SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS' ATTITUDES AND STRATEGIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan perbandingan sikap pelajar dan strategi dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris antarasiswa yang berprestasi tinggi dan rendah. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif dengan sepuluh siswa kelas sembilan MTs. Darul Ulum Bandungharjo yang dipilih secara random sebagai subjek penelitian. Data dikumpulkan dengan kuesioner. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang berprestasi tinggi dan rendah siswa memiliki sikap positif terhadap masyarakat yang berbicara bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Inggris pada umumnya. Namun, ada perbedaan antara sikap siswa yang berprestasi tinggi dan rendah terhadap bahasa Inggris. Para siswa yang berprestasi tinggi berpendapat bahwa mereka lebih suka bahasa Inggris daripada mata pelajaran lain. Di sisi lain, para siswa berprestasi rendah prestasi tidak setuju dengan pernyataan tersebut. Kondisi ini menunjukkan bahwa sikap adalah pribadi. Terlebih lagi, strategi yang berbeda dengan tinggi dan rendah siswa berprestasi. Studi ini menemukan bahwa siswa berprestasi tinggi menggunakan strategi kognitif dan metakognitif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dalam bahasa Inggris. Namun, para siswa yang berprestasi rendah hanya menggunakan beberapa strategi kognitif dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Ringkasnya, strategi kognitif dan metakognitif disertai sikap dan motivasi positif mempengaruhi prestasi pembelajar bahasa Inggris.

 Kata Kunci: *sikap, strategi, pembelajar bahasa asing, EFL*

ABSTRACT

This study focused on comparison of learner's attitude and strategies in learning English between the high and low achievers. The qualitative descriptive analytic method is implemented in this study. The 10 ninth graders of MTs Darul Ulum Bandungharjo were chosen as the subject of the study and questionnaires are used as the research instrument. The study found that the high and low achievement students had positive attitudes towards community, people who speak English, and English in general. However, there was differences between high and low achiever's attitudes towards English. The high-achievement students argued that they prefered English than other subjects. On the other hand, the low-achievement students disagreed with the statement. This condition showed that attitude was personal. Morever, the strategies were differ from the high and low achievement student. The study found that the high-achievement students

used cognitive and metacognitive strategies to improve their ability in English. However, the low-achievement students used only some of cognitive strategies in learning English. As a summary, cognitive and metacognitive strategies accompanied by positive attitude and motivation influenced the learners' achievements of English skills.

Keywords: *attitude, strategies, L2 learners, EFL.*

INTRODUCTION

Study of language may vary, since language plainly differs in certain ranges. Discussing language and language use regularly introduces and interprets of such factors as material constitution, design (kinds of structure), intended and character use, institutional role, and communities and language across broader culture. This is not because of cultural or intrinsically human limitation, but because of its nature (Chomsky, 2000: 20). Furthermore, the nature of language is seen as a unifying force and a common ground among various people through which effective communication is carried out. It has however been noticed that even within the same language, there are different ways or styles of speaking. Holmes (2001: 21) argued that certain social factors – who we are talking to, the social context of the talk, the function and topic of discussion – turn out to be important in accounting for language choice in many different kinds of speech community.

Language also performs certain functions. Functions are essentially the purposes that we accomplish with language, e.g. stating, requesting, responding, greeting, etc. Functions cannot be accomplished without forms of language. Halliday as cited in (Brown, 2007: 224) stated seven functions of language; the instrumental function, the regulatory function, the representational function, the interactional function, the personal function, the heuristic function, and the imaginative function. Moreover, there are some types of meaning; literal meaning, figurative meaning, denotative meaning, and connotative meaning. Those kinds of meaning are spread through the written text or in the spoken text. This statements shows how important the language in community.

