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Abstract

Language learning strategies are procedures or plans used by the language learners to learn the language easier, more enjoyable and effective. The strategies can be categorised in terms of direct strategies which consist of memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies and indirect strategies which consist of metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and affective strategies. Past studies have proven that a good language learner tends to use various strategies in learning the language. Specifically in speaking skills, there are also strategies used by a good speaker of English to learn speaking skills. However, little has been related to the specific Language Learning Strategies (LLS) used by the good speaker of English. Hence, in this study, a survey was carried out to identify the most used Language Learning Strategies by good speakers of English as well as the least strategies used by them. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Version 7.0 by Oxford (1990) was utilized in exploring the LLS used by the Year 5 students of a primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills. A survey consisting of 30 questions with a Likert scale of 1 to 5 was administered to 30 pupils who are good speakers of English which were selected through purposive sampling. The data was collected and SPSS Version 25 was used to analyse the mean of each strategy. The results showed that cognitive strategy is the most used LLS while affective strategy is the least used LLS by the Year 5 pupils of a primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills. Findings of this study would contribute in terms of the improvements of LLS used by the students and pedagogical practices implemented by the teachers in the learning of speaking skills.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies (LLS), Speaking Skills, Good English Speakers, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Introduction

Since 1975, research has been conducted on effective language learners. Rubin (1975) wrote an article titled "What can we learn from good language learners?" that motivated many researchers to perform studies on good language learners. According to

Rubin (1975), if we know what tactics strong language learners employ, we may strive to transmit and teach these tactics to weaker learners to help them improve their language skills. At least two studies on successful foreign language learners have been undertaken by Rubin (1981) to evaluate the characteristics of successful learners; and to delve deeper into the learning processes that influence foreign language learning success. Naiman et al (1978) undertook a study to learn more about the characteristics of an effective foreign language learner. Interview method was used: interviews regarding curriculum vitae and conversations on participants' learning processes in various scenarios. The concept is mastering a set of successful educational strategies which are sought and identified in language learners who are remarkable in their approach to language acquisition and effectiveness in it, in good language learners (Turula, 2016). Language Learning Strategies (LLS) are the methods that students utilize to improve their language skills. Language learning strategies, according to Nazri, Yunus and Nazri (2016), have been the subject of several studies and have evolved rapidly in the ESL environment over the years. This highlighted the importance of eliciting and investigating language learning practises in order to improve English language teaching and learning methods.

In this age of globalisation, English has increasingly become the language of choice in every sector of communication, both locally and globally. As a result, English speakers who can converse effectively in any country are in high demand. In many countries, including Malaysia, English is known as the International Language and is spoken as a second language. Successful language learners in Malaysian classrooms frequently participate actively in discussions and display a thorough command of the target language by employing effective learning practices. This is especially true for 21st-century students, as the Malaysian blueprint emphasizes the need to develop self-directed and autonomous learners. It is difficult for students to learn speaking skills in English language. Students believe that speaking is the most difficult discipline to perfect because it necessitates planning, such as deciding what subject we will address with our classmates, how to begin the conversation, how to expand the conversation, and how to end the conversation in a respectful manner. According to Bohari (2020), students can practice their speaking skills by participating in discussion activities. It is backed up by Wahyuningsih (2018), who claims that if students can do any of those things, learning a new language would not be difficult for them, even if the language is not their mother tongue or national language.

Nonetheless, Malaysia's Ministry of Education (MOE) is concerned about ESL students' inability to communicate in English, which has led to orchestration in the English language through collaboration with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) to establish international quality of teaching and learning for ESL students (Uri & Abd Aziz, 2018). The majority of LLS research (Naiman et al., 1975; Embi, 2000) concentrates on good language learners. Furthermore, previous studies on a substantial link between good language learners and their learning strategies application are conducted by (Mahalingam & Yunus, 2016; Lee, Yunus & Embi, 2016; Bayuong, Hashim & Yunus, 2019; Ang, Embi & Yunus, 2017; Atmowardoyo, Weda & Sakkir, 2021). Despite extensive study, little is done in the primary school context, especially in speaking skills. As a result, research is needed to determine the strategies employed by primary school pupils to learn English speaking skills.

Research Objectives
1. To identify the most used language learning strategy employed by the Year 5 pupils of a

primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills.
2. To identify the least used language learning strategy employed by the Year 5 pupils of a primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills.

Research Questions
1. What is the most used language learning strategy among the Year 5 pupils of a primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills?
2. What is the least used language learning strategy among the Year 5 pupils of primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills?

