

**HIGH ACHIEVING AND LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE
LEARNING STRATEGIES IN MAKASSAR PRIVATE SCHOOL: A CASE
STUDY**

A Thesis

**Presented to the Department of English Language Education as Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements to Obtain the *Sarjana Pendidikan* Degree in
English Language Education**



By

Muhammad Farez Aditya Hasrul

18322116

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION FACULTY OF
PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOCULTURAL SCIENCES ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
OF INDONESIA YOGYAKARTA**

APPROVAL SHEET

HIGH ACHIEVING AND LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN MAKASSAR PRIVATE SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY

By

Muhammad Farez Aditya Hasrul

18322116



Approved on December 22, 2023

By

Supervisor:

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Irma Windy Astuti, S.S., M.Hum.

NIP. 062216005

RATIFICATION SHEET

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By

Muhammad Farez Aditya Hasrul

18322116

Defended before the Board Examiners on 3rd of January 2024 and Declared Acceptable


Board of Examiners

Chairperson	: Irma Windy Astuti, S.S., M.Hum	
First Examiner	: Adam Anshori S.S., M.A.	
Second Examiner	: Anandayu Suri Ardini S.S., M.A.	

Yogyakarta, 22 December 2023

Department of English Language Education
Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences
Islamic University of Indonesia

Head of Department,

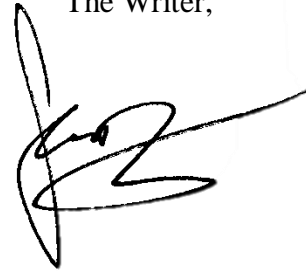

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The Writer,

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Muhammad Farez Aditya Hasrul

18322116

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The Writer,



Muhammad Farez Aditya Hasrul

18322116

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Muhammad Farez Aditya Hasrul

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By

Muhammad Farez Aditya

18322116

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the learning strategies employed by high and low achiever students in a private secondary school in Makassar, with a specific focus on their English skills. Drawing on the theoretical framework of language learning strategies, the study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing thematic analysis. Participants include one high and one low achiever student from the school. The research addresses the question: "What learning strategies do high and low achiever students use to enhance their L2 skills?" to identify and describe the strategies employed by these students in their lessons. The significance lies in exploring strategies that contribute to English proficiency, offering insights for second language learners. The study reveals key findings in four areas: Vocabulary Acquisition and Comprehension, Informal Learning, Self-Assessment of Language Proficiency, and Language Learning Challenges. High performers exhibit diverse strategies across memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and social domains, while low achiever primarily rely on memory and comprehension strategies. The high achiever student's broader strategy engagement correlates with their higher English proficiency. Implications suggest the importance of structured language learning opportunities, deliberate vocabulary learning techniques, and interventions to build confidence in speaking situations. The study contributes to addressing the nuanced challenges faced by secondary school students in enhancing their English proficiency, offering practical insights for language educators and learners alike.

Keywords: Learning Strategies, Thematic Analysis, Language Learning

Table Of Content

INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Formulation of the Problem	3
1.3 Objective of the Study.....	3
1.4 Significance of the study	3
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
2.1 Language Learning Strategies.....	4
2.2 EFL Students Learning Strategies in Their Lesson.....	6
2.3. Theoretical Framework.....	8
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	10
3.1 Research Design.....	10
3.2 Setting of the study.....	10
3.3 Participants.....	11
3.4 Data collection technique	11
3.5 Data Analysis Technique	14
3.6 Trustworthiness	14
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	15
4.1 Research Findings	15
4.2 Discussion.....	21
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	24
5.1 Conclusions.....	24
5.2 Recommendations.....	24
References:	25
APPENDIX.....	28

CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The development of students' learning process relies on students' strategy of learning as Cohen (2000) confirms that the role of strategies can bring positive effects on the students' English learning process. The development of students' learning process also can be shown from the time investment of the student. Brown (2007) states that the success of language learning is due to learners' own personal investment of time, effort, and attention to the language learned.

Some studies view learning strategies as the key to learning success (Thompson & Rubin, 1966; Mistar, 2011a) and some other studies view the success of learning is based on several variable such as gender, proficiency level, motivation, personality, and language aptitude (Huda, 1998; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995). The focus of these studies has been shifted to a more specific language skill to develop throughout the recent years which include speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Number of studies use the theory of learning strategies conducted by Oxford's SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) as the key instrument. The last study is by Forbes & Fisher (2018) on using metacognitive learning strategies on student's confidence and proficiency in foreign language speaking skills. The result of this study indicates that the use of learning strategies seems to have had a positive impact on pupils' confidence and proficiency in speaking and after the intervention the participants reported an increase in how much they both valued and used a range of metacognitive strategies.

The existing literature on language learning strategies has explored various facets of learners' engagement, emphasizing the pivotal role of strategies in fostering positive outcomes in the English learning process (Cohen, 2000). While studies have acknowledged the significance of learning strategies in language acquisition (Thompson & Rubin, 1966; Mistar, 2011a), and have delved into the impact of

variables such as gender, proficiency level, motivation, personality, and language aptitude (Huda, 1998; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995), a critical research gap emerges in the nuanced challenges faced by secondary school students, particularly concerning the enhancement of their speaking proficiency in a second language. The study by Gani et al. (2015) has addressed the importance of students' learning strategies in developing speaking ability, but there remains a gap in comprehensively understanding the specific needs and challenges encountered by secondary school students in the realm of speaking proficiency. While Nikolov and Djigunovic's study (2006) touches on age-related factors, it doesn't delve deeply into the intricacies of the secondary school context, leaving a void in understanding the dynamics of learning strategies specific to this educational level. Wu's study (2008) sheds light on language learning strategies used by students at different proficiency levels, providing valuable insights. However, a research gap persists in the context of secondary school students, as the study doesn't specifically focus on the challenges faced by this demographic in developing speaking proficiency. Oxford's work (2002) presents an overview of language learning strategies, offering a broad perspective. However, the literature lacks a concentrated exploration of high and low achieving secondary school students' learning strategies, especially regarding speaking abilities, which this study aims to fill. While Forbes and Fisher (2015) contribute significantly to the understanding of metacognitive learning strategies' impact on confidence and proficiency in foreign language speaking skills, there's a distinct research gap in examining the strategies employed by secondary school students of varying proficiency levels. Hong's qualitative case study (2018) delves into language learning strategies in an EFL speaking course, providing a valuable methodological perspective. However, the gap remains in applying a similar qualitative approach to explore the specific strategies employed by high and low achieving secondary school students in the context of speaking proficiency.

