Students' Learning Strategies in Public Speaking Class at Higher Education Level

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ABSTRACT

Public speaking is the capability to speak in public with learning activities that occur through experiences and speaking practices in front of audiences. Different learning strategies the students apply in improving their speaking ability surely result in diverse speaking mastery and performances. This research aims to discover and explore what kind of learning strategies university students use in a public speaking course. Three students from the same class of public speaking course were selected as the subjects of the study. They are selected based on the score criteria: high-average score, medium-average score, and low-average score students. It was a descriptive qualitative study using questionnaires and interviews as the main instruments. The result shows that three types of students use three kinds of learning strategies: cognitive, socio-affective, and meta-cognitive strategies, but the main differences are in the factors of frequency and consistency of using the strategies. The researcher found that the high-average score student mostly used cognitive strategies to support their mastery of public speaking. The high-achieving student regularly watches and listens to English speeches on YouTube and Instagram, which cover the specific strategy: auditory representation of cognitive strategy aspects. This study concludes that the student with a high-average score employs more cognitive techniques to promote mastery of public speaking. It also recommends more frequent language exposure to improve public speaking skills.

Introduction

One way to interact is through speaking. Individuals should be taught early how to exchange information and communicate with others. Moreover, speaking is one of the four language skills that English learners must acquire, particularly in higher education. It is a crucial skill since it allows the students to communicate with others and express themselves verbally. In current times, speaking is also considered a tool serving many purposes, such as communication for daily life and academic context, where the former involves speaking as a prominent role to interact with other people or just to share information to maintain someone's social life. At the same time, the

latter is more complex because it is utilized for a particular purpose, such as to persuade, give accurate information, demonstrate things, and so forth in the academic context (Basalama et al., 2020). The students in higher education possess a variety of speaking mastery skills, particularly in public speaking courses. Different ways of learning to talk contribute to the differences in speaking mastery. According to O'Malley & Chamot (1990): metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies.

Given that the students' English proficiency varies, particularly in public speaking classes, this study aimed to identify and investigate the students' learning process at the university level. The researcher investigated it because the students' English fluency differs, particularly in public speaking classes. In addition, the researcher wished to compare the student's learning strategies with their A, B, and C grades. This study investigated the different learning strategies used by participants in public speaking classes. The researcher also wanted to know why students in the same class and lecture perform differently despite receiving the same knowledge.

According to O'Malley & Chamot (1990), there are three different types of learning techniques: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies. Then, there are three distinct metacognitive strategies in public speaking class. The first is planning, the second is monitoring the subject material by writing subheadings or critical topics, and the third involves evaluating the materials and key themes to ensure they are relevant. The second cognitive strategy is repetition, rehearsing, and imitation of new vocabulary or language. In contrast, the socio-affective strategy is the third one, and it involves the learner's interaction with another person to assist learning through cooperation, clarification-seeking questions, or effective control to support a learning task. These tactics improve language acquisition through social interaction. It involves asking questions, cooperating with others, and having empathy for others.

As previously said, it is anticipated that learning strategies apply to learning, including in public speaking, which is vital for educational and professional success. It provides an indispensable setting for fostering critical thinking and increasing employability (Emanuel, 2005; Bodie, 2010). It is also stated that speaking skills are vital for students to communicate effectively with their peers (Tridinanti, 2018). It is also supported by Sugiyati & Indriani (2021) that public speaking is an essential ability to master, considering today's demands in many kinds of fields, including delivering information and giving a speech in a big forum or even running entertainment. The learners must demonstrate fundamental public speaking skills, such as product promotion, foreigner interaction, speech, etc. At the university level, the English department requires students to enroll in public speaking courses. The students are assigned multiple roles as public speakers and must deliver their remarks in front of the class. They are needed to fulfill multiple duties, including becoming a master of ceremonies, advertising items,

hosting a television program, and playing roles as a tour guide, storyteller, news anchor, motivator, political campaigner, public relations officer, and interviewer (Hafifah, 2014; Hafifah et al., 2014)

Public speaking is regarded as one of the most valuable language skills, notably in higher education, which encompasses a variety of higher learning institutions, including universities. These institutes of higher education could be arranged variously, typically within a university and in a distinct institution as universities and other institutions of higher education. A university is a higher education institution providing both genders with a high degree of intellectual development in the humanities and sciences. It promotes advanced study in conventional professional fields. Additionally, it refers to gathering people doing research and study (Alemu, 2018). Additionally, tertiary learning and training activities in highly specialized fields like science, engineering, language, and agriculture are included in higher education.

