Identifying Language Learning Strategies Used by Mixed-Ability Year 6 Pupils in Enhancing Speaking Skills

Muhammad Farid Akmal Adam, Nadzirah Abdul Rashid, Nur Madihah Aqish Muhammad Fadzli, Syifa Nazahiyah Ismail, Harwati Hashim

Identifying Language Learning Strategies Used by Mixed-Ability Year 6 Pupils in Enhancing Speaking Skills

Muhammad Farid Akmal Adam, Nadzirah Abdul Rashid, Nur Madihah Aqish Muhammad Fadzli, Syifa Nazahiyah Ismail, Harwati Hashim

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

Email: harwati@ukm.edu.my

Abstract

English is a language that is easy to converse with, as the entire globe has shown. Despite the other language skills, speaking is viewed as the most crucial because it occurs frequently in both formal and informal settings. Poor language speaking skills and a lack of attention to speaking skills in language learning sessions or assessments are just two of the downsides that make it difficult for learners to develop speaking abilities. The purpose of this study is to identify the language learning techniques utilized by Year 6 pupils to develop their speaking skills. For this study, 40 Year 6 primary pupils from four suburban Selangor and Johor primary schools participated in this quantitative research methodology. The findings revealed that social strategy is the most preferred strategy by Year 6 learners in general. High achievers preferred compensation strategies, moderate achievers preferred metacognition strategies, and low achievers preferred social strategies when their abilities were compared. The variety of strategies chosen occurs has not been discovered which makes future studies may focus on these aspects. The data gained from this study helps pupils and English language teachers alike. While pupils who are aware of the language learning strategies have better self-regulation, the teacher can assist pupils in improving their speaking abilities and create lessons specific to the student's preferred learning methods.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, Speaking Skills, ESL Learners

Introduction

The world at large demonstrated that English is a language that is comfortable to communicate in. It finds application in a wide range of fields. As the language most frequently used in a wide variety of everyday endeavors, including business, education, and management, English is an obligatory subject for all Malaysian pupils. Malaysia continues to be one of the few nations where the official second language is English. It is also one of the few places in the world where English is seen as a substantial component of the school system (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2012 as cited in Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). As a consequence of globalization, the crucial role of English, which is called the "global commerce language," has

become much clearer. This is one reason why business is so important. Since English is the de facto common language of the internet in this age of knowledge and the internet, it is essential to learn English if you want to be known internationally. English is now commonly acknowledged as the world's lingua franca and the language that is now spoken by the most people (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). In Malaysia, English which is taught as a second language is also a required curriculum for all elementary school pupils.

Although reading, writing, listening, and speaking are all important, speaking is considered the most important. This is because people speak frequently in both official and casual contexts. Speaking the target language is as crucial as strengthening other abilities to improve communication. Malaysia adopted 21st-century learning in 2014. Communication, cooperation, creative thinking, and critical analysis, were stressed as crucial (Ahmad, 2017). One of the four core skills for the 21st century is effective communication, making it important. Learners are encouraged to collaborate with peers and instructors. As a result, many national governments' educational policies aim to improve the ability of learners to communicate in order to create English-speaking experts. Thus, they can compete globally (Arif and Amin, 2021).

Speaking should be a skill that every language learner has in addition to their other abilities since it is an essential skill for conversation and transferring knowledge. Being a skilled English speaker means being fluent in the language, which is a challenging ability to master for ESL learners (Zhiping & Paramasivam, 2013). Without question, one of the most esteemed skills in the English language is speaking ability. When speaking English, one must think quickly, respond right away, and do it without much hesitation or delay. However, the lack of proficiency in English among Malaysian pupils is an extremely prevalent problem. Malaysia needs ESL competence to create a global communication generation. The country wants to be fully developed. According to past studies, English language instructors rarely use their oral communication skills to teach ideas (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). Instructors force learners to break the silence and use words they haven't learned yet. Learners will speak poorly due to their poor language proficiency. Teachers' beliefs may not match their classrooms. They can't use their pedagogical ideas in the language classroom since their instructional methods don't match. Teachers still use textbook-based education, according to the research. The instructor must adopt a more teacher-centered classroom method because of the learners' low level of competency (Spawa & Hassan, 2013 as cited in Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). This shows that teachers want to teach communicative language, but the exam's requirements prevent them. Grammar-based that comes along with teacher-centered classroom instruction is their only option to prepare pupils for the exam.

