

**A Survey Study of Language Learning Strategies Used by “Neutron”
Students to prepare National Examination**

A Thesis

**Presented to the Department of English Language Education as Partial
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the use of learning strategies implemented by twelfth grade senior high school students to prepare for English subject in National Examination. This study was conducted in “Neutron” Sragen tuition center and take 59 students in twelfth grade as the participants. The Strategy Inventor for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire version 7.0 for (ESL/EFL) was used to collect the data. The data analyzed by using SPSS and Microsoft Excel 2016 to find the most used and the rarely used strategies. The result of the data analysis found that Metacognitive strategy (Mean = 3,438795) and Compensation strategy (Mean = 3,338983) become the most used strategies. Memory strategy (Mean = 3,088512) and Social strategy (Mean = 3,011299) become the moderately used strategies. While Cognitive strategy (Mean = 2,984262) and Affective strategy (Mean = 2,80226) become the rarely used strategies.

Keywords: Learning Strategies, National Examination, SILL

1. Background of the Study

Nowadays, UN (National Examination) is regarded as a burden, especially the XII grade students. Many students feel depressed and anxious because National Examination becomes a requirement to graduate, although there is other score support National Exam result but the stereotype still exist (Saukah & Cahyono, 2015). They also find that students' honest aspect on national examination is low. That is why National Exam tends to remain high-stakes testing which to cause students to feel depressed and insidently encourage them to cheat. In the other side, some people have different point of view state that the National Examination will improve educational qualities (Sukyadi & Mardiani, 2011), through its high-stakes testing nature, it is that students will be more resilience to prepare standardised testing. Although, it is undeniable that many students feel burdened by the National Examination. National Examination is important because beside it became determining of students' graduation, National Examination also used to measure students' capability in each school in many regions. According to the survey that ever conducted by *kemendikbud* in 2012 that cited on Qudsyi & Putri (2016) shows that as much as 37.2% of students feel very worried about the UN, 37.2% of students felt quite worried, and 25.6% feel not worried. Every student has their own different learning strategies for National Examination, according to Chamot & Uhl (2004) learning strategies are the thinks and actions that used by learners to achieve a learning goal.

Based on the explanation and condition above, it shows that the issues of high stakes testing have only been studied in teachers context (Chamot & Uhl, 2004; Saukah & Cahyono, 2015). There is still limited study on students' learning strategies in related to National Examination in Senior High School context. Thus, the researcher wants to do an analysis toward learning strategies used by XIIth grade students in Neutron Sragen to facing English in National Examination. The researcher is interested to conduct research in

Neutron Sragen because Neutron has some strategies such as motivation session and shortcut solution to answer the question that can improve students' confidence and ready to facing the National Examination.

1.1 Identification of the Problem

There are still limited studies on research.

Every student has their learning styles, but some of them did not find proper learning strategies that match with their characteristics, maybe it can be the reason why they feel anxious and depressed while facing National Examination.

Therefore, students can find the proper learning strategies according to their characteristic; the advantages of knowing the proper learning strategies are to make the students enjoy the learning, make them confidence and erase their anxious to facing National Examination, moreover, National Examination regarded as a difficult burden for students.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the description of the study above, the researcher would like to conduct the study entitled "A survey study of Language Learning Strategies used by "NEUTRON" Students to prepare National Examination". The problems that will be discussed in this study can be stated:

What are the most and the least strategies used by XIIth Grade students in Neutron Sragen to facing English for National Exam?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

As the writer states to conduct a research, automatically there is an objective why the researcher does this research. The objective of the research is:

To describe the most and the least learning strategy used by XIIth grade students in Neutron Sragen to facing English for National Exam

1.4 Significances of the Problem

This study hopefully can give advantages for the students, teachers, many stakeholders in the educational field, and also for the researcher. The result of the study hopefully can be used as a reference to the next research with the same topic.

By analyzing the students' learning strategies, hopefully, it can improve the qualities of education and help students to find the good strategies which proper with their characteristic that will make them easier to do the National Exam.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Learning strategies for L2 Language learners

Learning strategies are the way used by learners to improve their learning. Through learning strategies, learners can control their own learning by improving language skills, increasing the motivation in the learning process and also their confidence. (Shi, 2017). There are six learning strategies that are used by L2 Language learners, such as cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related strategies, compensation strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies (Oxford, 2003). There are also other that taxonomies that have been classified by O'Malley and Chamot in 1990 (O'Malley, 1990) such as

Metacognitive, Cognitive and Social-Affective. The one shared by Oxford (2003) is known as SILL (Strategy Inventors for Language Learning). This theory is considered to be more complete in accommodating the context of this study than that of EFL students tend to be introduced more strategies by the teachers.

