LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES BASED ON GENDER
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Abstract— Gender as an individual characteristic has been proved to affect the use of strategies in learning a foreign language but how gender affects the use of strategies in learning a local language where the people in the community speak an national language is not explored yet. Some studies show that female students employed language learning strategies more often than male students (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Awang Hashim & Syed Sahil, 1994; Green and Oxford, 1995; Dreyer & Oxford, 1999). The present study was aimed to identify how gender affects the use of strategies in learning a local language in the environment where people in the country have a national language. A Non–probability sampling was used to collect data. With the Cronbach Alphas ranging from .79 to 82, mean scores of the use of language learning strategies the male and female students reported using were compared. In the present study it was found that metacognitive strategies were the strategies mostly used by female students and cognitive strategeis were the strategies mostly used by male students. This means that male students are likely to be more dependent on memorization than female students. Cognitive strategies which are characterized at least with memorization or rote learning in the present study tend to be used by male students.

Index Terms— cognitive strategies, gender, language learning strategies, local language, metacognitive strategies, social strategies

I. INTRODUCTION.

Human beings have the capacity to acquire another language. The acquisition process cannot be separated from the types of input available in their surroundings. Within the scope of SLA research, input data have most typically comprised recurrent linguistic features of speech and, in some studies, written texts, addressed to learners, as well as the function in assisting learners' comprehension, supplying feedback on their imprecisions, and guiding them toward more accurate production (Pica, 1991, p. 187). The input available to learners not necessarily becomes comprehensible for them to process. It involves the so-called *input processing* (Van Patten & Sanz, 1995, pp. 170-171). In this process, input is converted into intake. From this process learners must still develop an acquired system; it means that not all intake is automatically fed into the acquired system in Krashen sense, and there are still some other processes that learners have to do before input becomes output such as the conversion of input to intake and encoding linguistically. Because it deals with individual processes, many variables are automatically involved in the process and different individuals will use different processes. Even though they receive the same input, at the end of the learning process, they may have different levels of second language quality in their output. The differences in output cannot be separated from the role of individual differences.

Second (foreign) language learners can differ in many ways. Skehan (1989, p. 4) states some of the individual differences of learners include age, intelligence, aptitude, motivation, attitude, personality, and cognitive styles while in the process of learning the learners may differ in *strategies*. A study by Ehrman (1996) indicates that individual differences correlated with language learning. In her study individual differences in motivation proves to be significantly correlated with language learning. Individual variables, such as bilinguals/multilingualism (Nayak et al., 1990 & Klein, 1995), attitude, gender (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Green & Oxford , 1995), ethnicity (Politzer & McGroarty, 1985; Grainger, 1997; LoCastro, 1994), proficiency level (O'Malley, 1985; Green & Oxford, 1995) and motivation (Setiyadi, Sukirlan & Mahpul, 2016) have been investigated in relation to language learning strategies.

Related to gender, the result of the study by Green and Oxford (1995) shows that female students used 14 strategies more frequently than did male students. The the study has uncovered important information on gender-related language strategies. The present study continued to explore different strategies used by female and male students and relate the strategies in learning a local language in the context where a country has a national language.

Some studies show that female students employed language learning strategies more often than male students (Awang Hashim & Syed Sahil, 1994: Dreyer & Oxford, 1999; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). Oxford and Nyikos (1989) also describe that gender differences in using conversational input elicitation strategies or reflecting strategies. In their study, conducted in Puerto Rico, Green and Oxford (1995) show that women performed more frequently than did men the six categories of SILL: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Another study on the different uses of language learning based on gender was conducted by Graham and Rees (1995). Their study, which involved children, showed that in learning a language, female and male students prefer different learning strategies but their study did not investigate different amount of strategy use between the two groups of students. Their study also suggests that anxiety related to peer-group judgement is more common among female students, although they acknowledge that their finding contradicts the findings of other studies that suggest boys are reluctant to speak out in the public arena.

Many studies have been conducted to relate second /foreign language learning with individual characteristics (Jacobsen & Imhoof,1974; Bialystok & Frohlich, 1978; Wen & Johnson, 1997), but only a few associated individual variables with language learning strategies. Awang Hashim and Syed Sahil (1994) also report that gender affects the uses of language learning strategies. The result of their study, which used Oxford's SILL as a strategy measure, showed that female students used affective strategies more often. Their study was inspired by that Oxford and Nyikos (1989). They also suggest the same reason why female students employed language learning strategies more frequently than male students in the Malaysian context. However, the trend towards female students' greater use of metacognitive and deep level strategies and less use of surface level strategies in this study would need a different explanation.

Gender as an individual characteristic has been proved to affect the use of strategies in learning a foreign language but how gender affects the use of strategies in learning a local language where the people in the community speak an national language is not explored yet. The present study is aimed to identify how gender affects the use of strategies in learning a local language in the environment where people in the country have a national language.

II. METHODOLOGY

A Non–probability sampling was used to collect data. The population of the present study were learners who have been learning a local language at school and the subjects came from different school. In Indonesia the students generally speak Indonesian language as the national language. The students were briefed before the data were collected and confidentiality was confirmed. They could use as much time to complete the questionnaire. The reason of choosing the subjects was that they spoke the national language at home and learned a local language at school.

