

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Being proficient in speak English is one important skill in global communication because it allows individuals to convey their ideas, notions, opinions undeniably and effectively. Mastering this skill is not only an academic requirement but also a professional need for students in the English Language Education Department at the Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji (UMRAH), as they are being prepared to become competent and professional language educators. However, verbal expression is often viewed as the most formidable linguistic area. This aligns with (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017) who state that speaking serves as the primary channel for language expression but is also the most complex aspect of foreign language learning because it simultaneously involves linguistic, cognitive, and affective processes.

Syabhani & Apoko (2023) revealed that learners of English as a foreign language often face various difficulties, including limited exposure to authentic language, speaking anxiety, and a curriculum that prioritizes comprehension-based competencies over expression language capabilities. Similarly, Wahyuni (2021) reported that only about 38% of Indonesian students consistently apply speaking strategies outside the classroom. Alghamdi (2020) also emphasized that 71% of speaking errors are caused by employing suboptimal study techniques, not purely due to linguistic deficiencies. However, most previous literature have generally focused on language learning strategies as a broad

construct, with limited attention given to specific strategies in different learning environments such as UMRAH.

Although pedagogical tactics exert a substantial influence on supporting speaking aptitudes, most previous studies still focus their research on general language acquisition methodologies without considering specific tactics that are demonstrate superior efficacy in enhancing oral proficiency. Oxford's (2023) taxonomy classifies these methodologies into six distinct domains, including memory-related, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, affective, and social frameworks. Among the six tactics, metacognitive strategy plays the most central contribution to autonomous learning, owing to this strategy directs, monitors, and evaluates the learning process (Oxford, 2023). Thus, students who apply metacognitive strategies tend to be more capable of planning, monitoring, and evaluating their speaking performance, as well as making continuous improvements. Therefore, although language learning strategies are broad, this study focuses on the study of metacognitive strategies as an operational representation of learning strategies believed to significantly contribute to speaking ability.

The results of the pre-observation conducted at the PBI class of UMRAH showed that most students faced significant oral English impediments. This includes deficient lexical resources that hinders fluency, pronunciation difficulties caused by the first language (L1), and a lack of confidence that reduces participation in conversations. Despite studying English for several years, many learners were not yet able to employ effective learning

tactics to overcome their speaking difficulties.

Based on that analysis, a significant research gap can be identified. Previous literature has predominantly investigated limited quantitative research exploring how students' learning strategies influence their speaking abilities in a maritime environment like UMRAH. The distinct contribution of this inquiry stems from focus on analyzing the relationship between these two variables with regard to the Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji, where English-speaking ability plays a crucial role both academically and professionally, particularly inside the domains of teacher education and training. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the relationship between learning strategies (metacognitive strategy) and the speaking abilities of UMRAH English Language Education students. By using a quantitative approach through the SILL questionnaire instrument and speaking tests, this research was expected to generate empirical data that supports the development of more effective, contextual, and metacognitively aware speaking learning models to help students choose the right learning strategies.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Drawing from the contextual framework, some speaking obstacles identified are as follows:

1. Learners still face obstacles speaking English fluently induced by a paucity of words, which hinders the spontaneous expression of ideas in conversation.
2. Most students show a diminished self-assurance when presenting before

the class or interacting in English.

3. Students' metacognitive awareness in monitoring their speaking development is lacking, even though self-control in learning significantly impacts speaking performance.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

To maintain a well-directed and narrow analytical boundary, this empirical inquiry deliberately restricts its operational scope. Rather than encompassing all taxonomies of language learning approaches, the primary investigation strictly focuses on tactical learning frameworks—specifically, the metacognitive strategies deployed by third-semester undergraduates in Class One at Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji during their oral English acquisition. This specific constraint is applied to allow a profound examination of a singular strategic domain that actively facilitates conscious management throughout the learning process.

