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by

Submission date: 21-Oct-2022 07:01AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 1931021474

File name: ABIDIN_PAMMU_HARDIANTY_ARTICLE_1.pdf (298.95K)

Word count: 6413

Character count: 36568

Language Learning Strategies Applied By Ielts Overall Band Score-7 Achievers; A Case Study At English School Of Yayasan Insancita Bangsa

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Abstract

The study is an attempt to find out about language learning strategies applied by English learners that have been under investigation by teaching practitioners in recent years. However, the learning strategies applied by successful IELTS learners have often been ignored. For that reason, this study aimed to reveal the experiences of successful IELTS learners regarding what challenges they faced and what learning strategies they applied in IELTS learning. The study employed a descriptive qualitative study. The participants of this present study were overall band-7 achievers at YIB (Yayasan Insancita Bangsa) English school. The data was analyzed by using Miles and Huberman data analysis models, involving data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verifying. The findings of the study showed that the IELTS overall band-7 achievers faced various challenges that derive from internal and external learning IELTS. For resolving the challenges in listening, reading, and writing IELTS, they dominantly used cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In speaking IELTS, they dominantly employed affective and social strategies. The research generated pedagogical implications for both IELTS learners and teaching practitioners in the process of IELTS learning, especially in the particular context of the EFL environment.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, Language Learning Challenges, IELTS learning, IELTS overall band score-7, good learners

1. Introduction

One of the significant keys to achieving the success of English learning is how the learners applied the learning strategies. As stated by Oxford (1990), language learning strategy is a significant factor for improving active learning in the classroom and self-directed movement that is crucial to improving communicative competence. Learning strategy is also a significant factor in the success of improving IELTS scores for IELTS learners at YIB (Yayasan Insancita Bangsa) English school.

Yayasan Insancita Bangsa (YIB) is a foundation that provides IELTS scholarships to Alumni of Islamic Association students who intend to pursue higher education abroad. The awardees stay at a dormitory for four months of full-time study. It is expected that after the IELTS program, the awardees gain the IELTS target score and pursue higher education abroad to get new insights and gave contributions to Indonesia afterwards.

However, the learners who have studied IELTS for four months, not all students become successful test-takers. Many IELTS learners at YIB English school found it difficult to gain the

target score and faced challenges in the process of learning. According to Westwood (2008), The majority of the learning challenges were caused by internal and external factors. Internal factors are such as motivation, self-confidence, self-esteem, and attitudes were highlighted. On the other hand, external factors include sociocultural components such as instructors, learning aids, and classroom culture. It can be regarded that

One of the solutions to overcome the challenges was to use appropriate learning strategies to improve their learning quality and success in English learning. The successful learners in the YIB English School are more capable of selecting and applying specific strategies in such a way to achieve their target score. Although the IELTS tutors mainly teach the students with motivating teaching strategies, the particular learners seemed to be successful regardless of methods or teaching techniques. They seemed to optimize their strategy in learning more efficiently.

Good learners can learn more efficiently as they employ better learning strategies rather than poor learners. Rubin (1987) defined a good learner into some criteria. A good learner is a willing and accurate guesser; has a strong, persevering drive to communicate; is often uninhibited and willing to make mistakes to learn or communicate; focuses on the form by looking for patterns; takes advantage of all practice opportunities; monitors their speech as well as that of others; and pays attention to meaning".

There are some studies regarding language learning strategies issues that were conducted previously. A study was written by Wolf & Phung (2019) focused on language learning challenges, strategies and support services for Chinese nurses in English class. The study revealed the students' difficulties with academic writing, speaking, and the frequencies of learning strategy and support services facilitated. Nguyen and Terry (2017) explored individual differences and environmental and contextual factors in the Use of Language Learning Strategies applied by Vietnamese EFL students and staff in Vietnam using a narrative approach. On the other hand, a study by Ranjan and Philominraj (2019) found that participants'

most frequent- learning strategy and motivation concerning gender.