Literature Review
Language Learning Strategies
With the arrival of the cognitive revolution, there has been a surge in interest in language acquisition techniques. The term "language learning strategies" has been defined by a number of academics. Learning strategies, according to Wenden and Rubin (1987), are procedures, plans, and routines employed by learners to make it easier for them to receive, store, retrieve, and use information. O'Malley amd Chamot (1990) had added to a more comprehensive definition of language learning strategies where, language learning strategies were illustrated as "special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information". Hence, in other words, language learning strategies could be defined as the cognitive process or actions taken by learners to make learning easier, more enjoyable and effective.

Different categories and conceptualizations of language learning processes were proposed by several researchers. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) categorised language learning strategies into three categories namely; cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective. Cognitive strategies, according to O'Malley and Chamot (1985), are linked to specific learning tasks and require learners to control learning resources directly. Planning for learning, thinking about the learning process, observing others' production, correcting one's own faults, and evaluating learning after the experience are all examples of metacognitive strategies. Finally, social-affective strategies are intertwined with social-mediating activities and interpersonal connection.

Oxford (1990) categorises language learning strategies in a more comprehensive, precise, and systematic manner. Language learning strategies are divided into two categories by Oxford (1990): direct and indirect techniques. Language learning strategies that directly engage the target language and demand mental processing of the language are known as direct techniques. Direct strategies consist of memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies:

a. ***Memory strategies*** involve learners to store new information in their memory and retrieve it later (e.g. replace new words in context). An example of memory strategy is the use of flashcards to learn vocabulary. A study conducted by Komachali and Khodareza (2012 in Ang et al., 2017:51) found that flashcards were the favoured method of learning vocabulary.

b. ***Cognitive strategies*** allow learners to comprehend and produce language in different ways (e.g. taking notes, summarising text). This strategy can be

observed when learners begin a conversation in English and can be found in research conducted by Ang et al., 2017:51) as learners need to plan what they wish to say to the other party and this is especially crucial for this study as it focuses on the speaking skill.

c. ***Compensation strategies*** compensate and help learners to employ the language (e.g. paraphrasing while speaking or writing). Quite important in the speaking skill is the ability to compensate during the production stage where learners need to produce the language on the spot, when speaking, and may sometimes forget or are unsure of how to express themselves. They must find similar or supporting words to help in getting their meaning across to the other party.

Indirect strategies, on the other hand, help in language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, managing anxiety, boosting collaboration and empathy, and other methods. Indirect strategies include metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies:

a. ***Metacognitive strategies*** involve learners to arrange, plan and evaluate one's learning (e.g. overview and link with already known materials). Learners who are motivated to learn the language will put in extra effort to be self-aware of the language that they and other learners produce to improve their language learning ability.

b. ***Affective strategies*** regulate emotional behaviour and motivation (e.g. relaxation techniques). Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is essential to successful language learning (Ang et al., 2017:52).

c. ***Social strategies*** allow better learner engagement with other people in the language learning process (e.g. ask questions, develop empathy towards target language speaking person). Working with others allows the learner to obtain immediate feedback about their production and encourages learners to provide input using the target language.

The Good Language Learner (GLL)
In 1975, Rubin had produced an article entitled 'What the Good Language Learner Can Teach Us'. In this article, Rubin (1975) had stated that good language learning depends on at least three variables: aptitude, motivation and opportunity. He also enlisted seven strategies used by GLL:
1. GLL is a willing and accurate guesser.
2. GLL has a strong drive to communicate, or to learn from a communication.
3. GLL is often not inhibited.
4. GLL constantly looks for patterns in language.
5. GLL practices.
6. GLL monitors his own speech and of others.
7. GLL attends to meaning.

Apart from that, Rubin and Thompson (1994) describes GLL in terms of personal characteristics, styles and strategies, where they believe that GLL possess the following traits:

1. Finding their own path and taking charge of their education
2. Organize language information.
3. Try to be inventive with your language, both in terms of grammar and vocabulary.
4. Create opportunities for language practise both within and outside the classroom.
5. Learn to live with uncertainty by not becoming confused and continuing to speak or listen even if you do not understand every word.
6. Use a memory strategy to help you remember what you have learnt.
7. Making mistakes benefits them rather than hinder them.
8. When studying a second language, make use of your linguistic skills, including your first language knowledge.
9. Use contextual cues
10. Learn to make intelligent guesses
11. Learn chunks of language
12. Learn how to keep a conversation going by employing certain techniques.
13. Learn certain production strategies to fill in gaps
14. Learn different styles of speech and writing varying on the formality of situations encountered

Although it is simple to classify GLLs using the criteria listed and whether or not a learner has successfully developed their four core language skills, determining if someone who has only learned one or two of the language skills is also a GLL remains tough (Zare, 2012). This is because the speed of acquisition, learners' previous exposure to English, learners' goals and learners' level of proficiency differ and all these criteria should be taken into consideration in determining GLL. The awareness of GLL characteristics, techniques and strategies helps learners' language learning and enrich their efficiency in learning a language.

