A Profile of Strategies of Learning Speaking Skills by Indonesian Learners of English

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Abstract. This study aimed to profile the strategies Indonesian English learners use in developing their speaking skills. The profile covered four aspects, including the intensity of the use of the method in learning to speak, how one item inter-correlates with each other, how individual factors correlate to the learning speaking strategy attainment, and whether the use of learning strategies correlates significantly with the students' speaking skill. In this case, 560 students of an English education study program from five universities in East Java, Indonesia, were invited to be the study subjects. They were asked to fill out a 55-item questionnaire of strategies inventory for developing speaking skills distributed through a google form. The collected data were analyzed using factor analysis, descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis. From the data analysis, the following profile of the strategies was obtained. First, six groups of strategies were discerned, explaining 44% of the variances of strategies to develop speaking skills. They were named interactional maintenance strategies, metacognitive-evaluative strategies, compensation strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, culture-related social strategies, and time-gaining strategies. Also, it was found that the overall use of the strategies was moderate, with compensation strategies primarily used and culture-related social strategies used the least. Moreover, the use of these strategies was found to be significantly intercorrelated, suggesting that an increase in one strategy will lead to a similar rise in the other strategies. Finally, using strategies for learning to speak correlates significantly with the students' speaking performance.

Keywords: Strategies of learning speaking · Speaking skills · Learners of English

1 Introduction

Being orally communicative is to be able to express ideas, willingness, or wants in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and to respond to the information from the speaking partners in 'the meaningful context' (Amalia & Husna, 2019; Huang, Bailey, Sass, Chang, 2020). Furthermore, they should be engaged in the interaction activity (Al Hosni, 2014). However, some EFL learners would likely experience the feeling of being shy or embarrassed to speak up. Moreover, it is seen that students most likely found difficulty in making natural interaction and communication rather than the "multiplicity of sounds, words, phrases, and discourse forms" in any language (Brown, p. 324, 2007).

Teachers should facilitate students with class activities that attract their active involvement and activeness. The focus could be on the strategy choice (Syafii, 2018). Brown (2007, p. 332) suggested that the 'concept of strategic competence' should be well-known by the students and be well-selected afterward. These strategies involve asking for clarification, using fillers, conversation maintenance cues, getting someone's attention, paraphrasing for structures, appealing for assistance from the interlocutor, using formulaic expressions, and using mime and nonverbal expressions to convey meaning. Further, he stated that stress, rhythm, and intonation become crucial in communication as they could 'convey the important message'.

Attaining strategies, students could know what they 'think and act to accomplish a learning goal in the learning process', and they could choose the preferable activities to achieve their learning goal (Sartika, Santihastuti, and Wahjuningsih, 2019). O'Malley & Chamot (1990) stated that "language learners apply learning strategies to acquire and use information, stored or recalled, and can promote learning autonomy." Furthermore, Oxford (1990) believed that learning strategies are specific actions deployed by learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to the new situation. Thus, the strategy deployment enhances students to become actively involved in learning and set their preferences to obtain learning achievement.

There have been a lot of studies proved that high achiever EFL students outperformed better by selecting effective learning strategies to improve their speaking ability (Oxford, 1996; Li, 2009; Mistar, Zuhairi, Umamah, 2014; Syafii, 2018; Sartika, Santihastuti, & Wahjuningsih, 2019). These studies revealed with similar findings that strategy choice could be the best predictor for the student's learning achievement. Moreover, the learning strategies build students' autonomous learning and independence.

Concerning speaking proficiency, numerous studies have investigated that learning strategies could enhance speaking achievement. For example, Li (2009) found that the use of learning strategies, especially the use of cognitive interaction maintenance strategies, self-improvement strategies, and compensation strategies, and Mistar, Zuhairi, & Umamah, (2014) discovered that there are six factors of strategies in learning speaking: interactional-maintenance, self-evaluation, fluency-oriented, time gaining, compensation, and interpersonal processes and specifically, interactional-maintenance, self-improvement, compensation, and memory strategies significantly contributed to the speaking proficiency. More recently, the strategies choice has also successfully improved the EFL learner's self-involvement, activeness, and speaking ability (Syafii, 2018). In the following year, Sartika, Santihastuti, & Wahjuningsih (2019) confirmed that the successful EFL students applied high use of Metacognitive and outperformed better as they planned clear learning goals, had strict control, did review materials and evaluation than their counterparts who focused on memorizing, thinking, and doing some drillings. The current study is aimed at investigating the following research problems:

1. At what intensity do the students apply the strategies in learning to speak?
2. How does one item inter-correlate each another?
3. How does the individual factor correlate with the learning speaking strategy attainment?