Even though many scholars have researched learning strategies, the research that concerns the learning challenges and strategies applied by successful IELTS learners is still lacking. Besides, most learning strategies study the frequencies of the use of learning strategies by employing the quantitative method; on the other hand, this study will use the qualitative method and deeply narrate the participants' experiences. The data of this study is rich with a deep exploration of the participant's IELTS learning experiences. Therefore, there is still room to investigate how successful IELTS learners learn challenges and strategies.

Having the gap mentioned above, this study will explore how the language learning strategies applied by successful IELTS learners in the YIB English school and how they resolve the barriers during the learning process. The successful IELTS learners are the participants who gain an overall band score of 7. Overall band score-7 achievers are categorized as successful or good learners because they achieve "Good Users" on the IELTS score scale.

This research is a modest attempt to explore how successful IELTS learners at YIB English School applied effective learning strategies and dealt with the barriers during the learning process. Nevertheless, aside from the benefits of language learning strategies, it is significant to explore the language learning strategies applied by successful learners. The practical learning strategies applied by good learners need to find out in detail what strategies successful language learners use. Learning strategies applied by good learners could be the model as a good learning quality which can be helpful for insights for unsuccessful learners.

Finally, this paper will show recommended language learning strategies that will benefit both IELTS learners and trainers. Being aware of effective learning strategies can facilitate unsuccessful IELTS learners to improve their learning quality and boost their language performance. Furthermore, IELTS trainers can already pay attention to the learners' strategies. Finally, it gives benefits as the keys to reaching the target score more efficiently.

2. Literature review

The Definition of Learning Strategies

According to Gage & Berliner (1992), learning can be described as a process in which an organism changes its behaviour due to experience. How human life gets the experiences through doing something or taking actions premised is, is a result of the learning process. In line with Gage & Berliner, Lachmnan (1997) highlighted the changes in behaviour as the result of experiences. It seems that the definition of learning was viewed as a function that maps experience onto behaviour.

Gagne (1976, as cited in Wiyono, 2008) gives two definitions of learning; (a) Learning is a process of gaining motivation in my knowledge, mastery, habits, and attitude. (b) Learning is the mastery of knowledge or skills acquired from teaching. Brown had a similar point of view to Gagne.

The definitions of learning strategies are defined in many ways by scholars. The earliest definition of language learning strategies is attributed³¹ to Gagne (1974), who defined language learning strategies as the¹³ skills of self-management. He stated that the skills of self-management that the learner acquires, presumably over years, govern his processes of attending, learning, and thinking¹².

Oxford (2018) defined that language learning strategies are constructed of complex, dynamic ideas and actions, selected and employed by the learners in a certain level of¹⁰ awareness in particular settings to govern several aspects of themselves (such as cognitive, emotional, and social) with the goal of (a) completing language tasks; (b) improving language performance or usage; and/or (c) enhancing long-term competence¹⁷.

However, Oxford (1990) stated that learning strategies are steps employed by learners to set learning activities to become more efficient; therefore, the learners can comprehend the lesson faster in an enjoyable learning environment. While Cohen (2011) and Rubin (1987) also had the same idea as Oxford (1990), who viewed learning²² strategies as applicable to assist learners in learning to get the most advanced levels of target-language performance.

Language Learning Strategies (LLS), then, can be defined as certain actions, manners,

methods, or techniques³³ employed by language learners to assist them in language learning to comprehend the learning faster² and efficiently retain new information. The success of the English learning process is not only determined by the teachers but also by the students.

Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Many researchers classified the language learning strategy. One of the researchers is⁶ Oxford (1990). According to Oxford (1990), Language Learning Strategies are divided into direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies consist of cognitive strategies, memory strategies and compensation strategies. On the other hand, indirect strategies consist of metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies.

Oxford (1990) defined direct strategies as a strategy that directly involves the⁷ target language. This strategy is a part of the mental processing of language. In contrast, indirect strategies consist of metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. These present indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy, and other means (Oxford,1990).

