

EXPLORING EFL LEARNER'S SELF-EFFICACY, BELIEFS AND METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES USE TO ENHANCE THE ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN INDONESIA

Muslikan
(muslikan@yahoo.com)

SMP PGRI 1 Kediri

Abstract: Individual differences among EFL learners have been widely accepted playing important roles on successful English learners. EFL teachers should encourage the language learners to improve their self-efficacy and language learning strategy use especially metacognitive by seeking the ways to increase their experience or years of English study. This also should necessarily result in change in their beliefs and learning strategy use especially about foreign language learning because people with high self-efficacy—that is, those who believe they can perform well—are more likely to view difficult tasks as something to be mastered rather than something to be avoided. Moreover, metacognitive strategies are needed for planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning. Started from this understanding, it can be widely believed that both learners' self-efficacy and metaconitive strategy are undoubtedly powerful variables on enhancing the learners' English proficiency. Thus, this paper will focus on exploring EFL learner's self-efficacy beliefs and metacognitive strategies use to enhance their English proficiency.

Key words: EFL learners, self efficacy beliefs, metacognitive strategies,

INTRODUCTION

Individual differences among EFL learners have been widely accepted playing important roles on successful English learners. Self efficacy is one of the individual aspect within learners that has been studied widely. For instance, Bonyadi, Nikou, and Shahbaz (2012) find that in Iranian EFL learner context, there is no relationship between self-efficacy and language learning strategy use. Moreover, metacognitive strategies are frequently used language learning strategies by EFL learners.

In addition, there were no significant differences in both self-efficacy and strategy use due to gender. But, there were significant differences in self-efficacy beliefs and only in metacognitive strategies due to years of English study. This draws the attention of EFL teachers to encourage their learners to improve their self-efficacy and language learning strategy use especially metacognitive by seeking the ways to increase their experience or years of English study. This also should necessarily result in change in their beliefs and learning strategy use especially about foreign language learning.

Learners' self-efficacy is a belief in their ability to succeed in certain situations (Bandura: 1998). The concept plays a major role in which it focuses on how personality is

shaped by social experience and observational learning. In other words, people with high self-efficacy—that is, those who believe they can perform well—are more likely to view difficult tasks as something to be mastered rather than something to be avoided. Thus, it is self-efficacy that helps us explain the reason of why people's behaviors are different when they have similar knowledge.

Ellis (1997:77) argued that metacognitive strategies are those involved in planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning. These activities can be elaborated as previewing a concept or principle in anticipation of a learning activity; deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of input; rehearsing linguistics components which will be required for an upcoming language task; self monitoring of progress and knowledge states. Started from this understanding, metacognitive strategies seem the most beneficial strategies to be implemented by students to enhance their proficiency their English well.

Based on those theories above, it can be widely accepted that both learners' self-efficacy and metaconitive strategy are the most powerful variables on enhancing the learners' English proficiency. Thus, these two variables should be considered more by every English teacher especially in EFL context.

A REVIEW ON A RECENT STUDY

According to Bonyadi, Bonyadi, Nikou, and Shahbaz (2012), the beliefs about self-efficacy and language learning strategies are interesting topics to be investigated by researchers rather than other learner individual differences. In the past view years, the research findings mostly support the evidences that learner's self-efficacy beliefs strongly affect the students performance especially in term of learning English (Bandura, 1997). Because of the lacks of sufficient information related to self-efficacy that affects in the process of learning, storing, retaining the performance of learners academically, results of the present studies can be fruitful for Iranian teachers and learners. Oxford (1985) noted that strategies of successful language learners can provide a basis for aiding language learners. Because Iranian learners have less information about strategies and conscious use of language learning strategies, the findings of the present study can help them to be more successful. Furthermore, there is no study showing the existence of a relationship between self-efficacy and language learning strategies in Iran. Therefore, the results of this study can assist teachers to use new information in their teaching program.

From the findings on his research about the correlation between EFL learners' self-efficacy beliefs and their language learning strategy use among Iranian English learners, it is

concluded that most of the participants were more in using metacognitive strategies. The highest use of such strategies among Iranian students was similar to that observed among students of the previous studies (Oxford, 1990) but inconsistent with the most of the relevant studies which favoured compensation strategies as containing the highest use of the overall strategies. It is apparent that particular strategies may be culturally of more value to the students, and therefore preferred, or it may be that the educational experience of Iranian students leads them to prefer some strategies (e.g., Metacognitive strategies) over others.