2.1.1 Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive Strategies help the students to aim the language target and task by their-self process. They involve reasoning, analysis, and drawing conclusions. For example: Practice the language using drills method and the use of a dictionary to help students find the difficult words.

2.1.2 Metacognitive Strategies

According to Rebecca L. Oxford (2003) Metacognitive strategies used for controlling overall learning process. Metacognitive have various categories such as evaluating the success of various types of learning strategy, knowing self language learning style and requirement, setting a schedule and room for study, controlling mistakes, collecting and organizing materials.

2.1.3 Memory-related Strategies

Memory-related Strategies / Memorization Strategies are methods to effectively remember, to take and share information necessary for future language use. This strategy helps students to memorize the important information collected from their learning and get the information back when it necessary in the future. For example the semantic map of a group of nouns or verbs that shows the relationship between the words. Oxford (1990) as cited in Hardan (2013)

2.1.4 Compensation Strategies

Compensation Strategies helps students make up for a lack of knowledge. These involve the use of synonyms, gestures, paraphrase, and guess the meaning from context (Oxford, 2003). Furthermore, Færch and Kasper (1980) as cited by (Poulisse & Schils, 1989) who said that Compensation can be classified as ways that used by the speaker to achieve his or her authentic communicative purpose by using alternative speaking plan.

2.1.5 Affective Strategies

Affective strategies used to managing L2 emotion and motivation in Language Learning. According to the research conducted by Oxford and Ehrman (1995) towards EFL, and also the research by Dreyer and Oxford (1996) towards South African EFL learners, showed that there are significantly related between affective strategies and L2 proficiency. However in the other research that conducted by Mullins (1992) towards Thailand EFL learners, as cited by (Oxford, 2003) affective strategies didn't have a positive connection with some measures of L2 proficiency.

2.1.6 Social Strategies

Social strategies like asking of a confusing point to get clarification, asking the question, asking for some help, and also becoming culturally aware by cooperating with the L1 Speakers of the language. Raftari & Alawi (2012). According to the research by Dreyer and Oxford (1996) and also related study by Oxford and Ehrman (1995) towards the South African EFL, Social strategies significantly connected with L2 proficiency.

2.2. High Stakes Testing in EFL Context

2.2.1 High Stakes Testing in EFL High School Context

Johnson et al. (2008) as cited in Ashadi & Rice (2016) state that a testing program or test became high stakes are according to some factors such as the teachers accountability, the quality of students grade promotion or graduation, the school reputation. In the other side, Au (2008) argued that testing program became high stakes when the test performance has an impact to some form of students achievement, teachers, school administrators, schools, local school systems.

2.2.2 National Examination in Indonesia

According to Sukyadi & Mardiani (2011), as cited in Sundayana (2018) UN (National Examination) have aims to evaluate Indonesian students' achievement of Standar Kompetensi Lulusan (SKL – Graduate Learning Outcomes) at the end of each educational level. The SKL contains knowledge competence, skill competence (including thinking skills), and attitude competence. The UN is focused on knowledge and skill competencies.

National exam does not stimulate students' logical thinking, innovative thoughts, and emotional survival Santoso (2004) cited in Sulisty (2009). Besides, Santoso (2004) states that the items in the test are focused on academic pedagogical perspectives, building a possible character for the students to be careless to their environment. Zubaidi (2014) and Virgo (2016) as cited in Sundayana (2018) state that teachers usually only focused on teaching to face test, as a result, students prefer to answer the question directly

than elaborate their answer. In addition, UN tends to force the students to memorize answers because UN only oriented on the passive aspects of English (Zubaidi & Novitasari, 2014).

Peraturan Pemerintah (2015) as cited in Saukah & Cahyono (2015) find that National examination becomes low state testing because of its function, nowadays students' graduation is determined by their academic achievements at schools. On the other hand, according to the result of the study from Saukah & Cahyono (2015) outside of its function, National Examination is still high-stakes testing, indicated by the low aspect of honesty in National Examination.

2.3. Review on Instruments of Learning Strategies

2.3.1 Strategy Inventors for Language Learning (SILL)

SILL has been adopted into about 17 languages and distributed to about 10.000 learners (Chamot A. U., 2001). SILL have two versions that used as learning strategy questionnaire. First is for English native speaker (L1) who learn a foreign language (version 5.0, 80 items). The other is for EFL or ESL learners (version 7.0, 50 items). The Strategy Inventors for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 for ESL or EFL learners consist of 50 questions and uses five scale responses (“never or almost never true of me” to “always or almost always true of me”) for each strategy described, this strategy was developed by Oxford in 1990. The SILL is consist of 6 subscales: Cognitive strategies, Metacognitive strategies, Memory strategies, Compensation strategies, Affective strategies, Social strategies. For this research, SILL will be utilised.