Direct Strategies

- Memory strategy

This strategy is used is utilized for storing and⁴⁶ retrieving new information. There are some² subsets of memory strategy namely having mental linkages, employing images and sound, reviewing well, and using actions.

- Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies serve a variety of purposes, one of which is to manipulate or modify the³ target language. The four subcategories of cognitive strategies include practising, receiving and transmitting messages, analyzing and reasoning, and structuring input and output. Each set has a distinct strategy.

- Compensation strategies

This strategy is used to aid learners in using the new language for understanding and production despite their poor mastery of the new language. The two subgroups of comp³ensatory strategies are intelligently guessing in listening and reading and overcoming constraints in speaking

and writing. There are 10 approaches/specific strategies within the two groupings.

Indirect Strategies

According to Oxford (1990), the indirect strategies are metacognitive, affective, social strategies.

- Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies are activities that transcend solely cognitive devices and enable learners to organize their learning processes (Oxford, 1990).

- Affective strategies

This strategy is concerned with the emotional, behavioural, motivational, and value development of students. Oxford (1990) suggested that language learners may obtain control over the aforementioned aspects via emotional methods.

- Social strategies.

Social strategies include the learner's interaction with speakers of the target language. The subsets of social strategies involve inquiring, collaborating, and empathizing. Among the three, asking questions is the most beneficial and brings the greatest clarity to the message.

2.2 Research Questions

The present study aims to find out the challenge and learning strategies applied by IELTS band score-7 achievers. The research questions have been formulated as follows:

1. What are the challenges faced by IELTS band score-7 achievers in IELTS learning?
2. How do these IELTS band score-7 achievers solve the challenges in terms of language learning strategies use?

3. Research Method

The design of the research was a descriptive qualitative approach (Abbas et al., 2021). Creswell (2012) defined qualitative research as a process that enlarges and enriches our knowledge of significant occurrences. Case study, one of the varieties of the qualitative method was utilized in this study. According to Thomas, G. (2021), case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other phenomena which are studied holistically by one or more methods to illuminate and explicate some analytical

theme. The goal of the case study is to allow researchers to require and examine data based on a context or phenomenon. Therefore, case study was considered to explore the research questions of this study.

In this study, the participants were IELTS learners of YIB English School who achieved an overall band score of 7. The total of participants was 4 participants. The reason behind choosing the participants was because they had a valid IELTS certificate of no more than two years. Thus, when the interview was conducted, their English skills were still up to date.

There were two research instruments used in this study including a narrative frame and a guided interview. The narrative of this study was adapted from Barkhuizen & Wette (2008). Creswell (2012) concluded that the frame must have the dimensional space narrative structure involving interaction (information of how they feel, hope, react, and think), continuity (now and then), and situation (context time and space). The narrative frame could facilitate analyzing data to write the data more insightful and fuller of the participants' experience.

To know the participants' general attitudes related to their experiences in language strategy, the interview was employed. The total questions were 8 questions and were concerned with the learners' general attitudes and their experiences with Language Learning Strategies. Each interview was conducted between 24 and 40 minutes and recorded with the consent of each participant.

The procedure had a comprehensive stage and has been implemented in the research context. The research procedures were involved as follows: plan, collect data and disseminate findings (Neale, P., Thapa, S., & Boyce, C. 2006). The first step was to plan, identify what type of data was needed and arranged the interview questions. The second step was data collection. If the collecting data was finished, participants were asked to get in touch later for data validation and additional information if it was needed. the report was accurate, data validation was utilized appropriately to search for disconfirming, and the validating process consists of member checking and triangulation. The evidence of data validation protected the

data's credibility. The third step is data analysis. The researcher reviewed all the data and analyze the data. The fourth step is disseminating findings. In this step, the researcher writes the report, solicits feedback, revises the writing and disseminates it.