Moreover, their findings with respect to the existence of a significant difference of gender in the use of language learning strategy use support the results reported by Rahimi, Riazi and Seif (2004). However, the findings contradict those of previous studies that have reported a wider range of overall strategy use by females (e.g., Oxford and Nyikos, 1989). A possible reason for this absence of gender significant difference in strategy use might be the fact that the participants of this study were English university students. It is possible that the students' awareness of learning processes minimized the gender effect in the present study. Also, our findings with respect to the existence of a significant difference in learning strategy use due to years of English study were consistent with the Oxford and Nyikos' (1989). They indicated that participants who had longer length of English learning had higher means in Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning questionnaire. In other words, students with more years of language study tended to use strategies more than less experienced students. The findings were not similar with the findings of Rahimi, Riazi and Seif (2004) in which they have indicated that years of language study appear to negatively predict strategy use. Furthermore, the findings of the relationship between self-efficacy and learning strategy use scores obtained by Urmia English students on self-efficacy scale and SILL were unrelated to each other. It means that the General Self-efficacy (GSE) Scale do not have significant correlation with the scores on questionnaire of SILL. Thus, findings of previous studies by Magogwe and Oliver (2007) on relationship between self-efficacy and language learning strategy use which showed a positive correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and learning strategy use were not replicated here.

The findings of the study give a better understanding of the important role of self-efficacy and strategy use among EFL learners in general and Iranian learners in particular. This brings the suggestion of EFL teachers to encourage their learners to improve their self-efficacy and language learning strategy use by seeking the ways to improve their experience or years of English study. It occurs since the improvement of learners' self efficacy and language strategy use, the English proficiency level seems are able to improve as well. Thus,

the next section will elaborate more related to self efficacy and metacognitive strategy as the strategy used mostly by the learners.

SELF EFFICACY

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy refers to thoughts and feelings of a person about his or her own ability to perform an action. Thus, it is strongly as one's beliefs on his or her ability to organize and execute the process of learning which is required to produce an attainment given.

As one of components from motivation, self-efficacy has the strongest effect and contributes most to performance (Katz and Shoshani, 2007) . Self-efficacy entails constant work of personal evaluation of abilities, which involves drawing conclusions and reaching a final appraisal. In learning context, this belief affects the action in learning process pursued by learners, how much effort they put into a given endeavor, and how long they will persevere in the face of failure. And the contrary, learners who are feeling doubt about their capabilities in particular domains of activity, shy away from difficult tasks in those domains, find it hard to motivate themselves, and give up quickly in the face of obstacles. In contrast, people who have strong beliefs in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided and invest a high level of effort in what they do (Pintrich and DeGroot in Katz and Shoshani , 2007).

Self-efficacy is a thinking process, a generative capability in which cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral sub-skills are organized and effectively orchestrated to serve innumerable purposes. Self-efficacy operates as a key factor in a generative system of human competence (Bandura, 1997). As long as people continue to believe in their abilities to perform a given activity, they act habitually on that belief.

Moreover, Efficacy beliefs are constructed from four principal sources of information: (a) enactive mastery experiences that serve as indicators of capability, (b) vicarious experiences that alter beliefs through transmission of competencies and comparison with the attainments of others, (c) verbal persuasion that one possesses certain capabilities, and (d) physiological and affective states from which people judge their capableness. Efficacy beliefs are a product of cognitive processing of diverse sources of efficacy information. Once formed, they contribute to the quality of human functioning in diverse ways.

Lately, more attention has been paid to the issue of calibration of students' efficacy beliefs in relation to their actual performance. The self-efficacy appraisal-performance relationship generates four different types of self-efficacious people according to Bandura. The first is the realistic type of people, whose efficacy appraisals correspond to their

performance level. Under cautious realistic self-appraisals, people rarely set aspirations beyond their immediate reach, nor do they mount the extra effort needed to surpass their ordinary performances (Bandura, 1997).

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY

According to Ellis (1997:76-77), learning strategies are the particular approaches or techniques employed by learners or students in the process of learning especially, in this context, in learning new language (L2). In line with this statement, Oxford (1990: 1) gives a meaning to learning strategies as the steps or ways used by the learners to enhance their own learning.. In addition, Casper et al. (in Hismanoglu, 2000) define learning strategies as attempt to develop linguistics and sociolinguistics competence in the target language. To sum up these ideas, it can be concluded that learning strategies are approaches, techniques, tools, ways, steps, or attempts employed by learners to enhance their learning and to find the quickest or easiest way in developing communicative competence.

Furthermore, Oxford (1990: 14) mentions that the learning strategies are divided into two main classes: direct and indirect. These two classes are subdivided into a total of six groups (memory, cognitive, and compensation as direct class; metacognitive, affective, and social as indirect). From that strategy, metacognitive strategy seemingly believed as the most powerful strategy used by learners. This idea supported by Oxford (1990: 136), he states that metacognitive strategies are actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process. This statement is also strengthen by Schmitt and McCarthy (1997: 216) that metacognitive strategies are used by the students to control and evaluate their own learning, by having an overview of the learning process in general.

