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STUDENTS' COGNITIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY IN MASTERING ENGLISH MATERIAL AT VOCATIONAL SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstrak : In Indonesia, many students still cannot master English because they are not interested in learning English The appropriate learning strategy, which is suitable to the qualities and surroundings of the learners, is one of the factors in accomplishing English acquisition. This research aimed to know what cognitive strategy is most frequently used by the student at SMK N 4 Semarang and why them shoose that activity. This research applied a qualitative descriptive method. In collecting data, the researcher used an online survey through Gform and. SILL questions with a total number of fourteen questions related to the cognitive strategy was use to being the instrument. The subject of this research was X grade of mechanical engineering 4 at SMK N 4 Semarang which a total number of 36 male students. The data were analyzed by data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. From the SILL questions, the findings showed that *watching English language TV shows spoken in English or going to movies spoken in English* was the most frequently used activity by the students with a percentage of 50%. And the least used strategy was to start a conversation in English with a percentage of 8,3%. These findings suggest the teachers apply that activity to improve the English skills of the student so that the students are interested in learning English.

Kata Kunci : Learning Strategy, Cognitive Strategy, SILL

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that is widely used everywhere in the world, including Indonesia, to connect with individuals from other countries (Mayalisa et al., 2023). Nowadays, English has been made a compulsory subject in vocational high schools by the government. Learning English aims to provide the opportunity for the students to prepare themselves for the future such as applying for jobs, interviews, tests, and various other needs when they graduate from the vocational school. Susanto & Yosephine (2019) stated that the learning material should demonstrate the life skills that students need to handle career and workplace issues. But, in the teaching-learning process, most of the students still consider English a difficult subject. (Maria et al., 2019)said that they too often heard students complain about constantly learning and forgetting new phrases. The assumption that learning English is difficult makes some students feel lazy to improve their English skills. Many students also struggle to recognize their personalities since they are not accustomed to self-reflection. Furthermore, teachers frequently do not understand their learners' behaviors in learning English. As a result, teachers set unsuitable learning activities for their students.

Based on the writer's observation at SMK N 4 Semarang, it was found that there are still many students who do not master English. One of the reasons why they cannot master English is that they are not interested in learning English. This can be seen when the teacher is explaining, they are still busy with their smartphones, talking with their classmates, and some of them even fall asleep in class. This situation can be caused by low student learning motivation or even inappropriate learning strategies applied by the teacher.

As a teacher in the class teacher should give more attention to the students such as; giving motivation, giving compliment, giving tips, advice, etc. (Suwarti & Susanto, 2009). Moreover, teacher also should focus in applying strategy, technique, or method in the teaching English (Maria et al., 2019). Furthermore, Anita and Susanto (2017) told us that teachers have an important role in the implementation of quality teaching because the success or the unsuccessful teaching and learning process can be seen from the techniques that are used by the teacher by selecting the right techniques of teaching-learning. Therefore, teachers should make the teaching and learning activity more entertaining for students by providing appropriate media that captures their attention before entering the actual grammar taught (Kusumawardhani et al., 2017)

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) have been explained by some researchers around the world such as Ortega (2009), Jenny X. Montaño-González (2017), and Rebecca L. Oxford (2003). Ortega (2009 p. 208 cited in Jenny X. Montaño-González, 2017) defined Learning strategies as deliberate mental and behavioral actions people take to take charge of their learning. Meanwhile, Jenny X. Montaño-González (2017) defined learning strategy as a combination of tactics used by individuals to take charge of their learning. The theory from Rebecca L. Oxford (2003)is one of the most well-known LLS theories. The LLS's taxonomy by Oxford has received a lot of attention, notably in the field of learning English as a foreign and second language. The taxonomy of LLS, according to Oxford (2003) can be separated into two basic strategies: direct and indirect techniques. Direct and indirect techniques are made up of several sub-strategies that can help good language learners improve the quality of their language learning process.