The data analysis model by Miles and Huberman (1994) was conducted in the following steps: data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verifying. The data collection is the process through which the researcher collects all of the data that will be analyzed. When the researcher interviewed the participants, all of this was part of the data collection process. The researcher utilized this approach to obtain and collect data from the research to make compiling the research easier. After gathering sufficient data for processing and analysis, the following step was to reduce the data. The researcher reduced the data by summarizing and selecting the items. the relevant data was included, otherwise, the irrelevant data was excluded. the data was arranged to focus on the data directly to answer the research questions of the study. The result of data reduction was in the transcription of pertinent data relevant to this research. Data management is a term employed in qualitative research (editing, coding until tabulation data). Thus, the data has been simplified to provide clear data and provide it easier for the researcher to perform further data collection by combining three procedures, or what is known as data triangulation.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the most often used method of presenting data for qualitative research in the past has been narrative writing. The presentation of facts makes it simpler to comprehend what is occurring and to plan the next move based on what has been comprehended. When presenting data, the researcher preferred to write narrative text to describe the participants' experiences. Finally, the researcher verifies the research by concluding the data.

4. Result and Discussion

Result

The result of the study reveals that all participants showed a positive attitude toward the use of strategy in IELTS learning. They

stated that the use of learning strategies played an essential role in their IELTS learning experiences. Moreover, all participants argued that strategies in learning IELTS must be based on their learning style preferences.

All participants stated that the key success in reaching the achievements mostly came from internal factors. The keys to success were emotion, motivation, skill, mental, prayer and belief. The other factor came from an external factor, namely, luckiness. These factors played a significant role in supporting learners to succeed in the IELTS official test.

Listening skill

Participant 1 and participant 2 faced internal challenges in learning to listen to IELTS, such as the lack of vocabulary and unknown accent. On the other hand, participants 3 and 4 faced external challenges such as unclear recording, a noisy environment, the lack of Cambridge IELTS material, and a learning schedule.

The finding shows that participants solved the internal challenge in listening by using cognitive and metacognitive strategies. It was involving guessing, improving practice listening frequency, and evaluation. The participants' responses regarding strategies for listening to IELTS can be seen in excerpts 1,2,3,4, 5 and 6.

Excerpt 1: "I used cognitive and metacognitive strategy. Sometimes, I combine with compensation strategy. I analyzed a sentence and tried to guess what it meant but not to change the true meaning... For overcoming the unknown accent, I listened to the accent more frequent, for example, by watching Sherlock Holmes. I dominantly used cognitive strategy." (P1)

Excerpt 2: "I utilized a cognitive strategy. My solution was to write down some vocabularies that were unfamiliar for me in a special notebook, practice listening regularly, and guess if I missed the questions. I practiced and listened to the audio, which contains the unfamiliar vocabulary, more often I tended to use cognitive strategy dominantly" (P2)

Excerpt 3: *"I employed both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. After practising listening by listening to the IELTS recording regularly, I constantly evaluated the wrong answers. If I found unfamiliar vocabulary, I would use it in writing and speaking. I preferred to combine both cognitive dan metacognitive strategy."* (P3)

Excerpt 4: *"I used cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy. I forced myself to do the practice test for around one to two hours each day... After that, I evaluated my answers based on the answer key. In listening, if my answer was wrong, I replay the recording. I usually employed metacognitive strategy to solve the challenges in listening."* (P4)

Participants 2 and 3 found external challenges in listening. Participants solved the external challenges by using metacognitive strategy.

Excerpt 5: *"There were many distractions when I took the IELTS test because the participants were too crowded... Therefore, if we want to be more focused, just take Computer- Based IELTS test... Besides, the most challenge was the handphone because the handphone gave the most influential distraction... I tend to use metacognitive strategy"* (P2)

Excerpt 6: *"I also must collect the IELTS material I tried to find a more conducive place and a quieter physical setting for learning...For the limited material, I will wait for some weeks to forget the test questions and then reuse the listening test sessions. So, It can be said that I dominantly use metacognitive strategy.."* (P3)

