

## **STUDENTS' CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH FOR THE FOURTH SEMESTER AT STKIP PGRI LUBUKLINGGAU**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to identify students' challenges and strategies in learning English for the fourth semester of the English education study program at STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau. The method used qualitative survey in this research. The population and sample or research subject were 32 students taken by simple random sampling total sample was 16 students. The data collection tools used were questionnaires and interviews. The techniques for analyzing the data used findings the result of percentage. The result of this research was to trigger students' ability; second, to make students think about English; third, to improve students' skills; *Fourth*, to make learning easier and *five*, as students' motivation to learn English. In conclusion, challenges are significant for students in learning English because they can help students easier in learning English.

Keywords: *Challenges, Learning English, Strategies*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Learning English is common because English skills are needed in many aspects, even though English is still a foreign language in other countries. The power of English is not only in academic knowledge but also finding your place in the world and acquiring life experience. English is a world language used in all countries as equipment to concentrate language when communicating with people from different countries.

Abilasha & Ilankumaran (2018:202) stated that "English could be learned as a language through literature and not the other way about, and the language was

written and spoken correctly and presentably as the senior school students without having any training on linguistics. A scientific study of language is felt for language is a type of a patterned human behavior”.

Learning English is what people should do when they want to use the English language. Language skills are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. English as a second language refers to the teaching of English to students with different native or home language using. There are teacher and student interactions in the learning process to motivate students by improving their skills. Students are learners that can be children, teenagers, or adult who is going to school, but they may also be other people who are learning, such as in a college or university.

To make students challenged, the learner should have the motivation themselves because it can trigger their spirit to learn English and help them identify the problem in the learning process. The students' motivation is more of an instrumental motivation due to the requirements of the mandated national examination though English is now a global language, and the 2006 curriculum targets communicative competence.

According to Wu, Garza & Guzman (2015:1), they contribute to the diversity and internationalization of their classrooms, campuses, and communities. For example, these students add different perspectives in the classroom and enhance the mutual understanding and appreciation of the differences around the world.

English education study program in Lubuklinggau is one of the study programs is consist of STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau. Researchers conducted a study to identify the challenges and strategies of students in learning English in the fourth semester of the English education study program at STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau. The researcher chose the fourth semester as the object of this research because many students studied the general subject of English in the first semester, second semester, and third semester. So, automatically the students had many challenges and strategies in learning English. The similarity of this research with another researcher was the relation between students' challenges and strategies. Participants spent a significant proportion of the time discussing study-related issues during interviews. Wu, Garza & Guzman (2015) explained that it is needed to be good students learning English process should manage the time discussion used.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Learning English**

Language learning is a way to describe the students who learn foreign languages that have variables that influence competencies in the second/foreign language, Wulandari (2018:18).

Furthermore, many people look for ways of improving their English, but they need to know when to start. In most English classes, little attention is paid to

learners' conscious efforts to master a foreign language. Many students do not know, neglect, or do not pay enough attention to how to deal with the task of learning a foreign language, even after years of study: only a few students who have used a set of strategies have been able to succeed and hence, learn the language. It is a neglected area in our language classes Akbari (2015:396).

Ajeng (2017:2) stated that "learning English is common for people in Indonesia because the ability of English skills' is needed in many aspects, even though English is still a foreign language in this country." A foreign language is a language where it is not an official language, and the input of the language is limited. People learn a language other than their vernacular to get communicative competence in the target language, which is to be mastered the knowledge of the language and to be fluent in performing the language appropriately. In learning a second or foreign language, learners do some strategies to achieve their goals, which can be considered their language strategies.

### **The Benefit of Learning English**

International students constitute an increasingly relevant and important source of diversity on college campuses. They enrich the cultural diversity of campuses with their home culture and ethnic experiences. In addition, international students help the faculty and students develop their cultural sensitivities and skills in working with people from different backgrounds. International students can provide opportunities for American faculty, students, and US society to experience different languages, cultures, and traditions. Moreover, an individual exposed to diverse cultures has multiple opportunities to compare and construct a more diverse worldview (Wu, Garza & Guzman 2015:2).