2.3.2 Language Strategy Use Inventory and Index

Language Strategy Use Inventory and Index developed by Cohen & Chi (2002), this strategy consists of 89 items question with 4 points rating scales: “I use this strategy and like it”; “I have tried this strategy and would use it again; I’ve never used this strategy but i am interested in it”, and “This strategy doesn’t fit for me”. Language strategy use inventory and index contain 6 subscales categories, they are listening strategy use, vocabulary strategy use, speaking strategy use, reading strategy use, writing strategy use, translation strategy use. According to Grossmann (2011) Language Strategy Use Inventor and Index has no cumulative rating scales.

2.3.3 Motivated strategies for Learning Questionnaire

Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire(MSLQ) items cover 2 large areas of motivation and learning strategies, MSLQ was developed by pintrich in 2003, MSLQ has 81 items and 7 points rating scales from “not at all true of me” to “very true of me”. According to the study, the reliability of MSLQ is “relatively good” and it showed to be reliable although there is no data given.

2.4. Review on Related Studies

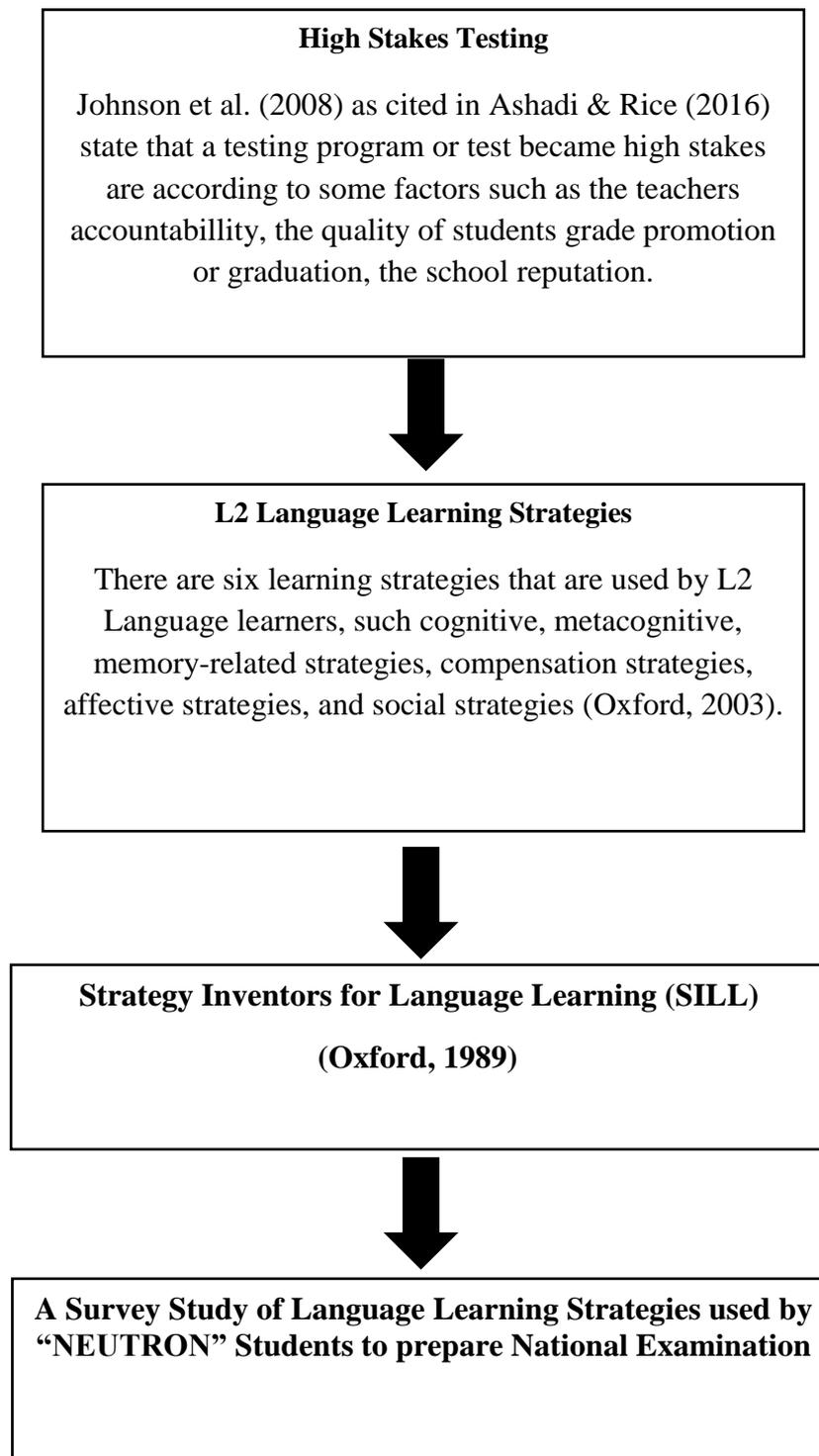
According to Lestari (2015) entitled “Language learning strategies of English education departement of FITK (A Comparsion Descriptive Study at the Fourth and the Sixth Students)”, found that the whole participants used all learning strategies such as memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategy. All the participants are categorized as a moderately user of learning strategy.

