

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Research

English is the language studied most as a foreign language around of the world. This necessary comes since English is standing as lingua franca, where English is able to relate all people mastering English to be connected with from different languages all over the world. In Indonesia nowadays there are four skills should be taught in order to master English such as speaking, listening, reading and writing.

In order to accomplish the students' need toward English, School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) prescribes English is one subject that must be taught and must be learned in senior high school. It is guidance in teaching and learning process. The way teachers teach English in the class will hold the important role to help students run the English process. Allah SWT said in Holy Qur'an An-Nahl 125:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (النحل: 125)

“Invite (mankind, O Muhammad SAW) to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur’an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a good strategy. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.”
(An-Nahl 125)

Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru is one of the senior high schools located on Jl. Manyar Sakti, Pekanbaru that uses KTSP as a guide of English teaching and learning in this school. In MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru, English has been taught since the first year of English teaching period. English is taught twice a week with time duration about 45 minutes and the passing grade of the score in this school for English subject is 75.

In the school, students learn English as the foreign language and they are required to master such four skills. Even though the students have learned English for years, they face some difficulties because English is not their mother tongue and the difficulties included: the students are not able to speak English fluently and accurately, the students are not able to read the English passage with good fluency, the students are not able to reach the point of spoken text, and the students are not able to write a paragraph in English well. That is way; the students need the appropriate Language Learning Strategies in learning English.

Language Learning Strategy is one of the important aspects that should be acquired by the students including the student of MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru. The strategy used is the foundation of second language learning. For example, good learners know that practice in authentic situations and risk-taking enhances language learning. They also practice discrete strategies such as predicting meaning in context before consulting reference tools, analyzing text for clues to meaning. Good language learners know how to improve their command of the language and intentionally apply strategies to do this.

Language learner strategies are very important to improve the development of their language learning skills. According to Chamot, Language Learning Strategies (LLS) are defined as “the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal”.¹ Through repeated use, these strategies become automatic.

Language learning strategies can be defined as choices we consciously make about how manage learning. They are some steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. The following is a definition by Rebecca Oxford that language learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills.²

In MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru, English is taught in different classes. In fact, the female students feel more difficulties than the male students do. It can be seen from what the female and the male students achieve in learning English. The female students tend to have lower scores than the male because the female students usually do not reach the standard of the passing grade. In general, there are differences in how males and females learn English as a second language. According to Zaubir Shaw and Oxford, males reported more often females that “not knowing the meaning of a word impeded their thinking process or their progress”. Females, however, reported using significantly more compensation strategies, such as guessing and learning from context, than the males did.

¹ Chamot, A. U., & Kupper, L. (1989). *Learning strategies in foreign language instruction. Foreign Language Annuals*, 22, 13-24.

² Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers. p. 132

According to Butler, there are brute facts of biology and gender is a phenomenon which is brought into being when it is performed. In her own words, “Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a ‘natural’ kind of being”. Gender is therefore not something you acquire once and for all at an early stage of life, but an ongoing accomplishment produced by your repeated actions.³

According to Kaylani, the influence of gender on EFL learning strategy use,⁴ Kaylani's starting point was that there is evidence from a number of studies conducted across different cultures around the world that there are differences between male and female students of foreign and second languages as regards what strategies they use and how they use them when engaging in language learning tasks.

During the preliminary observation at MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru, the researcher was easier to find the distinction between female and male students in learning English since in this school the female and male student were separated into different classes. In both female and male students’ classes, the researcher saw that the teacher taught the students normally without any discrimination between female and male students with the hope that all students could understand the lesson well and

³ Aslan, Oktay 2009. *The Role of Gender and Language Learning Strategies in Learning English*. Middle East Technical University

⁴ Kaylani, C., & Sunderland, J. (2002) The influence of gender and motivation on EFL learning strategy use in Jordan. In Oxford, R.L. (Ed.). *Language Learning Strategies Around the World: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. (Technical Report #13). (pp. 75-88).. Honolulu: Univeristy of Hawai’I, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.

reach the passing grade. In reality, to teach the female students was harder than to teach the male ones because the teacher should repeat the lesson several times when teaching the female students but the teacher did not need much time to deliver the lesson to the male students and they could understand the lesson quite well.