Akbari (2015:395) stated it is important to identify the problems Iranian students encounter in learning English. The main obstacle to learning English is that no environment makes them familiar with the original language. In other words, there is no active role in English outside the classroom. So they do not feel the immediate need to learn English. And the educational system should bring about such a need.

Learning English is common for students because English skills are needed in many aspects. Even though English is a foreign language skill in learning English, students learn English to get vernacular and be fluent in performing the language appropriately, making some efforts to attain students learning as challenging. It is explained by Ajeng (2017) even though they have the same strategies, they tend to have differences in the learning process.

### **Students' Challenges**

Students could have various difficulties and problems in learning English. They could make different mistakes in English pronunciation, grammar, orthography, and vocabulary usage. Mohammed (2018:1384) stated That problems

such as a lack of quality materials, no need to speak English outside the classroom, and parents not being involved in the students' learning create more complexity.

For more learners, learning English is a duty-something they have to do but don't want to do. They don't see the pleasure in learning English. These students have low motivation to participate in class and simply try to get a passing mark to get rid of the course.

Other students attend the classes to learn some special points to be successful in the University Entrance Examination, so they pay attention to special parts of the book. To be successful in this kind of examination, only a good grasp of vocabulary, some grammatical points, and reading comprehension are sufficient, so the students pay little attention to speaking, listening, and writing skills.

### **Students' Strategies**

Students' strategies in learning English are identifying students' difficulties and demands. In some nations, the English term is reserved for university students. In contrast, in the view of Akbari (2015:395) English language learners do not interact with other people because of the emphasis on grammatical structure.

Using the strategies in learning can influence the application of the strategies and the connections between the strategies used and the competencies in the second or foreign language. Language learning strategies are divided into two types, namely *direct strategies* and *indirect strategies*. Students should use strategies in learning

The statistics showed that metacognitive became the most frequently used learning strategy by successful students on a scale of high use. In contrast, the unsuccessful students were medium users of cognitive strategy. It also indicated successful learners employed all six categories of strategies in high frequencies than unsuccessful ones. This makes the assumption that successful students have the ability to plan clear goals, control, review, and evaluate their learning rather than unsuccessful students who focus more on the way they think, memorize, summarize, and repeat the learning. Oxford (1990:2) stated that "learning strategy workshops are drawing big crowds at teachers' conventions.

According to Ajeng (2017:2), stated that language learning strategies are precise efforts that the students make to create a less challenging, pleasant, and more adjustable learning environment. She divided learning strategies into two broad categories, direct and indirect strategies.

Albiladi (2018:27) stated that, in other words, the study attempts to give voice to language learners as part of shaping and to design the learning process. Students' opinions and feelings can conduct more effective and appealing in learning English as a foreign language.

Language learning strategies were defined as particular attempts that the learners make to improve their linguistics and sociolinguistics competence in the

second language. Furthermore, strategies can have direct impacts on their learning process. It should be selected consciously by the learners. Ajeng (2017) stated that sometimes they might consciously realize the strategies used in some activity to prefer as their helping to gain their goals.

### **The Benefit of Used Strategies in Learning English**

Language learning strategies (LLS) are believed to be influenced by individual differences as well as environmental and contextual factors. Therefore, the effective use of LLS is determined by various factors, including both learning and learner variables. Varisoglu (2016:982) stated that the most important known characteristic of learning strategies is the fact that it influences the process of learning directly and can be thought.

