



**THE CORRELATIONS AMONG GENDER,  
MOTIVATION AND ENGLISH  
LEARNING STRATEGIES  
OF THAI STUDENTS**

**THESIS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement  
of the Magister's Degree in the English Language Education  
at Semarang State University**

**by**

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2015**

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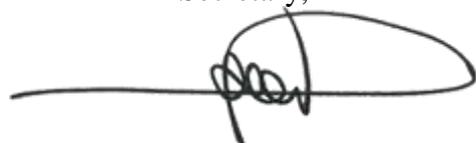
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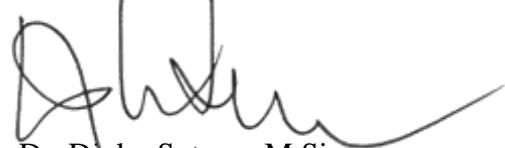
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I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writers’ opinions and finding included in this chapter are quoted or cited in accordance with the academic writing standards.

Semarang, December 2015  
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## **MOTTO AND DEDICATION**

### **Motto**

“Allah SWT creates men and women  
with the special significant different characteristics”

### **Decication**

This thesis is dedicated to:

1. English Language Education Faculty
2. Semarang State University
3. Wahid Hasyim University of Semarang

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Semarang, Novermber2015

Agus Trioni Nawa

## ABSTRACT

**Agus Trioni Nawa, 2015.** *The Correlations among Gender, Motivation and Language Learning Strategies of Thai Students.* Thesis. Graduate Program State University of Semarang. Supervisor I: Dr. Januarius Mujiyanto, M.Hum. Supervisor II: Dr. Djoko Sutopo, M.Si.

Keywords: Gender, Motivation, Language Learning Strategies (LLS), and Thai Students

This study aimed at investigating language learning strategies employed by 38 Thai students at Wahid Hasyim University of Semarang according to differences of gender and motivation level.

The language learning strategies (LLS) were divided into two categories; direct and indirect strategies. Direct included memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. While, indirect included metacognitive, affective and social strategies. In this case, language learning strategies implemented by Thai Students were described in the differences between male and female; and low, medium and high motivation levels in learning English as a foreign language.

This study employed descriptive quantitative research as the approach. The researcher used questionnaires adapted from Vaezi (2008) and Tuan (2005) to ask respondents for reporting their gender, and also to measure their motivation level in learning English as a foreign language. The choice of strategies for learning English by difference of gender and motivation of the subjects were investigated using questionnaire adapted from Oxford (1990) called the Strategies Inventory of Language Learning (SILL).

The study found that female learners' motivation were higher (3.54) than males (2.89) and they were also more strategic (3.34) in learning English than males (2.823). Generally females were more social strategies while males were more affective. Based on different level of motivation, the positive correlation only gained between lowly and highly motivated males. Moreover, the t-test analysis found significant difference between males and females in implementing memory (0.008\*), cognitive (0.001\*), compensation (0.033\*) and social (0.037\*) strategies at sign. two-tailed (\* $< 0.05$ ). The regression analysis, pearson correlation and ANOVA revealed no interaction between males' motivation and LLS use, however this study gained significant interaction between females' motivation and LLS use.

These findings concluded that there was no correlation between males' motivation and the use of English learning strategies. It clarify and proved the statement that female learners were more better in learning language than males.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The introduction consists of six parts, there are background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and outline of the thesis.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

English in the world is positioned as an international language and people are aware of the important of this language to be learnt. However, some countries are positioning English as a foreign language, although they are learning this language as a compulsory subject in every college and major. One of those countries is Indonesia. In Indonesia, English stands as a foreign language but this language is being presented in teaching and learning process, starting from kindergarten to university level.

In one hand, beside of the condition between English as international language and the position of English in Indonesia, there are also many students who learn English as an additional material. This condition was solidly evidenced by many of course corners in Indonesia which are providing English as a favorite subject. It might be familiar for us regarding the existence of course corners in Pare, Kediri. This place is recognized as an English village. There are many students from different region who learn English in this place.

In other hand, the existance of the students in Indonesia are not only the national students but also the international students. Those international students come from Malaysia, Singapore, Afghanistan, Thailand, Philippine, etc. Some international students are also facing English as foreign language in their country, such as Afghanistan and Thailand students.

Considering the above situations – English as an international language, and the awareness of the important of English; English as compulsory subject that must be learnt; Indonesia consists of not only national/domestic students but also international students – we could find the problems. Some of those crucial problems are how are international students' motivation in learning English; what language learning strategies do international students prefer to use; do gender and motivation have significant difference on the students' use of language learning strategies; and, what is the interaction among students' motivation in learning English and English learning strategies based on difference of gender?