As the increased uses of English in the last few decades, the growing numbers of countries are moving forward making English as the language instruction. English is spread through some layers of expansion. Kachru (1985) in Harmer (2007: 17) showed the expansion of English in terms of three circles. In the inner circle, he put English as a primary language. The outer circle includes English as an official or widely-used second language. Finally, the expanding circle shows English was learnt as a foreign language. As the position of English as the last circle, English as a foreign language describes the condition where the language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom (Ellis, 1994: 12). According to Oxford (2003) a foreign language is a language studied in an environment where it is not the primary vehicle for daily interaction and where input in that language is restricted.

Accordance with the explanation about learning language situation, Fauziati (2011: 185) stated two ways of learning language; natural and not natural. The natural situation is where the second language is learned through experience in a certain situation similar to that in which native language is learned. The not-natural situation for second language learning is classroom situation. Some schools use English in the teaching and learning process. However, the community does not use English in their daily conversation. The term "L2" is used to refer to either a second or foreign language learners.

In learning the second language, the learners should understand not only the form, but also the meaning of the language. They need more than linguistic competence to understand. The context, knowledge of the world, and the extra-linguistic information help them to understand language directed to them. The help from outside of the learners is kind of input. There are three major theories give us explanation about input. Ellis (1994) listed three; they are nativist (mentalist), behaviorist, and interactionist. Nativists believe that human beings are born with a built-in device of some kind that predisposes them to acquire language. Chomsky (1965) as cited by Ellis (1994) called this innate property as Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Moreover, the existence of innate properties of language explains a child's mastery of his or her native language.

On the other side, the behaviorist theory suggests that external stimuli can elicit an internal response which in turn can elicit an internal stimulus that lead to external responses. Moreover, the learning process has been described by S-R-R (stimulus-response-reward) chains. These chains come about because of the nature of the environment and the nature of the learner. The environment provides the stimuli and the learner provides the responses. Comprehension or production of certain aspects of language and the environment provide the reward (Ellis: 1994).

At last, the interactionist argued that children are born into a social world, and learning occurs through these interactions with other people. From the time we are born we interact with others in our day-to-day lives, and through these interactions we make our sense of the world. From those three theories, we can understand that input is "something" that the learner gets as the basic understanding in acquiring and learning language.

In order to shape the input into intake, there are some factors that may influence. Social factors, such as gender, social class, age, and ethnic identity that are indirectly influence the L2 learners' acquisition. Those social factors are mediated by a number of variables. One variable which found to be an important variable is learner's attitude. Those social factors may shape the learner's attitude towards learning second language. On the other hand, the individual learners' differences; learning style, personality factors, language aptitude, and learning strategies may also influence the process of absorbing the input into intake. In this way, the intake will influence the language proficiency. Relate to that, this study deals with attitudes and strategies in learning English.

Attitudes are crucial in language learning. Language attitude is an important concept because it plays a key role in language learning and teaching. Attitudes are internal states that influence what the learners likely to do. The internal state is some degree of positive/negative or favorable / unfavorable reaction towards an object. Baker (1988) as cited by Ellis (1994: 198) believed that attitudes are not subject to inheritance because they are internalized predispositions. Attitudes towards a particular language might be either positive or negative. Some learners may have negative attitude towards the second language and want to learn it in order to prevail over people in the community but generally positive attitude strengthens the motivation. Some individuals might generate neutral feelings. Attitudes towards language are likely to have been developed by learners' experiences. It could refer to both attitudes towards language learning and attitudes towards the members of a particular speech community.

Gardner (1985) in Ellis (1994: 509) hypothesized that L2 learners with positive attitudes toward the target culture and people will learn the target language more effectively than those who do not have such positive attitudes. Moreover, In their earlier studies, Gardner and Lambert (1959) found that aptitude and motivation were the two factors most strongly associated with learners' L2

achievement. Gardner and Macintyre (1993) in Ellis, (1994: 509) also claimed that individual-difference variables (e.g., cognitive variables and affective variables), inûuence by antecedent factors (i.e., biological factors such as age and experiential factors such as previous language training experience), interact with both formal and informal language acquisition contexts and inûuence both linguistic and nonlinguistic outcomes (i.e., students' reactions to the learning experience) will have an inûuence on individual-difference variables including language attitudes and motivation.

