



SUCCESS STORIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING



Editors

*Bambang Yudi Cahyono
Ive Emaliana*



STATE UNIVERSITY OF MALANG PRESS



SUCCESS STORIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

This book reveals the secrets of success of English language learning and teaching. By reading this book, English language teachers and lecturers are expected to be more aware of the ways to help themselves and their students to be even more successful.



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The Episode of Inspiration and Aspiration: The Profile of a Highly Self-determined and Persistent Language Learner

Irmayani

Islamic University of Darul 'Ulum (UNISDA) Lamongan, East Java

Champions aren't made in the gyms.
Champions are made from something
they have deep inside them – a desire, a
dream, a vision. (Muhammad Ali)

Being an English teacher for years put me to the period where I meet my former students who really make their life good with their professions. There were only few of my students that I could not forget, especially in terms of how I got along with them both in and outside the classroom. I found that there were some students who inspired me to be a highly motivated advanced English learner. Among my special students, there was one who really drove me to be the way I am now, as an English teacher who always attempts to make my students learn profoundly rather than only to get a lesson from my teaching.

The topic proposed for this edited book gives me an opportunity to share my personal feelings and experience about the former student, Isnaini, in the form of narrative story combined with some interviews I conducted through mail. I chose the student to be my model of 'a good language learner' because he was a successful person with high self efficacy and high motivation to learn autonomously. He works as a translator independently and he is not attached to any institution at the moment. He writes some articles for online magazines and his blog. Amazingly he is very active in joining many

writing competitions to put himself as one who has an astonishing competence in his field by winning some awards as well. Personally, I cannot hide my admiration to what he has achieved so far.

THE INTERVIEW

To gain an overview of how he became a successful English learner and practitioner, in the following I present the result of my interview with him some time ago.

I: *It seems to me that you really make your life from being an English nerd. How can you gain the high motivation to improve and maintain your English proficiency while you do not work any longer in any institution or company?*

Isnaini: It was my father who shaped my soul to be like what I am now. He inspired me to spend the whole time to read and study. He was not a teacher but he never spent his time for nothing but reading. He always told me that life is time to learn, then I should not waste time not to learn anything.

I: *That was about your motivation in learning. How about your English proficiency? Since when did you like English?*

Isnaini: Actually I never think that English would be my way for living. I like learning language since I studied at Denanyar, Jombang, where Arabic and English were the daily languages used for communication. It was my teacher from Maroko that encouraged me to be more intensive and sharpened in learning English although I got 6 for my English grade in rapport. I think that was the turning point of my English interest and the time I started aspiring myself to be more keen on English.

I: *Looking at your CV, I wonder how you can keep and develop your personal professional competence. Would like to share your secret of learning English? Do you have any special strategy? (Editors' note: see Isnaini's brief CV in the Appendix).*

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Isnaini: When you mentioned the word 'strategy,' it has come to me as an awkward notion since what I am about to reveal are perhaps simple tips than elaborate techniques you may require. These are what came to my mind when speaking of my personal 'strategy' in language learning. Frankly speaking, I am kind a fond of learning new languages, the foreign ones. This fact may have driven me to learn a new language. I personally find it pleasant and a bit cushy when learning a language, especially English and Chinese Mandarin. But this does not apply to other foreign languages which I have proven to be not good at. Let's say I am a language enthusiast. Things about language are always interesting and attractive to learn because we also study history and culture within the language. Do I have strategy to pave my way in learning a foreign language? The following tips may be relevant to what you are expecting.

Dictionary. I keep my dictionary handy. This is my past habit when I started learning English. Whenever I go, I take my small dictionary with me. When new words struck me (say, appearing on billboard or products leaflet) I rushed to look up their meaning in the dictionary. As soon as I know what those words embody, I put them in my own sentences. I composed sentences to implant their meaning in my mind. However, I no longer take any dictionary now when I am outdoor. Instead, I memorize words I find and hurry to get the meaning when I return home. In fact, the drive to learn new words is less strong than what I previously experienced. But I still do like injecting any foreign words/expressions into my memory collection.