Aside from this, a diminished emphasis on speaking also contributes to the difficulty to the way learners grasp speaking skills. Since there is no exam for speaking, no standardized assessment, and pupils are not appropriately exposed to the speaking skill, this handicap contributes to the difficulty that learners have in mastering speaking skills.Therefore, the goal of this study is to identify language learning strategies (LLS) used by Year 6 pupils to improve speaking ability and their preferred LLS for speaking ability improvement among mixed-ability learners.This study aims to answer the research questions as follows;

1. What is the preferred LLS employed by Year 6 learners in enhancing speaking skills?
2. What is the preferred LLS for improving speaking skills among each level of mixed-ability pupils?

Literature Review

Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

Language learning strategies are the preferred techniques, actions, behaviors, or operations adapted (consciously or subconsciously) by the learners themselves in the process of developing the language. In the field of language, research has been done with a focus on how learners process new information and the methods used to acquire, learn, and recall that knowledge. Specifically, LLS are student behaviors that make learning more accessible, efficient, flexible, and enjoyable, as defined by Oxford (1990). The following table 1 presents three classifications of language learning strategies proposed by different experts.

Table 1

Experts' Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990)	O'Malley and Chamot (1990)	Dornyei (2005)
Memory strategies	Cognitive strategies	Cognitive strategies
Cognitive strategies		
Compensation strategies	-	-
Metacognitive strategies	Metacognitive strategies	Metacognitive strategies
Affective strategies	Affective/Social strategies	Affective strategies
Social strategies		Social strategies

      Based on the table above, it can be simplified that Oxford (1990) underlined a more detailed version of language learning strategies that cater to all those six strategies. First and foremost, memory strategies help learners to acquire knowledge by retrieving new information; meanwhile, cognitive strategies allow learners to practice the language garnered indirectly through the process of analyzing, reasoning, summarizing, synthesizing, and reorganizing thoughts (Oxford, 1990; Oxford, 2001). Thirdly, compensating methods enable learners to engage in language practice despite difficulties such as insufficient grammatical knowledge and vocabulary (Oxford, 1990). Next, metacognitive strategies enable learners to indirectly coordinate their own learning by monitoring mistakes, evaluating learning, and identifying their own learning styles by arranging and planning it (Oxford, 2001 as cited in Salambau et al., 2022). On the other hand, Dornyei (2005) believed that affective strategies allow learners to regulate their emotions through self-encouragement and lowering anxiety levels in learning the language. Last but not least, social strategies assist learners in learning the language by cooperating with others in their social interaction circles (Oxford, 1990).

Speaking Skills and Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

Speaking is a fundamental language ability that enables the speakers to engage in verbal communication for the purpose of transferring information, social interaction, and sharing of knowledge with others. According to Darmi et al (2019), the English language remains to be a world language in any field such as commerce, science, law, history, business, education, and trading thus making it one of the most spoken languages among Malaysians. Besides, Masuram and Sripada (2020) also believed that advanced English language speakers would have more chances to exhibit ideas, express thoughts, debate issues, and resolve problems by applying their enhanced communicative skills. Meanwhile, Rao (2019) indicated that speaking skill is the most prominent skill among other language skills, in learning foreign languages.

Mohamed (2021) also discussed on the importance of speaking ability that depends on two parts: 1) character (knowledge and self-perception) and capability 2) speaker's participation which is the association of learner-speaker in limited situations. Hence, speaking demonstrates an interactive process between speaker and listener which involves transferring, receiving, and processing information that later produces responses. On the other hand, Leong and Hamadi (2019) denoted that if the learners did not practice their speaking skills, it would be harder for them to verbalize their thoughts. Prior to this matter, it is also widely noticed that ESL learners had limitations and barriers in speaking the English language plus a lack of confidence in practicing the language regularly. Moreover, according to Zhang (2022) such problems as learners' self-consciousness, anxiety, lack of motivation, lack of engagement, poor exposure to the second language, and first-language interference cause speaking barriers to ESL learners.

As speaking skill is difficult to accomplish, John et al (2021) explained that to enhance learners' communicative aspect, the application of LLS is vital to create successful language learners that have the techniques needed for the reception and production of their L2. Wu (2020) also agreed on the same matter which is denoted that LLS has a significant impact on learners' integrative, instrumental, and overall motivation. Therefore, it is also believed that LLS affects the learner's accomplishment in acquiring certain language skills successfully.