Therefore, this study seeks to address these research gaps by employing a qualitative method of thematic analysis, offering a novel and in-depth perspective on the learning strategies utilized by secondary school students. Through this approach, the research aims to contribute nuanced insights into the strategies that significantly influence students' English proficiency in a second language, differentiating itself from existing studies primarily through the chosen research method and the targeted secondary school context.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

The focus of this research is to find the answer to this question: “What are the learning strategies used by high achiever and low achiever learners of a private school in Makassar regarding their L2 skills?”

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study is an attempt to find out and describe the learning strategies used by private secondary school students in their lesson by looking at what strategies that high achieving and low achieving secondary school students uses.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is to explore the language learning strategies used by high achieving students and low achieving students in order to develop their English skills. The result of this conceptual study expects information on language learning strategies that enables the second language learners to find a better solution for a students’ problem in English skills development. By identifying and analyzing the strategies used by successful speakers, as well as the challenges faced by less proficient speakers, this research seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform and guide second language learners in their journey to improve their English skills. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of effective strategies that address the specific language / L2 difficulties encountered by learners, thereby facilitating their English skills development and offering practical solutions for enhancing their overall proficiency.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Language Learning Strategies

Using language learning strategies in a learning process is advantageous for all language learners. Learning strategies are commonly characterized as the operations or forms which are deliberately chosen and utilized by language learners to memorize the target language or to assist a language task (White, 2008). Language strategies were also defined by Chamot & O'Malley (1987) as techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions for learners to facilitate themselves in learning both linguistic and content area information.

Language learning strategies are categorized into three groups which are; social strategies, communication strategies, and learning strategies (Chamot 1990, as cited in Zare, 2012). All of the language learning strategies are related to cognitive learning and metacognitive learning. Clarification, practice, memorizing and monitoring belong to cognitive strategies while self-management, setting goals, and planning belong to metacognitive strategies. Language learning focuses on the process of conversation participation and sending meaning to the listener while clarifying speakers' intention which makes the relation of communication strategy less direct which is why communication strategies are often used to overcome the difficulties of communication by the speakers.

Another language learning strategy that has been classified in research was by Oxford (1990). She categorized the language learning strategies into six which are; memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, affective strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social strategies. Memory strategies help the learner to retrieve new information and then store it. Cognitive strategies enable the learners to understand different meanings of a language by understanding it and being able to create or

produce the language themselves. Compensation strategies are strategies that help learners to communicate authentically by teaching them to overcome the knowledge gaps. Affective strategies are used to help the learner to develop their self-confidence. Metacognitive strategies are used to improve the learner's communicative competence by regulating learners' cognitive abilities while focusing, planning, and evaluating their progress. Finally, to increase interaction and empathizing with interlocutors is the purpose of social strategies.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) also did research on language learning strategies. They separated it into three types which are; cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies. In this research, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) emphasize that cognitive strategies involve learning techniques that can be directly manipulated for example; translation and repetition. As for metacognitive strategies, the application of a plan for learning and the learning process, comprehension, production monitoring, evaluating a completed activity are the keys of these strategies, and for socio-affective strategies, they indicate that social transactions and activities are the point of these strategies.

Various options can be found in many different learning strategies which students can deliberately choose in hope to optimize the chance of achieving success in reaching their goals of learning a second language. This means that learning strategies are the key to success in learning a new language. Employing the right strategies to students can improve the learning process significantly as a positive outcome. As Gani, Fajrina & Hanifa (2015) stated, appropriate language learning strategies result in improved, faster language proficiency.

Andrew D. Cohen, in his book "Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language" (2003), delves into the complexities of language learning strategies and their relationship with proficiency. He explores various categories of language learning strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies, and discusses how learners can be trained to develop effective strategies. His findings highlight the significance of strategy instruction and training in language classrooms to enhance learners' language proficiency and empower them to become more effective language learners.

A study by Ya-Ling Wu (2008) explores how language learners employ strategies at various proficiency levels, providing insights into the evolving nature of language acquisition. This study contributes to the understanding of language learning strategies by highlighting learners with low-high proficiency-dependent nature by acknowledging the dynamic interplay between strategies and proficiency levels, educators and learners can make informed decisions to optimize the language learning process. Ya-Ling Wu studies encourages a shift from a one-size-fits-all approach to a more personalized and strategic language learning experience

Additionally, Oxford (2002) provides a comprehensive overview of language learning strategies, emphasizing their dynamic and evolving nature. She addresses the multifaceted aspects of these strategies and their role in the language acquisition process. The study serves as an update, reflecting the contemporary landscape of language teaching practices. It stands as a foundational piece in the realm of language learning strategies. It not only provides an insightful update on the theoretical underpinnings of LLS but also offers actionable suggestions for ESL practitioners.

Thus, the use of learning strategies helps the learner to see a way to process information that can be used to improve learning, retention, and comprehension. By using learning strategies, it trains the learners to digest new information better and can also improve their problem-solving skills in a certain language. By recognizing the importance of language learning strategies, students will be able to learn language with less time, less pressure, less effort, more efficiency, and effectiveness.

2.2 EFL Students Learning Strategies in Their Lesson

Students use learning strategies that cover various categories to improve their language skills. This has been proven by Gani, Fajrinam & Hanifah (2015) in their study. The study stated that students who have more balance in frequency and use more learning strategies in their learning activities are the one who are categorized as a high speaking performer. The result also says that low achieving students are using less strategies that include memory, cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies. These results are in line

with Oxford's (1990) claim that says a successful language learners' uses more strategies in a more conscious, appropriate, frequent, and purposeful way.

Hadi (2017) investigated the relationship between language learning strategies and speaking proficiency among university students. The study found that the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies positively correlated with speaking proficiency.

Studies conducted in international contexts have also contributed to our understanding of language learning strategies and speaking skills. Hong (2018) conducted a qualitative case study to examine the language learning strategies employed by a group of Korean EFL students in a speaking course. The study involved classroom observations and individual interviews with the students. The findings revealed that students utilized various cognitive and social strategies, such as using vocabulary notebooks, engaging in group discussions, and practicing with language partners, to enhance their speaking abilities. The study provided valuable insights into the specific learning strategies that supported students' speaking development in a particular instructional context.