Similar studies about learning strategies were conducted (Basalama et al., 2020; Nhem, 2019; Syafryadin, 2020) based on the theory of learning strategy proposed by O'Malley & Chamot (1990). However, there is a significant difference between the previous studies and this one. Basalama et al. (2020) solely focus on the learning strategies utilized by the students without considering a specific subject which is public speaking course. Another study by Nhem (2019) also focuses on learning strategies used by students, in this case, young and adolescents, which is shown to be distinguished from this research since the former does not focus on any specific subject while the latter specifies its focus to public speaking course. Finally, the study by Syafryadin (2020) shows a significant difference where this research selected university students while the third previous study selected high school students as the research subjects. This difference is essential since different focuses might lead to distinguished outcomes.

This research displays significant contributions both practically and theoretically. Practically, the outcome is valuable for identifying and analyzing the learning strategies promoting the students' mastery of the English language, especially to improve their speaking ability. The teachers would know the specific learning strategies that help the learners to learn better and easier. Additionally, they would be able to create certain instructional activities accommodating effective learning strategies. Theoretically, this study can be used as one of the references for studying the learning approach facilitating the students' mastery of the spoken language. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the learning strategies used by three types of learners (high, medium, and low-average score students) to improve their speaking competencies.

Method

This study used descriptive qualitative research methods. It signifies that the data are in the text format and ready for analysis (questionnaire and in-depth interview). The student's ability

and learning strategies in public speaking courses are the main objects of this study. The student's ability is based on the range score of English Department students, ranging from 0 to 100. The score range for an A grade is from 80 to 100. The average score is B, with a range of 64 to 71. The low score is C which runs between 56 and 63. The researcher determined that C had the lowest grade in the class, scoring 60 based on the student transcripts. The researcher then discovered that three students received B grades, two of whom scored 71 and one scored 69.4 points. Because 69.4 fell between scores of 71 and 64, the researcher opted to use it as the average score for this study. The researcher also discovered that five students received an A in this course, as evidenced by their transcripts. However, the researcher chose only the highest scores from the class to be this study's focus, totaling 82.8%. Then, three students with grades A, B, and C were interviewed to collect the research data. The information was made up of each student's replies to questions about their favorite methods of public speaking instruction. In this study, the measuring of the questionnaire was based on the Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" to "always," "sometimes," and "never" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2018). An additional interview was carried out to verify the questionnaire results.

Discussion

The researcher describes the results of the learning strategy in this part. The outcomes show the learning methods that each student at each level uses. There are students with high scores, average scores, and low scores. The scores are taken from the score transcript for public speaking, and three students are selected based on their performance. It has been demonstrated that these individuals apply learning strategies when learning public speaking. These are metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. Each strategy is made up of several distinct strategies. Therefore, by examining these detailed strategies and referring to the questionnaire, it is possible to identify the strategies utilized by each student.

Table 1. Students' Learning Strategies

Learning Strategies	NO	Specific Strategies	HAS			AS			LAS		
			A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N
Metacognitive	1	Planning I		x		x				x	
		Planning II			X		x			x	
	2	Selective Attention I			X	x			x		
		Selective Attention II			X	x				x	
		Selective Attention III		x		x					x

Learning Strategies	NO	Specific Strategies	HAS			AS			LAS		
			A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N
	3	Monitoring			X		x			x	
	4	Evaluation		x		X				x	
		Total (44,44%)									
Cognitive	1	Resourcing			X		x			x	
	2	Grouping		x			x			x	
	3	Deducing			X	x					x
	4	Transfer Knowledge			X			x			x
	5	Imagery			X		x				x
	6	Elaboration		x			x		x		
	7	Repetition and Auditory Representation	x			x				x	
	8	Summarizing	x			x			x		
	9	Translation			X	x			x		
	10	Note Taking		x			x			x	
		Total (%17,77)									
Socio-Affective	1	Asking For Clarification I			X		x			x	
		Asking For Clarification II			X		x				x
		Asking For Clarification III			X		x				x
	2	Cooperation I		x			x			x	
		Cooperation II		x			x			x	
	3	Empathizing		x			x			x	
		Total (44,44%)									

