



SRL in Elementary School Students' English Language Learning: A Case Study

Cahyaning Imani¹, Ive Emaliana², Sumyarto³
cacaimani@student.ub.ac.id

¹Faculty of Cultural Studies, Brawijaya University, Indonesia

²Faculty of Cultural Studies, Brawijaya University, Indonesia

³SDN Prunggahan IX, Tuban, Indonesia

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Abstract

Elementary education is one of the levels of education in which students' abilities, including attitudes, knowledge, and skill are developed through a series of learning activities undertaken. Self-regulated learning (SRL) in learning activities in elementary school is one of the factors that influences students' academic progress and it is associated with metacognitive and cognitive skills. The study was conducted in grade 4 of a public elementary school in the rural area of Tuban, East Java, from March to June 2021. The adoption of SRL is one of the factors that may encourage students to participate actively in the learning activities. By organizing their knowledge, students will acquire an ethical attitude. Students will be more self-assured and independent, and they will not be reluctant to voice their thoughts or ideas during learning activities. From the findings, among metacognitive self-regulation and cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies are the one most frequently used by students.

Keywords: elementary-school students; English; self-regulated learning.

Introduction

The educational system from elementary to higher school has collapsed not only in Indonesia, but globally. Due to the prolonged closure of schools and universities as the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak spreads, there has been a growing shift toward online learning as the only viable alternative (Stambough et al., 2020). The virus's rapid and unexpected spread has forced the Indonesian government to close schools and universities in order to prevent significant physical contact. Hence, in accordance with the Circular Letter of Ministry of Education and Culture number 4 of 2020, the teaching and learning process was conducted online.

Online learning offers numerous benefits, such as being conveniently accessible, a less expensive way of education in terms of transportation and accommodation, and being able to reach out to remote and rural areas (Dhawan, 2020). As of today, most Indonesian schools are not capable of teaching online.

Teachers and students still require socializing and online learning training. Prior until now, measuring online learning has rarely been conducted simultaneously (Sun et al., 2020). Nonetheless, there is no other alternative option than to conduct online learning. Teachers are expected to comprehend the material not only in conventional classrooms, but also in online teaching classrooms. At this point, the usage of technology and online learning tools is fundamental. Students' stress, fear, and anxiety levels should be reduced by making teaching and learning activities more interesting and fun (Dhawan, 2020).

Unpreparedness to integrate online learning might potentially lower Indonesian educational quality. Because of insufficient technological knowledge, elementary school students in remote areas are inevitably challenged. Therefore, the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, is launching a teaching campus activity program in 2021. The teaching campus program focuses on providing solutions to elementary schools with C level accreditations in remote areas with the assistance of the contributing students. They are university students from various institutions who were selected as part of the application process. The minister has assigned the chosen students to assist teachers and school administrators in conducting the learning activities, notably in learning English, during the coronavirus epidemic.

In the Indonesian educational context, English is taught as a foreign language in which there is a limited opportunity for students to engage with their environment using the language. English has been designed as an elective topic in Indonesian elementary schools with the goal of advancing English as a worldwide instrument of communication and encouraging young learners to learn a foreign language. The availability of English as a local content topic is dependent on the school's preparedness, particularly in terms of teacher resources, learning resources, and curriculum (Hawanti, 2018). As a result, the ideal condition to learn English is when students are in primary education. It will assist them in becoming fluent in English.

Primary education is one of the stages of education wherein the students' characteristics, such as behaviors, understanding, and abilities, are developed through the use of a series of activities. Furthermore, according to Ghasemi & Hashemi (2011), the effective time to introduce new languages to learners is when they are young. One of the competencies learners must acquire which according to the Minister of Education and Culture's Regulation No. 20 of 2016 on Competency Standards for Primary and Secondary Education Graduates is metacognitive ability, particularly involves the ability to recognize one's own strengths and limitations. As students have higher metacognitive ability in learning English, they should be able to effectively manage their learning processes. On the other hand, Elementary school students still find it particularly difficult in determining which learning strategies are suitable for them.

Self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies are strongly associated with metacognition (Zimmerman, 1989). In the perspective of metacognition, students that implement SRL are able to plan, arrange, and assess their abilities during the learning activities. SRL plays an essential part since it strives to develop abilities for lifelong learning (Zimmerman, 2002). Perels et al., (2009) state that SRL strategies can begin as early as preschool. The importance of SRL in enhancing

pupils' academic success has been demonstrated in several researches. Academically, students who use more self-regulated learning strategies are more likely to succeed (Bai & Guo, 2019). Students who are able to self-regulate their learning are expected to have a positive impact on their academic achievement. Nonetheless, Karlen, (2016) revealed that some students face challenges in implementing SRL.

