BEING SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE LEARNER: SOME USEFUL TIPS
LEARNING STRATEGIES TO APPLY FOR THE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT
Learning strategies are the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal. Learning a language especially English is quite challenging for the students since they have to master many skills in English: speaking, reading, listening and writing. This is certainly not easy for the students. This paper presents some strategies that the students can do in order to be more successful in learning English as a foreign language.

Key words: Strategies, Successful, Language Learner.

INTRODUCTION
Probably all of us are familiar with this statement “Your success in learning a language depends on you.” This idea is true because the greatest contributing factors in learning a language is about how much effort and strategy that someone’s have in learning English. Learning a language is probably the most difficult set of skills that someone could ever struggle to learn. There is no easy way to master a language, particularly a language which is not our first language. This ideas can be seen especially in countries where English is learned as a second or foreign language. In order to be a successful language learner, someone must strive and search for new experiences and challenges, to develop a feel for the language and to find opportunities for constant practice. Apart from these, there are many other contributing factors that determine the success in learning the language. In the process of learning the language, there are many variables that determine the success of a language learner. Language learning success is associated with a range of factors including age, gender, motivation, intelligence, anxiety level, language learning style and learning strategies. Among those factors, language learning strategies is one of the factors which is very important for language learners since it can make them successful in learning a language especially English.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Within the area of foreign language research, a number of studies indicate that learning strategies play a significant role in successful language learning. Politzer and McGroarty (1983) claim that learning strategies are positively associated with language acquisition. They may improve learners’ learning in the forms and functions which are required for comprehension and production (Rubin, 1981). Moreover, learners utilize learning strategies to aid the acquisition, storage, or retrieval of information (Rigney, 1978). In specific, the behaviors or actions used by learners to make language learning more successful, self-directed, and enjoyable are considered language learning strategies. Therefore, persistent the use of the strategies for language learning is a fundamental requirement.
B.1. The Definition of language Learning Strategies

There are many definitions from the experts about language learning strategies. Bialystok (1981: 71) states that language learning strategies are optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language. Meanwhile, Rubin, J (1987: 23) claims that Learning strategies are those which contribute to the development of the language system that the learner constructs and affects learning directly. Moreover, Chammot A (1987: 71) defines language learning strategies as techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information.

In addition, Oxford, R (1990: 8) says that Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. Then, Hall, J. K. (2001:92) Learning strategies are goal-directed actions that are used by learners to mediate their own learning.

To sum up the theories above, it can be understood that learning strategies are steps or ways taken by a language learner or students to help the students and make them easy in studying a language in this case English itself. By having the strategies, it is expected that they will be successful in studying english.

B.2. Importance of strategy in learning a foreign language

Once a learning strategy becomes familiar through repeated use, it may be used with some automaticity, but most learners will, if required, be able to call the strategy to conscious awareness. Learning strategies are important in second language learning and teaching for two major reasons. First, by examining the strategies used by second language learners during the language learning process, we gain insights into the metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective processes involved in language learning. The second reason supporting research into language learning strategies is that less successful language learners can be taught new strategies, thus helping them become better language learners (Grenfell & Harris, 1999). Numerous descriptive studies have addressed the goal of understanding the range and type of learning strategies used by good language learners and the differences in learning strategy use between more and less effective.

B.3. Characteristic of good Language Learner

According to Rubin and Thompson in Thompson (1983), a good language learner possesses some of these 12 characteristics. They are as follow:
1. Good learners find their own way
2. Good learners organize information about language
3. Good learners are creative and experiment with language
4. Good learners make their own opportunities, and find strategies for getting practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom
5. Good learners learn to live with uncertainty and develop strategies for making sense of the target language without wanting to understand every word
6. Good learners use mnemonics (rhymes, word associations, etc. to recall what has been learned)
7. Good learners make errors work
8. Good learners use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language in mastering a second language
9. Good learners let the context (extra-linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world) help them in comprehension
10. Good learners learn to make intelligent guesses
11. Good learners learn chunks of language as wholes and formalized routines to help them perform ‘beyond their competence’
12. Good learners learn production techniques (e.g. techniques for keeping a conversation going)
13. Good learners learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation
Meanwhile, Lightbown and Spada’s (1997) Characteristics of a ‘Good Language Learner. They are as follow:

1. Good learners are willing and accurate guessers
2. Good learners are willing to make mistakes
3. Good learners try to communicate even without language
4. Good learners look for patterns
5. Good learners practice whenever possible
6. Good learners analyse their own speech
7. Good learners pay attention to their own standards
8. Good learners enjoy grammar
9. Good learners begin learning in childhood
10. Good learners have above average IQs
11. Good learners have good academic skills
12. Good learners have good self image and self confidence

In conclusion, it can be seen that the characteristic of a good language learners should fulfill the criteria as it is mentioned previously. A good language learners has a strong desire to study and not afraid to experiment his ability to many people whether it is in the classroom or outside of the classroom. in addition, they also enjoy themselves while studying in the classroom and participate as much as possible in learning process.

B.4 Strategies in Learning English

To be successful in learning English, the students need to have strategies. According to Brown (2001:5) there are some strategies that the students could have and apply in learning English. They are as follow:

1. Discovering the learning style
   Learning a foreign language is just one form of learning in general. Therefore, each individual will employ the approach that he or she usually applies to other learning situations. According to some literature found, Learning styles may be defined in multiple ways, depending upon one’s perspective. Here area some definitions of learning styles. Brown (2000) defines learning styles as the manner in which individuals perceive and process information in learning situations. He argues that learning style preference is one aspect of learning style, and refers to the choice of one learning situation or condition over another.

   In addition, Murcia (2001) defines learning styles as the general approaches for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. The manner in which a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment. Learning style is sometimes defined as the characteristic cognitive, affective, social, and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment” (MacKeracher, 2004:71). Morover, Brown (2000) defines learning styles as the manner in which individuals perceive and process information in learning situations. He argues that learning style preference is one aspect of learning style, and refers to the choice of one learning situation or condition over another.

   To sum up the theories above, Learning style is the way and technique that the students use to learn and process information and knowledge. It helps students learn more fast and easier with selecting and using the appropriate learning style that they like. Learning styles refer to the variations in your ability to accumulate as well as assimilate information. Basically, learning style is the method that best allows you to gather and use knowledge in a specific manner. Most experts agree that there are three basic learning styles. Each individual may possess a single style or could possess a combination of different learning styles. In most cases, the characteristics of a learning style can even be observed at a relatively young age.

   According to the theories, there are some learning style that is widely used by the students. Jensen and Nickelsen (2011:35) state that Basically, learning styles are divided into three part, they are as follows:

   a. Visual learner
      Visual learners think in pictures and learn best in visual images. They depend on the teachers or facilitator’s non-verbal cues
such as body language to help with understanding. Sometimes, visual learners favour sitting in the front of the classroom. Individuals who fall into this category typically learn through what they are able to see with their own eyes. Visual learners have a tendency to describe everything that they see in terms of appearances. These learners love visual aids such as photos, diagrams, maps and graphs. Visual learners frequently are good writers and will commonly perform quite well on written assignments. The best ways for visual learner to process the information by recording, allocating, calculating, simplifying, describing, proving, preparing, evaluating, rewriting, drawing a picture, making mind-map, making a note, and using graphics organizer.

b. Auditory Learner

The students with this style discover information through listening and interpret information by the means of pitch, emphasis and speed. These individuals gain knowledge from reading out loud in the classroom and may not have a full understanding of information that is written.

Auditory style (auditory learner) is learning style where learner or students are very good in listening. They tend to absorb information in a more efficient manner through sounds, music, discussions, teachings, etc. These individuals will be more likely to record lectures so that they can replay them at a later time for study purposes. Auditory learners appreciate books on tape and may find that reading aloud will help them to retain information. Rather than written reports, auditory learners tend to do better on oral presentations and reports.

