

STATISTICS CORRELATION INDONESIA LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND GENDER AMONG STUDENTS SEKOLAH INDONESIA KOTA KINABALU (SIKK) SABAH MALAYSIA

Andang Sunarto

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bengkulu
Jalan Raden Patah, Kelurahan Pagar Dewa
Kota Bengkulu, Bengkulu 65144

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to analyze the statistical relationship influence gender differences in the correlation between language learning strategies and their ability in the Indonesian language for students Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Researchers previously found that more work on language learning strategies, the more successful learners and people with higher levels of use of the strategy is women rather than men. In this study, eighty (40 male, 40 female) students Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia participated in this study. Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was adopted to identify the students' language learning strategies, while their proficiency based on their test results Indonesian. Pearson correlation coefficient, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test were used to make statistical interpretation of the relationship. Knowledge gained from this research will be useful for future studies on how to improve the quality of learning and proficiency in Indonesia.

Keywords: Learning, language, gender, correlations.

INTRODUCTION

In Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, Indonesia as the first language (L1) of the Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, which is one of the compulsory subjects taught in primary and secondary school. At an elementary level, Indonesia language is a compulsory subject as they are required to sit for the Indonesia Language Test, a pre-requisite for entering Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Despite its wide usage in Indonesia education, an average Indonesian student in Sabah, Malaysia, still finds it hard to master the language adequately in terms of speaking the language fluently, writing compositions in Indonesia and applying proper grammar, resulting in unsatisfactory examination results. This has caused potentially smart youths facing problems in trying to get into Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Another obvious matter seen across the public Indonesian school in Sabah, Malaysia as of the twenty-first century is that, the number of female students always exceeds the number of male students. Could this be caused by psychological sex differences or is it just because that there are more female than male left in this world? However, it has been proved that men and women clearly differ in some psychological domains. Thus, there are possibilities that more female students are

getting accepted into school because they are able to grasp better language proficiency.

Factors influencing a student's language proficiency have often been related to their language learning strategies (LLS). For decades, numerous studies were made based on the language learning strategies. Defines learning according to Weinstein and Mayer (1988) is strategies as specific behaviors and thoughts that influence learner's encoding process. It is believed that a learning strategy facilitates the learner's acquisition, storage, or retrieval of information. Green and Oxford (1995) defines it as specific action or techniques that students use, often intentionally, to improve their progress in developing L1 skill. Since female students tend to have better language proficiency than male, we need to identify where the difference lies when it comes to the language learning strategies used by both genders. With that been said, identifying the correlation language learning strategies, language proficiency, and gender will aid in both teachers and students in improving their learning process, particularly in Indonesia language.

This paper is based on a preliminary test, which was administered to eighty students Malaysia (40 males, 40 females) at Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia in Agustus 2015. These students were given a

background questionnaire that includes gender, age, nationality, state of origin, the language used at home, previous secondary school type, household income, and parents' education, together with a self-report questionnaire called the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) to identify their learning strategies. Many strategy questionnaires have been constructed but the strategy inventory for language learning has been reported to have high reliability and validity. It is the most often used strategy questionnaire by researchers in many countries to identify the language learning strategy. Their identities were kept secret and results were only recorded based on their matriculation number.

The purpose of this study is to explore learning strategies that may contribute to improving the quality of Indonesia language learning and proficiency in Sabah, Malaysia. Therefore, we begin by identifying the differences in the usage of language learning strategies between male and female students, the correlation each category of the language learning strategies and language proficiency for both male and female students, and the correlation the overall use of language learning strategies and language proficiency for both male and female students.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Research in language learning strategies and other aspects related to it have always been popular amongst researchers. Most studies associate language learning strategies with effective language learning. Although there were studies that found no correlation the frequency of language learning strategy use and language learner's performance, most of them generally claimed otherwise. Bremner's (1988) study was based on students studying language and communication skills in City University in Hong Kong. He concluded that there are three possible ways of looking at strategies and their correlation with proficiency; the first is to see them as the outcomes of proficiency; the second is to see them as having a uni-directional causal role in increasing proficiency, but there is no strong evidence for this yet; the third is to accept previous researchers' view that the correlation the two is mutual, that causality is bi-directional.