The contribution of adopting SRL for students is one of the variables that might encourage them to engage more readily in their learning process. By organizing their knowledge, students will acquire an ethical attitude. Students will be more self-assured and independent, and they will not be reluctant to voice their thoughts or ideas during learning activities. Mega et al., (2014) believe that in order to achieve academic success, students will generally avoid negative behaviors and cognitions and will be aware of the strategies that must be learned and implemented in order to optimize academic accomplishment. To learn English more efficiently, students need to adopt SRL, which necessitates motivation, task strategies, and environment structuring abilities in order to self-regulate in addition to completing and executing a task in a learning activity. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the SRL strategy in learning English in elementary school students in Tuban.

Method

The research employed a case study research design that involved a qualitative method. It was conducted in grade 4 of a public elementary school in the rural area of Tuban, East Java, from March to June 2021. The subjects of the study were a homeroom teacher and her students. To gather the data for this study was done through interview, observations, and document analysis of primary and secondary sources. The teaching and learning process was observed seven times which was recorded into field notes, videos, and photographs. The interview was conducted with a homeroom teacher and two fourth-grade students. The teacher's note, students' book, exam documents, and students' report were all included in the document analysis.

To assess the validity of the data, the triangulation method was applied. Sugiyono (2010), defines triangulation as the combination of various existing data collection and data source techniques. Triangulation in data collection techniques refers to a researcher's employment of various approaches while collecting research data from the same data source, whereas triangulation in data sources refers to collecting data from numerous sources using the same technique.

Results

Self-Regulated Learning

Self-regulated learning is the process in which learners become the masters of their own learning (Zimmerman, 2015). If viewed from a self-regulated learning perspective, students are seen as active participants in the learning activities in order to attain certain learning goals. Students are expected to build their own objectives and strategies based on the information from both the external and internal environments. Planning, performance, and self-reflection are the three aspects of self-regulated learning. Several motivating beliefs stimulate the process

and affect learning strategies when students analyze the task, establish targets, and plan how to accomplish them in the planning phase. The planning phase is thought to influence how students participate throughout learning activities, such as how often they utilize strategies and how well they monitor their progress (Peters-Burton & Botov, 2017). Students conduct exercises, track their progress, and use a range of self-control methods to stay cognitively active and motivated to complete the assignments throughout the performance phase. Students also assess their progress throughout the self-reflection phase. These recognitions stimulate self-reactions that influence how students handle their next assignment. Students can manage their learning through self-regulated learning, which involves cognition, metacognition, motivation, as well as dynamic behavior on self-regulation (Panadero, 2017).

Students in elementary school are able to quickly imitate anything, such as language. Students require an environment where they are surrounded with targeted language that is relevant because of the context and the way the teacher/instructor speaks to them when learning a language. Their thinking techniques, attitude, competence, and language acquisition abilities are all included in the characteristics. Furthermore, it is clear that the characteristics of young learners differ significantly from those of adult learners. They are highly energetic and require physical activity to keep them going. They are also easily captivated by new experiences that they have never had before. With that being said, learning English as a foreign language at a young age is unique for children, and teachers must assist them in developing a high level of self-regulation in language learning.

Table 1. Self-regulated learning strategies

Strategy	Dimension	Definition
Goal orientation and approach	Metacognitive Strategy	Students' statements indicating academic goals setting, as well as the planning, scheduling, and execution of learning activities related to those goals.
Help-seeking	Cognitive Strategy	Students' statements indicating their attempts to seek more task information, such as teachers, when accomplishing a task.
Memorizing	Cognitive Strategy	Students' statements indicating their efforts to memorize the material through constant practice.
Reviewing	Cognitive Strategy	Students' statements indicating their efforts to reread notes or textbooks in order to

Self-monitoring	Metacognitive Strategy	prepare for class or further exams. Students' statements indicating their efforts to assess the learning process or outcome.
Self-evaluating	Metacognitive Strategy	Students' statements indicating their efforts to evaluate their learning progress.

Metacognitive Strategy

The ability of a student to monitor, plan, arrange, and assess their own learning processes is known as metacognition (Zimmerman, 1989). It demonstrates a learner's comprehension of their overall academic abilities and limits, the cognitive resources they may utilize to meet the needs of individual tasks, and how to regulate task engagements to maximize learning processes and results (Winne & Perry, 2000). The use of such active and self-regulation methods has been shown to be significantly associated with academic achievement (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Metacognitive abilities enable students to become aware of and track their progress toward their goals. They will be able to improve their learning and understanding in this way. Nonetheless, learners can see any changes in their learning that need to be made (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999).

In comparison to low achievers, high achievers' students were significantly more motivated and used more SRL strategies during their learning process (DiFrancesca et al., 2016). The implementation of self-regulated learning strategies in English learning favorably affected students' attitudes toward metacognitive self-regulation, particularly in goal orientation and approach, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Making a plan and setting a target by how much time students spent studying English material, such as learning new vocabularies, reading a short text, and answering a variety of questions. It enables students to maintain control over their efficiency in completing the assignment. One of the students had completed their time according to the plan. As a result, it is possible to conclude that these techniques encouraged students in continuing their English learning practices.