Other than that, a review conducted by Kehing and Yunus (2021) has reported that among the LLS used for English speaking skills, the most frequently used were metacognitive strategies, followed by cognitive strategies. Compensation strategies and social strategies were also highlighted in the review, but the least preferred strategies were affective and memory strategies.

Mixed-Ability Learners and Language Learning Strategies

Mixed-ability learners are described as learners who have various abilities and language levels in the same class or group (Harmer, 2020). From another perspective, Ansari (2021) denoted that mixed-ability learners are not only comprised of those who have various capacities but also can be referred to as learners with distinguished levels of grammatical knowledge, fluency, accuracy, vocabulary knowledge, and receptive and productive skills. As per-definitions mentioned above, mixed-ability learners definitely have their own learning preferences and styles that suit them respectively. It can also be summed up that learners in mixed abilities employ different language learning strategies in developing their capabilities in acquiring the English language. Pertaining to this matter, Oxford has designed an inventory named Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL), which is a standard measure to identify preferred LLS among learners. Many linguists all over the world have welcomed this method

of measurement (Lyu & Xu, 2019; Tandoc, 2019), and it has a long track record of success in the field.

A study conducted by Chan and Aziz (2021) in a mixed-ability Chinese classroom has reported that high-achiever learners preferred to execute metacognitive strategies in learning the English language. Erdogan (2018) in his study supported that high achievers learners preferred to employ metacognitive strategies as they have high self-regulation and self-responsibilities in coping with the language skills as well as in their own learning to successfully acquire it. Ali & Razali (2019) also asserted that metacognitive strategies would indirectly spark learners' enthusiasm and motivation as they monitor the progress of their own language learning regularly.

Meanwhile, Chan and Aziz (2021) in the same study conducted above also reported that low-achiever learners executed social strategies in learning the English language. Previous studies have shown that low-achieving pupils use social strategies like asking peers to repeat or slow down when speaking, having teachers correct their mistakes while they practice English, and seeking out assistance from high-achieving pupils. Asyiah (2019) postulated that learning English through social strategies helps low achievers to lower their anxiety and ease them to practice the language in daily communication.

On the other side, Habok and Magyar (2020) asserted that high achievers or proficient language learners tend to execute cognitive and metacognitive strategies as these two techniques involve more language skills plus learners need to engage the information through questioning, analyzing, synthesizing, and predicting. Besides, another study conducted by Firtasari et al (2020) reported that high achievers preferred to choose metacognitive strategies while moderate achievers mostly selected social strategies and low achievers chose cognitive strategies. However, Malpartida (2021) indicated that high achievers in his study demonstrated high use of cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies and the least use of memory and compensation strategies.

Concerning the variety of strategies, high achievers also executed more strategies compared to moderate and low achievers. The findings of Komari et al (2022) corroborate this, showing that high achievers employ greater utilization of LLS. Fazira (2022) postulated that although high achievers in her study preferred affective, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies, they actually employed all strategies in acquiring English language speaking skills. Many factors, including age, sex, attitude, motivation, cultural background, learning stage, language proficiency, learning styles, individual differences, and teacher expectations, were thought to affect pupils' favored methods of language acquisition (Rubin, 1975, cited in Anuar & Mokhtar, 2022). Thus, this explains why the preferred LLS among learners is not fixed and varied from group to group.

Methodology
Research Design
This study employs a quantitative research methodology. In quantitative research, the relationship between variables and outcomes is determined. According to Mertler (2016), the purpose of quantitative studies is very different from the purpose of qualitative investigations, which is to gain a deeper knowledge of a phenomenon. When conducting quantitative studies, researchers attempt to describe current situations, establish relationships between variables, and, on occasion, explain the causal relationship between variables.

Population and Samples

For this study, Year 6 primary pupils were chosen through purposive sampling, which included pupils from 4 suburban primary schools located in two states in Malaysia which are Selangor and Johor. There is a total of 40 pupils, 21 males and 19 females. They were divided into three levels: 10 high achievers, 20 moderate achievers, and 10 low achievers. These groups are divided according to their classroom-based assessment (PBD) scores in Speaking skills. Pupils with TP 1 or TP 2 were low achievers, pupils with TP 3 or TP 4 were moderate achievers, and pupils with TP 5 or TP 6 were high achievers. According to Gorard (2001), using a sizable sample does not guarantee that a study will be successful or widely disseminated. The purpose of sampling is to gain insight into a broader population by studying a subset of it; once the results of the sample have been obtained, you will wish to extrapolate them to the population.