In addition, Stern (1983: 376) as cited by Tahaineh, Y. (2013) distinguished three types of attitudes in second language learning situation : (a) Attitudes towards the community and people who speak the L2 (group specific attitudes), (b)Attitudes towards learning the language concerned; and (c) Attitude towards languages and language learning in general. These attitudes are influenced by the kind of personality that the learner's possesses. They may also be influenced by the particular social environment within which the language learning process takes place.

Researchers, teachers and learners agree that a high motivation and a positive attitude towards a second language and its community help second language learning towards a language to achieve a certain goal. Tahaineh and Daana (2013) study found that the students have certain reasons for learning the language and hold significant attitudes toward the use of English language that should be considered by English instructors and syllabus designers at the AAU-PAUC in preparing their materials, curriculum and teaching methods. In addition, the students' positive attitudes towards the educational status of English in Jordan could be employed to inform policy makers in the education field to revise the current policy at all stages of schooling to be English-oriented system.

Thus, attitude is incorporated with motivation in language learning, means that positive attitudes increase motivation. The attitudes play an eminent role in determining one's behavior, as the attitude can stimulates the behavior and directs it in a particular direction. Attitudes are somewhat indirectly related to second language achievement. So that improving the positive attitude of the students towards a particular academic subject may increase their desire to learn it, and an ability to apply what they have been taught may improvement their achievement.

The second term of this study deals with strategies in learning language. Language learning strategies are among the main factors that help determine how – and how well – our students learn a second or foreign language (Oxford: 2003). According to Ellis (1997: 76), learning strategies are the particular approaches or techniques learners employed to try to learn an L2. Language learning strategy may refer to an individual's way to complete a task. Schumaker and Deshler (1992) as cited by Fauziati (2010: 152) showed that strategy is an individual's way of organizing and using a particular set of skills in order to learn content as accomplish other tasks more effectively and efficiency in school as well as in non-academic settings. Thus, appropriate strategies can help the learner acquire the target language more easily and efficiently.

Based on the theories above, language learning strategies are factors that help students learn a second or foreign language. Qingquan, Chatupote, and Teo (2008) studied a number of useful implications for teaching and learning EFL in the Chinese context. First, since both the successful and unsuccessful first-year students started their tertiary EFL learning using learning strategies only sometimes, it is necessary to raise freshmen's awareness of the broad range of language learning strategy options available to them. The crucial role that strategies play in EFL learning in order to develop their strategic competence in EFL learning. Once they have increased their awareness of learning

strategies and come to realize the positive effects of learning strategies on EFL learning, they will certainly actively and consciously employ more learning strategies.

Additionally, Li (2009) proved that successful learners are more in favor of using learning strategies to learn vocabulary, and they think most of the strategies are useful. However, unsuccessful learners have different opinions, they seem not to favor using learning strategies in their study and only a few of them think these strategies are very useful. Thus, when teaching vocabulary teachers could teach some strategies and guide learners to use these strategies in their learning process.

Furthermore, in learning a language, the learner should cope with certain strategies to learn the language that is not used by the community. There are some languages learning taxonomy/classification. One of them is Rubin's taxonomy (1987) as cited in Fauziati (2010: 153). Rubin made the distinction between strategies which give direct contribution to learning and those which contribute indirectly to learning. According to Rubin, there are three types of language learning strategies; learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies.

The learning strategies are those which have direct contribution to the development of language system constructed by the learner. They consist of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. Rubin listed six main cognitive strategies; clarification, guessing/inductive inference, deductive reasoning, practice, memorization, and monitoring. On the other side, the meta-cognitive strategies are those to manage, regulate or self-direct language learning. They involve some process; planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and self-management.