4. Does the use of learning strategies correlate significantly with the students' speaking skills?

2 Research Method

2.1 Subjects of the Study

In this case, 560 students of an English education study program from five universities in East Java, Indonesia, were invited to be the study subjects. They were English department students majoring in English language teaching. They were asked to fill out a 55-item questionnaire of strategies inventory for developing speaking skills distributed through a google form. Furthermore, to elicit the speaking performance, they were asked to fill self-assessment of speaking skills.

2.2 Instrument

Two instruments were used to collect the data: the strategies of learning speaking and their speaking performance. Firstly, the questionnaire of consists of 6 factors: 1) Interactional Maintenance Strategies, 2) Metacognitive-Evaluative Strategies, 3) Compensation Strategies, 4) Fluency-Oriented Strategies, 5) Culture-Related Social Strategies, and 6) Time-Gaining Strategies. On the other hand, to collect the data on speaking performance, the subjects were asked to fill out the questionnaire on speaking self-assessment. Describing their speaking performance in an academic atmosphere by selecting 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, depicting how well they performed the speaking skill either during the speaking class or during joining the English subject matters.

2.3 Data Analysis

The first statistical analysis was performed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to classify the categories of speaking strategies. Before the factor analysis, the factorability of the data was evaluated based on two criteria: (1) Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant, and (2) the Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) value should be at least 6. The result of the factor analysis was then used to classify speaking strategy categories. Next, correlation analysis was performed to examine the contribution of individual differences in speaking strategies. This correlation analysis was also used to measure the intercorrelation among the speaking strategy categories and their correlation with speaking performance.

3 Findings and Discussions

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Research Problem 1: At What Level of Intensity Do the Students Apply the Strategies in Learning to Speak?

The factor analysis has been used and showed that among 55 strategy items, there are 6 categories revealed with 44.15% variances of learning strategies. The first factor is Interactional Maintenance strategies (12 items), accounting for 9.76%. They involved asking

for examples of how to use a word or expression, trying to give a good impression to the listener, paying attention, and enjoying the conversation flow, the speaker's rhythm and intonation, pronunciation, eye contact, facial expression, and gestures. The following strategy focuses on the subject and verb of the sentence, WH-questions, and the words that the speaker slows down or emphasizes. The following methods are sending continuation signals to show understanding to avoid communication gaps and requesting clarification about the speaker's words.

The second factor, labeled as Metacognitive-Evaluative Strategies, reveals 9.69%. It covers the items of trying to correct the mistakes while speaking, self-speaking, and evaluating the utterances and/or English mistakes. Noticing the errors and using them for improvement, watching English movies and news on TV and planning the schedule to study English, finding out how to be a better learner, and finding a comfortable place to learn English—trying to think in English, focusing more on pronunciation and intonation while speaking English, and paying attention to grammatical aspects to avoid errors.

Factor 3 is Compensation Strategies revealed with 9.04%. This category consists of 13 items using the English dictionary and idiom books; preparing a role-play or communicative activity in class; relating some unclear words and phrases using the existing knowledge of English; using known words and phrases for pronunciation practice; asking the speaking partner to repeat and explain in different terms to clarify the meaning; telling the partner when there is something new; trying to remember the similar English and Indonesian word; using simple sentences; speaking more slowly to get more understanding; responding the speaker even it is unclear; trying to catch the speaker's main point; using circumlocution to reach the speaker's utterance; ask them to slow down the speech and use the easy words to get more understanding.

The next factor, Fluency-Oriented Strategies (11 items), accounts for 7.20%. This consists of avoiding overthinking before speaking to get ideas; using rhymes to remember new English words; trying to learn a new pattern by making a sentence orally; putting words into rules; asking questions in English; using English words in different ways; starting English conversation; using general practices in a new situation; reading many English materials such as magazines and newspapers; mirroring self-practice for new sounds in isolation; and making risk while saying English words.

Factor 5, accounting for 4.69%, is Culture-Related Social Strategies which consists of 4 items. They are asking somebody to correct the talk, practicing English with native speakers, using English idioms or expressions when speaking, and trying to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Factor 6 (3.77%), labeled Time-Gaining Strategies, includes 3 items. The items use fillers such as and, well, to gain time, repeat the last words or phrases, and speak more slowly to give more time to think. The results from the factor analysis revealed that all six strategy categories explain less than 10%.