Research Instrument and Procedure

The survey was conducted in a classroom setting. By having 40 respondents submit the printed survey, they were able to obtain responses from every valid pupil. The questionnaire comprised six sections totaling 30 items. These six components are detailed in Table 2

Table 2
Six Parts of Questionnaire for Learning Strategy

Part A	Memory Strategy
Part B	Cognitive Strategy
Part C	Compensation Strategy
Part D	Metacognitive Strategy
Part E	Affective Strategy
Part F	Social Strategy

The questionnaires, both the Language Strategy Use Survey (Cohen et al., 2002) and the Young Learner's Language Strategy Use Survey (Cohen & Oxford, 2002) served as inspiration for this research. There are three possible answers on the Likert scale: "Yes, I do," "I am not sure," and "No, I don't." There are happy face icons next to the scales to help survey takers better understand the questions. These pupils find that visual representations, such as emoticons, are more accessible. If you want to convey the tone or sentiment of your message without using words, Alshenqeeti (2016) argues that emoticons are the way to go. Respondents were instructed to select one of three scales ranging from 1 to 3 to convey their level of agreement.

Before survey respondents began responding to questions, researchers explained the purpose of the questionnaire. The printed questionnaires were distributed. The researchers and respondents reviewed each question together to ensure that each respondent comprehended its meaning. During the session, respondents were permitted to ask questions to ensure that they comprehended the questions and the answer they selected.

Data Collection Procedures

The collection of data entailed three steps. The first step of data collection is obtaining permission to collect data for the study. Creswell (2015) noted that authorization might be sought from three separate parties: those in charge of the organization, those who provide the data, and campus institutional review boards. Therefore, prior to conducting the survey, verbal consent from each respondent was obtained. Additionally, respondents were informed that their answers would be kept private and anonymous. The second step was the administration and distribution of the questionnaire to the respondents. Finally, the final step was questionnaires were finally collated and analyzed.

Data Analysis Method

The data gathered from the respondents is analyzed using a descriptive approach. Analysis of the frequency and percentage data led to the identification of the most well-liked method of learning a language.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study center on the language-learning strategies employed by pupils, particularly for speaking ability. The concentration of the discussion shall be on addressing the research questions. The two research questions are: which LLS are preferred by Year 6 learners for enhancing speaking skills, and which LLS are preferred for enhancing speaking skills at each level of pupils with diverse abilities? The general frequency and percentages of speaking strategies are explored to shed light on both of these research concerns.

Findings

Table 3

Language Learning Strategy employed by Year 6 pupils

	Strategy category	Percentage %		
		Yes I do	I am not sure	No, I don't
A	Memory Strategy	47.5	28	24.5
B	Cognitive Strategy	48	28	24
C	Compensation Strategy	56.5	25	18.5
D	Metacognitive Strategy	51.5	23	25.5
E	Affective Strategy	51.5	30	18.5
F	Social Strategy	57	27.5	15.5

Based on Table 3 above, the social strategy is an appealing language learning strategy. This strategy is selected by 57% of Year 6 pupils who are improving their speaking abilities. Compensation strategy comes in second, accounting for 56% of all factors. In equal measure

(51.5%), respondents selected affective and metacognitive strategies as their third top strategy for improving their speaking abilities. On the contrary, 47.5% of respondents don't like using memory strategies to improve their speaking skills as a way to learn a language.

The data pertaining to the choice of the mixed-ability respondents are presented in Tables 4 through 6. For the respondents to choose from, each category in the tables has three options: "use the strategy" (represented by the emoji "smile"), "didn't know whether they used the strategy or not" (represented by the emoji "neutral face"), and "never tried this strategy" (represented by the emoji "worried"). Descriptive analysis is performed on all three tables; each table depicts a different technique and includes percentages for each component.

Table 4
Compensation Strategy (High achievers)

Compensation Strategy	Percentage (%)		
	Yes, I do. 😍	I am not sure. 😐	No, I don't. 😟
I would like to switch to my language if my partner can't understand what I am saying.	90	10	-
I move my hands and body so the person will understand me.	10	10	80
I try to say words or phrases differently.	60	30	10
To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	80	10	10
I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	60	40	-

Table 4 outlines the compensation strategy that high-achieving pupils preferred to enhance their speaking ability. If their classmates cannot understand what they are saying in English, 90% of pupils will likely revert to their native tongue. Additionally, the vast majority of them (80%) have tried the guessing method to understand unfamiliar English terms and intend to keep using it. 30% of pupils have also tried to pronounce words or phrases differently in conversation. In contrast, 80% of pupils never use gestures to convey their meaning when necessary.

