Interpersonal Intelligence and Second Language Learning Strategies

Murniati

English Department, University of Bunda Mulia, Jakarta

Abstract: This paper aims to find the dominant multiple intelligence and the learning strategies employed by adults with good English commandeven though they started learning English in Junior High School or after 12 years old. The data is gained from the lecturers from different departments working in a university in Jakarta. It was found out that 10 lecturers have good English proficiency as shown by the TOEFL score. In the next step, those ten respondents are asked to find their major intelligence. Next, the Strategy Inventory for Language learning (SILL) version 7.0 is delivered to each participant to find out their learning strategies. The results show that those lecturers have interpersonal intelligences. Regarding the learning strategies,they usually use four out of six learning strategies.

Keywords: Learning strategies, Multiple intelligence

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, job interview of lecturers can be conducted in English. While interviewing lecturers whose ages are more than 30 years old from all departments in the university where the writer works, it was found out that some interviewees can speak English very well. In addition, their TOEFL test scores are also high; some of them can reach more than 550. From the interview, it is also noted that they started to learn English when they were in the fourth grade in the elementary school or even after that. Other applicants, on the other hands, cannot speak English at all. Their English proficiency is not really good, as shown in the TOEFL test scores which do not reach 400.

In order to find out the reasons why some people have acquired the second language – in this case, English – successfully, the learning strategies employed by those lecturers are analyzed. In addition, the multiple intelligence of each of those lecturerswhose English is good is also analyzed. Gardner as quoted in Gardner (2011, p. xv) has argued that all human beings possess eight intelligences. Those blended intelligences appear to be different from one human to another. One type of intelligence is more dominant than others for every human being. For example, people with linguistic, nature, and interpersonal intelligences may be good at learning language than other people with other dominant intelligences (Akbari & Hosseini, 2008, p. 152). This research, therefore, aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common multiple intelligences of the lecturers with good English proficiency and who learnt English after 12 years old?
2. Which learning strategies are the most employed by those lecturers?

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Troike (2006) says that Second Language Acquisition (SLA)"refers both to the study of individualsand groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their firstone as young children, and to the process of learning that language" (p.2)

Regarding the second language acquisition, Oxford (1990, p. 4) argues that acquiring a language and learning the language cannot be separated. She also argues that at first, learning a language might be conscious, which later can be unconscious use of that language through practice. She states that language learning strategies contributes to the learning and acquiring the second language.

In order to find the learners' learning strategies, Oxford (1990, pp. 138-147) proposes the Strategy Inventory for Language learning (SILL). The SILL consists of 50 items spread in six parts under direct and indirect learning strategies. Part A, B, and C are under direct learningstrategies. Part A consists of 9 items which reflects the memory strategies. Part B is about cognitive strategies (14 items), and Part C which reflects the compensation strategies (6 items). Next, under the indirectlearning strategies, in part D, there are 9 items of metacognitive strategies, Part E which is about the affective strategies(6 items), and social strategies (6 items) in part F.

The results reflected in SILL say that those who score .35 and higher in the overall average of theSILL are high strategy users, between .25 and .34 are medium strategy users, and .24 and below are low strategyusers (Park, 2011, p.22).

Multiple Intelligences

Gardner as quoted by Richards and Rodgers (2014, pp. 230-241) states that there are eight intelligences which human being possess. They are: linguistic, musical, nature, logical mathematical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, Intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. The intelligences are set of life skills which enable human beings to solve the problem and to gather new knowledge. Armstrong (2003, p. 10-19) has discussed that basically, each person has those eight intelligences. It is just some intelligence is more dominant than other intelligences. All of the intelligences are developed depend on the needs of the person, the environments, and many other factors.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The respondents of this research are the lecturers working in a university in Jakarta. Before those lecturers had been accepted to be the full timers, they have to take some tests. One of them is the TOEFL Paper based test. It was found out that several lecturers have reached quite high TOEFL PBT score, which is more than 530. Those ten lecturers have later been asked to be the respondents in this research.

The data is gained from the interview, questionnaires, and the multiple intelligence test.An interview is conducted to find out the lecturers who meet the criteria to be the respondents of this research. The respondents should have started learning English in Junior High School or after 12 years old. They had no prior knowledge (English) before they first learn English in the Junior High School. In addition, they have never been living abroad.After the interview, ten lecturers fulfill the criteria. In the next step, those ten respondents are asked to find their major intelligence by conducting a multiple intelligence test downloaded from http://www.literacynet.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html

Next, the Strategy Inventory for Language learning (SILL) version 7.0 is delivered to each participant. The SILL delivered is the one used for the speakers of other languages learning

English.The respondents are asked to state their answer in the scale of 1,2,3,4, and 5. There is no correct or incorrect answer. The explanations of the scale are explained below.
1. Never true of me
2. Usually not true of me:
3. Somewhat true of me:
4. Usually true of me
5. Always true of me

The data of the language learning strategies is analyzed by classifying the respondent's answers as can be seen in the table below.