Many researchers throughout the world have become interested in LLS research such as Suran & Yunus (2016); Lestari & Fatimah (2020); Rahmawati et al. (2021): and Sukying (2021). Suran & Yunus (2016) investigated the LLS of pupils in the Meradong district's rural secondary school. According to the findings of the study, students' LLS can assist educators in increasing the effectiveness of the language learning process. Then,

Lestari & Fatimah (2020) revealed in their research that language learning strategies are crucial for increasing students' learning awareness and for enhancing teachers' preferences for teaching. Next research conducted by Rahmawati et al. (2021) which their research revealed that cognitive strategies have a positive effect on students' speaking performance. Finally, Sukying (2021) explained that language learning strategies are conscious behaviors used by language learners to foster the acquisition, storage, and use of new information, and the finding of his study showed that instruction in the application of learning strategy considerably benefits students.In this research, the writer proposes cognitive learning strategies as an effective strategy for vocational students learning English.

Cognitive language learning strategy is the best model for encouraging learning techniques in the classroom (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990 cited in Jenny X. Montaño-González, 2017). Studies on Cognitive strategies have been explored by Mundi & Kamaruddin (2021); Daar (2019); Luqman (2020); and Etfita (2018). Mundi & Kamaruddin (2021) researched to find out the learning strategies in writing procedure text and to know about the students' reasons for using those strategies. The research found that the most dominant used learning strategy by the students is cognitive strategy. In line with Mundi and Kamaruddin (2021), the research conducted by Daar (2019) revealed that the most strategy used by the students was the cognitive strategy with the percentage 90,2% of students. This research also found that cognitive strategy can help students improve academic achievement and provide the opportunity for students to practice speaking English outside of class. The next research conducted by Luqman (2020) showed that applying the cognitive learning strategy had a significant positive impact on developing the learners' ability to speak English. The last was conducted by Etfita (2018) whose research found that the use of cognitive strategy can improve students' skills in writing descriptive text. The findings of this study indicated that there was an increase in the average score of students above the completeness criteria of a minimum of English subjects is 75.

From those previous studies, it only explains that cognitive learning strategy affects the improvement of English skills and students frequently used cognitive strategy in certain material. However, they did not explain actually in detail which cognitive strategy is most frequently used by the students. The writer in this research tries to fill in the gap of the previous studies namely the researcher wants to use the SILL Questionnaire to know which cognitive strategies are most frequently used by the students in SMK N 4 Semarang. By doing this research, the writers hope that teachers can use the cognitive strategy most frequently used by the students to enhance EFL learners' language proficiency.

This research aimed to know what cognitive strategy is most frequently used by the student at SMK N 4 Semarang and why them shoose that activity. This research needs to be done to find out what cognitive strategies are often used by students so that teachers can apply these strategies to make students more enthusiastic and interested in learning English.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was conducted at SMK N 4 Semarang. The objective of this study was to know which cognitive strategies were most popular among the students. To obtain research, the researcher used qualitative descriptive in the form of an online survey. Creswell (2012 cited in Wisler, 2009) stated that qualitative research is a method of investigating and comprehending the significance of individuals or groups assigned to a social human problem. The total population was 36 students X grade mechanical

engineering 4 at SMK N 4 Semarang. They were still actively learning English as one of the compulsory subjects. In this research, the researchers used qualitative data analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994 in Dull & Reinhardt, 2014) which consists of data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification.

In collecting data, the researcher used an online survey through Gform. The instrument of this research was a questionnaire created by Oxford (1990) that is well known as the Strategy inventory for Language Learning. (SILL LLS). SILL is made for mapping the learners' language learning strategies. There are two types of SILL. The first is SILL Version 5.1. This version is for English native speakers who learn a foreign language. The second type is SILL Version 7.0 which is meant for people learning English who are not native speakers. Both versions consist of 80 and 50 self-report items respectively. All items are derived from direct and indirect learning strategies. This research used Oxford's Strategy inventory of Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire cited in Bessai, 2018)The questionnaire were:

1. I say or write new English words several times
2. I try to talk like native english speakers
3. I practice the sounds of English.
4. I use the English words I know in different ways.
5. I start conversation in English.
6. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
7. I read for pleasure in English.
8. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
9. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
10. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words English.
11. I try to find pattern in English.
12. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
13. I try not to translate word-for-word.
14. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the participants were male students in 10th-grade mechanical Engineering in SMK N 4 Semarang. 36 participants answered the questionnaire and all the participants were male. The researchers used Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL LLS) as an instrument to collect the data There were fourteen questions related to cognitive strategies which have been sent to the students through Gfrom. As for their age, all participants were 15 and 16 years old. In this background question, students were asked why they had studied English. Their answers were mostly because they need to learn English for future careers with a percentage of 69,4%. Then, those interested in the language 58.3%, have friends who speak the language 38.9% and need to travel 27,8%, and other reasons such as because English is the international language and because there is an English class. Below is a bar chart of the results of a background survey of students:
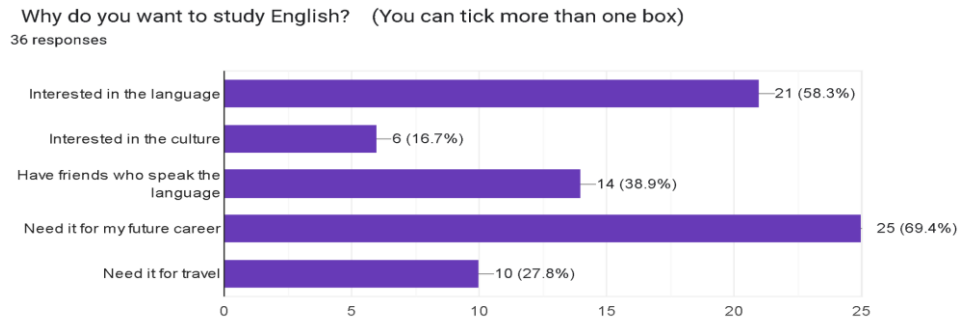
Why do you want to study English?   (You can tick more than one box)
36 responses

Interested in the language — 21 (58.3%)
Interested in the culture — 6 (16.7%)
Have friends who speak the language — 14 (38.9%)
Need it for my future career — 25 (69.4%)
Need it for travel — 10 (27.8%)

Chart 1. Percentage Of The Reason Why The Students Study English

In this section, the researcher presents the result of the research that was administered to the 10th-grade vocational school of the mechanical engineering department at SMK N 4 Semarang. The following is a detailed analysis of the SILL questions and answers from the respondents.
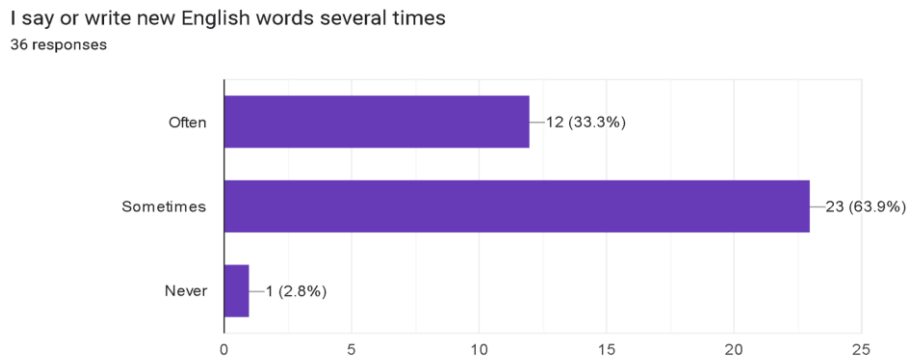
I say or write new English words several times
36 responses

Often — 12 (33.3%)
Sometimes — 23 (63.9%)
Never — 1 (2.8%)

Chart 2. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 1

The first statement is " I say or write new English words several times". From the bar chart, we can see that only one student (2.8%) *never* says or writes new English words several times, 23 students (63.9%) answer sometimes, and 12 students (33.3%) answer often. So, this strategy was quite popular with students even though the percentage of *sometimes* is higher than *often*.
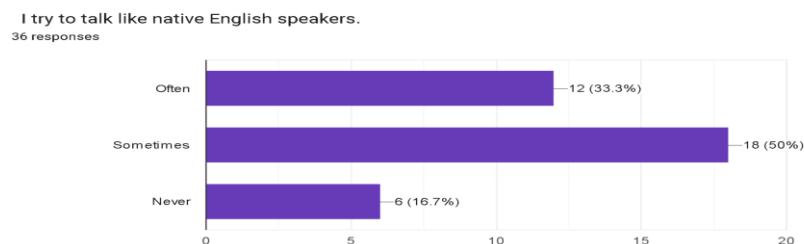
I try to talk like native English speakers.
36 responses

Often — 12 (33.3%)
Sometimes — 18 (50%)
Never — 6 (16.7%)