Table 5
Metacognitive Strategy (Moderate achievers)

Metacognitive Strategy	Percentage (%)		
	Yes, I do. 😍	I am not sure. 😐	No, I don't. 😟
I plan what I want to say.	90	5	5
I ask myself how a native speaker might say something and I try to practice saying it that way.	75	20	5
I look for people I can talk to in English.	35	10	55
I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	45	40	15
I pay attention when someone is speaking English	65	30	5

Table 5 depicts the metacognitive strategies adopted by most moderate achiever pupils in order to improve their speaking skills. About half of the pupils (45%) actively seek out additional opportunities to use English. Seventy-five percent of the pupils reported that they had asked themselves how a native speaker might say something and then actively worked to mimic that pronunciation in their own practice. They have found this method to be helpful in learning English. Meanwhile, it is found that the majority of the moderate achiever pupils (90%) have tried to plan out in advance what they want to say. However, 55% of moderate achievers never look for people to whom they can talk in English.

Table 6
Social Strategy (Low achievers)

Social Strategy	Percentage (%)		
	Yes, I do. 😍	I am not sure. 😐	No, I don't. 😟
I frequently ask questions to ensure I am involved in the conversation.	70	20	10
I ask the person to correct me when I talk.	70	30	-
I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	40	60	-
I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	30	30	40
I ask the person to speak slowly when I do not understand his/her words.	90	10	-

Table 6 depicts the social strategies implemented by Year 6 pupils to improve their speaking abilities. When the pupils (90%) do not understand what is being said, they ask the speaker to repeat or calm down. In addition, 30% of the repondents make an effort to acquire the culture of English speakers as part of their English study. 70% of the pupils have attempted to pose questions on a regular basis to ensure that they are actively participating in the conversation, and would like to learn more about this technique. However, 60 % of pupils never ask the English speaker to rectify them during a conversation.

Discussion
Research Question 1: What are the preferred LLS employed by Year 6 learners in enhancing speaking skills?
The six LLSs that were examined in the study are those pertaining to memory, cognition, compensation, metacognition, emotion regulation, and social interaction. Each strategy has its own merits. For example, memory strategies assist pupils in acquiring knowledge by obtaining new information, whereas cognitive strategies enable learners to practice the language indirectly acquired through the processes of analyzing, reasoning, summarizing, synthesizing, and reorganizing thoughts (Oxford, 1990; Oxford, 2001). Similarly, Oxford (2021) and Salambau et al (2022) said that metacognitive techniques let learners organize and arrange their own learning, which makes it easier for them to keep track of their own progress indirectly.

According to the analysis data in Table 3, the findings revealed that social strategy is the preferred language learning study among Year 6 pupils in enhancing their speaking skills. The social strategy, according to Oxford (1990) helps people learn a language by getting them to work with others in their social groups. Social strategy is an interactional strategy that can support and improve the speaking abilities of primary school pupils. The advanced language learner will be able to assist their peers with their English communication. They will

collaborate and support one another to complete the speaking assignment or group project jointly. This is corresponding to the claim made by John et al (2021) that having pupils work together to learn a language helps them become more invested in that language. This is because pupils can ask their peers to repeat themselves or speak more slowly if they are having difficulty comprehending an English word through this method without feeling embarrassed. Pupils will also develop greater confidence when using the English language. It can be argued that the high amount of social strategies used by these learners may be due to the characteristics of Malaysian English language education, which has a strong orientation to communicative methods when the Ministry of Education introduced the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or normally known as CEFR as the underlying framework in ESL teaching and learning. Using characteristics like reflection, communication, and networking, the CEFR framework aims to improve the quality of instructional language, as stated by (Goksu, 2015). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) serve as rules for language learners to follow in order to have a conversation or communicate effectively in a language.

Research Question 2: What is the preferred LLS for improving speaking skills among each level of mixed-ability pupils?