Community. During college, I joined an English club where we shared ideas about many things and spoke in English actively. This activity was of great value since we had the opportunity to express thoughts and arguments from our own perspective. We were encouraged to develop and improve both our speaking skill in English and how to communicate with clarity.

Practice with Native/English Speakers. Since I no longer belong to any group or language club, I now train my language skill by

talking to friends or people who speak English. As a matter of fact, we do not speak the way speaking normally happens. Instead, I chat with whom I can talk in English via Facebook or Blackberry Messenger. This definitely enriches my vocabularies and enables me to gain more confidence to use English as a second language in the real life context.

Reading. You certainly agree that reading is inspiring. Being face to face with particular text in English keeps my mind spinning to process information and to stock up new vocabs and insights as well. There is much to say about reading benefit. But something is very certain: reading protects our brain from internal damage.

Watching Film. While my listening competence is not outstanding, it is always useful to watch movies in English where we enjoy beautiful scenes and extract many valuable things including foreign expressions and different culture. When it is possible, reading the script will make us comprehend what we may miss during watching. This probably ignites better understanding about elements in the film thoroughly.

Writing. It is no doubt that putting ideas in words do reinforce what we have in mind. When appearing in writing, words sustain ideas as well as language aspects inherent in the paragraph. Writing allows me to store my ideas or personal opinions in words and highlights my competence progress in terms of insight. The other major advantage is that I can practice my English where I deal with syntactic structure and semantic features. And that is the reason why I keep writing, either by embedding ideas on my personal blog or by taking part in a contest where English is chiefly required. Above all, dictionary is still very dominant in my language learning. I look up to find synonyms and meaning in order to create more creative sentences and compelling expressions instead of sloppily dull presentation.

What excellent tips for other language learner! Indeed, I have no uncertainty to say you are a very good example of highly self-determined

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DISCUSSION

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and persistent language learner. I must learn how to acquire such good self-efficacy and motivation from you.

DISCUSSION

Referring to the result of the interview, I may state that Isnaini has two strong points to become such a startling self-efficacy and highly motivated language learner. They are the two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic (Dornyei, 1990). Certain learners seemed to be successful regardless of teaching methods or teaching techniques. As Brown (2007) affirms, no single method of language teaching and research findings would mark the start of universal success in teaching a second language. From what Isnaini shared, it is evident that he has awareness and action strategies in shaping his English proficiency. Dealing with his past experience when he got 6 for his English grade, he had a very strong self-determination theory to breed his autonomous action in improving his language learning. This is because, as based on attribution theory, people's past experiences may affect their future achievement (Dornyei, 2000).

The present figure also has a very clear goal that leads him to the recent position where he is not hired by any particular company to be acknowledged as a commercial translator. His attempt to set his position in his field has been noted evidently by his work and activity in his blog. His orientation is clearly stated to make him as he is at the moment. This is because he always has a goal in learning a foreign language (Dornyei, 2000).

Related to his strategy, it seems that he does not apply any particular strategy, yet most of his experiences in learning foreign languages are in line with the characteristics of a good language learner. The following is the review of what he has done for his proficiency development.

Dictionary Use. Dictionary is the tool that Isnaini depends on for his cognitive strategy towards new vocabulary (Griffiths, 2008). Based on the characteristics of language learning, he seems to have his own way and personal responsibility to his way of learning vocabulary (Rubin & Thompson, 1994). He admitted that he relied on dictionary very much as he has high inquisitiveness at novel terms he had never known before. His awareness in comprehending novel vocabularies urges him to facilitate his cognitive strategy by organizing the information of the language (Rubin & Thompson, 1994). His action to implant the new words is by making a sentence that uses the new term he just got. This indicates that he utilizes action strategy to ac-

compish his awareness (Brown, 2007). By implementing such new terms in an appropriate context, he has the creativity to feel the language in command usage. Thus, he possesses the second and third characteristics of a good language learner, namely the ability in organizing information about language creatively and the effort in trying to feel the language by experimenting its grammar and words.

Community involmment and practice with native/English speakers. By joining the community that facilitates him to practice his English, Isnaini has shown that he is the language learner who creates the opportunities to use English inside and outside the classroom (Rubin & Thompson, 1994). It covers his necessity to enhance his skill in speaking and to share the ideas in a natural setting. His awareness to attain his English community constrains him to the socioaffective strategies (Brown, 2007). As he has mentioned, by using social media such as Facebook and Blackberry Messenger group to maintain the community he could gain more confidence.