Chart 3. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 2

The second activity is try to talk like native English speaker. According to the taxonomy second language learning strategies compiled by Oxford (1990), this activity belongs to practicing. This strategy can be used to increase speaking skills of the students especially the pronunciation of the students. Most of the participants declared that they use this strategy with a certain frequency (50 % sometimes, and 33.3% often). Only 16.7% say that they never try to talk like native English speaker.
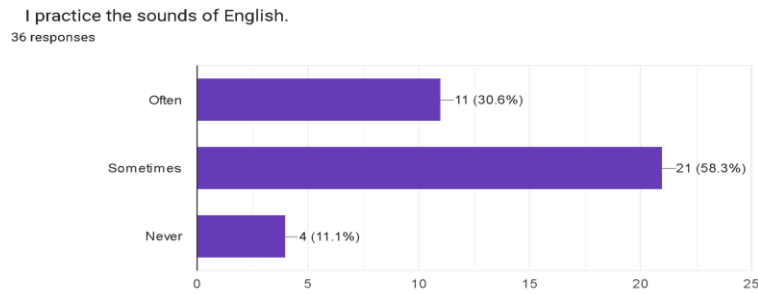
I practice the sounds of English.
36 responses

Chart 4. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 3

The third statement is "I practice the sounds of English". It includes to sub indikator practicing English sounds and belongs to practicing in cognitive strategy. Most of these students said *sometimes* (58.3%) and *often* (30.6%) to practice the sound of English. The last option was *never* (11.1% of the participations).
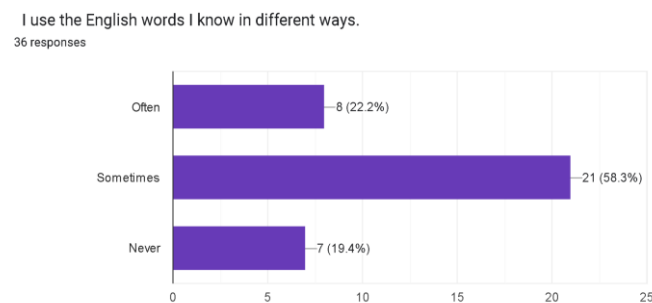
I use the English words I know in different ways.
36 responses

Chart 5. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 4

Based on the bar chart, 22% of the students affirmed that they *often* use the English words they know in different way. 58.3% said *sometimes* and 19.4% *never* did this strategy.
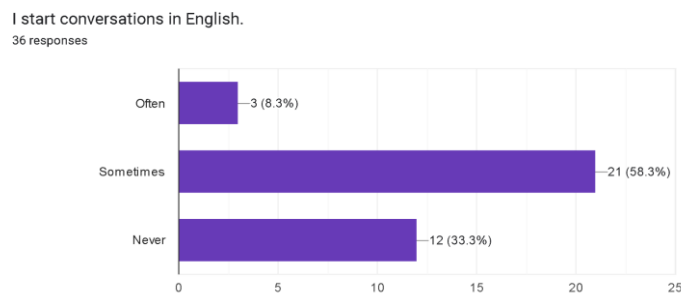
I start conversations in English.
36 responses

Chart 6. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 5

This activity is included in practicing in cognitive strategy. From 36 students, 8.3% affirmed that they often start conversation in English, 58.3% said they sometimes start conversation in English, and the rest that is 33.3% never start conversation in English. The result of this strategy showed that the students who never start conversation in English are higher than the student who often use this strategy.
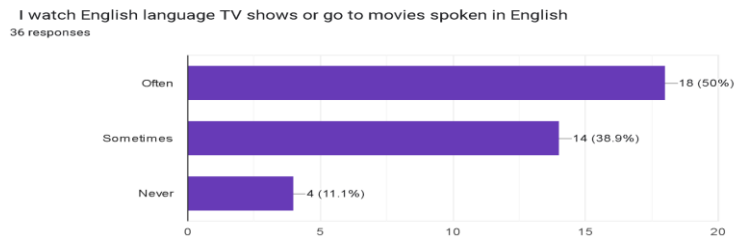
I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English
36 responses

Often	18 (50%)
Sometimes	14 (38.9%)
Never	4 (11.1%)