In accordance wIth the results seen in Table 4, high-achieving pupils frequently employ compensation strategies. This result contradicts the findings of Chan and Aziz (2021); Erdogan (2018); Ali and Razali (2019); Habok and Magyar (2020); Firtasari et al (2020), who found that metacognitive strategies were the most commonly used by high achievers. The findings of the compensating strategies showed that when the other person didn't understand what was being said, the pupils were more inclined to use their native language. If they don't know a specific word in English, they'll use a synonym to explain the concept or make up their own. The participants' learning environment could be one reason why they don't use these methods as often as they could. Outside of English class, they didn't get enough practice with the language, and they weren't forced to use more metacognitive strategies to interact in English. This is in line with the professional opinion of Rubin, 1975, cited by Anuar and Mokhtar (2022), who claimed that a wide range of demographic and contextual factors, including but not limited to age, sex, attitude, motivation, cultural background, learning stage, language proficiency, learning styles, individual differences, and teachers' expectations, have an impact on learners' preferred methods of language acquisition.

In contrast, the majority of moderate achievers selected metacognitive strategies, as seen in Table 5. Moderate achiever learners who utilized metacognitive strategies were able to self-monitor their own learning, allowing them to be identified as effective pupils. Possibly because they are aware they need to put in the effort to hone their speaking skills, moderate achievers used to ask how a native speaker would say something and then practice saying it in the same manner. According to Kehing and Yunus (2021), who agree, pupils that employ meta-cognitive methods develop greater autonomy. Pupils are also cognizant of their own strategies for learning as they employ them. Recognizing them may inspire average pupils to improve their performance.

Last but not least, low achievers opt for social strategies in improving their speaking skills. Low-achieving pupils who are usually nervous about speaking English, because they are not native speakers, can benefit from the social technique that creates a safe space for them to do so. A peer their age can assist them conquer their fears while also making them feel more at ease in the group. This was in line with what Wael et al (2018) said which Kehing and

Yunus (2021) quoted. They all agree that when using social strategies, people who want to improve their speaking skills should ask people they trust for answers when they are practicing. Pupils enjoy working with their peers on projects that help them develop their communication skills, and this finding reflects that observation. Even so, teachers should be willing to assist and identify appropriate tasks for introverted pupils. They will presumably work independently. Therefore, it is the responsibility of teachers to be attentive to their pupils' level and preferences in acquiring a second language, particularly in speaking.

Implications and Conclusion
Implications
The data gathered from this study provides insight to English language teachers to help pupils enhance their speaking abilities and create lessons specific to the student's preferred learning methods. It is also beneficial to the pupils, to make them aware of their frequently adapted strategies and also the foreign ones.

Knowing the preferred language learning strategies of the pupils in school is very crucial to the teacher in order to understand their pattern of language learning strategies when the pupils are involved in any conversation in a second language. At the same time, teachers are aware of less preferred strategies. The traits of the pupils or the atmosphere of the school probably play a role in the choice of strategies. A review of previous studies by Wang (2020) which identifies the various factors influencing the selection and use of language learning strategies does explain pupils' selection of strategies since his review identifies the positive and negative effects of the environment, gender as well as learner factors in terms of learners' learning level, interest, confidence, and academic record. With this understanding, teachers have better views of whether their teaching approaches accommodate the needs of the learners, especially in speaking skills.

Language learning strategy instruction thus will be very beneficial for teachers and pupils. Teachers can conduct activities in the classroom that highly use the preferred strategy to help empower the language learning strategies among the pupils. This will improve the speaking lessons as pupils are well-trained in the strategies. At the same time, the less preferred language learning strategies must not be ignored. As the first step, the teacher can introduce the less preferred strategies in the activities so that the pupils are aware of the choices of strategies that they have when they initiate or involve themselves in conversation. More speaking exercises that emphasize the less common strategies will help pupils refine their use of the strategies since they are aware of them. In the classroom with mixability pupils, varied activities can be adapted to cater to their learning of language learning strategies. In other words, they are provided with learning strategies within activities at their level.