As the second language strategies are communication strategies. They have less direct relation to language learning as their focus is on the process of participating in conversation and understanding speaker's meaning. The last strategy is the social strategies. They show the activities of the learners to be exposed and practice their knowledge. Those three strategies are practically engaged in the language learners' way in learning a second language. Each of them may insist in the way the learners learn the language, and the others may reflected in the practice of their knowledge.

From those explanation above, in this study, the writer focused on comparison of learner's attitude and strategies in learning English between the high and low achievers. The writer addresses the following research questions: (1) what are the attitudes and strategies of the high achievement students toward English? (2) what are the attitudes and strategies of the low achievement students toward English? (3) is there any significant difference between the high achievement and low achievement students towards attitude and strategies in learning English? And (4) do the learners' attitude and strategies influence students' achievement in English learning?

RESEARCH METHOD

To do the investigation on learner's attitude and strategies, the qualitative approach is implemented. The descriptive analytic design is used to have a more complete understanding, describing and categorizing the students' responses. 10 students as the subjects of this study are chosen randomly. They are ninth graders of MTs Darul Ulum Bandungharjo. 5 students are chosen from high achievement groups and 5 students from low achievement students group. The grouping is based on their English assessment mark. Questionnaires are used as research instrument in this study. The attitude questionnaires are the simplification of the 5 Likert-point level of agreement and the strate-

gies used the simplification of frequency level. The questionnaires items are translated into Bahasa to make the students understand well with the questions. Before applying the questionnaires, the writer tried out them to 1 low achievement student to validate it. After that, each group is asked to fill in the questionnaires at different time. Be specific with the Technique of analyzing the data After collecting the data, the writer analyzed and categorized the students' responses to answer the research questions. The questionnaires are enclosed in the appendixes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the writer categorized the findings and interpretation into parts of questions. The discussion is follows:

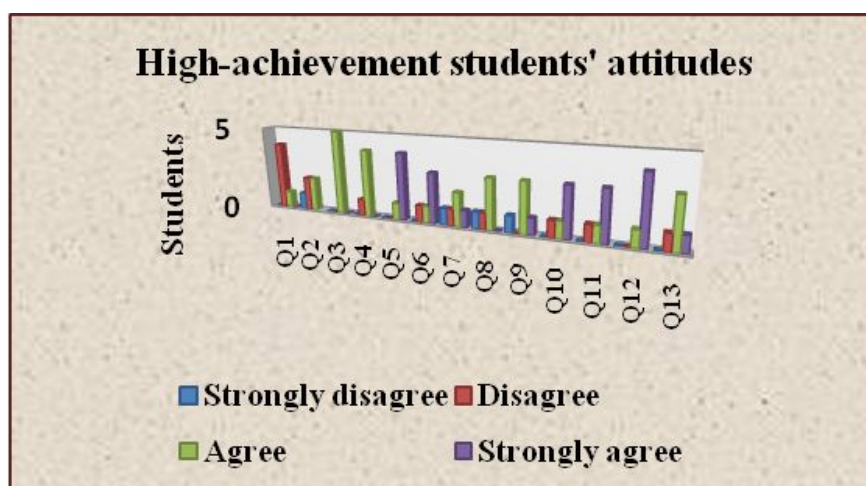1. **What are the attitudes and strategies of the high achievement students toward English?**

Table 1: High-achievement students' attitudes

From the figure above, almost all the participants agreed with the statements stated in the questionnaires. The first three questions asked about students' opinion of English. All the participants agreed that English was not a difficult and boring subject. All of them agreed that English was a fun subject. These statements showed their feeling in learning English. They had no burden in learning English.

In Q. 4, all of them agreed that they like English better than other subjects. They chose English as their favorite subject. The participants showed kinds of positive reactions toward English. Those were influenced by the particular social environment within which the language learning process takes place. This reaction came up as the positive interactions given by the English teacher (Q. 6). Based on description, the students' positive attitudes were incorporated with their motivations, means that their attitude increased their motivation. The first is that they were motivated to learn English to communicate with others especially the foreigners who came to Jepara (Q. 5) and to increase their understanding of English used in their surrounding (Q. 11). Moreover, they believed that if they were able to speak English, it would be easier for them to get along with others (Q. 13).