Some of the experts believe that there is a significant difference between male and female in the acquisition of language. Hetherington says that girls are superior in verbal abilities, include in vocabularies, reading comprehension and verbal creativity and boys are superior in mathematic. Papalia and Olda state that male and female are different in some specific abilities such as verbal ability and mechanical ability. Females are more superior in verbal ability than males. Papalia and Olda also said that females outperform male in reading, speaking, spelling and grammar.

Based on the statement above, the writer would like to find out the relationship between Language Learning Strategies Used by the students and gender factor. The followings are the phenomena that the writer found during her preliminary study at the school:

1. Some of female students are not able to speak fluently
2. Some of male students are lazier in reading a text
3. Some of female students are not able to write a paragraph in English well
4. Some of male students are not able to reach the point of spoken text
5. Some of male students are lazier than female students.
6. Some of male and female students are difficult to find the language learning strategies that have the influence in learning English

7. Some of students cannot decide whether it is an effective or ineffective strategy.

Based on the phenomena depicted above, the writer is interested in conducting a research entitled: **A Study on Language Learning Strategies based on Gender of the Students at MA Darel Pekanbaru.**

B. The Problem of the Research

1. The Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the problem above, the researcher identified the problem as in the following:

1. Why are some of female students not able to speak fluently?
2. Why are some of male students lazier in reading a text?
3. Why are some of female students not able to write a paragraph in English well?
4. Why are some of male students not able to reach the point of spoken text?
5. Why are some of male students lazier than female students?
6. Why are some of male and female students difficult to find the language learning strategies that have the influence in learning English?
7. Why some of students cannot decide whether it is an effective or ineffective strategy?

2. The Limitation of the Problem

Based on the definition of problems depicted above, it is sincerely better for the researcher to restrict the problem in order to pay more attention to specific problem.

This research focuses on the problem of students' language learning strategies based on gender of the first year student at MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru. In relation to the learners' behavior in learning English, gender factor cannot be neglected.

3. Formulation of the problem

The problem of the research is formulated in the following questions:

1. How is the Language Learning Strategies Used of the first year students at MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru?
2. What is the difference between male and female LLS of the first year students at MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru?

C. The Objective and the Significance of the Research

a. Objective of the Research

Based on the research question formulated above, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To identify language learning strategies used by first year students at MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru in learning English.
2. To identify LLS used between male and female students at MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru.

b. Significance of the Research

1. It is hoped that this study highlights Language Learning Strategies used by MA Darel Hikmah Pekanbaru, and categorize them according to the models in this field such as Oxford's.

2. To fulfill one of the requirements for the writer to complete her undergraduate degree program at English Education Department of Education and Teacher Training Faculty of State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau.
3. Theoretically, the writer can get information from this research that can be useful to enlarge her knowledge, especially language learning strategies based on Gender.
4. To provide some information to the students as well as English teacher related to their weakness in understanding language learning strategies used, so they will find solutions in order to master it.

c. The Definition of Term

To simplify the process of designing and application of the research and to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation, it is necessary to define the definition of term comprised in this research as follows:.

1. Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies can be defined as choices we consciously make about how to manage learning. They are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. Language learning strategies are the specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 language. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability. Language Learning Strategies consist of Direct Strategies and Indirect Strategies. Direct Strategies consist of

memory, cognitive and compensation. Indirect Strategies consist of metacognitive, affective and social strategy ⁵

2. Gender

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a 'natural' kind of being.⁶ According to Cameron, Gender is not something you acquire once and for all at an early stage of life, but an ongoing accomplishment produced by your repeated actions⁷. In this study, the term gender is used following this conceptualization of gender which is composed of culturally constructed male and female identity.

⁵ Oxford, R. *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. (New York, USA: Newbury House, 1990) p.18

⁶ Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of the Identity*. New York: Routledge. P. 8

⁷ Cameron, D. (2004). Language, gender, and sexuality: Current issue and new directions. *Applied Linguistics* 26/4, 482-502. Oxford University Press