When it comes to monitoring the task, all students knew how to underline words or simply make a note when they came across difficult words, as they stated, "I often ask the teacher if I come across a word that I don't know..." to help them comprehend the meaning. These strategies assist them in gaining a better understanding of the meaning of the words, resulting in a better understanding of the content. Furthermore, students are also capable of managing long-term activities until they have finished the task completely. Students with good self-regulation have effective learning strategies and the persistence to complete all of their tasks.

Table 2. Sample of sentences in the short text

Sentence 1	Mr. Amat saw a large tree on the side of the
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	road.
Sentence 2	Mr. Amat drinks water and lies down under the tree.

While it comes to self-evaluation as a final stage, one of the students explains, “...when studying English, I ask myself a lot of questions regarding the material...”. When he was already done accomplishing the task, he questioned again “Did that way of doing it worked well? Why was it so tough for me or why was it so simple for me?”. According to Zimmerman (2000), these judgments and thoughts might affect future behavior when executing a new learning task. In order to enhance their English skills, the students developed a list of goals to achieve, including expanding their vocabulary, improving their grammatical knowledge, and putting in a lot of practice time.

Cognitive Strategy

The cognitive in self-regulation, which focuses on the learners’ learning activities and motivational self-regulation, as well as other associated elements such as effort, are highly correlated and determine their performance simultaneously (Boekaerts, 2011). Cognitive in self-regulation is defined as the development of a series of positive behaviors that influence an individual’s use of cognitive abilities to integrate learning processes. These procedures can take place before students begin working on tasks, while they are working on them, and during breaks or after the activities have been finished; when students reflect on their accomplishments.

The cognitive strategy used in self-regulation focuses on facilitating individuals in learning, remembering, and comprehending the information. In this situation, learners had a positive attitude toward the employment of a cognitive strategy in the execution of the English task. It was revealed that students used a variety of strategies to accomplish the task, including guessing, checking a dictionary, and asking the teacher when they came across challenging terms. Students usually guess when they can’t come up with an appropriate interpretation for a word after adjusting it with the rest of the sentence. When they are uncertain of their own definition or have examined a dictionary for a precise explanation to the word, they will ask the teacher.

Furthermore, students frequently employed imaginations, translation, and transferring to the note as techniques when it came to rehearsing and memorizing. Furthermore, some techniques that have been found to be effective in rehearsing and memorizing include engaging in pleasant activities such as listening to music with lyrics. Subsequently, after examining their records, students agreed that all SRL procedures assist them in efficiently maintaining their English learning activities. “...occasionally I re-read my notebook when I study independently at home with my sister,” they both said. Despite the fact that they frequently learn only when they have homework.

Discussion

SRL is made up of two primary components: metacognitive and cognitive strategies. The use of cognitive strategy refers to the various unique strategies

utilized by learners to enhance their learning, whereas metacognitive self-regulation assists them in becoming more self-aware and deliberate in their learning. However, this strategy did not appear to execute effectively, as students paid less attention to metacognitive self-regulation than to the cognitive strategy used. The results of self-regulation in English learning revealed that elementary-aged children tended to use cognitive over metacognitive strategies. One of them was likewise unaccustomed to planning beforehand. This being said, he had a struggle to manage his own time in order to complete the task.

Students had more initiative while using the cognitive strategies, particularly during the rehearsing and remembering stage. Some strategies include listening to music with lyrics over and over again. They also showed positive enthusiasm in obtaining knowledge about ambiguous terms by making attempts such as guessing and seeking help from teachers. Students who plan the acquisition process, set their targets, arrange information, and continually monitor and assess themselves are “cognitively, metacognitively, and motivationally active participants in their own learning process” (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2011). Furthermore, the presence of teachers is essential to the learning experience. During the learning process, the teacher should assist students in implementing SRL.

Conclusion

In primary education, it is expected that students would be able to utilize learning that is combined with the SRL strategy in every learning activity. Students may arrange themselves in the learning process by involving cognition, metacognition, and motivation in a controllable manner by using the SRL learning strategies. Students with SRL abilities are likely to have an impact on academic progress, particularly in learning English. During the learning process, students will not be afraid to express their thoughts or ideas. When faced with learning problems, students will be better able to control themselves and will be less readily discouraged. Students will be able to complete given activities independently, as well as organize, manage, and optimize the time they have to learn.

According to the findings, both metacognitive self-regulation and cognitive methods utilized in self-regulation have a positive relationship with students' English understanding. Both strategies helped students to employ individual learning strategies to improve their learning and to become more self-aware and enthusiastic in their English learning. Furthermore, among metacognitive self-regulation and cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies are the one most frequently used by students. The explanations might be attributed to a high level of awareness and control of their cognitive activity while engaging with English content. The present study can assist English instructors in developing a clear grasp of SRL to be used in elementary schools. Teachers should be able to enhance students' interest and help them in using SRL in learning English based on the findings of the study.

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