The best ways for auditory learner to process the information by Telling the information loudly, Listening the voice recording, Discussing with friends or learning group, recording an argument or statement, doing interview, teaching someone or people, and debating with others.

c. Kinesthetic Learner

Kinesthetic learner prefers to learn by doing. They are good at recalling events and associate feelings or physical experience with memory. They enjoy physical activity, field trips, manipulating objects, and other practical, first-hand experience. They often find it difficult to keep still and need regular breaks in classroom activities. Kinesthetic learner prefers to learn through movement and is best to memorize the information by linking the movement. This modality of accessing all types of motion and emotion are created and kept in mind.

2. Motivating self and setting goals

Motivations is one of the most factors in students success in English. Motivations means having a real purpose in learning English or really wanting to learn English for a reason. According to Brown (1994:33) motivation is the extent to which someone make choices about goals to pursue and the effort that someone will devote to that pursuit. Motivation is very important in learning language because by having a good motivation, the students will do something more seriously. This argument is also supported by Ur (2000:275) claims that motivation is very strongly related to achievement in language learning. Then, she classifies some characteristics of motivated learner:

a. Positive task orientation which means the learner is willing to tackle tasks and challenges and has confidence in their success.

b. Ego-involvement which means that the learner finds it important to succeed in learning in order to maintain and promote his/her positive self image.

c. Need for achievement. It means that the learner has a need to achieve, to overcome difficulties and succeed in what he sets out to do.

d. High aspiration. It means that the learner is ambitious, goes for demanding challenges, high proficiency, top grades.

e. Goal orientation. It means that the learner is very aware of the goals of learning.

f. Perseverance. It means that the learner consistently invests a high level of effort in learning.

g. Tolerance of ambiguity. It means that the learner is not disturbed or frustrated by
situations involving a temporary lack of understanding or confusion.

3. Developing self confidence and lowering anxiety

Self confidence is how someone feel specifically about someone’s ability in English while anxiety means that students are afraid of making mistakes because someone feel your teacher will think that you are stupid or your classmates will laugh at you. In learning English confidence is a must since we will experiment many things in English especially speaking. By having confidence in learning, step by step our english can be improved. According to Brown (2002:27) there are some ways of developing overall self confidence and lowering anxiety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: Ways of Developing confidence and Lowering anxiety</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop overall self Confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Make a list of strengths and weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Sets goals to overcome weaknesses</td>
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<td>-Tell that you can do it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think Positively</td>
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<td>-Don’t say you can’t</td>
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<td>-Don’t let other classmates bad attitude affect you</td>
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<td>-Respect your teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask for help</td>
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<td>-Ask the teacher when it is needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Ask the classmate for help when it is needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Practice English as much as possible with the classmate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. Learning a second culture

Learning a second language always means learning a second culture. Language and culture are connected. When students greet someone or say no to an invitation or talk with people in an informal conversation all these situations are cultural. To improve english, try to understand the culture of an English speaking countries. When someone see the difference, ask people about them, read about them and learn about them. Use English to find answers to the questions about the culture. Most people have culture shock for a few months or even a year after they move to a new country and have to speak a new language. Brown (2002) proposes some strategies to reduce culture shock. First, the students have to find things to enjoy such as movies, tv, sports, restaurants, books and etc. Second, make friends with as many local people as possible. Third, ask questions when students not understand something about local culture. Fourth, try to think positively about the new culture. Fifth, try to remember, no place is perfect, including our own country. Sixth, students don not need to upset because culture schock is normal and they will get over it.

CONCLUSION

Previously, it is stated that language learning strategies is one of the factors which is very important for language learners since it can make them sucessful in learning a language especially English. Hence, the students can apply some tips in learning English. They are: first, the students have to discover their own learning style. Second, the students have to motivate themselves and set goals. Third, the students have to develop their confidence and reduce their anxiety. Fourth, the students have to learn the culture of the target language in order to make them aware and understand of the language they learn.

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