It is very vital for the pupils to know about their language learning strategies too. The implementation of LLS is essential since it has a considerable effect on learners' integrative, instrumental, and total motivation Wu (2020) while at the same time also producing competent language learners in the reception and production of their L2 (John et al., 2021). For moderate and low achievers, speaking in English as a second language has the potential as a less favorable skill especially when they have difficulties in conversations and struggle to find the strategies to understand the language. Teaching the strategies will be helpful for them as they may learn which strategy is their strength and which strategy they were less exposed to. Good language learners may have fewer challenges in catering for speaking lessons. Since they are quick learners, they also have their own strategies to cater to the

challenges in learning. However, knowing the language learning strategies has the potential to boost their learning performance as they are aware of their strength. Therefore, the instruction and understanding of language learning strategies is a must for the pupils even whichever category of learners they fall to. When they have enough exposure to these strategies, learner autonomy will easily take place. The combination of knowledge of language learning strategies, knowledge of speaking skills, and the learners' initiative to learn will help to develop language performance.

Conclusions

This research investigated the language learning strategies frequently employed by Year 6 pupils in enhancing speaking skills in general and based on mixability pupils. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the pupils employ social strategies when involved in conversation followed by compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, cognitive strategies, and memory strategies. From the results, social strategy functions as an interpersonal technique that can help enhance young children's speaking skills. In a mixed-ability classroom, each level of pupils plays a different role where the high achievers assist their friends, and moderate and low achievers support each other in the communication environment. Collaboration among them becomes a crucial part of the strategy to enhance speaking ability. Additionally, the results indicated that there are slight differences between each strategy used by the pupils despite the most preferred and less preferred strategies. However, the results of preferred strategies among high achievers and moderate achievers differed from the general results. High achievers tend to employ compensation strategies the most. This is possibly because of how they learn in their surroundings. On the other hand, moderate achievers prefer metacognitive techniques since they are conscious that they must work hard to improve their speaking abilities. Similar to the overall findings, low achievers preferred social strategies, probably because it gives them a secure environment in which to express themselves.

The findings of this research are very helpful in adding a variety of approaches to second language instruction. Rather than focusing on the content of the language itself, teachers may find teaching language learning strategies as another way to introduce learning how to learn skills to the pupils. This is one of the educational emphases proposed in Malaysia English Language Curriculum for Primary Schools where it is intended to prepare pupils for the challenges of the real world. However, no explicit explanations are given rather than the broad idea of study skills which makes many teachers face difficulties in introducing this concept to the pupils. Therefore, this study adds choices to it.

The limitation of this study is that it only included participants in upper primary school. Since their exposure to the target language and language learning strategies was still limited among lower primary school learners, it is necessary to extend the focus to participants in lower primary schools. Therefore, future research can focus on language learning strategies among lower primary school learners. This ensures that a thorough understanding of the variables impacting LLS could be developed, which will be useful for ESL teaching strategies used in Malaysian primary schools. Overall, they can ensure that their instructional strategies meet the pupils' demands with this study's aid. Additionally, this research can be replicated and expanded upon in a variety of research contexts.

References

Ahmad, R. K. (2017). Handbook of 21st Century Learning Implementation [E-book]. Institut Aminuddin Baki Ministry of Education Malaysia Kompleks Pendidikan Nilai. Retrieved from
http://eprints.iab.edu.my/v2/502/1/preparing%20schools%20final%20with%20cover.pdf

Alshenqeeti, H. (2016). Are Emojis Creating a New or Old Visual Language for New Generations? *A Socio-Semiotic Study. Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 7, 56-69. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.7n.6p.56

Anuar, A., & Mokhtar, I. (2021). Language Learning Strategies of ESL Pupils in Online Distance Learning Environment. Insight Journal, 8(2), 34–44.
https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/insightjournal/article/view/14840/7674.

Arif, Y. Z., & Amin, A. @M. N. (2021). The Implementation of 21st-Century Skills in the Teaching and Learning Process of Vocational College Teacher. Asian Journal Of Research in Education and Social Sciences, 3(1), 144–151. Retrieved from
http://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ajress/article/view/12900

Asyiah, D. N. (2019). The vocabulary teaching and vocabulary learning: perception, strategies and influences on pupils' vocabulary mastery. Jurnal Bahasa Lingua Scientia, 9(2), 293-318.

Aziz, A. A., & Kashinathan, S. (2021). ESL Learners' Challenges in Speaking English In Malaysian Classroom. International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development, 10(2), 983–991.

Chan, C., & Aziz, A. A. (2021). Employment of Language Learning Strategies by Chinese School Learners in Learning ESL Vocabulary. Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 6(3), 330–339. https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v6i3.707.

Creswell, J. (2015).Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research.Pearson.