Methodology
Research Design
This research study determined to identify the language learning strategies employed by year 5 students in an urban school located in Bintulu, Sarawak. This study utilised a survey research design utilising quantitative approach in collecting and analysing data.

Research Sample
30 students were selected by purposive sampling as they were considered high performers based on their achievement in previous classroom based-assessment (CBA). Apart from that, researchers observed that they easily talked to each other about new ideas with good intonation and pronunciation. They also portrayed excellent speaking techniques including voice projection and acceptable body language gestures in their daily interactions.

Research Instrument
This research utilised a survey study consisting of background information and 30 language learning strategies questions was used. The study adapted Oxford's (1990) edition the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 which contained 50 items.

However, only 30 items were chosen to evaluate the learners' language learning strategies to learn speaking skills. According to Habok & Magyar (2018), the SILL was widely accepted and most used in assessing LLS as it has internal consistency and reliability ranging between 0.91 and 0.94 (Cronbach's alpha). The questionnaire was adapted in using 5 Likert-scale (1,2,3,4,5) for learners to answer the questions and evaluate themselves in terms of speaking skills ability. The questionnaire was divided into 6 sections which comprises the six groups of language learning strategies classified by Oxford (1990).

Table 1: Description for each section of the questionnaire.

Section	Description
Part A: Question 1-5	Memory strategy
Part B: Question 6-10	Cognitive strategy
Part C: Question 11-15	Compensation strategy
Part D: Question 16-20	Metacognitive strategy
Part E: Question 21-25	Affective strategy
Part F: Question 26-30	Social strategy

All of the statements were labelled on a Likert scale of 1-5, to indicate the degree of the participants' opinion (strongly disagree to strongly agree) to any statements based on their experience in speaking English.

Table 2: Likert scale description for each statement in the questionnaire.

Scale	Description
1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neither agree or disagree
4	Agree
5	Strongly agree

Data Collection Method
The research was conducted using a quantitative approach by distributing the questionnaire to the participants via Google Form. The data was gathered directly after all 30 participants have responded to the questionnaire.

Data Analysis Method
For data analysis, the most used language learning strategy by the participants in learning speaking skills will be analysed descriptively. Therefore, the mean score of each strategy will be evaluated in order to discuss and analyse the findings. The researchers used SPSS Version 25 to obtain the database and analyse the mean of each strategy. Hence, the most used language learning strategy by learners was identified and discussed to answer the research question in this study.

Findings
Research Question 1
What is the most used language learning strategy among the Year 5 pupils of a primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills?

Based on the responses given by the respondents, the mean for six language learning strategies is calculated and shown in Table 3. The most used strategy by the Year 5 pupils in learning speaking skills is the cognitive strategy, with a mean score of 4.120. It is believed that due to the strategy's practicality, the strategy has been used mostly among the Year 5 pupils in the urban area. Corresponding to the table, the language learning strategy often utilized by the students starts with cognitive, metacognitive, social, memory, compensation and the last strategy is the affective strategy.

Table 3: Language Learning Strategy with Mean Score

No	Language Learning Strategies	Mean
1	Memory	3.667
2	Cognitive	4.120
3	Compensation	3.507
4	Metacognitive	4.033
5	Affective	3.493
6	Social	3.960

Table 4 below shows the mean score for each strategy in the cognitive strategies part. The cognitive part of questionnaire includes the following strategies: (1) "I say or write new English words several times", (2) "I try to talk like native speakers", (3) "I practice the sounds of English", (4) "I start conversations in English" and (5) "I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English". Each strategy received a mean score of 3.833, 3.867, 4.233, 4.467 and 4.200 respectively. Besides, the mode of answers for each strategy also shown in Table 5 whereby, most of the respondents have chosen *5 (Strongly Agree)* for cognitive strategy (2) and (4), followed by cognitive strategy (1), (3) and (5) with the mode of *4 (Agree)*.