There are several factors that affect language learning strategies, for instance, motivation, cognitive style, personality, and aptitude. It can be conducted in the field of the differences in the use of language learning strategies by second language learners. It also involves more conversation and trying to get as many inputs as possible in their memory strategies. They can investigate the differences in the frequency of the learning strategy use: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Students can choose more than one of the strategies used in the learning process.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter discussed methodology. The first part of this chapter discussed the research design implemented in the study. Then a second description of the participants will be offered. The next part explains the data collection method and the reasons why I chose that method. Then, the data collection procedures are described in this part, and the last part of the data analysis process is explained to complete the description of the last part. The data analysis process explains to complete the description of the methodology for this research.

After collecting the data, the next step researcher should take analyzing them. The data obtained by the researcher is required to form the answers to the research questions. Inductive analysis was used in this research to analyze the data gained by the researcher before. The data is analyzed from the particular or detailed data to the general codes and themes. The data were obtained from observation of the teaching and learning process, the students' and teachers' activities in the classroom along the process of study, and interview "s results from both students and teachers. The documentation from the observation and the writing product of the students are supplementary data in developing the report. This research belongs to basic interpretative research in which the data and the result of the data be interpreted from the researcher "s point of view. From the result of the data analysis,

the researcher had them as research findings. The data collected by the researcher was analyzed based on suggestions from (Miles et al., 2014), which are data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/ verification.

In this study, the researcher used quantitative research. Fraenkel and Wallen (2012:393) stated that survey research is typically used to describe the characteristics of a population. The kind of quantitative research used by the researcher was a survey research design.

This research was used to find the percentage of language learning strategies used by students (Wulandari, 2018:19-25). In this quantitative research, the researcher used this study because the researcher needs to quantify and analyze variables in order to get results (Apuke, 2017:41).

To analyze the data, the researcher used the mean findings to reveal the language learning strategy used by students for the fourth of the English education study program at STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau that made a sign in an empty table to each answer to a question.

The data were collected by using questionnaires and interview results that choose by the students. Based on Acharya (2015), a questionnaire is defined as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis. The data from this study was collected through students' questionnaires adopted from the survey the strategies used by (Oxford:1990).

### **Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a research instrument that consists of a set of questions or other types of prompts that aims to collect information from a respondent. A research questionnaire is typically a mix of close-ended questions and open-ended questions. The questionnaire is equally used in survey research, experiments, and other modes of observation (Archaya:2010).

The statistical analysis of the data revealed that students optioned for metacognitive, social, cognitive, compensation, memory, and affective—the strategies respectively as the most frequent strategies they have used in their learning process.

Oxford (1990:282), The strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) is designed to gather information about how the students learn a foreign or second language in learning English. That tells how true the statement is in the terms.

**Table 1.** Overall Item Numbers of Students Strategies

No	Indicator	Item Numbers
1.	Memory Strategies	1-9
2.	Cognitive Strategies	10-23
3.	Compensation Strategies	24-28
4.	Metacognitive Strategies	29-36
5.	Affective Strategies	37-42
6.	Social Strategies	43-52

The number of statements in the table was fifty-two questions divided into six indicators, as described in the sentence above. It is explained by Wulandari (2018:19); the numbers obtained were then depicted to explain the most chosen strategies as well as what they imply for the learners and the teachers.

### **Unstructured interview**

An unstructured interview is an interview in which there is no specific set of predetermined questions, although the interviewers usually have certain topics in mind that they wish to cover during the interview.

Unstructured interviews remain a ubiquitous and even predominant tool for many screening decisions. Studies of human resource executives suggest that they believe more in the validity of unstructured interviews than other screening methods, even when they are aware that the evidence suggests that structured assessments are superior (Dana, Dawes & Peterson 2013:512).

In this research, the researcher used nine questions divided into two parts, such as part A, which has three questions' and part B, which has six questions.

### **Identification**

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed students' perspectives toward students' challenges and strategies in learning English based on the data in the questionnaire. The researcher calculated students' answers to the questionnaire. The score was graded from five to one (1= Never or almost never true of me, 2= Usually not true of me, 3= Somewhat true of me, 4= Usually true of me, 5= Always or almost always true of me). After that, the researcher calculated the total score and the average of each perspective given by each student in order to investigate the data.