Darmi, R., Saad, N. S. M., Abdullah, N., Puteh-Behak, F., Zakaria, Z., & Adnan, J. N. I. (2017). TEACHERS' VIEWS ON PUPILS' PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY COURSES VIA CEFR DESCRIPTORS. IJAEDU- International E-Journal of Advances in Education, 363–370. https://doi.org/10.18768/ijaedu.336688.

Dornyei, Z. (2005). The Use of Motivational Strategies in Language Instruction: The Case of EFL Teaching in Taiwan. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *1*(1), 153–174. https://doi.org/10.2167/illt048.0.

Fazira, N. (2022). Speaking Strategies Employed by Extrovert and Introvert Speaking High Achievers of English Education Department, Unisma. http://repository.unisma.ac.id/handle/123456789/5480.

Fitasari, Y., Wijayanti, M. A., & Rima, R. (2020). An Analysis of Speaking Learning Strategies of EFL Learners in University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. PROCEEDING AISELT (Annual International Seminar on English Language Teaching), 4(4). https://jurnal.untirta.ac.id/index.php/aiselt/article/download/11066/7093

Habok, A. & Magyar, A. (2020). The effect oflanguage learning strategies on proficiency, attitudes and school achivement, Front. Psychol,8, 2358.

Harmer J. How to Teach English. Pearson Education Limited, 2010. 289 p.

John, E., Rangasamy, D., Indiran, D., Adickalam, E. R., Kashinathan, S., & Hashim, H. (2021).Language Learning Strategies Used by Form 4 Esl Learners to Develop Speaking

Skills. International Journalof Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 11(6), 1547–1562.

Kehing, K. L., & Yunus, M. M. (2021). A Systematic Review on Language Learning Strategies for Speaking Skills in a New Learning Environment. European Journal of Educational Research, 10(4), 2055–2065. https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.10.4.2055.

Komari. K., Suryanto, S., & Hanum, U. L. (2022). English vocabulary learning strategies of university pupils in Papua. Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities, 10(1), 67-87. https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v10i1.13117.

Leong, L. M., & Ahmadi, S. M. (2019). An analysis of factors influencing learners' English speaking skill. International Journal of Research in English Education, 2(1), 34–41.https://doi.org/10.18869/acadpub.ijree.2.1.34

Lyu, L. Q., & Xu, Z. Q. (2019). A case study on L2 learning strategies on middle-aged learners. English Language Teaching,12(3),214-219.

Masuram, J., & Sripada, P. N.(2020). Developing speaking skills through task-based materials, Procedia Computer Science, 172, 60-65.

Malpartida, W. M. F., & Prof, P. T. (2021). Language Learning Strategies, English proficiency and Online English Instruction Perception during COVID-19 in Peru. International Journal of Instruction, 14(4), 155–172. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14410a.

Mohamed, G. (2021). Speaking Skills in Online Learning: An Investigation of the Strategies Used by EFL Learners at the University of Bisha. ASEAN AFL Journal, 28(2), 120–134.

Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Newbury House Publishers.

Oxford, R. (2001.). *Language learning styles and strategies: an overview*. Research Gate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254446284.

O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). Learning Strategies in Language Acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal*, *76*(2), 235. https://doi.org/10.2307/329782.

Rao, P. S. (2019). The importance of speaking skills in English classrooms. Alford Council of International English & Literature Journal (ACIELJ) 2.2 (2019): 6-18.

Rubin, J. (1975). What the "Good Language Learner" Can Teach Us. TESOL Quarterly, 9(1), 41. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586011.

Salambau, S. E., Lai, B., Xian, G. P., Fabian, S. R., & Hashim, H. (2022). Identifying Language Learning Strategies Used by Polytechnic ESL learners in Enhancing Speaking Skills. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *12*(6), 144–157. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i6/13957.

Tandoc, J. P. (2019). Language learning strategiesenhancement training through personality development: a training designed for ESL learners.International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation.2(5), 380-403.

Wang, X. (2020). Literature review on language learning strategy research in China. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 11(5), 787-792.

Wu, Y. L. (2020). Language learning strategies used by pupils at different proficiency levels. Asian EFL Journal, 10(4), 75-95.

Zhang, S. (2022). The role of input, interaction, and output in the development of oral fluency.English Language Teaching, 2 (4), 91–100.

Zhiping, D., & Paramasivam, S. (2013). Anxiety of Speaking English in Class AmongInternational Pupils in a Malaysian University. International Journal of Education and Research, 1(11), 1–16