Another motivation in learning English was that they consciously using English while accessing internet (Q. 7). They were familiar with internet, so that they realized the effectiveness of English on it. In addition, the participants also realized that they should deal with English as it is one of the subject stated in the junior high school curriculum (Q.8). Moreover, they realized that they will get along with English when they go to the higher school (Q. 9). Another support was also given by their parents. The participants were strongly agreed that their parents supported them to learn English (Q.10). The last question (Q. 12) deals with motivation from the people surrounding them. They agreed that if they heared someone speak English fluently, they wanted to be like them. This motivated them to learn English seriously.

Those responses showed that the high-achievement students had a positive attitude towards people who speak English and positive attitude towards English in General. It also proved that the social environment gave influence the students' attitudes. In addition, high-achievement students were greatly motivated by the teacher, the parents, and people surrounding them. These motivations were supported by their positive attitude toward English. So, their attitudes increased their motivation in learning English.
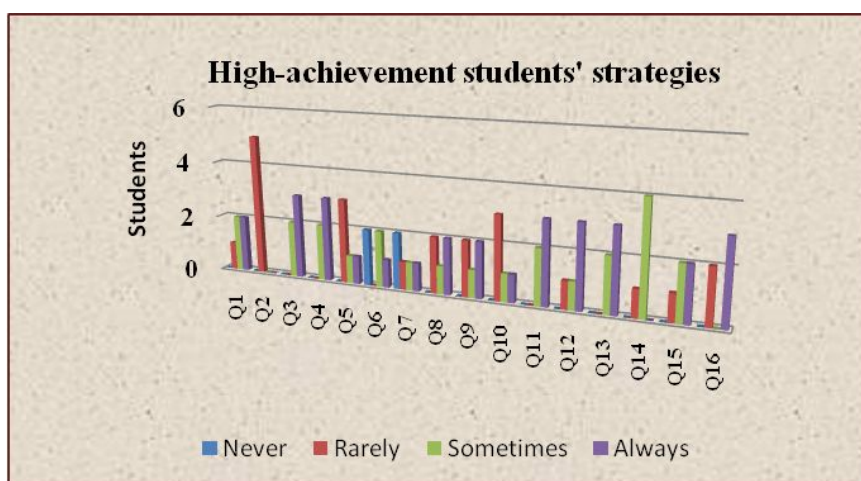

Table 2: High-achievement students' learning strategies

The second term is about high-achievement students' strategies. The figure above illustrated how the high achievement students practiced those two learning strategies; cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. They responded always for seven strategies in the questionnaires. The writer classified them into two categories. The cognitive strategies are Q.3, Q.4, Q.9, Q.11, Q.12, Q.13 and Q.16. The Q3 is a kind of verification strategy. The high-achievement students always pay attention to the teacher's explanation of a certain difficult words in the text in order to understand it. This strategy was useful in increasing their attention and being focus on teacher's explanation.

The Q.4 and Q.9 deal with the practice strategy. The students chose always in practicing their spelling and pronouncing certain sentences or words by imitating the teacher. The teacher here played role as the language model to their students. The following strategy was deal with verification strategy (Q.11 and 12). The students also prefered translating certain questions or sentences before answering them by looking at the dictionary. This strategy helped them to understand the text, and then answer the questions. The last of cognitive strategy is memorization strategy (Q.13). The students

took a note and memorized certain difficult words that they got from certain text. Those cognitive strategies made them learn English easier.