Notes:

A: Always   HAS: High Average Score Student

S: Sometimes   AS: Average Score Student

N: Never   LAS: Low Average Score Student

X: Student uses the strategy

Table 1. explains the percentage of the students' responses to the kinds of learning strategy questionnaires. High-average score student applies all major learning strategies from O'Malley & Chamot (1990). Furthermore, this participant openly employs several specific strategies. In metacognitive strategy, planning, selective attention, and evaluation are implemented. High-average score student also employs grouping, transferring, elaborating, repetition, having auditory representation, making a summary, and taking some notes as cognitive strategies. In addition, the student also employs socio-affective strategies during the public speaking learning process, including cooperating and empathizing.

Average score student uses planning, selecting attention, monitoring, and evaluating. Aside from the metacognitive strategy, the cognitive strategy is also used by the student to improve their performance. For cognitive strategy, the used strategies include resourcing, grouping, deducing, making imagery, elaborating, doing repetition, summarizing, translating, and note-taking. Doing repetition, summarizing, and translating are put into practice to their best extent by the student. The socio-affective strategy is the last strategy that is used by the student. All the specific strategies are used but not to their fullest extent. These strategies are cooperation, asking for clarification, and showing empathy.

Based on the questionnaire, like the previous participants, the low-average score student also uses all the proposed learning strategies, which consist of metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective. Unlike the previous participants, the low-average score student utilizes several specific strategies for each major strategy. The cognitive strategy used by the student, specifically, covers resourcing, grouping, elaborating, doing repetition, summarizing, translating, and note-taking. The socio-affective strategy consists of several specific strategies that the student implements. Asking for clarification is moderately used by the student. This includes questioning their friends about any information. Aside from questioning their friends, group discussion is also done by the student. This is included in cooperation. Helping friends in need is done during the debate, which is considered empathizing.

Each student employs each method in a similar and distinct manner. This is shown in their responses to the questionnaire. By referring to the questionnaire lists, it would be possible for the student to identify employed learning methodologies. Moreover, each student utilizes each method at varying rates which vary from student to student. This disparity in strategy utilization likely contributes to the various performances of the students. The table indicates that the students with medium and low scores employ more strategies than those with the highest scores. It is demonstrated that the student with the highest score employs eleven methods, including three metacognitive strategies, six cognitive strategies, and two socio-affective strategies. The average student employs 18 strategies, including four metacognitive strategies, nine cognitive

strategies, and three socio-affective strategies. Low-scoring students are revealed to employ 14 strategies, including four metacognitive strategies, seven cognitive strategies, and three socio-affective strategies.

This study shows the usage percentages of each strategy based on the calculations. This study also offers a diagram showing the percentages themselves. The diagram is displayed below.
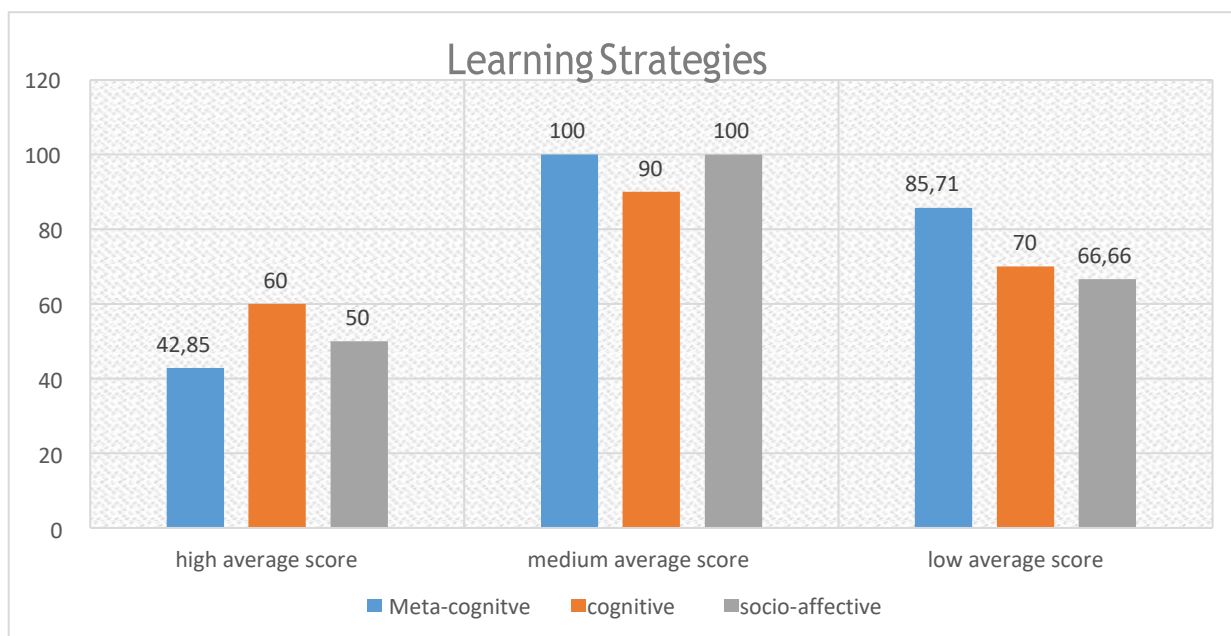