Reading

Based on the interview, it can be concluded that the internal challenges faced by the participants involved reading speed, unknown words, and unfamiliar topics. The external challenge was noise and the lack of Cambridge IELTS practice test. Besides, the external challenges in reading skills are the noise and lack of Cambridge IELTS practice test. The results show that the participants used cognitive,

metacognitive, and memory strategies to overcome the internal challenge. It was by improving the reading speed, practising reading more frequently, memorizing the vocabulary by writing, and practising the vocabulary more often. All participants dominantly utilized cognitive strategies in reading IELTS. The participants' responses regarding strategies in reading IELTS can be seen in excerpts 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Excerpt 7: *"I tended to use cognitive strategy. I read the whole passage where the answers put more carefully to find out the answers. I read the question first then finding out the answers to get the answer faster. I did not have a strict reading schedule to improve my reading. I just read when I had spare time. I dominantly employed cognitive strategy.."* (P1)

Excerpt 8: *"I employed cognitive strategy. I need to read unfamiliar topic text more frequently. Especially the text with science and biology topic. The most difficult topic was about worm anatomy which I never read it previously. As a result, I started to list vocabulary about worm and learn it. I preferred to use cognitive strategy more often in reading strategy"* (P2)

Excerpt 9: *"I combined both cognitive and metacognitive strategy. If I found a new vocabulary, I would immediately use it for speaking and writing. So, I easily remembered it "I combined both cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy. Both strategies were effective to solve the reading challenge."* (P3)

Excerpt 10: *"I employed memory strategy and cognitive strategy The solution, if I did not really know the meaning of a vocabulary, I would find out what it means in a dictionary. If the text was in English, it did not have to be translated. The most dominant was the metacognitive strategy."* (P4)

Moreover, in external challenges, the participants used a metacognitive strategy: collecting the material and studying in a quieter place. The participants' responses can be found in excerpts 33 and 34.

Excerpt 11: "I employed metacognitive strategy. I prepared the test questions prepared the physical setting for learning." (P3)

Excerpt 12: "I employed metacognitive strategy. I collected the IELTS materials and practice from the Internet." (P4)

Speaking

The result shows that some challenges in speaking skills come from internal factors. The internal challenges in speaking skills involve confidence and persistence to study. The external challenges in speaking skills mainly were found when the participants practised their speaking, namely when they did not understand what the native speakers said, were unconfident with the IELTS students' comments, and lacked Cambridge speaking IELTS practice test.

The finding shows that participants solved the internal challenges using affective and social strategies. The ways to solve the problems were by building confidence and intensively practising English speaking. Based on the interview, participants solved the external challenges by using affective and social strategies by asking the speakers about the meaning, practising speaking more intensely, reusing the practice test, and practising with a more qualified IELTS tutor. All participants dominantly utilized both affective and social strategies in speaking. The participants' responses regarding strategies in speaking IELTS can be seen in excerpts 13, 14, 15, and 16.

Excerpt 13: "I utilized affective strategy for the internal challenge. When I felt unconfident, I forced myself to speak. For external challenges, I used social strategy. My solution was to ask the speaking partner what he meant and speak with the other people more often. I did not do a special method to overcome this challenge. I just directly practice it. If I got wrong, my lecturers and my friends told me and fixed it. I tended to utilize affective and social strategies " (P1)

Excerpt 14: "I used affective and social strategy. I tried to be more confident. For speaking practise, I preferred to practice by myself, just recording and reviewing. My speaking was

improved when I learned by self-study and practicing with a tutor. Practicing with tutor worked for me. I used affective strategy. The solution was that I must focus only on myself and ignoring the negative comments. Something that made us uncomfortable must be avoided. I utilized both affective dan social strategies. However, I used a much more affective strategy." (P2)

Excerpt 15: "For solving my internal challenge, I used affective and social strategy. I solved the unconfidence challenge by getting connected with a person who was more qualified in IELTS to give some comments about my work. For example, with the tutor and my native speaker friend to ask the Feedback. I used social strategy. The way I overcame this challenge was by reusing the same IELTS practice test...With the tutor and my native speaker friend, I asked the feedback. I dominantly utilized affective dan social strategy " (P3)