Classification	Frequencyof use	Averagescore
High	Always or almost always trueofme	4.5 to 5.0
	Usuallyused	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometimesused	2.5 to 3.4
	Generally notused	1.5 to 2.4
Low	Never or almostneverused	1.0 to 1.4

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Multiple Intelligence and TOEFL Score
The table below shows the results of the multiple intelligence tests conducted by the respondents.

No	Respondent	TOEFL PBT Score	First major intelligence	Second major intelligence	Third major intelligence
1	Respondent 1	577	**Interpersonal**	Intrapersonal	Musical
2	Respondent 2	620	Spatial	Logic	**Interpersonal**
3	Respondent 3	592	Intrapersonal	**Interpersonal**	Musical
4	Respondent 4	610	**Interpersonal**	Intrapersonal	Musical
5	Respondent 5	553	Musical	Nature	**Interpersonal**
6	Respondent 6	525	Bodily	**Interpersonal**	Nature
7	Respondent 7	592	**Interpersonal**	Intrapersonal	Spatial
8	Respondent 8	547	Intrapersonal	**Interpersonal**	Spatial
9	Respondent 9	521	**Interpersonal**	Bodily	Intrapersonal
10	Respondent 10	571	Musical	Intrapersonal	**Interpersonal**

Table 4.1 The results of the multiple intelligence test

The table above shows that each participant has interpersonal intelligence. Even though the interpersonal intelligence is not always the first intelligence, it is still included as the first three intelligences. As a result, it can be said that the interpersonal intelligence is one of the major intelligence of the respondents. In short, it can be said that the respondents with good command in English and who learn English after 12 years old have interpersonal intelligence.

4.2 Learning Strategies

Part A of SILL consists of 9 items which reflects the memory strategies under the direct strategies. The overall score for this part is 2.59. It can be categorized as medium, or the respondents sometimes use the memory strategies. The overall results in detail can be seen in the table below.

Part A							
No	Learning Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in the SL.	0	3	4	3	0	10
2	2. I use new SL words in a sentence so I can remember them.	0	3	2	4	1	10
3	3. I connect the sound of a new SL word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word	0	4	4	2	0	10
4	4. I remember a new SL word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	1	4	2	3	0	10
5	5. I use rhymes to remember new SL words.	1	4	3	2	0	10
6	6. I use flashcards to remember new SL words.	5	3	1	1	0	10
7	7. I physically act out new SL words.	4	1	3	1	1	10
8	8. I review SL lessons often.	2	2	5	1	0	10
9	9. I remember new SL words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign	3	4	1	2	0	10
	Total	16	28	25	19	2	90
	Total x score	16	56	75	76	10	233
	Average						2.59

Table 4.2. The memory learning strategies

Part B of SILL is still about direct strategies, in specific, about the cognitive strategies. There are 14 items being investigated. The mean score of this part is 3. 76. It can be categorized as high which means that the respondents usually use the cognitive strategies. The result can be seen in the table below.

No	Part B Learning Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	Total
10	I say or write new English words several times.	0	1	2	4	3	10
11	I try to talk like native English speakers.	0	0	0	5	5	10
12	I practice the sounds of English.	0	0	1	5	4	10
13	I use the English word I know in different ways.	0	1	1	5	3	10
14	I start conversations in English.	0	0	4	4	2	10
15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	0	0	1	4	5	10
16	I read for pleasure in English.	0	0	2	5	3	10
17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	0	1	3	3	3	10
18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	0	1	4	2	3	10
19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	1	1	2	6	0	10
20	I try to find patterns in English.	1	1	5	1	2	10
21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	0	4	4	0	2	10
22	I try not to translate word-for-word.	0	0	5	3	2	10
23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	1	2	3	4	0	10
	Total	3	12	37	51	37	140
	Total x Score	3	24	111	204	185	527
	Average						**3.76**

Table 4.3 The cognitive learning strategies

Part C of the SILL reflects the compensation strategiesunder the direct strategies which consist of 6 items. The result in number is 3.57. It means that the respondents usually use the compensation strategies. The respondents' answers can be seen in the table as follows.

