir di mobil saya naik dan apa hp dia? Maaf ee siapa nama sopir mobil dan ee berapa nomer hp dia? ...Kamera saya mungkin masih di mobil dia",* which in English means "I'm sorry, what is the driver's name? And what is his telephone number? Maybe I just left my camera in his car." Students also monitor their ability in speaking and writing. An example of monitoring the strategies used shown by the data: *"...flash cards ini bagus untuk belajar kata-kata baru. Saya selalu menulis kata baru di flash cards supaya saya ingat. Ini saya punya banyak flash cards. Flash cards ini punya nomer jadi saya bisa tahu ingat berapa dan lupa berapa. Saya pakai flash cards untuk belajar dengan tutor juga. Flash cards ini membantu saya ingat kata-kata BI",* which in English means "These flash cards are good for learnign new vocabulary. Writing new vocabulary words on flash cards makes them easier to remember. Here I have a lot of flash cards. They are numbered so I can know which ones I still need to memorize. I use flash cards to learn with tutors as well." It can be described that students monitor learning

strategies which can support both receptive and productive skills.

5.5. Self-evaluating

The fifth characteristic of metacognitive strategies used by students is Self-evaluating. There are two specific behaviors: (1) evaluating the learning process, and (2) evaluating the learning progress. An example of evaluating the learning process shown by the data *"...Itu bagus sekali feedback guru waktu bahasa saya jelek. Saya memperbaiki bahasa saya dengan feedback itu. Itu juga bagus, waktu semua tidak boleh pakai bahasa Inggris..."*, which in English means "It's good to have feedback from the teachers when I make some language mistakes. And it's also good that the students are not allowed to use English." It can be described that students make reflections on whether the learning process has optimized their potential, and whether there are potentially other opportunities to support their learning. An example of evaluating the learning progress shown by the data: *"...saya pekir minggu sekerang saya bicara kurang bagus. Saya tidak pekir saya sakit tapi tidak bisa bicara banyak. Minggu dulu saya bicara banyak. Minggu sekerang bicara sedikit. Tapi teman saya minggu dulu bicara sedikit. Sekerang dia bicara banyak. Dia fluent sekali"*, which in English means "I think this week I am not speaking Indonesian very well. I don't think I'm sick, I just can't speak well. Last week, I spoke a lot. But my friend could only speak a few words last week, and now, this week, he can speak a lot. He is so fluent." From the data it is shown that students make reflections on whether they are progressing, and whether they are good and responsible students in doing their tasks.

5.6. Self-managing

The sixth characteristic of metacognitive strategies used by the students is Self-managing. An example from the data: "*...melihat menulis saya! Saya menulis tentang akhir minggu. Saya coba pakai kata-kata baru di menulis saya. Saya menulis lebih panjang supaya saya tahu kalau saya sudah menulis baik di bahasa*", which in English means "Look at my writing! I wrote about my weekend. I tried to use new vocabulary in my writing. I wrote a lot in order to see whether I can actually write well in Indonesian." From the data, it can be described that students create their own activities to help them learn.

5.7. Self-reflecting

The seventh characteristic of metacognitive strategies used by the students is Self-reflecting. Self-reflection is the motivation and the desired effect by the students externally, while when it is internally called as self-evaluation. An example shown by the data: *"saya pikir saya punya banyak kata Indonesia informal, tapi sedikit kata formal untuk menulis"*, which in English means "I think I know a lot of informal words in Indonesian, but just a few for writing formally". The data show that students try to find the factors which can support and hinder their learning activities; students are self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses in learning Bahasa Indonesia. The indicators of self-reflection demonstrate a desire to improve, resulting in teacher motivation to accommodate the student's needs.

6. Discussions

Of the 12 types, learning behaviors identified, four are in line with O'Malley and Chamot's ([17]: 46) metacognitive strategies: (1) concentration of attention; (2) planning; (3) monitoring; and (4) evaluation. The twelve metacognitive behaviors identified in this study also support the findings of O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper and Ruso [12] in O'Malley & Chamot ([13]: 117) which identify learning tools such as: 1) advanced organization, 2) functional planning, 3) self-regulation, 4) self-monitoring, and 5) self-evaluation.