Excerpt 16: "I used social strategy. My solution was doing much more practice, so I practised speaking with my friend every day. It was social strategy. If we did not know what the examiner meant, just asked it to the examiner. The most dominant strategy was social strategy because I always practised speaking with my friend and tutors, so I got feedback which really improved my speaking " (P4)

Writing

Most participants stated that the lack of ideas was the most significant internal challenge in writing. The other challenges were grammar and motivation. Moreover, external challenges involve the types of data, questions, and lack of Cambridge writing practice test. Based on the findings, the participants utilized cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy, and effective strategy.

The ways participants solved the internal challenges in writing was to learn from the sample answer and practice more intensely. Moreover, participants used metacognitive and cognitive strategies in solving external challenges. The solution to solve external challenges in writing involves getting essay feedback, practising writing with different types

of questions, and improving grammar ability. The participants' responses regarding strategies in speaking IELTS can be seen in excerpts 17, 18, 19, and 20

Excerpt 17: *"I enriched my ideas by reading the article, especially for writing task 2. While for task 1, I read the journals. That was why I preferred to use the cognitive strategy. I applied metacognitive and cognitive strategy. For solving the external challenge in types of questions, I practiced writing more and asked the feedback from tutor. I dominantly employed metacognitive strategy because I got feedback from the tutor."* (P1)

Excerpt 18: *"I employed cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy. The solution was learning more from sample answers that relate to the topic and rewriting them in the exact same way. Then, I analyzed the writing... Then I rewrote it in my own style... I must be more disciplined when it is the time for study... I used cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy. Feedback was helpful, If only the tutor had signed the details of the error of my writing and the solutions, yes, it really helped... I dominantly employed cognitive strategy"* (P2)

Excerpt 19: *"I used cognitive and metacognitive strategy. To increase my motivation in writing, I tried to learn writing from the sample writing for improving my writing skill... I also just asked feedback from the IELTS tutor, whom I regarded as capable. I dominantly used metacognitive strategy"* (P3).

Excerpt 20: *"I used cognitive strategy. The solution for grammar was that we must use it habitually. I used cognitive and metacognitive strategy. I practiced writing the IELTS essay by writing with various types of questions. I also get feedback from tutor. For improving my writing skill, I usually asked my tutors' feedback. Therefore, I was likely to dominantly utilize metacognitive strategy"* (P4)

The finding shows that participants had different experiences regarding the inefficient strategy they had stopped using. Respondent 1

stated that the inefficient strategy was to arrange the schedule. On the other hand, participant 2 stated that Feedback that did not give a solution, watching a movie, listening to TED did not improve her skill. The social strategy was unsuited for Participant 3 while listening to Podcast did not improve participant 4. Based on the result of the data, all participants answered that they applied different strategies during the IELTS learning process.

Discussion

Regarding the participants' perception of language learning strategies, all the participants showed a positive attitude toward using language learning strategies. Learning strategies application is closely connected to language skill improvement and achievement. (Hsiao, and Oxford, 2002). The key to the success of taking the IELTS test was emotional management. It was indicated that anxiety has a negative consequence that affects the learning process and becomes a hindrance to students' learning goals (Macintyre, 1998).

Regarding the listening skill, the challenges listening skills were from internal and external factors. The lack of vocabulary and accent became the most significant internal factor challenge. Individual's vocabulary mastery influenced how well listeners understand the spoken message (Nation, 2013). The other challenges were such as accent, noise, the tempo of delivery, pronunciation, and intonation (Rashidova, N. (2021). In terms of listening strategies, the finding shows that the dominant strategies used by participants to solve the challenges in listening were by applying cognitive and metacognitive strategies. All participants practised listening to the IELTS recording more intensely to improve their listening skills. Moreover, this result was in line with Bao's (2017) research finding that the more listeners use cognitive methods, the better they understand the listening texts.