Chart 7. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 6

The next strategy is watch Engliah language TV show or go to movies spoken in English. This strategy appears to be more popular and used by participants to acquire new english words. 50% students choose often and 38.9% sometimes do this strategy. Meanwhile, only 11.1% who never use this strategy.
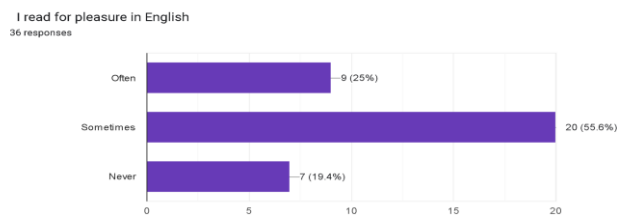
I read for pleasure in English
36 responses

Often	9 (25%)
Sometimes	20 (55.6%)
Never	7 (19.4%)

Chart 8. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 7

I read for pleasure in English also belongs to the practicing language naturally. This statement refers to the extensive reading in which the learners get started in enjoying reading favorite books such as novels or short stories. This statement was quite popular because the total students who choose *sometimes* and *often* are 80.6% with details *sometimes* 55.6% and *often* 25%. Meanwhile, the number of students who confirmed that they never do this strategy is only 19.4%.
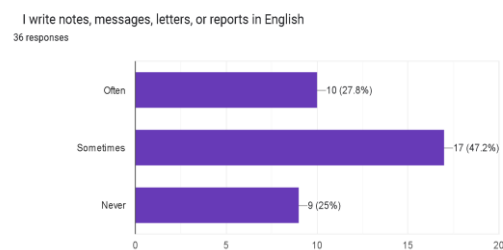
I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English
36 responses

Often	10 (27.8%)
Sometimes	17 (47.2%)
Never	9 (25%)

Chart 9. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 8

In the strategy of writing notes, messages, letters, or reports in English, we can see that quite a lot of students did this strategy. This starategi belongs to receiving 27.8% said that they often do this strategy, 47.2% said they sometimes do this strategy, and 25% students never do this strategy.
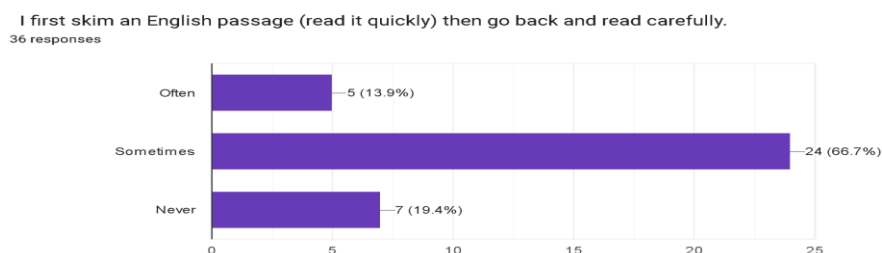
I first skim an English passage (read it quickly) then go back and read carefully.
36 responses

Often	5 (13.9%)
Sometimes	24 (66.7%)
Never	7 (19.4%)

Chart 10. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 9

The next startegy is "I first skim an English passage (read it quickly) then go back and read carefully." The table showed that students who never do this strategy were

19.4%. Meanwhile, the number of students who often do this strategy was 13.9% and for students who do this strategy with a frequency sometimes was 66.7%.
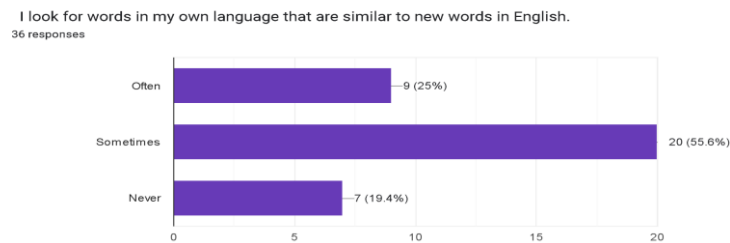

Chart 11. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 10

Out of 36 male students, they said that 9 students (25%) often use the strategy "look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English", 20 students (55.6%) sometimes use this strategy, and 7 students (19.4) never do this strategy.
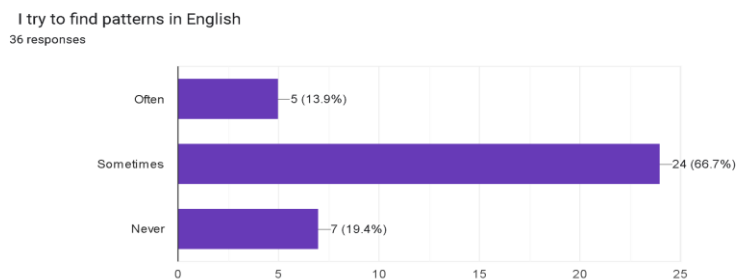