Another study was done by John, Emily & Rangasamy, Devandran & Indiran, Dinesiriy & Adickalam, Evelyn & Kashinathan, Saraswathy & Hashim, Harwati. (2021). This research paper recognizing the significance of effective communication in English learning. Employing a questionnaire and statistical analysis, the study identifies metacognitive strategies as highly utilized, while memory-related strategies are minimally employed. Results highlight the learners' intentional use of metacognitive strategies, reflecting a mindful approach to improving speaking skills. The study suggests that memory-related strategies, though less popular, contribute to knowledge recall and retrieval. The findings offer valuable insights for educators and researchers, emphasizing the relevance of LLS in language learning and providing a basis for future investigations into diverse learning styles and language skills.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this study is to know and describe "What are the learning strategies employed by high achieving students and low achieving students that contribute to their current level of L2 proficiency?" This qualitative question aims to explore the specific learning strategies utilized by high achieving students in order to understand the factors that contribute to their success in speaking proficiency.

First thing needed to understand is the categories of learning strategy, which are; Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive, Affective, Social, and Comprehension (Oxford,1990).

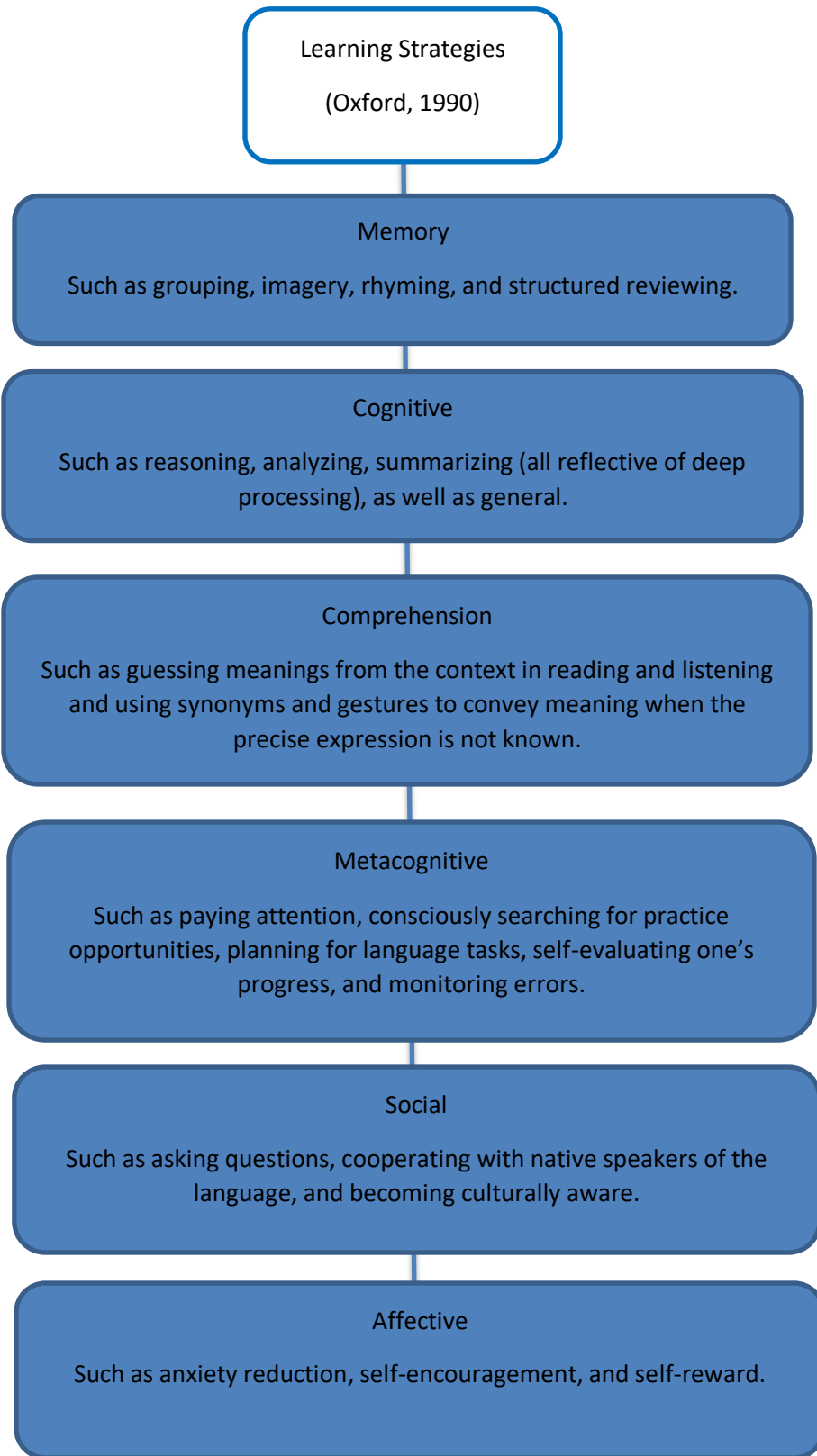


Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study is using a qualitative research design. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) is chosen because all the required data comes from the in-depth analysis of a small sample, in this case, students from a private secondary school in Makassar. As the theory mentioned, thematic analysis can be used to analyze small amounts of data with 1 - 2 participant to large amounts of data up to 60 or more participant (Cedervall & Aberg, 2010; Mooney-Somers, Perz, & Ussher, 2008)

3.2 Setting of the study

Being the school of Indonesia's ex Vice President, Jusuf Kalla, this school is a very known elite private school in Makassar. The curriculum implemented in this school is the national curriculum, but does not eliminate the school's characteristics. Meanwhile, the programs created process this school into an effective school environment and learning center. Achievements are built not only in the intra-curricular area, but also in the extracurricular area. Both at regional, national and international levels. Learning methods developed are adaptive to current technology and learning methods. The accessibility of the data for the writer in this research is ensured through the utilization of interviews conducted with both low and high achieving students with the help of the schools' English teacher providing the data of the high achieving students and low achieving students, providing firsthand and insightful perspectives on their learning strategies and experiences in the context of speaking proficiency.

3.3 Participants

The participants of this research are one low achiever student and one high achiever student. By selecting one low and one high achiever student, we can see the difference of learning strategies that they used to perform in English. The process of picking the participant was by doing a collaboration with the teacher from their school. By looking at their academic report (mid-term and final exam score) and their overall performance and achievement in school, the two participants were recommended by the teacher and chosen. They are high school students currently studying at a private secondary school in Makassar as this research conducts. The two students in this private school are 2nd grade. The reason why the researcher chose students from high school was because typically, high school students have had some experience in learning English for some period of time, have had some experience in performing in speaking English

3.4 Data collection technique

The researcher prepares the question for the interview. In the interview process, the researcher was looking for credible information by giving as many meaningful questions as possible.