### **Classification**

The researcher classified the perceptions of students based on the indicators of statements in the data.

### **Description**

The researcher found out the mean of each type of the strategies and the overall mean of the entire strategy used. Based on Oxford for language learning strategy usage, the mean of each type of student's strategies and each statement of strategy will classification as high (mean of 3.5 to 5.0), medium (mean of 2.5 to 3.4), and low (2.4 or lower).

Based on the questionnaire and interview data, the researcher concluded that the result of the study after analyzing the data, summarizing, and deciding students' challenges and strategies in learning English.

## **FINDINGS**

This chapter presented data analysis and a discussion of findings in order to answer the questions in research questions about students' challenges and strategies

in learning English for the fourth semester of the English education study program at STKIP PGRI. Students' challenges are the way to trigger students' spirit in learning English. Many people around the world step in to learn English, and they are simultaneously challenged by linguistics and cultural difficulties. Sated the problems such as a lack of quality materials, no need to speak English outside the classroom, and parents not being involved in the students learning to create more complexity.

Sometimes, the challenges that the students found in learning English are more varying and harder. And it makes students felt difficult to solve the challenges. So that, way to solve this problem, the students need strategies to face the challenges. Students' strategies in learning English is the process of identifying students' difficulties and demand.

In the previous chapter, the researcher stated that the data was taken from students' questionnaires and interview questions in the fourth semester of the English education study program at STKIP PGRI. There are 52 item numbers in the questionnaires and nine questions in the interview question.

Based on the result of interviews, a question from 16 respondents of opinion noted that challenges are very important in learning English as a motivation for them to improve their skills by using six strategies in learning English. Because knowing more about challenges and strategies, they thought that it could solve the difficulties in learning English, and they chose one of the strategies they liked based on the question interview in section B. The result shows that mostly the respondents used Social strategies as the main strategies and made it a motivation to learn English. It is similar to that it influences students' motivation towards their learning in second or foreign language contexts. In terms of the English language, the motivation issue has been discussed by scholars in second/foreign language contexts.

**Table.2. The Five level Likert statements**

<b>Five-level Likert statements</b>	<b>statements</b>
Never or almost never true of me	9
Usually not true of me	14
That is somewhat true of me (about 50% of the time)	5
Usually true of me	8
Always or almost always true of me	6
Total	52

The calculation by six strategies, such as 1. Memory strategies (70%), 2. Cognitive strategies (72%), Compensation strategies (73%), Metacognitive (77%), Affective strategies (78%), and Social strategies (80%).

From the explanation above, the researcher found the result from students' questionnaires and interviews question by sixteen respondents that the students used Social strategies more than other strategies (80%) because students think that social strategies can give many benefits because if they do these strategies, they can



increase students skill in English. Then can make students enthusiastic about reviewing lessons on campus.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Reason Students need the Challenges in Learning English**

The answer was decided as a result of the interview section by 16 respondents. There are two parts (A and B) to the interview question. In part A, there were three questions such as (1) *What is your opinion about challenges in learning English?* (2) *How the way you solve the difficulties in learning English?* and (3) *Did you think challenges are important in learning English?*

Part B, there were consists of six questions (1) *Which one the most statement you like in-memory strategies?* (2) *Which one the most statement do you like most in cognitive strategies?* (3) *Which one the most statement do you like most in compensation strategies?* (4) *Which one the most statement do you like most in metacognitive strategies?* (5) *Which one the most statement do you like most in affective strategies?* and (6) *Which one of the statements do you like most in social strategies?*

### **What is Your Opinion about Challenges in Learning English**

The researcher analyzed the result of the interview, and students stated that challenges are a way to trigger students' ability, make students think about English, made students improving students' skills, make learning easier, and as students' motivation to learn English. Students' challenges need to help students to improve students skills, as students' motivation (Copland et al., 2014:751).