Chart 12. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 11

The next activity is" try to find pattern in English." This activity belongs to sub indicator practcing namely developing language pattern. From the survey, it showed that the frequency of using this strategy was the most, namely filling sometimes with a percentage of 66.7% and the second position is never, which has a percentage of 19.4%. Then, the last position was often where the percentage was only 13.9%.
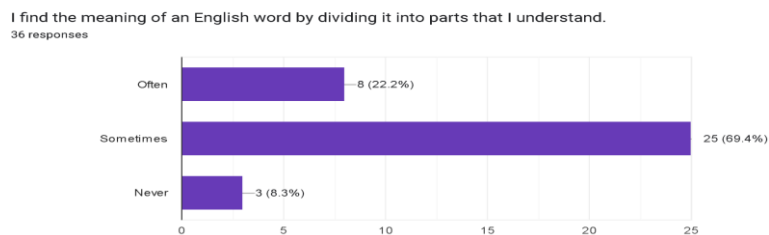

Chart 13. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 12

The next activity is "I find the meaning of the English word by dividing it into parts that I understand." This activity belongs to analyze and Reason in cognitive strategy. This strategy was quite widely used by students. This can be seen in the bar chart which 8 students (22.2%) confirmed that they often do this strategy, 69.4% sometimes do this strategy and the rest namely three people (8.3%) never use this strategy.
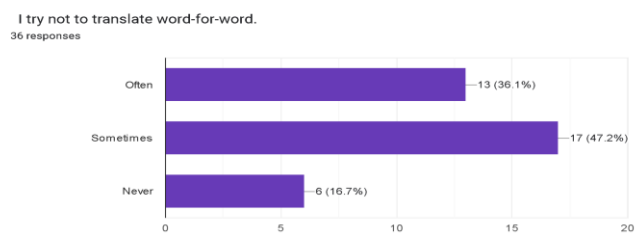

Chart 14. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 13

The next strategy is "try not to translate word-for-word." This activity belongs to Analyze and reason of cognitive strategy.This strategy has begun to be widely applied by students because the bar chart showed that students emphasize that they often try not to translate word-for.
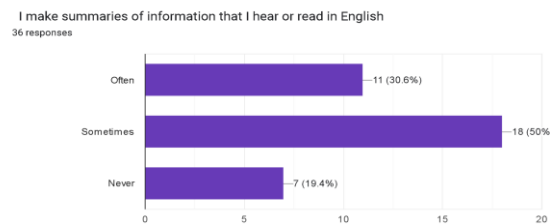
I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English
36 responses

Often	11 (30.6%)
Sometimes	18 (50%)
Never	7 (19.4%)

Chart 15. Percentage Of Cognitive Strategy 14

The last strategy is " I make summaries of information that students hear or read in English." The chart showed that almost 81% of the survei respondents affirmed that they often (30.6%) or sometimes (50%) make summaries of information that they hear or read in English. Only 19.4% never this learning strategy, even though make summaries of information that they hear or read in English is mostly importatant because it shows that someone have understood the text.

From the findings, it can be concluded that the mostcognitive strategy frequently used was "watch English language TV show or go to movies spoken in English" with the precentage 50%. This activities was the most strategy used by the students since it didn't make the student this activity was the activity most often used by students because watching movies or videos is a interesting way. When we watch video, we will indirectly understand what they are saying even we don't use subtitles. This condition is supported because of the presence of visuals that help interpret the conversations or sentences of the characters. Meanwhile, the least used strategy was start conversation in English. This strategy was rarely used for several reasons such as they do not have a partner to communicate in English, they don't know how to transfer their language into English, and the last they are afraid of being wrong when pronouncing English vocabulary.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Cognitive learning strategy is the most popular learning stratgey among the students. The activity of cognitive strategy frequently used was watch English language TV show or go to movies spoken in English. From this finding, the writers suggest the teacher to apply that activity to improve English skills of the student so that the students intereseted in learning English.

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