Those above questions come as the key problems in this study. In order to limit the study, the researcher addresses these issues on the Thai students' gender, and motivation in implementing language learning strategies. However, before we come to the statement of the problems, researcher will show the introduction of a concept of “language learning strategy and Thai students' in Indonesia.

The concept of strategy is a somewhat fuzzy one. It consisted of mental or behavioral activity related to some specific stage in the overall

process of language acquisition or language use, Ellis (1999). It is also widely phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual communities. The language learning strategy choices are affected by several factors; social, behavioral and situational.

Every student has different language learning strategies in improving his/her proficiency, including international students. The international students face so many different social factors and some other factors which can influence their language learning strategy choice in their learning process. This condition is also happening on international students in Indonesia, some of them are Thai students at Wahid Hasyim University.

Meanwhile, the number of international students in Indonesia steadily increase. Ananto Kusuma Sera (head of Indonesian Planning and Cooperation of Foreign Affairs Department) as found in Pikiran Rakyat Online reported in years 2011 until 2013 a number of international students were increasing significantly until 20 percent. It was also happening at Wahid Hasyim University of Semarang (UNWAHAS), there were coming twenty three female students from Afghanistan on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013. They are 19-23 years old. Previously, there were coming male and female students from Thailand. Those international students were freely choosing selected major, such as international relations, economic, Islamic education, and so on. In every major they face English which is learnt as a compulsory subject in the first, second and third semester.

This condition required students to be smart in choosing appropriate strategy to lead their success in learning. However, it became a problem for the international students because they must learn language while learning subject material in the class. It explores how important language learning strategies are.

Relating to language learning strategies, experts are different in its classification. However, Oxford, (1990) were simply classifying language learning strategy into six categories. Those are memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy and social strategy.

Each strategy is different in its implementations and purposes. Some strategies may be precise to be implemented in several places or environments, but not for the others. It is a task for educators to be familiar with every situation and characteristic of their students, so that they can guide their students to be successful learners. It is necessary, because one of factors affecting students' success in using language learning strategies is teachers' guidance. Teachers have also responsibility to have ability to determine what appropriate teaching methods, trainings and learning strategies are in order to teach, facilitate and guide students for being success language learners as well as to give them some informations to choose the best language learning strategies based on difference of condition and situation or other factors engaged in students environment.

This task is not easy for us as the teachers to determine the most appropriate strategies to be used in learning second or foreign language.

Dealing with this statement, Ellis (1999) stated that “there is no agreement about what constitutes a learning strategy”. There is no widely accepted theoretical basis for identifying and describing strategies, although O’Malley and Chamot, (1990) have anchored their own work, with some success, in a cognitive theory of information processing. As a result, the nature of the strategies that have been identified varies enormously.

A lot of the research has been based on the assumption that there are “good” learning strategies. But this is questionable, (Ellis, 1990). The beneficial effect of strategies may be relative to the kinds of task they are deployed in. For example, some strategies may work in task aimed at the development of linguistics competence and other in task with more communicative objectives. Effective strategy may consist of the flexible deployment of the right strategies in the right task, but little is currently known about this. It is also possible that different strategies are important for classroom and naturalistic language learning and for children as opposed to adult. This is the teachers’ task to comprehend the students’ characteristics they are taught to that they can determine what are appropriate learning strategies for his/her students.

Comprehending students’ characteristics is not as easy as seem like, especially international students who come from different social environment. This is one of the focus of this study, facilitating teachers to comprehend international students in using learning strategies to learn English as a foreign language in foreign country and foreign environment. In addition, by

providing information for the teachers about learning strategies used by Thai students, hopefully he/she will be also able to determine what appropriate teaching strategies to teach them are.

To sum up, the students' success in learning are supported by many aspects, and two of these aspects are learning strategies and teachers' guidance. The accuracy of learning strategy choice is a determinant factor of students' success in learning. However, the accuracy of learning strategy choice is influenced by several factors such as students' belief, individual learner differences, and teachers' guidance, motivation, gender, etc. That is why it is very necessary for us to understand those factors to discover students' learning strategies. Evaluating these problems, in this study, researcher excites to conduct a research by investigating the correlation among gender, motivation and the choice of language learning strategies by Thai students at Wahid Hasyim University in order to give understanding for the teachers, students and the other people who want to evaluate this matter.

## **1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

Every student must use different strategies in learning English and improving their English proficiency, especially the Thai students. It might be happening because different successful learners may use different learning strategies. Macaro, (2001) stated that successful language learners seem to use strategies to help them stay focused in the classroom even when they are not directly involved in the L2 interaction will use different way in increasing

understanding. These facts demand Thai students to implement specific language learning strategies.