In this research, metacognitive strategy become the most used strategy that used by both students in 4th semester and 6th semester, while the most rarely used strategy is different between 4th semester students and 6th semester students, the most rare strategy used by 4th semester students of FITK is Memory strategy, while the most rarely used strategy that used by 6th semester is social strategies. the research also proved that the 4th semester students used more learning strategies than 6th semester students.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

Based on the description that has been raised previously and some contract theories that have been noted above, the variables involved in this stud can be formulated through framework as follows:

Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework



3. Research Method

This study was designed to find out the needs analysis of learning strategies used by the “Neutron” Sragen students. The researcher used survey research to collect and analyze the data. According to Check and Schutt (2012) as cited in Ponto (2015) Survey is collecting information from a sample of individual’s responses. Whereas Pinsonneault and Kraemer (1993) as cited in Glasow (2005) stated that survey is a tool for collecting the information about the characteristic, responses or opinions of a large group of people

3.1. Population and Sample

According to Sugiyono (2010) Population is a geographic generalization that consist of object/subject that have particular characteristic determined by the researcher to the research then make the conclusion. While Arikunto (1998) state that population can be defined as the whole of the research subject. This study population consists of 59 students in XII grade which prepare for national examination course in “Neutron Sragen”. The researcher chooses “Neutron Sragen” as the place to collect the data because the students who take a course in “Neutron Sragen” come from various school and they used various learning strategies to prepare for National Examination.

According to Arikunto (1998) sample is a part of the population. The population can be used as a sample if the population are less than 100, it means that this study used all the population as a sample because the population in this study are 59.

3.2. Research Instrument

This part explains about the instruments that research used to collect data. In this research, the researchers using a questionnaire from Oxford that translated into Bahasa as instruments to find the result of the study. Oxford's strategy inventory for language learning has two versions that used as learning strategy questionnaire. One is for English native speaker (L1) who learn a foreign language (version 5.0, 80 items). The other is for EFL or ESL learners (version 7.0, 50 items). According to the participant of this study were EFL or ESL learners, this study used SILL version 7.0. which consists of: Memory strategies (9 items) represent to remembering effectively, Cognitive strategies (14 items) represent the use of mental process, Compensation strategies (6 items) represent compensating for missing knowledge, Metacognitive strategies (9 items) represent Emotion controls, and Social strategies (6 items) represent learning with friends/ others.

This questionnaire was rated on a five-point Likert-type scale: 1. I never or almost never true of me (*Tidak Pernah*), 2. Usually not true of me (*Jarang*), 3. Somewhat true of me (*Kadang-kadang*), 4. Usually true of me (*Sering*), 5. Always or almost always true of me (*Selalu*). Students were asked to honestly responding each item of questionnaire.

3.3. Data Collection

To collect the data needed in this study, the writer needs some steps:

1. Asking permission to conduct the study.
2. Distributing the questionnaire to – XIIth grade students in “Neutron” Sragen.

3.4. Validity and Reliability of the Data

According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005), as cited in Taherdoost (2016), Validity explains how good the collected data encompass the research area. While Sugiyono (2010) explain that Validity is the accuracy of data that gained among the researcher and the object of the research. Based on the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) the construct validity of the SILL is not consistent with different factor across various learning context (Eldib, 2004; Green & Oxford, 1995; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Robinson & Midorikawa, 2001; Yang, 1999) cited on Park (2011).

Reliability is the main concern when measuring the behaviour and characteristic using a psychological test. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1991) as cited in Taherdoost (2016). In the most study, the internal consistency reliability of the SILL that has been determined by cronbach alpha is above an acceptable alpha value of .60 or .70, (Hair et al., 1998; Landau & Everitt, 2004) as cited on Park (2011).