Magogwe and Oliver (2007) conducted an interesting research where their subjects were a student of various levels of education, including primary, secondary and tertiary learners, with an

objective to address the dearth of research exploring the effect of age on choice of language learning strategy. The study found more proficient language learners generally use language learning strategies and that there is a correlation type of strategy used and successful language learning. The study also found that different age groups prefer different strategies resulting in better language learning. Most previous researchers have included other variables that affect language learning such as age and gender. Politzer and McGroarty (1985) who ran a self-report questionnaire and gained scores over an intensive course in Indonesia reported mixed result, which was that some behaviors were associated with conscious learning whereas others were related to acquisition and gains in general communicative competence. The results of the questionnaire, which was classified according to the student's cultural background, also suggested that cultural background had a great deal to do with the type of language learning behavior. The authors then concluded, there is still need for a great deal of research leading to the precise formulation of the actual constructs implied by the various behaviors mentioned in current "good language learner" literature.

When it comes to gender, most studies found that women tend to use language learning strategies more than men, resulting in better proficiency. Goh and Foong (1997) found that the female students used more of each category in language learning strategies, resulting in higher means with significant differences for compensation and effective strategy by using a t-test. Green and Oxford (1995) too concluded that women had a higher overall strategy use compared to men and that there is a significant difference by proficiency level and gender in students' use of the broad strategy categories on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. Green and Oxford (1995) also argued that most studies have tended to pay more attention to overall strategy use rather than the differences in the use of individual strategies. Hence, in this study, we pay attention to both the gender differences in each category of strategy in language learning strategies and the overall use strategy use of language learning strategies.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Eighty students (40 males, 40 females) at Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia had participated in this study. These

students were all at the age of Seven years old. They consisted of mainly Indonesian (Java, Timor, Adonara, Lombok, Melayu, Bugis, Ambon, Gorontalo, Manado, Palu, Bajau). These students were from two different groups, randomly classed by the class in school. Students had been informed verbally that they were part of a study to identify their language learning strategies and that there were no right or wrong answers to the questionnaires given. These students were given 20 minutes to answer both the strategy use of language learning strategies and the background questionnaire simultaneously during a class in September 2015.

Indonesia Language Test is widely used examination to test Indonesia proficiency. There are four components tested in Indonesia Language Test; listening (50 marks), speaking (50 marks), Reading (50 Marks) and Writing (50 marks). These four components are used to measure language performance in listening comprehension, grammar skill, communicative ability and writing skill. Proficiency is graded using 5 bands with band 5 being the highest, and band 1 being the lowest.

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

The strategy use of language learning strategies (SILL) version 7.0 (Oxford, 1990) was used to measure learning strategies preferences. It was a self-report questionnaire divided into six sections, each of which represented a particular strategy, both direct and indirect. The direct strategies were memory, cognitive and compensation. As for the indirect strategies, there were metacognitive, affective and social. There were 50 items and students responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "Never or almost never true of me", 2 "Usually not true of me", 3 "Somewhat true of me", 4 "Usually true of me", and 5 "Always or almost always true of me". The questionnaire was prepared in both Indonesia and English.

Background Questionnaire

The background component of the questionnaire requires the research subjects to provide the following information: matriculation number, gender, age, nationality, state, language used at home, previous secondary school type, household income, parents' highest education and the student's use of Sabah, Malaysia whether as a first language, second language or foreign

language. This part of the questionnaire was constructed to understand the background of the participants and to specify the criteria selection of samples.

Statistical Analysis

Different methods and theories produce varieties of results and conclusion. Magogwe and Oliver (2007) used a number of methods, which includes ANOVA, t-tests, repeated measures ANOVA and mixed factorial ANOVA. However, it was to determine the significance of variation in the mean strategy used across the strategy use of language learning strategies categories and the mean self-efficacy beliefs instead of language proficiency. Green and Oxford (1995) opted for ANOVA and Chi-square tests and found that proficiency level had a significant effect on the cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and social categories. But some studies preferred Pearson correlation coefficient to investigate the correlation the strategy use of language learning strategies and language proficiency (Poltizer and McGroarty, 1985; Park, 1997) and for some, self-efficacy beliefs (Magogwe and Oliver, 2007).