The main focus of this study is to find out and analyze the learning strategy used by the participant to improve their English-speaking skills. The participant will be interviewed twice using semi-structured Interview based on the questions that researchers have made. The overall purpose of using semi structured interviews for data collection is to gather information from key informants who have personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs related to the topic of interest (DeJonckheere, M. and Vaughn, L.M, 2019). The first interview was conducted on April 12th and the second interview on September 1st 2023. Both interviews for 30 minutes. The interview was recorded via Zoom Video Recording to facilitate data collection/transcription to be credible.

The research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide consisted of a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses from the

participants regarding their language learning experiences, strategies, and perceptions. The questions were carefully crafted to explore various aspects of language learning, including the participants' exposure to English, their confidence levels, practice opportunities, learning strategies, vocabulary acquisition methods, and interactions with English-speaking individual. The questions were formulated in reference to Oxford (1990)'s theory to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' language learning experiences. The questions are designed to uncover the intricacies of strategy use across memory, cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, and compensatory domains.

During the interviews, the researcher followed the interview guide while also allowing for flexibility to seek clarification when necessary. This approach ensured that the interviews remained focused on the research objectives while also providing space for the participants to share their unique perspectives and experiences.

Table 1

First Interview Question Points (II)

No	Components of LLS Theory	Main Line Interview Question
1	Strategies (General)	What learning strategies do you usually use in your speaking lessons? Did you find that certain strategies were more effective than others? If yes, which one?
2	Metacognitive Strategies	How do you prepare for an assignment or presentation? Have you ever tried to analyze or reflect on your own performance? If so, did you find it helpful?
3	Social Strategies	Have you ever practiced outside of class? If yes, what kind of activities do you do? How did you get feedback on your English skills? Does it help?
4	Cognitive Strategies	How did you learn the new vocabulary or grammatical structure you needed to learn English?
5	Memory Strategies	Have you ever used technology (e.g. online tools or apps) to practice or improve your skills? If yes, which one?
6	Affective Strategies	How do you deal with nervousness or anxiety when speaking in front of people?

Table 2

Second Interview Question points (I2)

No.	Components of LLS Theory	Main Line Interview Question
1	Metacognitive Strategies	<p>Can you think of a time when you deliberately planned and employed specific strategies to enhance your speaking skills? What were the outcomes of using these strategies?</p> <p>How do you monitor your own progress in speaking? How does self-evaluation help you identify areas for improvement?</p> <p>Can you discuss the range of strategies you currently employ in your language learning journey and how you determine which strategies are most appropriate for specific speaking tasks?</p>
2	Affective Strategies	<p>Can you describe your experiences and feelings when learning and using English? How do these experiences impact your motivation to improve your speaking proficiency?</p> <p>How do you manage feelings of nervousness or anxiety while speaking in the target language? Are there any specific affective strategies that you find helpful in such situations?</p>
3	Social Strategies	<p>Can you share an experience when you engaged in conversations with others to practice speaking? How did these social interactions contribute to your English proficiency?</p> <p>Can you describe any difficulties you encounter while learning to speak the target language? How do you cope with these challenges, and do you employ any compensatory strategies to overcome them?</p>
4	Cognitive Strategies	<p>Can you recall an instance when you experimented with different strategies to improve your English skills? How did you adapt your approach based on the results of these experiments?</p>
5	Memory Strategies	<p>Can you describe a situation when you used a combination of strategies to tackle a speaking task? How did the synergistic use of these strategies impact your performance?</p>
6	Comprehension Strategies	<p>Can you share an experience when you engaged in conversations with others to practice speaking? How did these social interactions contribute to your English proficiency?</p>

The second/follow up interview are done to get a more in-depth and genuine data from the participant

The interviews were conducted in a one-on-one setting through online communication tools. Each interview was audio-recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accurate data capture. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim, capturing both verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

After all the data were collected, the results were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a way for qualitative researchers to analyze data for the research. The data at different points in the process then get examined to find patterns. The six-phase on conducting thematic analysis are familiarizing researcher with data collected, generate initial codes, search for themes, review themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clark, 2006)

3.6 Trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness and understanding of qualitative research is crucial for maintaining the study's credibility. Given the reliance on interview data as the primary source, traditional triangulation methods, which involve cross-referencing multiple data sources, are not applicable. Instead, the focus shifts to other strategies that contribute to the credibility of the study.

A key strategy employed is member checking. This involves returning to the participants, specifically low achieving and high achieving students, to validate the accuracy of the interpretations derived from their interview responses. The validation process is facilitated by consulting the participants' academic performance records, including midterm and final term results, with the collaboration of their school teacher.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Findings

The research findings from the interviews with the low achieving student and the high achieving student provide valuable insights into their language learning experiences and strategies. The following discussion highlights the key findings and explores the implications for understanding the factors influencing English language proficiency. Below is a table showing the topics and sub-topics related to the experience of high achieving student and low achieving student in speaking English at one of the private high schools in Makassar.

Table 3

Themes and Sub-themes of Students' Speaking Strategies

Themes	Sub-themes
Social Strategy (SS)	Social Circles Interactions with Native Speakers Practicing with Peers Outside School
Affective Strategy (AS)	Nervousness, Anxiety, and Coping Mechanism Overcoming Difficulties
Metacognitive Strategy (MtS)	Self-Assessment, Self-Monitoring and Self-Evaluation
Memory Strategy (MmS)	Vocabulary Retention Methods
Cognitive Strategy (CgS)	Learning from English Media
Comprehension Strategy (CmS)	Vocabulary Improvement Methods

A. Comprehension Strategy

The participants shared their experience in learning English and their attempt at how to improve their English-speaking skills. Starting from their vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. When asked how do they improve their vocabulary, their answers are different. The low achieving student said:

I mostly learn English from talking with my friend, from watching videos, and from reading. Lately, I learn some sentences from TikTok... If I forgot how the word is pronounced, I opened Google Translate again and listen to how the word is pronounced again and I memorized the words eventually. (CmS, Low Achieving Student, I1).

On the other hand, the high achieving student uses a more traditional method for improving their vocabulary. They claim their way of memorizing their new vocabulary by “writing it down repeatedly while using it into a sentence” (CmS, High Achieving Student, I1) whenever they found a new vocabulary

This shows the difference in learning intensity in terms of improving vocabulary. The low achieving student uses the internet every time they forgot a vocabulary that they have learned while the high achieving student uses the new vocabulary over and over until they understand the uses of the new vocabulary.