Reading. Being inspired by his late father, Isnaini has acquired his cognitive knowledge by establishing good reading habit. By reading English books he attains the vocabularies in the real common usage and shapes the sentences semantically in his mind. This habit naturally enlarges his linguistic input from reading. In the process of first language acquisition, linguistic input is initially received via listening; however, it is often via reading that students are exposed to a language other than their first language. Reading in English also highlights the importance of action orientation in the target language reading classroom (Schramm, cited in Griffiths, 2008). In a process called elaboration, Isnaini integrates pre-knowledge elements into his mental models. The availability of such pre-knowledge depends on interests, which means that texts based on unfamiliar cultural information pose a higher reading challenge than texts based on one's own culture. By reading, he also gains more information which is derived from his intrinsic factor. This habit fosters him to be familiar with discourse markers and it also deepens his linguistic input. Furthermore, it brings up reading strategies or any other strategies such as recognizing main ideas, inferring connections among parts of a text, recognizing organizational patterns in texts, and identifying typical genre features of a text (Grabe, 2009). This reading habit is a significantly distinguished character that expands his language expertise as he does reading for his personal willingness and interest.

Watching Films. Another English can be made by making a target language environment. Isnaini made film as one of target language to practice his listening skill efficiently practiced. This strategy of a good language learner number one is "not getting confused and by controlling every word" (Rubin & Thompson, 1994). This film enabled him to be accurate in conversations. As a result of being more familiar with the exact meaning of conversations with the words, and other meanings his

Writing. Reading a lot of books and knowledge he gained from reading, self-efficacy, reinforces him to sustain ideas as well as language input plays more significant role to bring back what he has learned. A truly good language learner has knowledge of both the first and second pieces of writing work which is his bilingual writing also indicates that a language learner, namely "learners to vary their language register" (Rubin & Thompson, 1994).

CONCLUSION

Regarding the strategies used in this study, the conclusion that being a good language learner is a distinguished character and strong conditions are present: (a) the task at hand; (b) the strategies used; (c) the differences to one degree or another; and (d) effectively and links it with

Watching Films. Another attempt to get involved in a natural setting of English can be made by managing various activities that may facilitate the target language environment. Since English is not a daily language for Isnaini, he made film as one of target language media to enrich his language input and to practice his listening skill as he noted that listening is the skill he is deficiently practiced. This strategy corresponds with the characteristics of a good language learner number 5, i.e. "learn to live with uncertainty by not getting confused and by continuing to talk or listen without understanding every word" (Rubin & Thompson, 1994). Listening practice by watching film enabled him to be accustomed with interpersonal and transactional conversations. As a result of the practice, as a language learner, he turns to be more familiar with the expressions that his interlocutors produce when having conversations with them as he is aware of the assumptions, implications, and other meanings hidden between the lines (Brown, 2007).

Writing. Reading a lot of information may make one write his prior knowledge he gained from reading activities. Isnaini, with his astonishing self-efficacy, reinforces himself to write what he has in mind. He strives to sustain ideas as well as language aspects inherent in paragraphs. His linguistic input plays more significantly in his writing. Using his memory strategies to bring back what he has learned in writing, Isnaini puts him that he is a truly good language learner (Rubin & Thompson, 1994). Using his linguistic knowledge of both the first language and the second language, he produces pieces of writing work which are interesting to read. His cultural awareness in his bilingual writing also leads to the natural work of his translation. This competence indicates that he owns the 14th characteristic of a good language learner, namely "learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language regarding the formality of the situation: (Rubin & Thompson, 1994).

CONCLUSION

Regarding the strategies that have been discussed, it comes to the conclusion that being a good language learner requires an irrefutable distinguished character and strong personality. A strategy is useful if the following conditions are present: (a) the strategy relates well to the second language task at hand; (b) the strategy fits the particular student's learning style preferences to one degree or another; and (c) the student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies. Strategies that fulfill

these conditions “make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1990). Learning strategies can also enable students to become more independent, autonomous, lifelong learners (Little, 1991). Yet above all, the episode of inspiration and aspiration may not be separated from one’s success of learning. Primarily, the presence of inspiration helps shape a highly self-determined and persistent language learner.