The analysis of the data was mainly descriptive and inferential (Zanzawi, 1986). Using R statistical software, the analysis started by computing the means and standard deviations of each strategy and the mean of the Indonesia Language Test results in each gender. Analysis of Variance F-test is then used to compare means of the overall use of language learning strategies. Welch's two-sample t-test was used to determine the significance of the variation in the mean of each strategy used across the strategy use of language learning strategies categories when compared between male and female students. For establishing the overall correlation language learning strategy and language proficiency between genders, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient were employed. All decision rules were based on calculated p-value of less than 0.10. The p-value is the probability that the test statistic will take on a value that is at least as extreme as the observed value of the statistic when the null hypothesis H_0 is true.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall use of language learning strategies between genders

Table 1 and table 2 both show the mean and standard deviation of each strategy of the categories of the strategy use of language learning strategies and the overall use of language learning strategies, according to the genders. According to these tables, the mean for overall use of language learning strategies for the female students is higher than the mean for the overall use of language learning strategies for the male students. Using ANOVA, with a critical region of $p < 0.05$, the F-value showed significant differences in the mean of the overall use of language learning strategies between these two genders, as shown in table 3. A high p-value was selected due to the fact that p-values are much influenced by sample size. This result is in line with most studies that have claimed that female students do tend to use more language learning strategies compared to male students.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the use of language learning strategy for female students.

Strategies	N	M	SD
Memory	40	3.023	0.432
Cognitive	40	3.455	0.491
Compensation	40	3.324	0.428
Meta-Cognitive	40	3.566	0.415
Affective	40	3.133	0.590
Social	40	3.652	0.572
Overall	40	3.411	0.302

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the use of language learning strategy for male students.

Strategies	N	M	SD
Memory	40	2.875	0.565
Cognitive	40	3.101	0.471
Compensation	40	3.220	0.553
Meta-Cognitive	40	3.754	0.557
Affective	40	3.125	0.603
Social	40	3.278	0.719
Overall	40	3.250	0.477

The categories of language learning strategies between genders

When the means of each category of the language learning strategies in Table 1 and Table 2 are compared, there is an obvious difference on how the female students tend to use more of each strategies than the male students, except for compensation strategy. However, using Welch's t-test, the results suggested that only two strategy that that shows a significant difference, which is the Cognitive strategy with $p = 0.0053$ and $t = 3.243$, and the Social strategy with $p = 0.082$ and $t = 1.722$. Both means of these strategies suggested that the

female students were using these strategies significantly more often compared to the male students.

Despite that, the mean of Meta-cognitive strategy by both genders suggested that it is used more frequently compared to others strategies. This result is in-line with the results obtained by Goh and Foong (1997). Whereas the mean of Memory strategy suggested that it is the least favourite strategy used by both genders, which is also a result that is in-line with Goh and Foong (1997).

Table 3. ANOVA table comparing means of overall use of language learning strategies between genders.

	Df	SS	Mean Sq	F-value	p-value
Gender	2	0.501	0.5004	2.234	0.0431
Residual	78	9.538	0.2744		

The correlation overall language learning strategies and proficiency

Table 4 shows the correlation coefficient between the overall language learning strategy and language proficiency by both female students and male students. With high p-value calculated (female, $p = 0.035$; male, $p = 0.024$), the results suggested that correlation appeared to be insignificant. Moreover, the correlation coefficient obtained for the female students' results were negative. With a small sample size, the confidence intervals obtained by both genders are also small. However, this result might be suggesting that genders do not effect the correlation language learning strategies and language proficiency. This brings up some possibly questionable assumptions. Hence, further review is needed.

Table 4. Overall relationship between language learning strategy and proficiency

Female		Male	
Pearson's R	P	Pearson's R	P
-0.021	0.035	0.013	0.024

CONCLUSION

In this article, we found that female students do indeed use the language learning strategies more frequent compared to male students. There was a significant difference between genders' mean in overall use of language learning strategies. We also found that both male and female students favour the same two strategies, which are Meta-Cognitive strategy and Social strategy. The least preferred strategy by both male and female students is also the same, which is the Memory strategy. However, a significant difference was found

only between the means for Cognitive strategy and Social strategy for both genders. The Female students tend to favour both these strategies more than the male students. Finally, we found that the correlation language learning strategies and language proficiency given their genders, appeared to be insignificant. This is due to high calculated p-values.

These results clearly suggest that there is still a lot of room for improvements in the data collection and analysis to narrow down errors and the p-values to obtain results with better confidence and reliability. Further research needs to be done before making assumptions and suggestion as to what could a teacher do to help the students to be better language learners, especially with bigger sample sizes.

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