3.5. Validity and Reliability of the Data

The researchers take the same steps in accordance with this study.

- a. The SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) questionnaire translated by Lestari (2015) adopted as instrument.
- b. Checking the questionnaire and consult to the lecturer to make sure that the the questionnaire is easy to understand by students.
- c. Print the questionnaire and share it into the participant in “Neutron Sragen”.
- d. Record the data collecting process.
- e. Use Microsoft Excel and SPSS as a tool to calculate the data findings.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Findings

The survey results were obtained from a sample of students on the use of learning strategies that has an average range (Mean = 3,110685). To be more detailed, the researcher categorizes the data into six categories of learning strategies, they are Memory strategies, Cognitive strategies, Compensation strategies, Metacognitive strategies, Affective strategies, and Social strategies. The questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia to avoid misinterpretation and to ease the respondent to complete the questionnaires.

According to Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002), a mean score between 3.5 and 5.0 indicates the learning strategy is highly used by the participants, a mean score between 2.5 and 3.4 indicates that the learning strategy is moderately used by the participants. Whereas, a mean score below the 2.4 indicates that the learning strategy is rarely used by the participants. The sample of students in the category of Metacognitive strategies get the highest score (Mean = 3,438795); Affective strategies (Mean = 2,80226); Compensation strategies (Mean = 3,338983); Memory strategies (Mean = 3,088512); followed by Cognitive strategies (Mean = 2,984262); and Social Strategies (Mean = 3,011299).

4.2. Discussion

Based on the overall findings above, we can conclude that all the participants used all learning strategies; such as memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy.

Moreover, according to the theory of Mokhtari & Sheorey (2002), all the participants are moderate users of learning strategies.

4.2.1. The most used strategies to face National Examination

According to the data, it was shown that metacognitive strategy (Mean = 3,438795) became the most used learning strategy used by Twelfth-grade students who take a course on Neutron Sragen. Metacognitive strategy, in statement number 32, "I pay attention to someone who speak English" became the most prominent strategy, it is about listening skills. In relation to the characteristics of Indonesia National Examination is that it is aimed to evaluate students' attainment of skill competence. The skills include reading, speaking, listening, and writing. In Neutron Sragen, the students experienced and applied listening-related strategies, rather than speaking in cognitive strategies (monologue = 3,10; dialogue = 2,38), reading (in cognitive strategies = 2,81 in metacognitive strategies = 2,89, in compensation strategies = 2,83). However, in pronunciation skill the students experienced high frequent of 3,62. The statement is "I practice the sounds of English". Reflecting to the characteristic of UN the students have not used the learning strategies very well. It is because they still used the strategies in a moderate level. In fact, one of the purposes of UN is to evaluate the skills. Moreover, the data was collected 2 months before UN. Thus, in term of cognitive strategies in responding to english skills the students need more preparation.

4.2.2. The least used strategy to face the National Examination

Based on the data, affective strategy became the least strategy used by Twelfth-grade students who take a course on Neutron Sragen. Affective

strategy like identifying students' mood and the level of worried, discusses feelings, give a reward for ourself for good performance, and positive self-talk and using deep breathing also become the least strategy used by Twelfth-grade students who take a course on Neutron Sragen (Mean = 2,80226). Perhaps, it happens because the effect of anxiety on National Exam, National exam do not stimulate students' logical thinking, innovative thoughts, and emotional survival, Santoso (2004) as cited in Sulisty (2009).

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

5.1. Conclusion

The result of this study shows that the Twelfth-grade students who take a course on "Neutron" Sragen use all the learning strategies. The use of learning strategies in Neutron Sragen is moderately used by the participants (Mean <3,5).

According to the frequency of use, the most used strategies are Metacognitive strategy (Mean = 3,438795. SD = 1,03149) which has highest mean in statement number 32: "I pay attention to someone who speaks English" (Mean = 4,050847. SD = 0,954549).

While the least used strategy is Affective strategies (Mean = 2,80226. SD = 1,085963) which has highest mean in statement number 39: "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English" (Mean = 3,898305. SD = 0,844759).

5.2. Suggestions and Implications

This study conducted at “Neutron” private course in Sragen regency, Central Java. The students who take a private course in “Neutron” Sragen are come from some school in Sragen regency and produces the data already outlined above. Suggestion for further study hopefully can be conducted in a wider scope not only in “Neutron” Sragen, such as in different context of study (Junior high school and in different tuition centre (*Primagama, Ganesha Operation*, etc) to get more variety of data.