Why do the Thai students also need to implement specific learning strategies? Because they will face different social, culture, even the teacher who does not understand what their needs are, and others factors which make them need different or special learning strategies. Carroll and Ryan, (2005) stated that many lecturers, faced with unfamiliar student characteristics and needs, are unsure how to respond whilst at the same time meeting what they perceive to be the academic expectations of the institution for research, new program development and/or income generation. By having taken the decision to study abroad, many encounter difficulties in their quest to be academically successful in their new learning environment. The best learning strategy choice may help student's achievement. Oxford, (1990) divided learning strategies into two broad aspects; direct and indirect language learning strategies. Direct language learning strategies involve students' mental process such as memory, cognitive and compensation. While, indirect language learning strategies involve social environment, such as metacognitive, social and affective strategies.

The different learning strategies above might be influenced by some factors. There are so many factors influencing student for choosing learning strategy such as gender, proficiency, belief, motivation, and experience, etc. Some experts as cited in Gao (2010) stated that strategy use is related to learners' exercise of agency as it reveals their self-consciousness, reflexivity,

intentionality, cognition, emotionality and so on (Carter & New, 2004; Giddens, 1984; Sealey & Carter, 2004). In this current study, the researcher focuses on difference gender and motivation in influencing the choicelanguage learning strategies.

Gender difference is an important reason which affect students in different strategies use. As many researchs' results revealed that female learners are more succesfull in learning language. This phenomena was shown by Thai students at Wahid Hasyim University, based on the observation that female students seemed more motivated and strategic than males, especially in collaborating with other when learning. Oxford and Nyikos, (1989, as cited in Bozinovic and Sindik 2011) examined the use of learning strategies on a sample of 1200 adult French, Spanish, Italian and German language learners and demonstrated that gender plays a decisive role in the selection of strategies.

The other factor affecting strategies use is motivation. The researcher viewed that this is very necessary to investigate language learning strategies use based on different level of motivation, because, based on the survey which have been conducted at Wahid Hasyim University, was found that there were several students who focused on learning English and desired to improve their English skills. However, the others learners seemed follow the English class because of the duty that must be faced in the first, second, and third semester as a compulsory subject. This is a problem in language learning, because some of the students have low motivation in learning. In other words, motivation is a learners' difference and it could affect students' language learning strategies choice. Evidently, Rivera-

Mills and Plonsky (2007, as cited in Zarei and Elekaei, 2013) stated that learners who are more motivated tend to use more language learning strategies.

Based on the reasons and conditions above, researcher views that individual learners differences, especially gender and motivation become the crucial factors in influencing international students' language learning strategies. It is necessary to conduct a research to explain Thai students' implementation of English learning strategies based on the different gender and motivation level. To limit the subject of the study researcher determines to conduct this study by analyzing Thai students at Wahid Hasyim University.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problems**

From the background of the study and the reason for choosing the topic of this study, this current study was proposed to investigate the phenomena of direct and indirect learning strategy used by Thai students of Wahid Hasyim University of Semarang based on difference of gender and motivation level. The problems are declared in the following questions:

- 1) How is the correlation between male Thai students with low and those with medium motivation in using English learning strategies?
- 2) How is the correlation between male Thai students with low and those with high motivation in using English learning strategies?
- 3) How is the correlation between male Thai students with medium and those with high motivation in using English learning strategies?

- 4) How is the correlation between female Thai students with low and those with medium motivation in using English learning strategies?
- 5) How is the correlation between female Thai students with low and those with high motivation in using English learning strategies?
- 6) How is the correlation between female Thai students with medium and those with high motivation in using English learning strategies?
- 7) How is the interaction among Thai students' motivation in learning English and English learning strategies?

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the statement of the problems, the objectives of this study are:

- 1) To explain the correlation between male Thai students with low and those with medium motivation in using English learning strategies.
- 2) To explain the correlation between male Thai students with low and those with high motivation in using English learning strategies.
- 3) To explain the correlation between male Thai students with medium and those with high motivation in using English learning strategies.
- 4) To explain the correlation between female Thai students with low and those with medium motivation in using English learning strategies.
- 5) To explain the correlation between female Thai students with low and those with high motivation in using English learning strategies.
- 6) To explain the correlation between female Thai students with medium and those with high motivation in using English learning strategies.