Fig 1: Usage Percentage of Learning Strategies

The diagram displayed the percentage of each approach utilized by each student. The student with the highest score utilized 42.85% of metacognitive strategies, 60% of cognitive strategies, and 50% of socio-affective strategies. The average student utilized all metacognitive strategies, 90 % cognitive strategies, and 100% socio-affective ones. The student with a low-average score utilized 85.71 % of metacognitive strategies, 70 % of cognitive strategies, and 66.66 % of socio-affective strategies.

After conducting the analysis, it is apparent that each student employs the primary strategies that O'Malley & Chamot (1990) described. However, a student with a score between average and below average is more likely to employ this learning technique than a student with a score above the average one. The high-average score student rarely employs all those learning strategies while the student has grasped the English language. Additionally, the student employs cognitive methods daily. The student spends at least 20 to 30 minutes each day observing video speeches on YouTube or Instagram.

In contrast, the low-scored and average-scored students use the strategies only before the class and simply stop using them after the class ends. This brief duration of usage deters them from increasing their English skills, despite employing more strategies than the student with the

highest score strategies. The researcher discovered that the student with a high-average score might master English proficiently due to the consistency and frequency of employing cognitive techniques.

Concerning efficiency, it has been observed that the students with a low level of comprehension use a variety of learning strategies which have been demonstrated to be utilized at a higher rate than the strategies used by the students with a good extent of knowledge. It is demonstrated to be caused by the level of language comprehension, which relies on existing information to help new learning. Due to their inadequate language comprehension, low-level students may have difficulties. In addition, it is consistent with the findings of Hashim et al. (2018) that the respondents use all types of language learning strategies as described by O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and other researchers. Although different language learners prefer different language learning strategies, only a few strategies are preferred by proficient language learners. Each participant utilizes all three categories of language learning strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-effective. They utilize distinct kinds of language learning procedures for the various talents they wish to gain and improve. The respondents are fluent language users; therefore, they are aware of the strategies they prefer to use to accommodate their learning preferences.

The use of learning strategies by each student was further emphasized in the interview, where several questions were asked regarding the utilization of each strategy. The metacognitive strategy implements planning, gathering selective attention, and evaluating. Before attending the class, the high-average score student utilizes the planning technique to prepare and investigate the subject. The student also employs the gathering selective attention method in addition to planning. This method involves selecting specific information fast and precisely, such as searching for a certain word in a dictionary. Evaluation is also used to assess the student's performance in the public speaking course. The student also employs grouping, doing the transfer, elaborating, doing repetition, running auditory representation, summarizing, and note-taking as cognitive strategies. By categorizing each word or concept, grouping is applied. It is performed to enhance their comprehension of the respective disciplines. The transfer is utilized to implement prior knowledge to complete the assigned duties. To elaborate, the student connects new information about the contents of public speaking to prior information. Additionally, the student repeats the newly acquired vocabulary to retain it more effectively. This is included in both the repetition and auditory representation categories. In addition, they record any new vocabulary in a short but clear note. This is part of summarizing and taking notes. The student employs a socio-affective strategy during the public speaking learning process. The student specifically uses cooperation when studying in groups for the public speaking course. The student did not hesitate to seek the

classmates for help when getting confused by the content. The student not only asks the questions but also assists the classmates, which can be stressed as empathy.