ENHANCING THE STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TROUGH SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS

Self-efficacy can greatly impact how people feel, think, behave, and motivate themselves. People who have a heightened sense of self-efficacy tend to see challenging problems as tasks to be mastered, rather than threats to be avoided, develop greater intrinsic interest and focus in their activities, set challenging goals and demonstrate a stronger sense of commitment to them, quickly recover their self-efficacy following setbacks and disappointments.

However, people who have a low sense of self-efficacy tend to void difficult tasks and view them as personal threats, have a weak commitment to their goals and believe that

difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities, Dwell on personal failings and negative outcomes, rather than how to succeed, quickly lose faith in their personal abilities and easily develop depression and stress (Bandura, 1994).

In addition, people who possess high self-efficacy have a tendency to learn and achieve more than those with low self-efficacy, "even when actual ability levels are the same" (Ormrod, 2008:137).

Self-efficacy affects all aspects of life, including exercise and health behaviors, emotional responses, academic pursuits, and career choices. When one possesses high self-efficacy, one is more likely to choose tasks one believes one will succeed at, set and focus on higher goals, persevere, even in the face of adversity, and learn and achieve more than those without high self-efficacy (Ormrod, 2008). According to Ormrod (2008), social cognitive theorists believe self efficacy is developed from one's previous successes and failures, messages that others communicate, successes and failures of others, and successes and failures of the group as a whole. In other words, individuals determine their self efficacy by judging how they did in the past on certain activities, the feedback they receive from others, observing the results of others' attempts at certain tasks, and the results of how they work in a group on collaborative assignments (Ormrod, 2008).

Others have significant influence on one's self-efficacy by providing praise and positive assurance regarding the possibility of success (Ormrod, 2008). Understanding how to help influence individuals to develop self-efficacy helps educators, parents, coaches and employers to design learning and work environments that provide the necessary feedback and support needed by the individuals (Fitton, 2008). Assisting children in developing their self-efficacy is vital and can be done by means of positive reinforcement and positive role modeling. Positive reinforcement and positive role-modeling help children learn more effectively and be more productive in their tasks. Aiding adults to develop high levels of self-efficacy is equally as important by helping them to become more productive in their surroundings, reduces stress, and has great potential to increase happiness.

ENHANCING THE STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY THROUGH METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Oxford (1990: 137-140) stated that metacognitive strategies include three strategy sets: Centering Your Learning (CYL), Arranging and Planning Your Learning (APYL), and Evaluating Your Learning (EYL). In CYL the learners focus to coverage their attention and energies on certain language tasks, activities, skills, or materials. This strategy is related with

three strategies; overviewing and linking with already known material, paying attention to a language task, and delaying speech production to focus on listening. While APYL focuses the attention on finding out about language learning, organizing, setting goals and objectives, identifying the purpose of a language task, planning for a language task, seeking practice opportunities. The last is EYL which focuses on, self-monitoring and self-evaluating.

Similar with the statements above, O'Malley et al in Brown (1994: 115-116) defines a metacognitive strategies as strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. It means that metacognitive strategies are useful for learners in organizing concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity, deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distracters, deciding in advance to attend specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input, understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions, planning for and rehearsing linguistics components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task, correcting one's speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present, consciously deciding to postpone speaking in order to learn initially through listening comprehension, and checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.

Based on some elaboration above, it can be inferred that metacognitive strategy which is widely used by successful learners in learning English can be used as strategy to improve the learner's English proficiency. This conclusion occurs due to metacognitive strategy enhances and enriches the learning experience, develop independent learners who can control their own learning and learn how to learn for life, provides self-monitoring, which is a step-by-step process of evaluation during the learning process, and last, Metacognition develops higher learning and problem solving skills. By applying this strategy, the improvement of English proficiency is significantly avoidable.

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the article written by Bonyadi, Nikou, and Shahbaz (2012) about correlational study on *The Relationship between EFL Learners' Self-efficacy Beliefs and Their Language Learning Strategy Use* among Iranian students which come up with conclusion that the importance of improvement the EFL learners self-efficacy and the use of metacognitive strategy. Even though in their study did not show the significant correlation

between self-efficacy and language learning strategy use, however it found out that, metacognitive strategies are frequently used as language learning strategies by EFL learners. Moreover, some previous studies showed that self efficacy is one of individual differences which mostly affected the students' performance and proficiency. Thus, both self efficacy and metacognitive strategy have essential role in the enhancing EFL learners' proficiency in English.

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