The data analysis in Table 1 confirms that Indonesian college students' general use of strategy classification was moderate. Among six strategy categories proposed by Oxford (1990), Compensation strategies present a higher mean of 3.48, followed by metacognitive-evaluative Strategies with 3.42. The lowest use is the category of Culture-Related Social Strategies which accounts for 2.78. This statistical result shows that the students sometimes applied the strategies in learning to speak.

Table 1. The intensity of strategy used in learning speaking

No.	Strategy Classification	Mean (SD)	Level of Use
1.	Interactional Maintenance Strategies	3.38 (.61)	Moderate
2.	Metacognitive-Evaluative Strategies	3.42 (.64)	Moderate
3.	Compensation Strategies	3.48 (.55)	Moderate
4.	Fluency-Oriented Strategies	2.91 (.52)	Moderate
5.	Culture-Related Social Strategies	2.78 (.56)	Moderate
6.	Time-Gaining Strategies	3.09 (.60)	Moderate
	Overall Learning Speaking Strategies	3.25 (.49)	Moderate

Table 2. The inter.correlation among the strategy used in learning to speak

	IMS	MES	CS	FOS	CRSS	TGS
IMS	1					
MES	.611**	1				
CS	.627**	.477**	1			
FOS	.528**	.582**	.393**	1		
CRSS	.382**	.418**	.247**	.592**	1	
TGS	.321**	.264**	.390**	.327**	.320**	1

IMS: Interactional Maintenance Strategies, MES: Metacognitive-Evaluative Strategies, CS: Compensation Strategies, FOS: Fluency-oriented Strategies, CRSS: Culture-Related Social Strategies, TGS: Time-Gaining Strategies

3.1.2   Research Problem 2. How Does One Item Inter-correlate Each Another?

The inter-correlation analysis in Table 2 clearly shows that six strategy classifications correlate significantly. The finding also indicates that Interactional Maintenance and compensation strategies strongly correlate (r = 627). On the opposite, Compensation strategies and culture-related social strategies were at the lowest correlation (r = .247).

3.1.3   Research Problem 3: How is the Correlation Between the Individual Factor and the Learning Speaking Strategy Attainment?

Using bivariate correlation analysis, Table 3 shows that among the 11 individual differences, only one variable, which is integrative orientation, significantly correlated with the six categories. Meanwhile, the other factors of attitude toward native speakers of English, attitude toward learning English, desire to learn English, English class anxiety, interest in foreign languages, instrumental orientation, and motivational intensity have a significant contribution to four strategies of Interactional maintenance, metacognitive-evaluative, compensation, and fluency-oriented strategies.

Table 3. The estimated correlation between the individual factor and the strategy used in learning speaking

	IMS	MES	CS	FOS	CRSS	TGS	OSS
AtNSE	.241**	.352**	.306**	.115*	.057	.030	.291**
AtLE	.340**	.463**	.389**	.187**	.071	.144**	.403**
DtLE	.429**	.457**	.376**	.180**	.050	.143**	.418**
ECA	.136**	.215**	-.145**	.386**	.199**	-.073	.170**
EUA	.316**	.365**	.056	.473**	.209**	-.018**	.346**
IiFL	.444**	.436**	.497**	.198**	.024	.132**	.450**
InstO	.238*	.228**	.163**	.142**	.215**	.074	.248**
IntO	.302**	.351**	.353**	.120*	.174**	.186**	.355**
MI	.385**	.508**	.286**	.291**	.077	.031	.413**
Extro	.054	.036	-.037	.202**	.256**	.078	.108*
Neurot	-.015	.002	.163**	.050	.164**	.233**	.102*

Notes: AtNSE: Attitude toward Native Speakers of English, AtLE: Attitude toward Learning English, DtLE: Desire to LE, ECA: English Class Anxiety, EUA: English Use Anxiety, IiFL: Interest in Foreign Languages, InstO: Instrumental Orientation, IntO: Integrative Orientation, MI: Motivational Intensity, Extro: Extroversion, Neurot: Neuroticism, IMS: Interactional Maintenance Strategies, MES: Metacognitive-Evaluative Strategies, CS: Compensation Strategies, FOS: Fluency-Oriented Strategies, CRSS: Culture-Related Social Strategies, TGS: Time-Gaining Strategies, OSS: Overall Speaking Strategies

Further, extroversion contributes significantly to fluency-oriented and culture-related social strategies, while neuroticism influences compensation, culture-related, and time-gaining strategies. On the opposite, the individual factors of attitude towards native speakers of English, attitude toward learning English, desire to learn English, interest in foreign languages, and motivational intensity do not influence the strategies of culture related. However, attitude and motivation positively correlate to the six strategies for learning to speak.