The average-score student uses planning, gathering selective attention, monitoring, and conducting the evaluation. Planning is used by preparing and studying the materials before the class. For selective attention, the student uses it to search and pinpoint parts considered critical, such as the main idea of a selected topic. The student also chooses to attend specific classes and ignore unrelated ones. The student uses the monitoring strategy to evaluate the effect and performance. For cognitive strategy, the strategies include resourcing, grouping, deducing, making imagery, elaborating, doing repetition, summarizing, translating, and note-taking. Resourcing means using all sources related to the corresponding topic, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, or textbooks. The student also seems to classify the words and concepts to increase the understanding of the materials. This is included in the grouping strategy. Applying rules and patterns concerning the attended class is heavily implemented by the student included in deducing. The student uses imagery strategy to prompt to use an image or comparable objects to ease the student in memorizing the materials explained in the class later. Related to using images, the student links those fresh and recent relatable materials, such as images or other sources, with their prior knowledge to boost their understanding of the said topics. Doing repetition, summarizing, and translating are put into practice to their best extent by the student. Repetition is done by, as its name suggests, repeating freshly heard words.

Summarizing is done by compiling those words into a small yet compact summary. Furthermore, any information in foreign languages is translated to comprehend it better. It is included in the translation. Also, preceding the process of repeating and compiling those new words into a summary, the student writes each story down in a note. This is included in notetaking. The socio-affective strategy is the last strategy used by the student. All the specific strategies are used but not to their fullest extent. These strategies are cooperation, asking for clarification, and empathizing. The student is proven to learn and discuss in groups during class, which can be included in cooperation. During the discussion process, the student asks some friends about any new knowledge. This is included in asking for clarification. Besides asking for clarification from some friends, the student also provides help to some friends if they stumbled onto problems, which is included in empathizing.

Low-average score student also uses all the proposed learning strategies, which consist of metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective. In metacognitive, based on the questionnaire, the student occasionally uses planning to prepare and formulate any necessary material before entering the class. The student heavily uses the selective attention strategy to choose and select any necessary yet related material. Monitoring and evaluation are also used to track and assess

performances. The student uses the cognitive strategy, especially resourcing, grouping, elaborating, repetiting, summarizing, translating, and note-taking. The student uses dictionaries, encyclopedias, or textbooks to help in public speaking class. This belongs to resourcing. The student also classifies any new word, term, or subject related to the materials learned during the class, which is included in the grouping. As for elaboration, the student links all the prior knowledge and public speaking materials with the new ones. After linking all the bits of knowledge, the student repeats the latest knowledge, such as vocabulary. This is included in the repetition.

The low-average score student uses the summarizing strategy at a significantly higher rate. The student uses this strategy by constructing a small summary based on the collected notes. The student uses a translation strategy to aid in the summary construction process. This is done by translating any necessary material from English to Indonesian. Before translating and summarizing the essential materials, the student writes down small notes containing new information, such as vocabulary. The socio-affective strategy consists of several specific strategies that the student implements. Asking for clarification is moderately used by the student. This includes questioning some friends about any information. Aside from questioning some friends, group discussion is also done. This is included in cooperation. Helping friends in need is also done during the debate, which is considered empathizing.

Based on the findings and discussion, it is possible to infer that the learning strategies provided by O'Malley & Chamot (1990) are useful for improving public speaking skills in English. The results showed that high-score students used cognitive strategies to support their speaking proficiency and regularly viewed and streamed English-speaking videos to improve their language comprehension. Cognitive strategies include repetition, auditory representation, translation, and keyword methods. The student with the high-average score utilized the strategies well before and after the class began, indicating that they utilized them at home or outside the classroom. However, the differences between the students with the maximum results and those with lower scores are the consistency and frequency with which they use these strategies, particularly in cognitive strategies.

A study by López (2011) discovered comparable outcomes to this study, namely that students with advanced English comprehension employed fewer learning strategies but more polished ones. According to the findings of López (2011), novices were found to apply all five strategies, albeit in different ways than intermediate and advanced students. This is understandable, as beginner language learners have only recently begun their studies. The students at the intermediate level of competence were reported for the greatest variety of ways which can be explained by the fact that they were acquiring more language and applying more structures in

their regular lessons. The advanced students employed more intricate strategies than those in the other two groups. They were in the last stages of their degree programs and used strategies such as requesting repetition and explanations. The Beginning and intermediate students relied on their teachers, peers, and dictionaries when speaking English. These preliminary results were encouraging since they revealed that the students spontaneously utilized the strategies without prior instruction.