Table 4: Mean Score of Cognitive Strategy

Language Learning Strategies		Strategies	Mean	Mode
	1.	I say or write new English words several times.	3.833	4
	2.	I try to talk like native speakers.	3.867	5
Cognitive	3.	I practice the sounds of English.	4.233	4
	4.	I start conversations in English.	4.467	5
	5.	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	4.200	4
		Total Mean	4.120	

Research Question 2
What is the least used language learning strategy among the Year 5 pupils of primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills?
Based on table 5, the least language learning strategy used by the pupils is affective strategy with a mean score of 3.493. The table below shows the mean of each affective strategy responded by the participants. The highest mean with regards to the affective strategies was (2) "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake" with a mean score of 4.033. Both strategies (1) "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English" and
(2) "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake" in affective strategies have the same mean of 3.500, followed by strategy (4) "I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English". The lowest mean among the strategies was affective strategy (5) "I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English" with a mean score of 3.067. The findings revealed that the pupils are less likely to use affective strategies in learning speaking skills. Besides, the mode of answers for affective strategy (1), affective strategy (2), affective strategy (3) and affective strategy (4) is *4 (agree)* which indicates that most of the pupils agree that they are using those affective strategies in learning speaking skills. The affective strategy (5) has the mode of *3 (Neither agree or disagree)* for the answers chosen by the pupils.

Table 5: Mean Score of Affective Strategy

Language Learning Strategies		Strategies	Mean	Mode
Affective	1.	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	3.500	4
	2.	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	4.033	4
	3.	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	3.500	4
	4.	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	3.367	4
	5.	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	3.067	3
Total Mean			3.493	

Discussion
Research Question 1
What is the most used language learning strategy among the Year 5 pupils of a primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills?

Based on the findings above, it is shown that cognitive strategies are the most utilised language learning strategies in learning speaking skills with a mean score of 4.120. Cognitive strategies are one of the direct strategies, in which the target language and mental processing of the language are both directly involved. In regards to the cognitive strategies, Di Carlo (2017) defined it as actions involving the adoption of learners in a conscious, intentional manner, to optimize assimilation, internalization, construction and transference of knowledge and language skills. Learners who utilized cognitive strategies would intentionally involve themselves with the language whereby the learning happens through various mental processes such as assimilation of knowledge and language skills. For instance, the cognitive strategies stated in the questionnaire which are (1) "I say or write new English words several times", (2) "I try to talk like native speakers", (3) "I practice the sounds of English", (4) "I start conversation in English'' and (5) "I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English". Based on these strategies, it can be shown that those are conscious ways used by the learners in comprehending and producing the language, especially in learning speaking skills. Learners will use different ways to understand and produce the language in cognitive strategies (Oxford 1990). For instance, taking notes about the language by writing new English words several times.

Corresponding to table 4, the most used cognitive strategies by the pupils was (4) "I start conversations in English" with a mean score of 4.467, followed by (3) "I practice the sounds of English", (5) "I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English", (2) "I try to talk like native speakers" and (1) "I say or write new English words several times". Based on these strategies, it can be seen that the pupils try to imitate the way a native speaker of English speaks in order to learn speaking skills. They might find it easier to imitate the pronunciation, sentence structure or vocabulary used by native speakers, hence applying it in a different but similar context of situations. It can be concluded that the pupils learn the language to learn speaking skills through the imitation process. For instance, watching English

spoken movies or TV shows exposed them to the pronunciation of the native speakers of English. Hence, in this situation, they will listen and imitate the native speakers in terms of their pronunciation, non-verbal language and many more. The learning process through imitation of the native speakers may drive them to practice the language and apply it in speaking the language.

From this study, it can be concluded that the pupils gauge their learning in speaking skills by using cognitive strategies such as imitating the native speakers and practising the language. These strategies helped the pupils in learning speaking skills as it can be seen in terms of their good performance in speaking skills. Imitation (Wael, Asnur & Ibrahim, 2018) and practicing the language through repetition (Rahman, Sazali & Veloo 2019) are the crucial elements in cognitive strategies used in learning speaking skills. The cognitive strategies are able to assist the pupils in learning speaking skills, hence, this information should be utilised by the teachers to provide lessons encouraging the use of cognitive strategies in learning speaking skills.

Research Question 2
What is the least used language learning strategy among the Year 5 pupils of primary school in Bintulu, Sarawak in learning speaking skills?

Based on the findings above, the least used strategy among the pupils is the affective strategy with a mean score of 3.493. Ang et al. (2017) stated that affective strategies relate with the pupils' behaviour or motivation in enhancing their language skills. Motivated learners will put effort into learning the language. Despite the fact that affective strategies are the least used language learning strategies by the Year 5 pupils, assumptions cannot be made by approving that they are not motivated enough in learning speaking skills. The highest mean of answers among the strategies is (2) "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake", which indicates a positive behaviour in learning English. Ang et al. (2017) stated that the affective strategy of self-encouragement to speak English indicates that the learners are motivated enough in learning English. Hence, with the highest mean for affective strategy (2), it can be concluded that most of the pupils are still motivated enough in learning speaking skills.