B. Memory Strategy

Next one is their vocabulary retention method. The low achieving student said:

“If there is a sentence I don’t know how to explain, I read the sentence first then it just came in my head” (MS, Low Speaking Performing Student, I1).

The low achieving student uses context to remember the vocabulary that they have learned. Meanwhile, the high achieving student remembers the vocabulary because they have been writing it over and over, also by using it in a sentence. It shows that the low achieving student is leaning towards using comprehension strategy as for the high achieving student uses memory strategy to retain vocabulary.

C. Cognitive Strategy

Another way they use to improve their vocabulary is to learn from English media. Both of the students have a similar way in utilizing English media. The low achieving student said:

“I use a lot of social media and YouTube. I just eventually remember English words.” (CgS, Low Speaking Performing Student, I1).

While the high achieving student said:

“I also watch a lot of English movies and shows” (CgS, High Speaking Performing Student, I1)

. Both of the students use audio-visual media such as YouTube videos and movies to find new vocabularies.

D. Social Strategy

Beside vocabulary acquisition and comprehension, the researcher found that both students have experience engaging in their social circles in some way. The first one is the informal learning through social circles. While both students have encountered situations in their social circles, their approach are different. The low speaking performing student said:

“I tend to avoid speaking practice because I'm afraid of making mistakes...” (SS, Low Speaking Performing Student, I1).

Different to what the low achieving student said, the high achieving answered:

“These interactions expose me to different speaking styles and enhance my adaptability in various social contexts” (SS, High Speaking Performing Student, I2)

This shows the difference approach of both students. Low achieving student misses the opportunity to improve their speaking skills while the high achieving student is constantly seeking for those interaction whether it is with their friend that has similar interest in learning English or with a native speaker.

Apart from their circles, they also have had interacted with native speakers. The low achieving student mentioned:

“I have a friend from India but I never speak to them in Voice Call because I’m nervous. I only talk to them via text.” (SS, Low Speaking Performing Student, I1).

The high achieving student also mentioned:

“Last time I talk to Native speaker though was not too long ago when my English Club has a visit to this English Village and there were three Native speakers there” (SS, High Speaking Performing Student, I1)

The low achieving student have an opportunity to speak with a native speaker but they are too nervous to interact beyond via text. Meanwhile the high achieving student actively tried to interact with the native speaker that they encountered at English Village (Kampung Inggris). This shows their difference in their social aspect.

Another finding is that both participants are practicing outside school. When the researcher asked about their interaction outside school, the low achieving student answered “I have”. Additionally, when asked about their conversation, they mentioned that:

“I wasn’t talking to them in sentences or anything. It usually just word per word” (SS, Low Speaking Performing Student, I1)

They also have tried force themselves into practicing English before. They quote:

“Sometimes when I completely didn’t understand something, I open Google Translate and find out what the word or sentence means” (SS, Low Speaking Performing Student, I1)

On the other hand, when high achieving student was asked the similar question, they answered:

“I mostly practice speaking with my English Club member.” And “I also speak English with my siblings a lot at home” (SS, High Speaking Performing Student, I1)

Both of the participant has practiced outside school, though, the difference between the participant is intensity of practice. The low achieving student only practice whenever they are with their friends. Additionally, they mentioned:

“I tend to avoid speaking practice because I'm afraid of making mistakes. I like hearing my friends talk in English but I just replied back in Bahasa Indonesia.” (SS, Low Speaking Performing Student, I1)

Meanwhile, the high achieving student practice their English constantly at home and at their English club.

E. Metacognitive Strategy

Then next topic that was developed from the analysis of the data is Self-Assessment of Language Proficiency. This explores how participants assess their own language proficiency and monitor their progress. For low achieving student, they said:

“I struggle with monitoring my progress effectively because I'm not entirely sure what to look for. I rarely evaluate myself after speaking activities.” (MtS, Low Speaking Performing Student, I1)

As for the high achieving student, they mentioned:

“I keep a journal of speaking activities and note areas where I excel or struggle. Self-evaluation helps identify which aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary, or fluency need improvement.” (MtS, High Speaking Performing Student, I2)

Based from the answer of both participants, the difference between participants is their vision and goal in learning English. The low achieving student struggled to monitor their progress as they did not know where to start while the high achieving student is writing their weaknesses that can be improved.

F. Affective Strategy

The last topic that the researcher developed through this research is about language learning challenge. The first sub-topics is focusing on participants' nervousness, anxiety, and how they cope to this situation. The participants stated that they have felt some kind of anxiety in speaking English.

“Nervousness is a constant companion, especially when I have to speak English in front of others. I worry about being judged or laughed at. The way I usually get through is with practicing a certain script before doing something like a presentation in front of others.” (AS, Low Achieving Student, I2).

Similarly, the high achieving student commented:

“The way I overcome my nervousness in front of people is by doing some sort of gestures with my hands.” (AS / High Achieving Student / I1)

Each participant has similar anxiety that can be challenging when speaking English. The difference between the participants is their way to cope from the situation. For the low achieving student, they prepared and practiced a script before talking in front of others. Meanwhile for the high achieving student, they use hand gesture to make their point known.

The second sub-topic is about overcoming difficulties or challenges. The low achieving student said:

“Sometimes when I completely didn’t understand something, I opened Google Translate and find out what the word or the sentence means.” (AS, Low Achieving Performing Student, I1)

Additionally, they also mentioned:

“Challenges like mispronunciation or misunderstanding others are frequent. To cope, I sometimes rely on non-verbal communication, like nodding, to pretend I understand” (AS, Low Achieving Student, I2).

As for the high achieving student, they said:

“I experiment with different strategies to improve speaking. For instance, I might try changing my tone or pace of speech to see how it affects communication.” (AS, High Achieving Student, I2)

They also added:

“I remind myself that making mistakes is part of learning. I also like asking for clarification whether from teacher, friends, or even Google to overcome these hurdles.” (AS, High Achieving Student, I2)

The result showed the lack of strategies the low achieving student used. Meanwhile, the high achieving student actively tried new ways to improve their speaking skills. They also actively seeking clarification from different sources to correct their mistakes.

