Language Learning Strategies And Student Thinking Style: A Case Study of Marginal Children at Relawan Anak Sumatera Selatan (RASS)

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Abstract: *This research explores the relationship between language learning strategies and the thinking styles of marginalized children under the care of the Relawan Anak Sumatera Selatan (RASS) community. The research aims to identify how these students, who face various socio-economic challenges, adopt specific language learning strategies and how their unique thinking styles influence these choices. Through qualitative methods using field Observations and in-depth interviews. Findings show that marginalized students often use social and memory strategies due to resource constraints and external support, and their thinking styles, This research contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive education by highlighting the importance of adaptive teaching methods that address the diverse cognitive and socio-economic backgrounds of students.*

INTRODUCTION

English is a vital global language, offering access to cross-cultural communication, education, and resources. In Indonesia, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a strategic competency crucial for children's development in the global era. However, as Cohen (2017) highlights, effective learning requires strategies that enhance enjoyment and efficiency, addressing specific challenges. Learning strategies, categorized by Brown (2000) into direct (memory, cognitive, compensation) and indirect (meta-cognitive, affective, social) approaches, are critical for fostering active learning and self-management. Additionally, thinking styles, defined by Sternberg (1988) as internal (solitary) or external (collaborative), significantly influence how students process information and achieve learning outcomes. These strategies are particularly important for marginalized children, who often face barriers like poverty and limited access to education.

In regions like Palembang, marginalized children encounter challenges such as high dropout rates and a lack of educational resources (Anjal & APS, 2020). Volunteer initiatives, including the South Sumatra Children Volunteers (RASS), play a pivotal role in bridging these gaps by providing non-formal education and supporting equitable learning opportunities. Drawing on Vygotsky's theory of socio-cultural learning, which emphasizes the role of social

interactions and guidance in cognitive development, this study examines the relationship between language learning strategies and thinking styles among marginalized children. By leveraging these insights, the research aims to empower volunteers with effective tools to enhance English learning outcomes, contributing to a more inclusive and impactful education system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language Learning Strategies

language learning strategies are the techniques that language learners apply to improve their acquisition, retention, and use of a new language. Oxford's (2017) framework divides these strategies into direct (cognitive, memory, and compensation) and indirect (metacognitive, affective, and social) categories, indicating that learners benefit from a combination of focused language practice and supportive methods.

Thinking Style

Thinking style refers to a learner's method of processing information and solving problems related to their tasks. Thinking styles refer to people's preferred ways of using the abilities that they have. Robert J Sternberg's theory in Zhang, Sternberg, & Fan, (2013), those are five categories namely: function, form, level, scope and learning. Focusing on the scope dimension: Internal (Introvert) and External (Extrovert) is crucial for marginalized children because their socio-economic and educational environments often shape their preference for working independently or collaboratively.

METHOD

This study used qualitative research with two variables, namely language learning strategies (X) and student thinking style (Y) as variables. The writer researched the children in a group of volunteer organizations in Palembang, namely Relawan Anak Sumatera Selatan (RASS) as the object. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with case studies carried out intensively, with the writer observing directly and going into the field and using field note and moderate participant on the observation, also unstructured and depth interview.

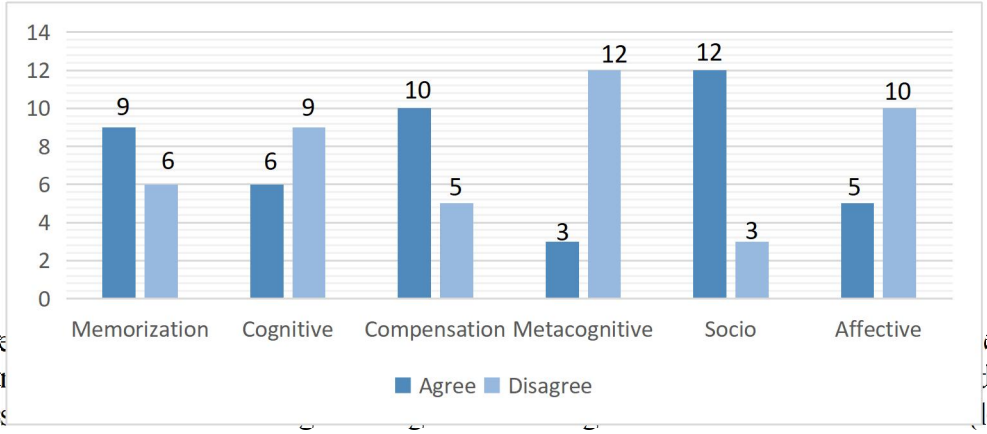
Participants in this research were selected using a purposive sampling method who particularly useful when researchers want to focus on specific characteristics or experiences that are central to the research question, thus ensuring that the sample is highly relevant, the writer chose the same life background, namely among marginalized groups who had the same characteristics and traits.

The writer used source member checking in this investigation that used to evaluate the accuracy of qualitative findings by asking informant review whether they thought the final report was accurate after providing a copy or with certain descriptions or themes.

The data analysis process involved four key steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction phase, information was sorted and organized to retain only the most relevant details. Field observations and interviews were transcribed and systematically coded. Initial codes anonymized participants, while questions and responses were organized by sequence (e.g., Q1, Q2). Themes related to language learning strategies (LLS) and thinking styles (TS) were identified and assigned descriptive codes, such as "MEM" for memory strategies and "E" for extroverted thinking. Data display utilized tables and essays to visualize the findings, aiding comprehension and further analysis. Finally, conclusions were drawn by cross-checking observations and interviews to ensure consistency and validate the results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) indicate that compensation and socio strategies was significant that marginalized used of learning English. It showed 10 out of 15 children or about 67% who chose compensation and the most chose was SOC there are 12 out of 15 children or 80% of children chose.



The re ent was active in learn hinking style. It was learning collaboratively) and compensation (lack of knowledge).

CONCLUSION

The study on language learning strategies and thinking styles among marginalized children at Relawan Anak Sumatera Selatan (RASS) found a strong connection between the two. Limited resources and unsupportive environments hindered the children's English learning, prompting the community to provide tailored education. Socio strategies and external thinking styles emerged as key approaches, fostering confidence and self-expression.

Implications: This study highlights the importance of tailoring educational approaches to the unique needs of marginalized children. By integrating socio strategies and external thinking styles, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment that fosters confidence and self-expression. The findings suggest that community-based learning, with relatable mentors and an emphasis on active participation, can significantly improve language acquisition for students from underprivileged backgrounds.

Limitations and suggestion**:** The study is limited by its focus on a single community and a relatively small sample size, which may not fully capture the diversity of marginalized children's experiences in different contexts. Additionally, the reliance on qualitative methods, while insightful, could benefit from being supplemented with quantitative data to strengthen the findings and enhance generalizability. For future research should explore similar approaches in various marginalized settings to verify the effectiveness of socio strategies and external thinking styles across diverse groups. Incorporating quantitative methods alongside qualitative ones could provide more robust evidence. Educational interventions should continue to focus on reducing social gaps and fostering active learning processes while addressing resource constraints to support marginalized students more comprehensively.

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