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APPENDIX: CURRICULUM

Name :
 Place/Date of Birth :
 Sex :
 Marital Status :
 Interests and Hobbies :
 Nationality :

Qualification

Qualification :
 Field of Study :
 Major :
 Institute/University :
 Grade :
 Graduation Date :
 Latest TOEFL score :

Seminar and Training

2008 Understanding M
 Talent Seminar
 2007 Basic Conversat
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 2007 The 55th TEFLIN
 International Co
 Hidayatullah, Ja
 2006 Teacher Training
 2006 Financial Revolu
 Waringin
 2004 Teacher training
 Central Java
 2002 Fiction Writing
 sity, with bests
 2002 On Scientific W

APPENDIX: CURRICULUM VITAE

Name : Isnaini Khomarudin
Place/Date of Birth : Lamongan/29 January 1982
Sex : Male
Marital Status : Married
Interests and Hobbies : Writing, Singing, Philosophy, Literature, Swimming
Nationality : Indonesian

Qualification

Qualification : Bachelor's Degree
Field of Study : English
Major : Literature
Institute/University : Diponegoro University, Semarang
Grade : 3.33
Graduation Date : September 2005
Latest TOEFL score : 553

Seminar and Training

- 2008 *Understanding Motivation and Identifying Child's Learning Behavior*, a Talent Seminar by Pumping Indonesia Foundation, Bogor, West Java
- 2007 *Basic Conversational Mandarin*, Hanlin Mandarin Institute, Bogor, West Java
- 2007 *The 55th TEFLIN (Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia) International Conference* held by The State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta
- 2006 *Teacher Training*, BBC English Training Specialist, Semarang
- 2006 *Financial Revolution*, Solo, Central Java, with motivator Tung Desem Waringin
- 2004 *Teacher training*, BBC English Training Specialist English, Semarang, Central Java
- 2002 *Fiction Writing Workshop*, Faculty of Letters, Diponegoro University, with bestselling author Ahmad Tohari
- 2002 *On Scientific Writing*, Faculty of Letters, Diponegoro University

Employment Record

- 2008 – 2009** Editor for motivational books at **Penebar Swadaya Publisher**, Depok, West Java
- 2006 – 2008** Editor for English textbooks at **Yudhistira Publisher**, Bogor, West Java
- 2004 – 2006** English instructor at **BBC English Training Specialist**, Semarang, Central Java
- 2005** Interpreter for **IWAPI – PEP Canada**, Central Java
- 2005** Translator for foster parents support at **Yayasan Kesejahteraan Keluarga Soegijapranata (YKKS)**, Semarang, Central Java
- 2004** Part-time surveyor at **MarkPlus and Co.**
- 2003** English teacher at **First Study** English Course
- 2008 – 2011** Owner and teacher at **brightinstitute** (a free English course for underprivileged children in Cibolang, Bogor)

Awards and Honors

- 2001** Scholarship from Directorate General for Higher Education for learning support
- 2001** Winner of English narrative text reading competition, Diponegoro University
- 2005** **Teacher of the Year** at BBC Branch II, Tlogosari, Semarang
- 2011** 1st winner of *Ttokpokki* book review contest
- 2011** 1st winner of blog review contest held by www.sederet.com
- 2013** 1st winner of book review contest held by WahyuMedia Publisher (www.wahyumedia.com)
- 2013** 1st winner of book trailer contest held by NouraBooks Publisher (www.noura.mizan.com)

Books and Publications

Year	Book/Project Title	
2012-2013	English lyrics/songs	
2012	<i>Hand of Iblis</i>	C
2011	<i>The Life of Muhammad</i>	A
2011	<i>Fire of Hell & Garden of Paradise</i>	Sy Qa
2011	<i>The Quran and the Life of Excellence</i>	Ab
2010	<i>Indonesian Movies Catalogue</i>	
2010	<i>Asyiknya Panen Bersama (bilingual)</i>	
2010	<i>Conspiracy Theories</i>	Ja
2010	<i>100 Ways to Happy Children</i>	Dr.
2009	<i>100 Ways to Happiness</i>	Dr.
2009	<i>200 Magnificent Wisdom from Hadith for Kids (bilingual)</i>	Ag
2009	<i>Science: Workbook 1, 2, 3 for Elementary Students Grade 4, 5, 6 (bilingual)</i>	Sci
2004	<i>Head to Toe Science</i>	Ji