The metacognitive strategy that they did was planning (Q.16). From the figure above, the high-achievement learners had certain schedule to learn and review the English subject. This strategy helped them to revise their memory of certain difficult words, answer questions and practice their pronunciation. They also sometimes made outline in Bahasa before writing in English (Q.2). This strategy helped them to construct idea to write. However, the students rarely study English before they were going to have it in the classroom. It might because of the MTs Darul Ulum students have many subjects to learn in a day. However, they prefered to choose "always" in planning certain time to learn English. From the findings above, the high-achievement students did some efforts in learning English by applying cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

2. What are the attitudes and strategies of the low achievement students toward English?
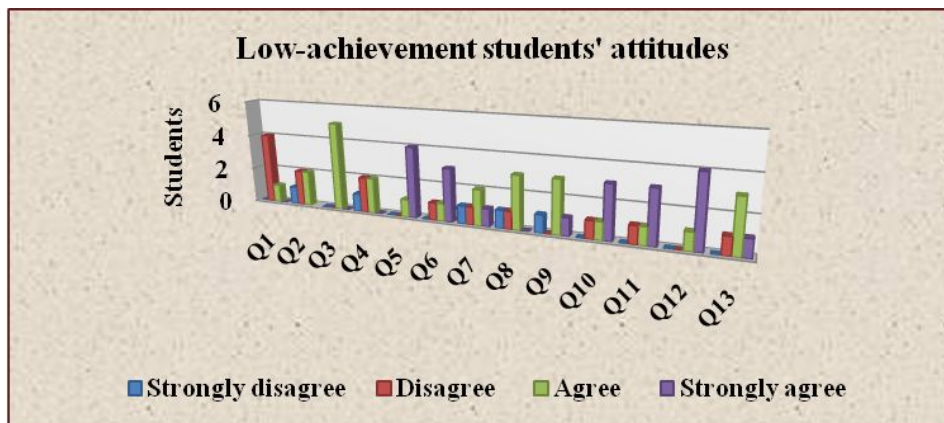

Table 3: Low-achievement students' attitudes

The figure above shows that the low-achievement students almost agreed with all the statements in the questionnaires. They had positive feeling toward English. They agreed that English was fun; it was not a boring subject and not difficult (Q.1, Q.2, and Q.3). This positive feeling increased their motivation in learning English. They agreed that the teacher made them enjoy the process of learning English in the classroom (Q.6). Furthermore, their parents supported them in learning English (Q.10). This support gave them such positive motivations. Although they were obligated to learn English as it was one of school's subject, they realized that they would also need it if they go to the higher level of education.

In addition, they learnt English as they wanted to communicate with the foreigners and friends while using internet (Q.5 and Q.7). They believed that they were proud if they could speak English fluently and understand all things around them which deal with English. It also made them easy to get along with others (Q.11 and Q.13). Those positive attitudes increased their motivation in learning English, explicitly. Those motivations are needed to create a successful learner.
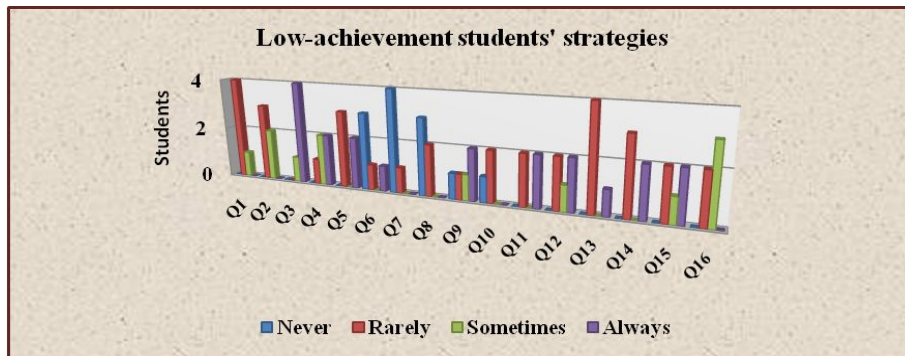
Table 4: Low-achievement students' learning strategies

For the low-achievement students' strategies in learning English, the figure above shows that their responses are varying from those four choices. The strategy that they prefered was listening to the teacher's explanation on some difficult words found in a text (Q.3). Only some of them did the metacognitive strategy in learning English (Q.16). Some of them had schedule to study, but two of them had no schedule to learn. This condition shows that they only learn English in the classroom without reviewing it at home. This respond related to the Q.1. Almost all of them chose never doing English homework. As they had no schedule to review English, they had no time to do the homework. It showed that the metacognitive strategy might influence the cognitive one.