3.1.4 Research Problem 4: Does the Use of Learning Strategies Correlate Significantly with the Students' Speaking Skills?

The final analysis of the correlation is to know whether the strategy attainment correlates to EFL students speaking skills. It was found that all strategy categories were significantly related to the perceived speaking ability (r = .428). Table 4 confirms that the strongest correlation is on the use of culture-related social strategies (= .588); meanwhile, the fluency-oriented strategy is at the lowest correlation (r = .098).

Table 4. The correlation between the student's learning strategies and their speaking skill

Interactional Maintenance Strategies	Perceived Speaking Skill
Metacognitive-Evaluative Strategies	.322**
Compensation Strategies	.406**
Fluency-Oriented Strategies	.098*
Culture-Related Social Strategies	.588**
Time-Gaining Strategies	.320**
Interactional Maintenance Strategies	.112*
Overall Learning Speaking Strategies	.428**

3.2 Discussions

Utilizing the Factor Analysis on 55 strategy items in learning speaking, 6 categories reveal 44.15% variances and present less than 10% for each type. Among six classifications, the students used Compensation Strategies most intensively (3.48), and Culture-Related Social Strategies were at least frequently used (2.78). Overall strategy use showed a moderate level, meaning that the students sometimes deployed the strategies in learning speaking EFL.

In the context of learning to speak, the EFL students often used dictionaries and idiom books to prepare for role-playing and communicative activities in the class. Besides, they usually relate the words or phrases to what they have understood to get a clear understanding. In conversation time, they also preferred to ask their partner to repeat the words and vice versa. On another side, the students seldom practice English with natives and their cultures.

The other result revealed significant intercorrelation among the six strategy categories. For example, the Interactional Maintenance strategies and compensation strategies have a strong correlation (r = 627). On the opposite, Compensation strategies and culture-related social strategies were at the lowest correlation (r = .247). Having been calculated utilizing bivariate correlation analysis, the preceding section has explained that among 11 individual differences, only one variable, integrative orientation, significantly correlated with the six categories. Meanwhile, the other factors of attitude toward native speakers of English, attitude toward learning English, desire to learn English, English class anxiety, interest in foreign languages, instrumental orientation, and motivational intensity have a significant contribution to four strategies of Interactional maintenance, metacognitive-evaluative, compensation, and fluency-oriented strategies.

The final correlation analysis indicates that strategy attainment correlates to EFL students speaking skills. It was found that all strategy categories were significantly related to the perceived speaking ability (r = .428). It was clearly presented that the strongest correlation is on the use of culture-related social strategies (= .588); meanwhile, the fluency-oriented strategy is at the lowest correlation (r = .098). This means that EFL learners believed practicing with native speakers would contribute to their speaking achievement.

Overall findings imply that strategies could enhance the student's learning performance, especially speaking ability. The moderate strategy used in learning to talk to EFL by Indonesian students was confirmed by Mistar, Zuhairi, & Umamah (2014). Both studies highlighted that the EFL students employed the strategies at the "sometimes" level. The previous studies showed that the students mainly deployed a Resources-based strategy. In contrast, the current study reveals the most intensive use of Compensation Strategies.

The positive and significant contribution of the learning strategies to the students' speaking proficiency was also in line with the studies from Mistar et al. (2014); Sartika et al. (2019). The EFL learners who tend to choose the learning strategies could achieve better speaking proficiency. It was proven that successful learners selected more strategies than their counterparts (Mistar et al. 2014). Moreover, strategies could successfully improve the learners' self-activeness, involvement, and speaking ability (Sartika et al., 2019).

4   Conclusion

The preceding sections present that Indonesian EFL students in the current study attained and used the learning strategies moderately. The compensation strategy categories were most intensively operated. The EFL students will most likely use the dictionary or idioms to prepare the communicative activities with their partners. Besides, easy words or phrases would be primarily selected to comprehend the speaking context. As the Culture-Related Social Strategies were last used in the practical implication for speaking class, the teacher could present and talk more about English cross-cultures and more activities that engage students with some idioms and English expressions.

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