The high achieving student demonstrates a wider range of learning strategies across multiple categories, including memory, cognitive, comprehension, metacognitive, and social strategies. They actively employ strategies such as writing down vocabulary, reasoning and analyzing, imitating English shows, planning and self-evaluating, and engaging with a diverse language learning community. On the other hand, the low achieving student primarily relies on memory and comprehension strategies, with a particular emphasis on looking up words through Google Translate and learning from interactions with friends, social media, and

YouTube. The high achieving student's engagement with a broader range of learning strategies may contribute to their higher level of speaking proficiency compared to the low achieving student.

These findings suggest several implications for language learning interventions. Providing structured language learning opportunities, such as English clubs or extracurricular activities, can facilitate more effective language practice. Integrating deliberate vocabulary learning techniques, such as writing and creating sentences, can aid in retention and contextual understanding. Additionally, strategies to build confidence and alleviate nervousness in speaking situations should be emphasized.

4.2 Discussion

The research findings shed light on the language learning experiences and strategies of the low achieving student and the high achieving student. The discussion aims to further analyze and interpret these findings, highlighting the similarities, differences, and implications for understanding the factors influencing English language proficiency.

Both students demonstrated exposure to English input, albeit through different sources. The low achieving student relied heavily on social interactions with friends and exposure to English through social media platforms and YouTube. This passive exposure to English content may have contributed to their limited understanding of the language. On the other hand, the high achieving student had early exposure to English through watching English shows and receiving guidance from an older sibling. The consistent and immersive exposure likely played a significant role in their higher proficiency. Similar result was found by Al Zoubi (2018) stressing that the more exposure the learner had, the better the learner performs in the target language.

One notable difference between the two students was their level of confidence and nervousness when speaking English. The low achieving student expressed a lack of confidence and exhibited nervousness, particularly in real-time conversations. This lack of confidence and anxiety may have hindered their ability to effectively communicate in English. In contrast, the high achieving student demonstrated

more confidence in English-speaking situations, which likely facilitated better fluency and communication. This statement is supported with a study done by Aulia, Nisa & Apoko, Tri. (2022). The study says that despite the wrong use of language structure, students would communicate well if they felt confident in speaking English, but they would also have the most barrier if they did not feel confident in speaking English. Overcoming nervousness and building confidence can be crucial for language learners to enhance their speaking proficiency.

The learning strategies employed by the two students also differed. The low achieving student primarily relied on memory and comprehension strategies. They remembered English words and sentences by using Google Translate for clarification and learned through interactions with friends, social media, and YouTube. The emphasis was on memorizing sentences and vocabulary rather than structured learning. In contrast, the high achieving student adopted a more structured approach to language learning. They engaged in cognitive strategies such as reasoning, analyzing, brainstorming, and summarizing when practicing English with peers. Additionally, they utilized metacognitive strategies, including planning, preparation, practice simulations, and self-evaluation. The high achieving student's engagement with a wider range of learning strategies likely contributed to their higher level of speaking proficiency whilst the low achieving students only relied on memory which John e al. (2021) found out that students with improved speaking skill preferred memory strategies the least.

The students' access to practice and speaking opportunities varied. The low achieving student had limited practice opportunities outside the classroom. While attempts were made in the past to force practice through watching movies with English subtitles, the consistency and frequency of such efforts were lacking. On the other hand, the high achieving student actively sought practice opportunities. They engaged in conversations with peers, participated in English-speaking contests, and visited places where native speakers were present. Regular practice and exposure to English-speaking environments can significantly contribute to the development of speaking skills. It could be said that the more the learner exposed to English language, the more they can speak or read said language (Samer et al., 2018)

The approaches to memorization and vocabulary acquisition also differed between the two students. The low achieving student relied on sporadic vocabulary acquisition through exposure to English words in various contexts. Memorization occurred mainly when encountering unfamiliar words or mispronunciations. In contrast, the high achieving student employed a more deliberate approach. They wrote down new vocabulary repeatedly and created sentences using those words for reinforcement. Additionally, exposure to songs or TV shows/movies aided in memorizing vocabulary in context. The deliberate and structured approach to vocabulary acquisition employed by the high achieving student may have facilitated a deeper understanding and retention of vocabulary.

Both students received positive feedback from friends and siblings who were proficient in English. However, the low achieving student expressed concerns about the comprehension of non-fluent English speakers during interactions. This suggests that while their proficiency may be understood by fluent English speakers, there may be challenges in conveying meaning to those with limited English proficiency. In contrast, the high achieving student's regular practice with peers and siblings likely contributed to their enhanced communication skills and better comprehensibility.

The discussion of the research findings highlights the importance of structured language learning opportunities, deliberate vocabulary learning techniques, confidence-building strategies, and regular practice in enhancing speaking proficiency. Providing language learners with opportunities for meaningful exposure to English input, structured learning environments, and consistent practice with proficient speakers can significantly impact their language development. Additionally, incorporating metacognitive strategies such as self-evaluation, planning, and goal setting can enhance learners' ability to monitor and reflect on their own progress.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The varied approaches to vocabulary acquisition underscored the need for tailored teaching methods accommodating diverse learning preferences. Informal learning through social circles and interactions with native speakers appeared as a crucial factor in English performance, emphasizing the importance of building a supportive environment for speaking practice. Diversity in self-assessment practices highlighted the necessity for structured tools and mentorship programs to aid students in monitoring their language proficiency effectively. Common challenges of nervousness and anxiety were met with varying coping strategies, emphasizing the importance of addressing emotional well-being in language learning environments.

5.2 Recommendations

To address these findings, educators are encouraged to adopt a differentiated approach, incorporating various teaching methods to cater to the diverse needs of students. Promoting opportunities for informal learning through smaller social circles, exchange programs, and online platforms can create a supportive community for speaking practice. Introducing structured self-assessment tools and workshops can empower students to monitor their language proficiency effectively. Strategies to ease nervousness and anxiety should be implemented, creating a positive language learning experience for all students. Finally, the development of comprehensive language learning programs that integrate a range of strategies can enhance overall language proficiency.

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APPENDIX

Interview Transcript

LOW ACHIEVING STUDENT

NOTE: “I” refer to Interviewer and “P” refers to Participant

FIRST INTERVIEW

I = how was the study conducted back when you were still in middle school?

P = It was like a normal study in school

I = Do you think your English is good?

P = Not so good. I understand a little bit of the basics though

I = So you were saying you could understand a little bit of English through your friends and not from school, correct?

P = Yes

I = How do you remember English then?

P = I don't know, I just happen to remember it

I = is it maybe because you were used to listening to your friend speaks English?

P = Yes. Because back when I learn English in class in middle school, I couldn't speak English yet, and my teacher was using English a lot, so I couldn't understand it even more.

