

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Every learning activity requires a manner or strategy to be adopted in order to be able to reach the main purpose of the learning itself. Therefore, all language learners should prepare and aware of what kind of tools they can use to support their learning. Discussed by Hardan (2013) in his study, ‘what’ to use for learning and ‘how’ to use it are included among the important things in the process of learning. However, learning a language is not an easy thing. According to Ranjan & Philominraj (2020) there are several factors that can influence learners and their learning process in language learning. One of the key elements related to the learning progression is the language learning strategies (LLS) used by the learners in their learning process. Moreover, Aziz and Shah (2020) add that language learning strategies are the crucial element that will aid students to identify the effective way to learn a second language. Hence, it seems to be obvious that it is impossible in a process of learning a language learners learn without using learning strategies (Setiyadi, 2016).

There have been numerous studies about language learning strategies. Oxford (1990) defines learning strategy as steps or actions taken by language learners to enhance any aspect of their learning. Referring to Oxford’s definition (1990), Setiyadi (2016) states that learning strategies refer to conscious activities since students seem to be aware of what actions or steps they are taking to enhance their learning process to acquire another language. Additionally, there are several classifications of language learning strategy according to Oxford (1990). Those LLS can be classified into direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct

strategy involves a) *memory strategy*, b) *cognitive strategy* and c) *compensation strategy*. Meanwhile, indirect strategy includes a) *metacognitive strategy*, b) *affective strategy*, and c) *social strategy*.

At senior high school level, language learning strategies are rarely included or even informed by the teacher as one of the materials that learners must pay attention to in the process of learning. Therefore, the students' comprehension regarding what language learning strategy is or what categories are included in is still in the low category of understanding. In addition, students are reported to be not familiar related to the kinds of learning strategies they probably use since none of information regarding LLS have taught to the students.

Furthermore, in senior high school level the students are cognitively considered as a mature individual who is able to manage their learning process. In this level, students receive numerous opportunities to explore their skills in order to improve their capability compared with what have been received during their education in elementary or high school level. However, students at one of senior high schools in Muaro Jambi specifically at the eleventh grade level is still considered as a low achiever of English language. This can be seen from the average score obtained by male and female students within their original English score during 6 months of studying.

Based on the initial observation, the score which students obtained within three times of test is still unable to reach the standard minimum criteria (KKM). This phenomenon occurs in all academic major (language, social science, and natural science). Being asked about their low performance in learning English, some of students say that they are not really interested in learning English which

then bring them to put just a little effort to learn English. The small amount of effort the students put on their learning process however reflects on their low achievement in English score. Meanwhile, the other students report that they don't have much amount of exposure to the English language.

The phenomena found in the school being studied encourage the researcher's interest to conduct a research regarding LLS. One major factor behind this is due to a limitation of research on LLS which is done in the area of this study. A substantial amount of research regarding language learning strategy of Indonesian speakers has been conducted frequently by former studies, but Muaro Jambi has very limited study in this area. Considering this fact, the writer perceives that there is a need to do this investigation. By conducting this study, the information regarding students' learning strategy will be provided. In addition, research on LLS specifically some research used as related studies in this study are mostly done in tertiary level. On the contrary, this study will be conducted for students in senior high school.

Therefore, regarding to the phenomena and preliminary observation results, the researcher is interested in conducting a research entitled "*English Language Learning Strategies Used by Low Achievers at Senior High School Level*" to investigate LLS used by low achievers and examine the differences of LLS used based on gender and academic major at one of senior high schools in Muaro Jambi.

1.2 The Research Questions

There are two research questions formulated in this research which can be seen in the following:

- 1). What are language learning strategies used by students at one of senior high schools in Muaro Jambi?
- 2). Is there any significant differences in the use of LLS according to gender and academic major at one of senior high schools in Muaro Jambi?

1.3 The Purpose of the Research

The purposes of this research are described as follows:

- 1) To investigate the language learning strategies used among students at one of senior high schools in Muaro Jambi
- 2) To discover any significant differences in the use of LLS based on gender and academic major at one of senior high schools in Muaro Jambi

1.4 Limitation of the Research

Particularly, this research was limited to investigate the use of language learning strategies used by low achievers. Additionally, the writer limited the study on low achievers in language, social sciences, and natural sciences of eleventh grade at one of senior high schools in Muaro Jambi. Moreover, this study focused on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning proposed by Oxford (1990).

1.5 The Significance of the Research

By conducting this research, the researcher hopes that the findings of this research will share useful insights for some aspects of education especially in teaching English for students in senior high school level. Specifically, for student side this study is expected to find out their language learning strategies in learning English. By knowing their preferences on learning strategies, students are able to know how to deal with the learning activity by maximize their strategies during the process of learning. On the other hand, for an English teacher this study can be

sources of information regarding the students' language learning strategies in order to develop suitable lesson plan or teaching strategies to be implemented in the classroom.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The definition of key terms are presented by the writer in order to achieve a better understanding and to avoid misinterpretation regarding the key terms employed in this study. The following section is the details definition of key terms used:

a. Learning Strategies

Learning strategies denote to particular actions or ways of thinking that students employ to improve their acquisition of a second language.

b. Direct Strategy

Direct strategies are strategies that directly contribute to language learning and require target language mental processing. Direct strategies include memory, cognitive, and compensation strategy.

c. Indirect Strategy

Indirect strategies focus more on organizing learning through activities that let students control their thought and emotions. Indirect strategies involve metacognitive, affective, and social strategy.

d. Low Achievers

Low achievers in this study refer to students at eleventh grade whose scores are under the standard minimum criteria (KKM).

1.7 Research Hypotheses

The followings are the research hypotheses formulated in this study:

1. H_{o1} : there is no significant difference in the use of language learning strategies based on gender

H_{a1} : there is a significant difference in the use of language learning strategies based on gender

2. H_{o2} : there is no significant difference in the use of language learning strategies based on academic major

H_{a2} : there is a significant difference in the use of language learning strategies based on academic major