- 7) To explain the interaction among Thai students' motivation in learning English and English learning strategies.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

In accordance with objectives of the study, this research aims to find out the phenomena of language learning strategies implemented by Thai students of Wahid Hasyim University of Semarang. The results of this research are expected to have the following advantages:

- 1) Theoretically, the result of this study will provide information about the study of learning strategies, and factors affecting learning strategies choice. In this case it refers to the learning strategy used by Thai students in English learning process. This study is expected to be able to enrich the knowledge of learning strategies and how to implement the learning strategies.
- 2) Practically, the research is expected to broaden the knowledge of teachers and students, especially those who want to determine the appropriate learning strategy in teaching international and/or immigrant students to determine which the most appropriate learning strategies in learning English as a foreign language are.
- 3) Pedagogically, the result of this study will open up a realistic view on bilingual instruction that has been conducted in some of the schools and universities in Indonesia, especially the school or university which has international students as its students.

From of this reality, this study hopefully will give contribution for many sides to take a conclusion what is learning strategy that will be the best one to be implemented by Thai students in learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia. Those contributions are relevant with condition which is stated by Crawford, et al. (2005) that many teachers are seeking to change their practices to support reading and writing for critical thinking. In supporting the students to implement their critical thinking teachers need to understand the way of supporting itself, one of that ways is by practicing students in order to make them recognize with learning strategies. It is great necessary because learning fully and usefully means that students can think about what they learn, (Gardner, 1993; Marzano, 2001, cited in Crawford, et al 2005). So, when the teachers are challenging the students to memorize, examine, create, solve, interpret or debate, the students are realize what strategy they supposed to use is.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study covers the three central aspects, those are English learning strategies, motivation and gender. In order to carry out this study more accurately, the reseacher will formulate the boundaries of the research scope as follow:

- 1) Analysis on the Thai students motivation in learning English as a foreign language.
- 2) Analysis the general Thai students' tendency in implementing English learning strategies.

- 3) Analysis the Thai students' tendency in implementing English learning strategies based on the difference of gender.
- 4) Analysis the Thai students' tendency in implementing English learning strategies based on the difference of motivation level according to gender.
- 5) Analysis the correlation among English learning strategies use by Thai students at Wahid Hasyim University.
- 6) Analysis the interaction among Thai students' motivation and English learning strategies

The subjects selected for this study were limited to students enrolled only Thai students at Wahid Hasyim University in all faculty courses such as islamic education, international relations, economic education, etc.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

This present study focuses on analysing English learning strategies by Thai students at Wahid Hasyim University in all education majors. In analysing this term, the subjects of this study are separated into six group according to difference of motivation level and gender. The key terms of this study are correlation, language learning strategies, gender, and motivation. Those terms are defined as follow:

- 1) The correlation

The correlation research refers to studies in which the purpose is to discover relationships between variables through the use of correlational statistics, (Borg and Gall, 2003: 320). The kind of this study will result

three different correlations, those are positive, negative and absence correlation.

## 2) The language learning strategy

Language is a complex, specialized skill, which develops in the child spontaneously, without conscious effort or formal instruction, is deployed without awareness of its underlying logic, is qualitative the same in every individual, and is distinct from more general abilities to process information or behave intelligently.

In other hand, learning is activity to obtaining a knowledge. In more detailed, learning is a process of acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction. In behaviorist theory, learning is process of imitation, practice, reinforcement, and habit formation, (Lightbrown and Nina, 2006). More over, strategy is a detailed plan for achieving success in situation, such as war, politics, business, industry, or the skill of planning for such situations. In the complete definition, language 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, (Oxford, 1990).

## 3) The gender

Gender refers to the attitude, feelings and behaviors that given cultures associates with a person's biological sex.

#### 4) The motivation

Motivation is an effort and desire to achieve goal and attitudes, (Gardner, 1985 cited in Zafar, 2012). The motivation to learn a language could be the achievement of a successful career, or passing a foreign language requirement, or wishing to identify closely with the culture or people of target language. These motivations must be known by the teacher to encourage the students to better language.

### **1.8 Outline of the Thesis**

This current study is reported in five chapters. Chapter 1 is concerned with the introduction of the study. In this chapter, the research questions and the significant of the study are also presented. Chapter 2 reviews theoretical perspective on language learning, language acquisition, language learning strategies and factors affecting language learning strategies choice.

Furthermore, the next present chapter in this study is chapter 3. It consists of design description of partial items, instrument, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The last two is chapter 4 presents the result of the study and discussion. In this chapter, the readers could find the significant finding gained from the respondents through descriptive and inferential statistic presented by researcher. The readers could also find the implications of every finding for the teachers. While, the last section (chapter 5) is provides the conclusion of the research along with pedagogical implications, followed by suggestion regarding to the finding.