I = Then why is it when you speak with your friend in English you could understand them?

P = I don't really know myself. I just eventually understood them. Maybe it's also because I use a lot of social media and YouTube. I just eventually remember English words.

I = So is it because you're getting used to see English words you ended up remembering some words?

P = Yes, and sometimes someone asks me “what does this word means”, but I couldn't explain it to them, but I understood the word.

I = Do you often use the sentences that you've learnt from your friend?

P = Yes, but I'm not confident in speaking it. I usually use the sentences through texting. And even though I know that the sentence I wrote is correct, I'm still worried that it still might be wrong. So, I thoroughly checked it.

I = When you speak in English, are you nervous?

P = Yes.

I = But have you spoken in English before, like with your friend maybe?

P = I have

I = I thought you were nervous. How did you overcome your nervousness then?

P = I wasn't talking with them in like sentences or anything. It usually just word per word

I = Have you been asked to do a presentation in English?

P = I have

I = So how did you do it?

P = When I was in middle school, I still have a little bit of confidence because everyone was not able to speak English very well. In high school though, there are plenty of people who could speak English very well.

I = So how do you prepare yourself before giving a presentation in English? Did you practice?

P = I prepared the sentences first because I couldn't make my own sentence on the fly. And also, I didn't need to memorize the sentence, I just have to understand it. Because the sentence was already in my head but when I have to speak normally, I couldn't do it.

I = So you were making the sentence with Google Translate?

P = Yes. So, for example, if there is a sentence I don't know how to explain, I read the sentence first then it just came in my head.

I = Have you practiced speaking English?

P = I have never, but I often talking to myself in English

I = So you usually think in English?

P = Yes. I'm not practicing speaking English in front of a mirror or anything.

I = Have you ever talked to an English-speaking foreigner?

P = No.

I = Even when you play like an Online Game, you never talk to them in English via Voice Call?

P = I have a friend from India but I never speak to them in Voice Call because I'm nervous. I only talk to them via text.

I = Have you ever spoken English other than in class?

P = Very Rarely

I = so you've never practice English outside the classroom at all?

P = I have tried to force myself to practice English before, but it was long time ago. I think it was 3 years ago. I tried watching a movie with English subtitle. even though I mostly didn't understand, I tried to

force myself. Sometimes when I completely didn't understand something, I opened Google Translate and find out what the word or the sentence means.

I = Let's say you finished your presentation and you are not satisfied with your performance. Did you do a self-reflection?

P = I have, but most of the time, I was satisfied.

I = alright next question. When your friend spoke to you in English, do you also reply to them in English?

P = I have, but lately my friend rarely speaks in English

I = how was their reaction? Did they understand what you were saying?

P = they did understand, but I was worried that they won't.

I = how do you learn grammar?

P = to be honest I never really learn grammar. I usually just use the sentence that I have heard from people.

I = so you very rarely learn grammar?

P = Yes. I mostly learn English from talking with my friend, from watching videos, and from reading. Lately I learn some sentences from TikTok. They usually have some sort of "quotes" in English. And if I heard something I rarely heard, I find the meaning through Google Translate.

I = so for example, there is an English word that you couldn't read or is hard to pronounce, how did you memorize those words?

P = I never really tried to memorized it. Sometimes I just use my feelings but back then, I mispronounced a lot of English words, and then I opened Google Translate also I listened to how the word is pronounced. I never really memorized it really. If I forgot how the word is pronounced, I opened Google Translate again and listen to how the word is pronounced again and I memorized the words eventually.

SECOND INTERVIEW

I = Can you describe your experiences and feelings when learning and using English? How do these experiences impact your motivation to improve your speaking proficiency?

P = Learning English has been quite challenging for me. I often feel overwhelmed and frustrated because I struggle to understand and express myself. I can understand when I hear others speaking fluently, but when I tried to answer, I feel a little discourage since my pronunciation and vocabulary isn't that good yet. These experiences make me feel like improving my English is an uphill battle, which can be demotivating but I definitely willing to learn if I know the right goal.

I = Can you recall a specific situation when you utilized strategies like remembering words, analyzing sentences, or guessing context? Also have you may be looking for practice opportunities with your friends during a speaking lesson? How did the use of these strategies influence your speaking performance?

P = During speaking lessons, I rely heavily on memory strategies to remember basic vocabulary and phrases I saw whether online, in a movie or in a video game. I often pause and hesitate while speaking, which can be embarrassing. I'm not very confident in using cognitive or metacognitive strategies, and affective strategies are essential for managing my anxiety during speaking activities. Social strategies are limited because I'm self-conscious about making mistakes in front of others.

I = Have you ever realized that you have actually used learning strategies in practicing English?

P = Maybe I have? I usually use to google translate and use the text to speech feature on some vocabulary I didn't know how to pronounce and try to pronounce it like once or twice. Is that a learning strategy? Also Sometime, when I see some vocabulary, I didn't know the meaning of, again, I go to google translate and find out the meaning. I am too lazy to actually write it down though. If I forgot the meaning, I just go back to google translate again.

I = How do you monitor your own progress in speaking? How does self-evaluation help you identify areas for improvement?

P = I struggle with monitoring my progress because I'm not entirely sure what to look for. I rarely evaluate myself after speaking activities.

I = Can you share an experience when you engaged in conversations with others to practice speaking? How did these social interactions contribute to your speaking proficiency?

P = I tend to avoid speaking practice because I'm afraid of making mistakes. I like hearing my friends talk in English but I just replied back in Bahasa Indonesia. Maybe I would slip some English words here and there in my sentence but very rarely I speak full sentence of English.

I = Can you describe any difficulties you encounter while learning to speak English? How do you cope with these challenges, and do you employ any compensatory strategies to overcome them?

P = Challenges like mispronunciation or misunderstanding others are frequent. I sometimes rely on non-verbal communication (gestures), like nodding, to pretend I understand. I also avoid situations where I might need to speak English as a way of avoiding these challenges.

I = Can you recall an instance when you experimented with different strategies to improve your speaking skills?

P = I rarely experiment with different strategies because I'm unsure of which ones to try. I often stick to what feels safe which is using google translate. I just don't know where to start.

I = How do you manage feelings of nervousness or anxiety while speaking English?

P = I worry about being judged or laughed at. The way I usually get through is with practicing certain script before doing something like a presentation in front of others.

I = Can you describe a situation when you used a combination of strategies to tackle a speaking task? How did the synergistic use of these strategies impact your performance?

P = I struggle to use a combination of strategies effectively. My limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge make it challenging to apply various strategies simultaneously.

