

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

This study is based on the experiences of English Education students in implementing language learning strategies to improve their speaking skills. Speaking English plays a vital role in helping language learners speak fluently and express their thoughts and ideas. For university students in Indonesia who are learning English as a foreign language at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, fluency in speaking is essential. They must master this skill because, as future teachers, they will use it as a primary tool in the teaching and learning process (Darmuki et al., 2018). Furthermore, the ability to speak English fluently not only supports their academic and professional development but also enhances their confidence in real-life communication settings, which is crucial for effective classroom interaction in the future.

On the other hand, language learning strategies play an essential role in developing speaking skills, enabling Indonesian EFL students to find suitable methods or ways to help them understand themselves and the materials. It is divided into three aspects: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies (Chamnot & Kupper, 1989), which can emphasize the use of language strategies by students. Finding suitable strategies that can be useful for developing speaking ability requires experience and skill to determine those from people who are experienced in the field. Therefore, those aspects were chosen to determine the learning strategies used by students with more experience and speaking abilities.

The participants of this study are two Indonesian EFL students with excellent speaking skills who are at a public university in Tasikmalaya. The researcher's interest in choosing them as participants is because the researcher had the opportunity to be in the same speaking classes with the participants from the 2019 cohort several times from semester 1 to semester 5 and directly observed their speaking abilities. The students have superior speaking skills compared to their classmates and are known for their proficiency in speaking English. This experience strengthened the validity of selecting them as students with outstanding speaking

skills. They are also accustomed to speaking English fluently daily without experiencing significant difficulties. This is evidenced by their perfect grade, which is an A in every course related to speaking. In addition, both have won several competitions related to speaking skills and participated in several activities related to speaking skills. Thus, this study is to investigate significant language learning strategies implemented by two Indonesian female EFL students in English-speaking activities that are expected to help and benefit the English Education students who are struggling in learning speaking and finding suitable strategies.

There are previous studies conducted to reveal the use and impacts of language learning strategies students implement. First, Alfian (2016) investigated language learning strategies (LLS) used by high school students in Indonesia and indicated that cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies were the most frequent strategies used by the students. Second, gender differences do not affect strategy use. Third, successful students used more strategies than less successful students. Second, Wael et al. (2018) studied the learning strategies used by students in speaking performance. They showed that students in the third semester of the English department frequently used memory strategies in learning speaking, followed by metacognitive and social strategies. Last, Syafryadin (2020) conducted a study to investigate the use of learning strategies in learning speaking and showed that students of both schools generally used the same and different learning strategies, which are the organizing and evaluating learning, referring to metacognitive or indirect strategies.

However, previous studies mostly used descriptive qualitative and quantitative methods, which tend to focus on measuring general patterns or statistical relationships rather than exploring in-depth individual experiences. Quantitative methods conducted by previous studies rely on questionnaire that do not capture the complexity of learners' personal strategies or contextual factors influencing their speaking skills. In contrast, this study fills a gap by adopting a case study approach, selecting participants intentionally based on their outstanding speaking abilities and high grades. This method allows for a detailed and comprehensive exploration of the specific language learning strategies used by two

Indonesian EFL students who excel in speaking skills.

B. Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background above, the writer can conclude the formulation of the problems with research questions as follows:

1. What language learning strategies are implemented by the students to learn English speaking skills?
2. How do language learning strategies affect the students' English speaking skills?

C. Operational Definitions

1. Language Learning Strategies

Conscious behaviors used by language learners as tools to support the acceleration of acquiring and storing new information, including cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective.

2. Speaking Skills

The condition allows the speaker and listener to communicate within the English language. It contains interaction between a speaker and listener and a process of producing, receiving, and processing sounds to achieve goals in speaking skills. The aspects of speaking skills related to this research are accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

3. Indonesian EFL Students

Indonesian EFL students are non-native students who use English as a foreign language in their learning process.

D. Aims of the Study

This study explores the language learning strategies implemented by two Indonesian EFL students and how these can affect their English-speaking skills.

E. Significance of the Study

The study's objective is to perceive the phenomenon of language learning strategies implemented by two Indonesian EFL students in their speaking skills experiences, which can help them find suitable language learning strategies for developing their fluency in speaking activities.

1. Practical Use

This study is expected to be a consideration for students or teachers still trying to find suitable strategies in English-speaking skills to develop and follow the steps to hone their speaking capabilities.

2. Theoretical Use

This study might be beneficial in discovering the phenomenon of language learning strategies implemented by two Indonesian EFL students that can be used in selecting and establishing the right strategies for university students and to help other researchers discover something new related to the topic for the upcoming research.

3. Empirical Use

This study investigates a phenomenon that happens in the field of education, which is the strategies for English-speaking skills. Also, this study will investigate learning strategies for speaking skills development more deeply based on the phenomenon and experience found in the two Indonesian EFL students. Thus, this research will develop and explain the previous research about English language learning strategies in speaking activities.