No	Part C Learning Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	Total
24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	0	0	3	5	2	10
25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	1	2	0	6	1	10

	Part C						
No	**Learning Strategies**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Total**
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	1	2	3	2	2	10
27	I read English without looking up every new word.	1	1	3	3	2	10
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	2	0	3	3	2	10
29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	0	1	1	3	5	10
	Total	5	6	13	22	14	60
	Total x Score	5	12	39	88	70	214
	Average						**3.57**

Table 4.4 The compensation learning strategies

Next, under the indirectlearning strategies, in part D, there are 9 items of metacognitive strategies. The mean score is 3.58. It is still categorized as high which means that the respondents usually use this strategy. The results in details are as follows.

	Part D						
No	**Learning Strategies**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Total**
30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	0	1	1	5	3	10
31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	0	1	2	5	2	10
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	0	0	2	6	2	10
33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	0	1	3	4	2	10
34	I plan my schedule so I have enough time to study English.	1	2	2	5	0	10
35	I look for people I can talk to in English.	0	2	2	4	2	10
36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	0	2	2	5	1	10
37	I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	0	1	6	3	0	10
38	I think about my progress in learning English.	0	1	5	4	0	10
	Total	1	11	25	41	12	90
	Total X Score	1	22	75	164	60	322
	Average						**3.58**

Table 4.5 The metacognitive learning strategies

Part E which is under the indirectlearning strategies is investigating the affective strategies. There are 6 items in Part E. The answers are reflected in the table below. It can be seen later that the score is 2.62 which means that the respondents only sometimes use this strategy while learning the language.

No	Part E Learning Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	Total
39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	0	1	3	4	2	10
40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	0	1	4	5	0	10
41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	3	3	2	2	0	10
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying English.	2	2	3	3	0	10
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	7	1	1	1	0	10
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	5	1	3	1	0	10
	Total	17	9	16	16	2	60
	Total X Score	17	18	48	64	10	157
	Average						**2.62**

Table 4.6 The affective learning strategies

Finally, Part F which is still under the indirectlearning strategies, there 6 items about the social strategies. The mean score of this part is 3.6. The respondents usually use this social strategy while learning the language. The results can be seen in the table as follows.

No	Part F Learning Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	Total
45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	0	1	2	5	2	10
46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	0	2	4	4	0	10
47	I practice my English with other students.	0	0	3	6	1	10
48	I ask for help from English speakers.	0	1	4	4	1	10
49	I ask questions in English.	0	0	4	5	1	10
50	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	0	1	5	1	3	10
	Total	0	5	22	25	8	60
	Total X Score	0	10	66	100	40	216
	Average						**3.6**

Table 4.7 The social learning strategies

The overall results can be summarized in the table below.

The Learning Strategies	Mean	Category	Rank
Memory strategies	2.59	Medium	6
Cognitive Language Learning Strategies	3.76	High	1
Compensation Language Learning Strategies	3.57	High	4
Metacognitive Language Learning Strategies	3.58	High	3
Affective Language Learning Strategies	2.62	Medium	5
Social Language Learning Strategies	3.6	High	2

Table 4.8 The summary of the learning strategies

It is actually expected that the respondents with the interpersonal intelligence employ the social learning strategies at the most. However, the results show that the respondents mostly use the cognitive language learning strategies. After some short interviews, it was found out that the respondents learn English at school, in which some cognitive learning styles are adopted. After that, as predicted, the second most used strategy is social learning strategies. By applying this, the respondents with the interpersonal skills might use the language learnt directly.

The two last strategies used by the respondents are memory and affective learning strategies. It can be said that the interpersonal intelligence respondents do not memorize the language learnt. They are not afraid of using the language learnt in the real life context.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this paper show evidences why some foreign language learners have successfully acquired the language, even when they first learn that foreign language after 12 years old. While relating this to multiple intelligence, it turns out that the interpersonal intelligence is one of the first three major intelligences of those people.

The findings also provide evidence on how people with the interpersonal intelligence learn a foreign language before they acquire it. The overall results of the language learning strategies employed show that the respondents usually use four out of six learning strategies.

REFERENCES

[1]   Akbari, R. & Kobra Hosseini. 2008. Multiple intelligences and language learning strategies: Investigating possible relations. *Systems*.141–155. doi:10.1016/j.system.2007.09.008

[2]   http://www.literacynet.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html

[3]   Oxford, R.L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know.* Boston: Heinle& Heinle Publishers.

[4]   Park, G.-P.(2011). The validation process of the SILL: a confirmatory factor analysis. *English Language Teaching*. (4)4. 21-27. doi:10.5539/elt.v4n4p21

[5]   Gardner, H., (2011). *Frames of mind: the theory of multiple intelligences.*New York: Basic Books.

[6]   Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T.S. (2002).*Approaches and methods in language teaching: second edition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[7]   Troike.(2006). *Introducing second language acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.