The 12 types of metacognitive learning behaviors identified by the researcher also support the finding of Chamot and Kupper ([2], in [20]: 159) which describes the metacognitive strategies as being of seven types: planning, focusing of attention, selecting the attention, self-managing, self-monitoring, identifying the problem, and self-evaluating. The 12 metacognitive behaviors are also relevant to Felder and Solomon [9] who classified the strategies into eight types: the initial setting, focusing of attention, the election of attention, self-management, functional planning, self-monitoring, production delays, and self-evaluation. The types of metacognitive learning behaviors identified above also support the statement by Wenden and Rubin [24] and Oxford [17] about the types of metacognitive strategies. This research found two other new metacognitive behaviors: anticipating learning difficulties and self-reflecting.

As can be seen in Appendix 1, there is substantial overlap with individual behaviors identified in prior literature and those identified in the present research findings; the behaviors are now organized into seven General and twelve Specific behaviors as mentioned above.

CLS students at the beginning level have never been to Indonesia before; therefore, for these students learning Indonesian in Indonesia means learning to live in Indonesia. Doing two things at the same time is a challenge for them as they must anticipate situations in order to prepare for them in advance. Moreover, CLS students must self-reflect when they learn Indonesian. The 12 types of learning behavior identified above describe students' mental arrangements while learning Indonesian. The use of the term 'mental management' is supported by Bedell and Oxford ([1]: 59) in their statement that "management or metacognitive strategies were used moderately by learners". In addition, the term "mental management" is also inspired by Cumming (in [6]: 235) who propose that metacognitive strategies are related to the "management of goals", which means setting goals for language learners.

7. Conclusions

The 7 models of learning behaviors are generated by three main factors and three supporting factors. The three main factors that determine the use of metacognitive strategies are (1) students' knowledge of their mother

tongue, (2) prior experiences of their foreign language learning, and (3) prior knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia as a foothold for further knowledge attainment. The three supporting factors that determine the use of metacognitive strategies to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* are (1) the individual differences, (2) belief in the culture of learning, and (3) learning objectives.

The use of metacognitive strategies in learning Indonesian for CLS students at the beginning level relies on mental management of language learning. American students at the beginning level use their mental management when they learn Indonesian in Indonesia. Hence, one thing can be suggested to BIPA teachers. Teachers of Indonesian as a foreign language should understand the mental processes of learning Indonesian because the use of metacognitive strategies relies on mental management.

This research has implications for students of Indonesian as a foreign language, teachers of Indonesian as a foreign language, and program administrators developing curricula and monitoring students' progress. The indicators of metacognitive strategies described in this paper can be used by all parties to facilitate learning and accommodate individual students' needs.

Acknowledgement

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Comparison of Metacognitive Strategies Proposed by Experts and the Researcher

No	[12]	[24]	[2]	Researcher (2014)	
				General behaviors	Specific behaviors
1	Advance organizers	Planning	Planning	Anticipating	(1) Anticipating learning difficulties
2	Directed attention	Prioritizing	Directed attention	Planning	(2) Planning beforehand
3	Functional planning	Setting goals	Selective attention		(3) Planning functionally
4	Selective attention	Self-management	Self-management	Controlling	(4) Controlling the learning goals
5	Self-management		Self-monitoring		(5) Controlling the learning activities
6	Self-monitoring		Problem identification	Monitoring	(6) Monitoring the comprehension
7	Self-evaluation		Self-evaluation		(7) Monitoring the production
8					(8) Monitoring the strategy used
9				Evaluating	(9) Evaluating the process,
10					(10) Evaluating the progress
11				Self-managing	(11) Self-managing
12				Self-reflecting	(12) Self-reflecting
No	[17]	[13]	[9]	Researcher (2014)	
				General behaviors	Specific behaviors
1	Centering learning	Selective attention	Advance organizers	Anticipating	(1) Anticipating learning difficulties
2	Arranging and planning learning	Planning	Directed attention	Planning	(2) Planning beforehand
3		Monitoring	Selective attention		(3) Planning functionally
4	Evaluating learning	Evaluation	Self-management	Controlling	(4) Controlling the learning goals
5			Functional planning	Monitoring	(5) Controlling the learning activities
6			Self-monitoring		(6) Monitoring the comprehension
7			Delayed production,		(7) Monitoring the production
8			Self-evaluation		(8) Monitoring the strategy used
9				Evaluating	(9) Evaluating the process,
10					(10) Evaluating the progress
11				Self-managing	(11) Self-managing
12				Self-reflecting	(12) Self-reflecting