I = Can you discuss the range of strategies you currently employ in your language learning journey and how you determine which strategies are most appropriate for specific speaking tasks?

P = I don't think I have a repertoire of strategies.

HIGH ACHIEVING STUDENT

NOTE: "I" refer to Interviewer and "P" refers to Participant

FIRST INTERVIEW

I = I heard from your teacher, have you ever participated in an English-speaking contest? Or maybe you're in an English Club at your school?

P = I have participated in English-speaking contest. As for English Club, we an English Club and I happen to be the president of the club.

I = Since when did you learn English? Do you have an English subject in your middle school?

P = I've been learning English since I was little, probably since elementary school.

I = did you learn English from school or did you learn English on your own?

P = my older sibling teaches me English. I also watch a lot of English shows like cartoon since I was little.

I = so I want to ask about your learning strategies. What are your strategies of learning how to practice speaking English? What kind of activities do you do?

P = to improve my speaking ability, I usually speak in English with my friend. Coincidentally, in high school, I have a friend who understand English and fluent in English so I usually practice with each other. I also watch a lot of English movies and shows

I = so while you were watching, you also imitate how they speak?

P = Yes.

I = have you talk with English-speaking foreigner before?

P = I have talk to them. So, when I was in Elementary school, I've been to this place called "*Kampung Inggris*" In this place, everyone is speaking English and coincidentally, they have a Native English speaker there. Last time I talk to Native speaker though was not too long ago when my English Club has a visit to this English Village and there were three Native speakers there.

I = I will give you a scenario, let's say you were about to give an English presentation, or do a public speaking, how do you prepare yourself?

P = first I do brainstorm with my friends, making a draft, and practice with my friends.

I = how do you practice with your friend? Is it like you're doing a simulation?

P = Yes.

I = how do you practice at home if you're alone?

P = I like to write. It helps me memorize English better.

I = did they teach you speaking English at school?

P = Yes.

I = do you still remember how the lesson was?

P = last time we were told to make a speech then later we have to give a presentation of the speech that we made.

I = have you practice speaking English outside the classroom or outside the school?

P = I have

I = how was the practice? Are you practicing with your friend?

P = Yes. I mostly practice speaking with my English Club member

I = let's say you wanted to learn a new vocabulary, what do you do to memorize those new vocabulary?

p = I learn how to memorize new vocabulary by writing it down. For example, if I found a new vocabulary, I write it down repeatedly while making a sentence using those new vocabulary that I just learn.

I = have you ever memorized a new vocabulary through songs?

P = I have. The way I memorized it though is by listening the song over and over until I memorized how it could be used.

I = have you ever used any online tools or any application to practice speaking English?

P = I have never

I = so it is mostly by interacting with people like your friends?

P = Yes. I also speak English with my siblings a lot at home.

I = let's say you're going to do a presentation or a public speaking, and you're feeling nervous. What do you do to overcome your nervousness?

P = the way I overcome my nervousness in front of people is by doing some sort of gestures with my hands. It helps me deliver my speech better with the help of gestures.

I = so you often speak English with your friends and your siblings, how was their feedback of your English? Do they have positive feedback? Or maybe when you were speaking in English, your friends or your siblings do not understand of what you were saying?

P = they do have positive feedback since they also can speak English, but when I speak English with people who is somewhat not too fluent in English, they may not understand some bits.

I = I want to ask you, if someone wants to start learning English, what are the tips would you give to them?

P = the simplest way is to watch English shows and write a new vocabulary like I did. When you don't understand something, you can always search it on Google, but if you want to get a more detailed explanation, you can join like a cram school and have a teacher to teach you

I = Thank you for participating in this interview. We can finish it up here.

P = thank you

SECOND INTERVIEW

I = Can you describe your experiences and feelings when learning and using English? How do these experiences impact your motivation to improve your speaking proficiency?

P = Learning English has been an exciting for me. It started when I was quite young, and I remember feeling curious. Initially, there was some nervousness, especially when speaking in front of others, but over time, not so much. Learning English made me realize how fun it is to be able to speak another language and interact with people of different culture than mine.

I = Can you recall a specific situation when you utilized strategies like remembering words, analyzing sentences, or guessing context? Also have you may be looking for practice opportunities with your friends during a speaking lesson? How did the use of these strategies influence your speaking performance?

P = I employ memory strategies to recall vocabulary and phrases quickly. also, like analyzing the topic and brainstorming ideas help me structure my speech effectively. I also set goals and evaluate my performance. I often practicing with friends from English club

I = Can you think of a time when you planned and employed specific strategies to enhance your speaking skills?

P = I remember I set specific goals for fluency and pronunciation. I engaged in activities like reading aloud, recording myself, and seeking feedback from teachers and peers.

I = What were the outcomes of using these strategies?

P = I think these efforts enhanced my speaking proficiency.

I = How do you monitor your own progress in speaking?

P = I keep a journal of speaking activities and note areas where I excel or struggle.

I = Can you share an experience when you engaged in conversations with others to practice speaking? How did these social interactions contribute to your speaking proficiency?

P = I participate in English language clubs where I can practice speaking regularly. Because my friends have different style of speaking, it makes me adapt to various context.

I = Can you describe any difficulties you encounter while learning to speak English? How do you cope with these challenges, and do you employ any compensatory strategies to overcome them?

P = I like to remind myself that making mistakes is part of learning. I like asking for clarification whether from teacher, friends, or even google to overcome my struggles.

I = Can you recall an instance when you experimented with different strategies to improve your speaking skills? How did you adapt your approach based on the results of these experiments?

P = I might try changing my tone or pace of speech to see how it affects communication. Based on the results, I adapt my approach and fine-tune my strategies accordingly.

I = How do you manage feelings of nervousness or anxiety while speaking in the target language? Are there any specific affective strategies that you find helpful in such situations?

P = Nervousness occasionally creeps in, especially in high-stress speaking situations. Deep breathing or doing hand gestures help me manage this stress.

I = Can you describe a situation when you used a combination of to tackle a speaking task? How did the synergistic use of these strategies impact your performance?

P = I may use memory strategies to recall relevant vocabulary, cognitive strategies to structure my speech, and metacognitive strategies to ensure I meet my speaking goals.

I = Can you discuss the range of strategies you currently employ in your language learning journey and how you determine which strategies are most appropriate for specific speaking tasks?

P = I select strategies based on the specific speaking task and my goals. I think I can adapt to different situations, whether it's a formal presentation, or a casual conversation