### **The Reason Students' Should Use the Strategies for Learning English**

From the explanation above, the researcher found that when students get difficulties in learning English, those are their challenges in learning so they can improve their English skills. They need their challenges in learning English so that they can think about how to find a way to solve them, and they can be more creative in determining the strategies that they should use. On another side, the researcher also found if all strategies, such as (1) *Memory Strategies*, (2) *Cognitive Strategies*, (3) *Compensation Strategies*, (4) *Metacognitive Strategies*, (5) *Affective Strategies*, (6) *Social Strategies* are using by students in learning English because all strategies are related with all their challenges and difficulties in learning English.

### **Memory Strategies**

The researcher analyzed the data above, and almost all of the students in memory strategies statements usually chose true of me or option number 4. It can be seen in the first statement, "Thinking of relationships between what learners already know and new things they learn in English." in that statement, there are seven students (43.75%) chose option number 4 or usually true of me, seven

students (43.75%) choose option number 3 or Somewhat true of me, and two students choose option number 5 or Always or almost always true of me.

It means that most students agree when they are learning English or get difficulties when they study a new thing in English, they have strategies such they connect something that is already known so that it can help them to decrease their difficulties in learning English.

Wulandari (2018:22) stated that "Memory strategies respectively then are the least frequent strategies used by the respondents in this study because these strategies are formidable mental tools."

And it is also could be seen in the second statement. "*Using new English words in a sentence so learners can remember them.*" In this statement, there ten from 16 students (62.50%) choose option number 4 or usually true of me. It means that almost of students agree and use it to improve their English and memorize it easily.

### **Cognitive Strategies**

Based on the data, the researcher analyzed that almost all of the students also used that strategies to help them to solve their problems. It could be seen in the first statement, "*Saying or writing new English words several times.*" There are 10 (62.50%) students who choose option number 4 or usually true of me. It means that ten students agree they like saying or writing new English words several times so that they can add their new vocabulary in English.

On the other hand, students also do talk in native English to improve their speaking skills. It can be seen in statement number 2, "*Talking like native English speakers.*" There are 9 (56.25%) respondents who choose option number 3 or are somewhat true of me. Here, they do not deny that it is what they do to improve their English, especially in speaking skills.

Cognitive strategies are crucial in learning a new language because these strategies work promptly upon the information arrived Wulandari (2018:22).

Besides it, they also use other ways to improve their English. Such as making conversation, watching movies, reading, and writing notes in English. It means that cognitive strategies are used by students when they are learning English.

### **Compensation Strategies**

In compensation strategies, students also use many strategies to compensate for their difficulties when they were learning in English, such as in the first statement in compensation strategies, "*Use gestures,*" almost students agree they used gestures to show something that will be conveyed if they can say it in English. In this statement, 13 students (81.25%) choose option number 5 or Always or almost always true of me. It shows that most of them agree that they always use strategies to compensate for their difficulties when they are speaking.

Then, when they can not speak what they want, they also do like the second statement state, such as *"Make up new words when they do not know the words in English."* It means they combine English words and Bahasa. They make up new words so that other people can understand what they are talking about or writing. In the second statement, there nine students, or 56.25%, choose option number 4 or usually true of me.

It can be concluded the students also used this strategy to help them increase their difficulties in learning English. Such as using gestures, making up new words, reading English passages, and Guessing what a person will likely say next and soon.

Wulandari (2018:22), this strategy are used when the students try to fill the gaps in their knowledge when they produce or understand the language learned.

### **Metacognitive Strategies**

Metacognitive strategies refer to methods used to help students understand the way they learn; in other words, it means processes designed for students to 'think' about their 'thinking.' Metacognitive strategies are also used by students to solve their problems in learning English. Such as, in the first statement, *"I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better,"* almost of students agree that they do those strategies to help them to be better at learning English. It could be seen six students (37.50%) chose option number 3 or Somewhat true of me, and six students (37.50%) chose number 5, Always or almost always true of me.