They also chose never for learning English from listening to English song and watching English movie (Q. 7 and Q.8). This condition illustrated that they only learnt English in the classroom setting. However, some of them tried to use dictionary to help them understand certain sentence (Q.12). They also made an outline in Bahasa before writing English sentences (Q.14). This strategy might be helpful to create an idea before writing.

From the figure and explanation above, it may be concluded that the low-achievement students did not take various strategies in learning English. Although they had positive attitudes and motivations, they did not plan some useful strategies to increase their understanding in English. Moreover, the figure above illustrated that the positive attitude and good motivation did not guarantee that they had some useful strategies in learning English.

3. **Is there any significant difference between the high achievement and low achievement students towards attitude and strategies in learning English?**

The different respond of the high and low achievement students are figured as follow:
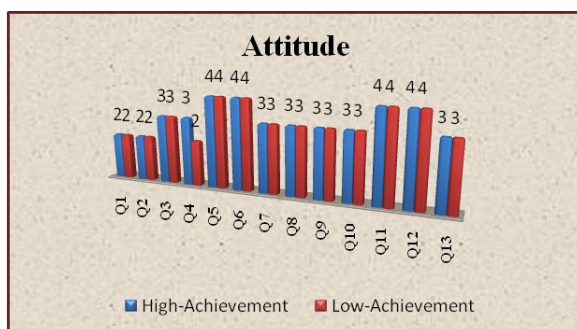
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Agree
4	Strongly Agree

Table 5: High and low-achievement students' attitude

From the figure above, it was illustrated that between the high or low achievement did not have many differences in attitude. Both of them agreed that English was fun and not boring subject. They did not regard English as a difficult subject (Q.1, Q.2, and Q.3). This belief showed that they had positive feeling toward English. The teacher interaction and support from their parents increased their attitude. Both of them also realized that English is obligated for them, but they realized that they supposed to be able to use English while using internet to connect them with the world. It motivated them to learn English efficiently.

However, there was one contradictory respond in answering the question number 4. The high-achievement students argued that they prefered English than other subjects. On the other hand, the low-achievement students disagree with the statement. This condition shows that the low-achievement students did not regard English as their favorite subject. Each student may be good in English, but not so capable with math or vice versa. This condition showed that attitude was personal. Each person may have different opinion about English.

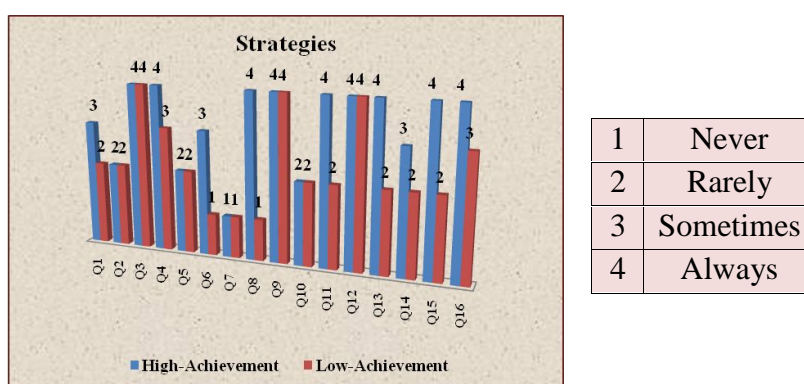| 1 | Never |
2	Rarely
3	Sometimes
4	Always

Table 6: High and low-achievement students' learning strategies

The figure above illustrated how the strategies they applied vary from the high and low achievement student. First, Q1 showed us that the high chose sometimes in doing English exercises. On the other hand, the low responded rarely in doing their homework. These questions connected with the question number 16 (metacognitive strategy). The high stated that they had certain schedule to learn English. As the contrary, low stated that they had no schedule in reviewing the lesson. This circumstance showed that the high had certain schedule to review the lesson and did the homework. On the other hand, the low had no certain schedule to do that. It described that there was a connection between the cognitive and metacognitive strategy.