With regard to affective strategy (1) and (4) also indicate that most of the pupils are aware of their behaviour in learning speaking skills. For instance, noticing own's anxiety and dealing with it in speaking English. However, some pupils may not be able to notice their own feelings or do not know a way to deal with it, especially in dealing with anxiety. Thus, some of the pupils have answered *(3) Neither Agree or disagree*, *(2) Disagree* and *(1) Strongly Disagree* for affective strategy (1) and (4). Inability to deal with own's behaviour or feelings may be caused by several factors such as self-confidence, anxiety, age etc. (Badara et al, 2018). It is believed that age may be the factor influencing their inability to notice and deal with their own behaviour as the pupils are young language learners. Some may not be mature enough in dealing with inner feelings.

Corresponding to Table 6, most of the pupils have chosen answer 3 *(Neither agree or disagree)* for affective strategy (5) "I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English". Based on this finding, it is believed that the pupils may not feel necessary to explain their feelings when learning English. They may not find the topic of feelings in learning English is interesting enough to be discussed with others. Ang et al (2017) stated that today's learners found that expressing their feelings in learning English is not seen as necessary as social media has become a platform to express one's feelings. They added that some pupils may be unsure

of how to express their feelings to others about the learning of English due to their low self-esteem.

Implications
This study has been effective in identifying the most used language learning strategy used by Year 5 pupils of a school in Bintulu, Sarawak which is the cognitive strategy. The findings of this study proves that there is a marked significance between the preferred language learning strategy between all learners and these differences should be taken into consideration when a lesson is being planned as the people who stand to benefit from the differentiated instruction is not the teacher, but the learners.

Moreover, it also serves as evidence to educators worldwide that not every learning strategy is able to benefit all the learners in the classroom. Strategies that cater to the individual learners' needs and abilities are crucial and these needs can be identified through the administration of inventories such as the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as proposed by Oxford (1990). By doing so, the abilities and preferences of learners can be identified and will be advantageous to them in the teaching and learning process as the lesson will be imparted in such a way that they will be able to engage in the lesson fully.

Additionally, the findings of this study could become crucial information for the instructional coordinator or curriculum designer to plan a programme incorporating all language learning strategies in learning English. Activities and approaches utilizing each LLS could be included in the curriculum whereby it could serve as a guidance for the teachers. Variety of activities with specific LLC could become an opportunity for the teachers to choose any of the activities provided and suit it with the needs of their learners. Hence, the findings of this study are not only beneficial towards the learners, but in terms of methodological perspective where teachers and curriculum designers could plan educational programmes incorporating the LLS in the Malaysian ESL classroom.

Conclusion
Speaking is a production skill that many English as Second Language Learners face trouble with as they are unsure of what is considered 'correct English' and this stems from unsuitable learning strategies used to benefit them the most. Many teachers still utilise the 'drilling' method and many learners use the rote memorisation strategy as encouraged by their teachers. However, there is more to learning a second language than drilling and repetition. There are many strategies that can be employed by learners to maximise their learning. This study investigated the language learning strategies used by year 5 learners in an urban school in Sarawak to identify what strategies were most utilised to learn the speaking skill and found that the cognitive strategy was the most used language learning strategy which supports findings by Lim, Sze, Raki, Sani and Hashim (2021) who also claim that the cognitive strategy is the most used language learning strategy.

Furthermore, this study also showed that not only do learners plan their language production, they are also aware of what they are thinking and are able to evaluate their learning process which is a metacognitive strategy and just happens to be the second most used language learning strategy. Despite the fact that this study was able to identify the language learning strategy used by the learners, it fails to explore in greater depth the factors that play a role in

the use of the language learning strategy. Future research can be conducted to identify such elements to provide a more in-depth and critical insight into the strategy employed by the year 5 learners in attaining the speaking skill.

In conclusion, the findings of this study tend to aid primary school language teachers to be conscious of their teaching approaches and to ensure that their teaching approaches suit or fit learners' LLSs.

Limitation and Study Forward

Besides focusing on the speaking skill, teachers can also conduct further research to investigate how effective each of the strategies are in improving the learners' language learning skills to ensure learners are more balanced in all four skills including grammar and vocabulary rather than simply focusing on one skill. This would ensure that learners are able to use the English language to compete at the global level in line with the aims listed out in the Malaysian Education Blueprint in which learners possess operational proficiency in English. Since this study focused on students in an urban primary school, more research with students in rural or suburban primary schools is needed to establish a comparison when English language exposure and teaching and learning facilities are severely constrained.

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