The data in the present study were collected through a questionnaire, which has been modified from Setiyadi (2001; 2004). This questionnaire, which is called Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire (LLSQ), consists of 80 items. In the questionnaire of the language strategy use, language learners were provided with statements with five possible answers which were arranged in an ordinal variable. The scores of the choices are 1 for *never* on an 5 for *always* (see Appendix). The questionnaire was given in in the mother tounge of the learners. The LLSQ includes 4 categories of learning strategies: speaking strategies, listening strategies, reading strategies and writing strategies and each category consists of 20 items. In total the LLSQ has 80 items and each category has learning strategies that are grouped under cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cronbach Alpha coefficient for each scale was computed. As shown on Table 1, the scales of the scales were internally consistent; the Cronbach Alphas show satisfactory to good reliability, ranging from .79 to 82. Table 2 provides evidence that the items of the questionnaire had high correlation with their constructs so that the items developed in the present study was considered valid. In general, the items had high correlation with the constructs of each category so that the items of the questionnaire was considered valid, as shown on Table 2. Therefore, all of the criteria of the constructs were met in the present study.

TABLE 1: RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURES

Scales	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Listening Strategies	20 items	.79
Speaking Strategies	20 items	.80
Reading Strategies	20 items	.82
Writing Strategies	20 items	.70

TABLE 2: VALIDITY OF EACH ITEM WITH THE CONSTRUSTS

Constructs	Item number and the validity
Listening Strategies	1)0,739, 2)0,728, 3)0,720, 4)0,741, 5)0,789, 6)0,773, 7)0,719, 8)0,734, 9)0,738, 10)0,711, 11) 0,741, 12)0,764, 13)0,736, 14)0,815, 15)0,717, 16)0,751, 17)0,725, 18)0,719, 19) 0,743, 20)0,706
Speaking Strategies	1)0,639, 2)0,721, 3)0,770, 4)0,641, 5)0,719, 6)0,721, 7)0,732, 8)0,744, 9)0,722, 10)0,721, 11) 0,733, 12)0,732, 13)0,743, 14)0,811, 15)0,722, 16)0,741, 17)0,735, 18)0,729, 19) 0,721, 20)0,716
Reading Strategies	1)0,739, 2)0,733, 3)0,670, 4)0,711, 5)0,722, 6)0,735, 7)0,755, 8)0,741, 9)0,754, 10)0,763, 11) 0,737, 12)0,744, 13)0,757, 14)0,711, 15)0,732, 16)0,723, 17)0,744, 18)0,781, 19) 0,735, 20)0,718
Writing Strategies	1)0,745, 2)0,744, 3)0,723, 4)0,741, 5)0,722, 6)0,741, 7)0,737, 8)0,731, 9)0,782, 10)0,777, 11) 0,751, 12)0,732, 13)0,754, 14)0,751, 15)0,777, 16)0,761, 17)0,735, 18)0,726, 19) 0,722, 20)0,711

Table 3: Mean scores of learning strategies by gender

	Metacognitive strategies	Cognitive strategies	Social strategies
Female	3.63	3.11	3.18
SD	.63	.46	.48
Male	3.31	3.52	3.05
SD	.66	.51	.61

Note: SD = standard deviation

For the purpose of comparison between the strategies used by female and male learners, mean scores of the use of language learning strategies the students reported using were compared. Table 3 provides empirical support for no significant differences between female and male students' use of language learning strategies. In general there was a trend that female students employed language learning strategies more often than did male students. The mean score of metacognitive strategeis by female students was higher than the mean score of the same strategies by male students. Male sudents used cognitive strategies more often than female students and the mean score of cognitive strategies of male students was the only mean score which was higher than female students.

IV. DISCUSSION

In the present study it was found that metacognitive strategies were the strategies mostly used by female students and cognitive strategeis were the strategies mostly used by male students. The use of social straegeis of two groups was relatively equal. Even though female students and male students used the three groups of strategies in different frequencies, the two groups did not show that the differences in using the strategies were not significant. There was no significant difference between male and female students in using strategies in the present study is in line with the findings in a study conducted by El-Dib (2014), which was conducted in Kuwait. The findings of El-Dib's (2014) study reveal that female students use more cognitive strategies more than male students do even though is study was also not in line with his previous study (1999), which provides contradictory evidence that there was no significant difference in using learning strategies between male and female students. He also suggests that the use of learning strategies between male and feemale students was cultural context.

This finding of the present study supports to some extent those of previous studies (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995) that female students employed language learning strategies more often than male students (see also Dreyer & Oxford, 1999. However, the findings of the present study was not in line with a study by Park (2011). The study which was conducted in Korea showed that male students more learning strategies than female students, espesially in using memory strategies of SILL (Park (2011).

The extended model of student learning developed in a study by Meyer, Dunne and Richardson (1994) may be used to contextualize the differences between male and female students in using language learning strategies. They suggest that competitiveness, versatility and a dependence upon memorization are of less importance in characterizing individual differences among female students than they are in characterizing individual differences among male students. This means that male students are likely to be more dependent on memorization than female students. Cognitive strategies which are characterized at least with memorization or rote learning in the present study tend to be used by male students. However, the greater likelihood of female students to use metacognitive may be hard to explain although a notion suggested by Graham and Rees (1995, p.18) may be relevant. Their study indicates that female students feared a negative evaluation of their classmates, and performance in oral work was bound up with how one might be viewed by others as a person, rather than just from the point of view of language proficiency. Their fear to be evaluated by others seems to produce self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-correction. These strategies are classified under metacognitive strateeis in the present study.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Gender as an individual characteristic may affect the use of strategies in learning a local language. In the present study male students rely more on cognitive strategies while female students use metacognitive strategeis more in learning a local language. It is suggested that language teacher may provide their students with learning opportunities so that female and male students may use language learning strategies differently which are appropriate with their gender characterics. Hopefully, by providing students with a variety of learning oppotunities, the Lampungese students can produce greater frequency of learning strategy use which contributes to the success of learning a local language.

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