In addition, according to the findings of the research conducted by Basalama et al. (2020), the students employ the three learning strategies in learning speaking proposed by O'Malley & Chamot (1990). This finding provides further evidence of the fact that when learning, the students tend to make use of all learning strategies, which is likely done in order to have a better understanding of the subject matter. According to Nhem (2019), language students, particularly those in Cambodia, make use of three distinct learning strategies while acquiring a new language. Consequently, one can conclude that learning techniques are relevant throughout most of the learning process, particularly in speaking courses, provided these findings are considered.

By looking at the results, it can also be seen that several findings emerged from this study's conduct. Gani et al. (2015) discovered that high-performance students consciously and appropriately employed more learning strategies than low-performing students. However, in this study, the one who utilized the most learning strategies was the medium-average score student, followed by the low-average score student. Another additional study by Amjusfa et al. (2021) discovered that the higher-achieving students used all of the language learning strategies to improve their speaking skills, while the lower-achieving students generally did not use the learning strategies in their learning activities. This difference proves that not all high-performance students utilize more strategies because proficient learners are more likely to employ strategies appropriate to the particular settings, tasks, or needs (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). The more successful students employed strategies that enabled them to accomplish the assignment more correctly, frequently, and diversely. Successful language learners adopt learning techniques that are more adaptable and relevant. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that more strategies do not mean higher performance.

In the study conducted by Fitasari et al. (2019), the high-scoring students utilized speaking learning strategies (P=83.8%) more often than the average-scoring students (P=79.8%). Moreover, the students with average scores utilized SLS more frequently than those with low scores (P=67.5%). These data revealed that those with a high degree of achievement adopted more aggressive strategies than the other students. It was backed by Green & Oxford (1995), who hypothesized that the students with a higher level of English proficiency would apply broader techniques. In addition, Griffiths (2003) demonstrated that the more learners utilized all ways, the

more they improved their language skills. Consequently, the high achievers exercised the tactics more frequently than the low achievers.

Therefore, by looking at the previous explanation regarding the previous studies and this research, it is safe to conclude that there are several possibilities in terms of learning strategies implementation where the said strategies might be implemented in different ways. In this research, the learning strategies are employed more by the low-average and average score students. This research also shows that the high-average score student applies fewer strategies but in a refined manner where the student accurately and effectively utilizes strategies suitable for their learning style. This proves that learning strategies might not correlate with an individual's English comprehension, and it can be concluded that the students might need to be effective in terms of implementation of learning strategies to increase their capability in learning a new language.

Conclusion

Considering the results and discussion, the students with the high-average score utilized cognitive strategies to support public speaking competence the most frequently. The two learning strategies employed by the students with the average score were metacognitive and socio-affective strategies. In addition, the student with the low-average score used metacognitive methods. The consistency and frequency with which the student used the learning strategies distinguished the students into high-average, average, and low-average scores. In this study, the highest scorer was more likely to employ cognitive strategies to support the mastery of public speaking and as part of daily routines, as opposed to the average scorer and low-average scorer who only used these strategies at specified moments, such as while in the class or just before entering the class. Since they do not use these strategies daily, the students with average and low-average scores performed equally well in the public speaking lesson. The learning strategies merely aid their comprehension of the materials and have no bearing on their English comprehension. Since the students in the public speaking class are required to speak, a huge vocabulary list and in-depth knowledge of technical subjects, such as syntax, are unquestionably required. This circumstance was determined to be related to how students applied the strategies. However, these strategies do not substantially impact the students' performance due to the differences in English comprehension.

This research completion comes along with the limitation, which can be considered the weakness of this research. By looking at the participants, it can be seen that this research only focused on three participants, which can be considered a relatively small number of participants in discovering the learning strategies used by the students in public speaking. Furthermore, this research did not cover the participants' results after implementing the learning strategies.

Therefore, further researchers are suggested to conduct similar topics. Since this research explores additional reasons for using learning strategies, further research might show different and richer results. For readers interested in English, especially public speaking, it is suggested to dig more about it to obtain a deeper understanding of public speaking, such as the suitable strategy to use in learning public speaking or how to overcome the problems that might be faced when learning it.

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