Regarding reading external challenges, participants faced a noisy environment that became the biggest challenge. Psychologically, learners may be easily disturbed and interrupted by the noise around them when reading more challenging text (Ding, 2020). The other internal challenges were unknown vocabulary and

unfamiliar topics. Moreover, encountering unfamiliar vocabularies also strongly affects their reading comprehension (Masrai, 2019). Related to reading strategies, the result showed that the most dominant strategies employed by participants were cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The successful learners were more metacognitively aware while reading a text. (Reffyal, Pammu & Sukmawati, 2018).

The challenges in speaking skills were from internal and external factors. Most participants felt unconfident to speak due to bad accents, pronunciation, negative comments from classmates. The unconfidence that triggers anxiety contributed to the speaking performance which results in the inability to perform the ideas (Al Nakhalah's, 2016; Ritonga, Nasmilah & Rahman, 2020). On the other hand, in external factors, the participants faced unfamiliar idiom or words, negative comments on speaking performance and a lack of Cambridge IELTS material. The most-used speaking strategies applied by participants were affective and social. These strategies were effective in overcoming the participants' unconfidence (Zakaria, N., Hashim, & Yunus, 2019; Hsiao, & Oxford, 2002).

In writing skills, the challenges were from internal and external challenges. The most dominant internal challenge was the lack of ideas to write, grammar and motivation (Maharani, & Setyarini, S. (2020). The difficulties in finding an idea were due to external challenges, namely the difficulty to present the data in task 1 and the types of questions in task 2. Based on the findings, all participants utilized cognitive and metacognitive strategies to solve the writing challenges (Wischgoll, 2016). Practising IELTS writing and giving the IELTS writing feedback to the participants were regarded as the most efficient strategy to implement. The participants practised writing more intensely and asked the tutor for feedback to evaluate their writing score. The feedback contributed to the participants' writing quality.

Participants used trial and error to choose the most appropriate learning strategies. Participant 1 ever tried metacognitive and memory strategies, but it did not suit his learning style. Finally, he stopped applying the strategies.

On the other hand, participant 2 experienced time consuming when she read the whole paragraph before finding the answers. Then, she changed the strategy by reading only the answers first and focus read the passage where the answers were put. In addition, participant 3 initially used social strategy in writing to acquire feedback, but he realized that it was inefficient to ask for feedback from the tutors who did not master the writing IELTS band descriptor then he preferred to self-study in writing. On the other hand, participant 4 did not use certain strategies in writing. As a result, he did not gain the target score. Finally, he decided to use social strategy to improve his writing.

All participants claimed they used different strategies from the early phases of their L2 development until when they are more competent (Hsiao, & Oxford, 2002). The applied strategies must suit the participants' learning styles. When they did not suit a strategy, and it was inefficient for their learning, they would use the other strategies.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusion

The overall analysis demonstrates that the present study contributed to the use of Language Learning Strategies in learning IELTS. It may be confirmed that IELTS band-7 achievers faced internal and external challenges during IELTS learning. They constantly applied Language Learning Strategies regularly during the learning process which cognitive and metacognitive strategies account as dominant strategies. The participant did trial and error to select the most appropriate learning strategies that suit their learning style. Finally, Language Learning Strategies (LLS) support the IELTS learners in attaining the target score.

Suggestions

It is becoming evident that language learning strategies have played essential roles in improving all skills, such as receptive and productive skills. Therefore, learners need to be aware of their learning efficiency. They must familiarize a variety of learning strategies for recognizing their learning style preferences, combining, selecting, and sequencing to decide on the most effective learning strategies to apply.

By knowing which strategies must be dominantly used, learners can quickly obtain the IELTS target score. IELTS tutors must be suggested to pay more attention to learning strategies. It is known that learning strategies are teachable. IELTS tutors can guide the IELTS learners in the learning strategies application. It is also crucial that institutions, where this research takes location, engage in curriculum development to consider the importance of including strategy training within the curriculum since learners still encounter difficulties in learning English.

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