The evaluation of these strategic behaviors utilizes Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), with an exclusive emphasis on questionnaire items that gauge executive control mechanisms, systematic monitoring, and structural organization. Consequently, alternative tactical modalities, including cognitive, affective, social, and compensatory strategies, are entirely excluded from the analytical focus of the current investigation. Furthermore, undergraduates' oral proficiency is quantified solely through a tailored speaking performance test evaluating pronunciation, vocabulary accuracy,

and fluency. Secondary competencies such as reading, writing, and listening are not scrutinized, given that the empirical focus is specifically directed toward oral communication as a complex, context-dependent productive skill.

Moreover, the research participants are confined to third-semester students in Class One who have completed or are concurrently enrolled in the Speaking course. Because the sample selection is heavily dependent on the deployment of self-regulatory tactics identified through the questionnaire, the resulting empirical data cannot be generalized to the entire cohort within the English Language Education study program at UMRAH or other institutions with contrasting academic profiles. Finally, this project does not account for external variables that potentially influence speaking performance, such as social environments, intrinsic motivation, oral anxiety levels, instructional styles, individual practice frequency, or prior educational backgrounds. These omitted dimensions extend beyond the predefined empirical boundaries, leaving them open for future scholarly investigations to achieve a more holistic interpretation of oral proficiency determinants in the EFL context.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background and problem limitations explained above, the research questions that will be answered in this study is: How is the correlation between these learning strategy (Metacognitive Strategy) and the students' speaking ability?

1.5 Objective of the Study

This empirical study primarily aims to investigate the correlation between the deployment of metacognitive learning strategies and the oral English development of undergraduates enrolled in the English Language Education Study Program at UMRAH. Additionally, it seeks to deliver substantive empirical data validating how effectively these executive self-regulatory frameworks support the enhancement of learners' speaking proficiency.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The outcomes of this empirical inquiry are anticipated to yield significant advantages both theoretically and practically:

1.6.1 Theoretically

This empirical inquiry is projected to contribute substantially to the existing body of knowledge surrounding oral acquisition methodologies within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy. Specifically, it offers fresh academic perspectives and nuanced insights tailored to the landscape of tertiary education environments in Indonesia.

1.6.2 Practically

The outcomes yielded by this research:

a. Students

To enhance awareness and ability in selecting appropriate speaking learning strategies, thereby optimizing their speaking abilities in English.

b. Lecturers and Program Administrators

As a consideration in designing more effective teaching methods and curricula that meet students' needs.

c. Other Researchers

As a reference related to effective pedagogical tactics that can be deployed to improve English speaking abilities

1.7 Key Terms of the Study

To avoid ambiguity in understanding the concepts, some key terms in this study are explained as follows:

1. Speaking learning strategies

Referring to techniques, approaches, or actions systematically used by learners to effectively acquire and enhance their English speaking ability. This strategy was identified with the evaluation predicated on data yielded by the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) instrument.

2. English speaking ability

Describes the capacity of undergraduates regarding the expression of conceptual thoughts, personal viewpoints, and knowledge orally in English with fluency, accuracy, and confidence. This ability is measured based on the results of a speaking test that assesses four main aspects: pronunciation, vocabulary, accuracy, and fluency.

3. Undergraduate students

In the context of this investigation, the term "undergraduate students" designates learners enrolled within the English Language Education Study Program at UMRAH. These individuals are situated within the early adulthood educational phase and bear an elevated accountability for autonomously regulating their acquisition tactics. This is aligned with empirical literature; for instance, a study executed by Margarita Gozalo-Delgado et al. (2020) asserts that university-level students serve as proactive agents throughout their educational journey, whereas instructors predominantly assume the role of facilitators within the instructional framework.

4. Speaking difficulties

This concept refers to the empirical barriers encountered by learners throughout their oral English production. These impediments encompass both linguistic dimensions, including deficient lexical resources and articulatory inaccuracies, and psychological factors, such as verbal apprehension and diminished self-assurance.

5. Correlation

Refers to the statistical correlation between two research variables analyzed using wherein the Pearson product-moment correlation matrix is employed to evaluate the strength and orientation of their statistical link.