On another side, *"I pay attention when someone is speaking English"* in this statement, the students also agree if they do this to comprehend English. In fact, eight students (50%) agree they always pay attention when someone is speaking English so that they can understand well what someone means.

Metacognitive strategies are very important for students in learning English. To assist them in choosing and activating their learning strategies in English to help them succeed Wulandari (2018:21).

Then, there are also other strategies that students use in the metacognitive aspect, such as they try to find out how to be a better learner of English, and they also plan their schedule so they will have enough time to study English.

### **Affective Strategies**

Affective strategies are strategies to manage their emotions in learning, especially in learning English. There is a circumstance that sometimes makes students can not control their emotions when they are learning. Such as, in statement number 1, *"Relaxing whenever learners feel afraid of using English,"* English as a foreign language sometimes makes students afraid when they want to speak English. They are afraid when they say a false word. So that they need to feel relaxed when they feel afraid of using English. In this statement, six students (37.50%) choose option number 4 or usually true of me, and six students (37.50%)

choose option number 5 or Always or almost always true of me. It means that they agree when they feel afraid of using English, they need to feel relaxed to increase their fears so that it can make them brave to speak English.

On another side, in statement number 2, "*Self-encouraging to speak English even when students are afraid of making a mistake.*" Almost of students agree if they encourage their selves to speak English. It can be seen, there seven students, or 43.75%, chose option number 3, 6 people, 37.50% chose option number 4, and 3 students chose option number 5. It means that to solve their problem in speaking English. They agree to motivate their selves to speak English even when the other students are afraid of making a mistake.

Wulandari (2018:23) stated that "affective strategies involving activities that allow students to manage their own motivation, behaviors, and feelings in the process of language learning.

### **Social Strategies**

*Social strategies* are social acts that learners employ in order to understand better in the target language. There are many strategies that students use in learning English. Such as, "*If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again*" in this statement, there are nine students (56.25%) chose option number 5, which means that almost of students agree if they do not understand they will ask the other person to slow down and say it again so that they can comprehend well about it.

Then, in statement number 2, "*I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.*" There are eight students (50%) agree that they will ask an English speaker to correct them when they talk. So that they can decrease their mistakes and error in speaking English and they can speak English as they want.

Wulandari (2018:21), social strategies is an activities such as interacting with others, for instance, asking for assistance and explanation or practicing English with others.

From the explanation above, the researcher found that when students get difficulties in learning English, those are their challenges in learning so they can improve their English skills. They need their challenges in learning English so that they can think about how to find a way to solve them, and they can be more creative in determining the strategies that they should use. On another side, the researcher also found if all strategies, such as (1) *Memory Strategies*, (2) *Cognitive Strategies*, (3) *Compensation Strategies*, (4) *Metacognitive Strategies*, (5) *Affective Strategies*, (6) *Social Strategies* are using by students in learning English. Because all strategies are related to all their challenges and difficulties in learning English, so, they can not use one strategy in learning English to solve their problem in learning English.

The researcher concluded, based on the result of the questionnaire and interview, that (80%) of students choose social strategies as their motivation for

learning English. It is similar to Wulandari (2018:23); the high percentages for other strategies showed students options for social strategies as students' motivation in learning English. On the other hand, Mandasari & Oktaviani (2018:68), the result shows that the Affective strategies domain is the most preferable for students learning English.

## CONCLUSION

Challenges in learning English were needed by students because, based on the result of interviews with respondents, they stated that challenges are very important in learning English. It can make respondents more creative in solving their problems in learning English so that if they have a problem in learning, they will think about how to find strategies that are suitable for their difficulties. The most common strategy used by students is *Social Strategies*, with a total mean of 4.2, and the lowest strategy used by students is *Memory Strategies Strategies*, with a total mean of 3.5.

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