Moreover, the high and low achievement students illustrated another difference. Q. 4 and Q.6, demonstrated how the high practiced their English by imitating their teacher's performance. On the other side, the low rarely did that. This situation connected with how the high-achievement students used gesture or Bahasa to switch certain difficult utterances or words. Furthermore, the high listened to English song to improve their listening ability, but, the low never did that strategy. This illustrates the efforts of the high to be able to say some utterances in English were higher than the low.

Dealing with how the high and low achievement students' strategy in understanding a text, they demonstrated significant differences. The high answered always in taking note of some difficult words found in a certain text, then tried to remember them. Contrary, the low only used dictionary to find

some difficult words without taking notes and remembering them. The high also tried to write in Bahasa first when they had to write something in English. On the other hand, the low rarely did that. Moreover, the high sometimes used self-management strategy whenever they find some errors in speaking or writing English. They got this ability from paying attention to the way their teachers explained something.

Those differences showed that the high-achievement students used cognitive and metacognitive strategies to improve their ability in English. However, the low-achievement students used only some of cognitive strategy in learning English.

4. Do the learner's attitude and strategies influence students' achievement in English learning?

From the explanation of differences between the high and low strategies in learning English, it demonstrated how the high efforts were differ from the low efforts. Although their attitudes were not significantly difference, their strategies showed significant differences. The attitudes figured out how the surrounding, the social environment influenced their motivations in learning English. However, these positive attitudes and motivations were not completed without some effective strategies to improve their ability. It illustrated that the attitudes and motivations were not significantly influence the learners' strategies use.

To conclude whether the cognitive and metacognitive strategies may improve the learners' achievement in English, the writer compared with their English mark. Their achievements in English from grade 7 until grade 9 were better than their friends. They got 8 and more in English assessment. Contrary to the students who did not apply some strategies in learning English, they only got 5 in English assessment. This circumstance demonstrated how cognitive and metacognitive strategies accompanied by positive attitude and motivation influenced the learners' achievement in English skill.

CONCLUSION

This study found that both of the high and low achievement students had positive attitude towards English. Those positive attitudes were incorporated with their motivations, means that their attitude increased their motivation. Those responses showed that the social environment influenced the students' attitudes. In addition, high-achievement students were greatly motivated by the teacher, the parents, and people surrounding them. However, there was difference answer in strategy questionnaires. Those differences showed that the high-achievement students used cognitive and metacognitive strategies to improve their ability in English. However, the low-achievement students used only some of cognitive strategy in learning English. This fact demonstrated how the positive attitude and motivation accompanied by cognitive and metacognitive strategies influenced the learners' achievement in English skill.

The findings of this study suggested a number of useful implications for teaching and learning English in EFL context. First, since the low-achivement students started their EFL learning using learning strategies only sometimes and never, it is necessary to raise their awareness of the broad range of language learning strategy options available surrounding them which may develop their strategic competence in EFL learning. Once they have increased their awareness of learning strategies and realized the positive effects of strategies on EFL learning, they will practice more strategies.

Second, by responding questionnaires of attitudes and questionnaires, the L2 learners may able to react the strategies that they have practiced or not. Then the teacher may divide them into groups to share experience and to discuss them in detail. The teacher also can pay more attention to how to ask the low students to try practicing the most confinient strategies that they discussed. Moreover, as the environtment may give influence to the learners' attitude and motivations, there should be certain comfortable peer group to work together in English class. So, the students' positive attitudes and motivations will activate their strategies naturally and effectively.

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