Books and Publications

Year	Book/Project Title	Author	Employer/Publisher	Employed as
2012-2013	English lyrics/songs	Sean Yap	Malaysian composer	Translator
2012	<i>Hand of Iblis</i>	Omar Zaid	Zaytuna, Jakarta	Translator
2011	<i>The Life of Muhammad</i>	Al-Waqidi	Zaytuna, Jakarta	Translator
2011	<i>Fire of Hell & Garden of Paradise</i>	Syaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani	Zaytuna, Jakarta	Translator
2011	<i>The Quran and the Life of Excellence</i>	Sultan Abdulhameed	Zaytuna, Jakarta	Translator
2010	<i>Indonesian Movies Catalogue</i>	Team	The Ministry of Culture and Tourism	Translator
2010	<i>Asyiknya Panen Bersama (bilingual)</i>	Aisha S. Maharani	Sixmidad, Bogor	English editor
2010	<i>Conspiracy Theories</i>	Jamie King	Raih Asa Sukses, Depok	Translator
2010	<i>100 Ways to Happy Children</i>	Dr. Timothy J. Sharp	Raih Asa Sukses, Depok	Translator
2009	<i>100 Ways to Happiness</i>	Dr. Timothy J. Sharp	Raih Asa Sukses, Depok	Translator
2009	<i>200 Magnificent Wisdom from Hadith for Kids (bilingual)</i>	Agil Abdullah HP	Pustaka Hisyam, Bogor	Translator
2009	<i>Science: Workbook 1, 2, 3 for Elementary Students Grade 4, 5, 6 (bilingual)</i>	Science Team	Yudhistira, Bogor	Translator
2004	<i>Head to Toe Science</i>	Jim Wiese	Pakar Raya, Bandung	Co-translator (with Herudjati Poerwoko, PhD)

Other Publications

- 2010 Translation editor of a book entitled **Success** by Andrea Molloy for Raih Asa Sukses Publisher
- 2010 Translation editor of a book entitled **Coach Yourself to Success** by Andrea Molloy for Raih Asa Sukses Publisher
- 2010 Translation editor of a book entitled **Redesign Your Life** for Raih Asa Sukses Publisher
- 2009 Editing English translation for **Information and Communication Technology 1–3 for Junior High School Grade 7, 8 and 9** for Yudhistira Publisher
- 2009 Editing English translation for **Information and Communication Technology 1–3 for Senior High School Grade 10, 11 and 12** for Yudhistira Publisher
- 2006 Poems contributor for an anthology of poems entitled **Khianat Waktu**, by Lamongan Arts Council
- 2006 Author of a personal collection of poems entitled **Sujud dan Meneteskan Rembulan**, published by Nuansa Aulia, Bandung, West Java
- 2005 Poems contributor for an anthology of poems entitled **Nol** (Zero) by Faculty of Letters, Diponegoro University
- 2004 “*Ambivalensi Kebebasan*”, an essay for *Suara Merdeka* daily newspaper
- 2004 Translator (with Herudjati Poerwoko, PhD) for a book entitled **Head to Toe** for Pakar Raya Publisher, Bandung, West Java
- 2004 Poems contributor for an anthology of poems entitled **Lanskap Telunjuk** by Lamongan Arts Council
- 2003 Poems contributor for an anthology of poems entitled **Bulan Merayap** by Lamongan Arts Council
- 2003 Poems in *Manunggal University Magazine*
- 2003 Poems in *Jurnal Puisi*
- 2003 “*What is Literature?*”, an article for *Miracle English Magazine*
- 2003 “*A Note on Creativity*”, an essay for *Hayam Wuruk, Faculty Magazine*
- 2002 Story contributor for a book entitled **Graffiti Imaji** (anthology of short short stories), by Yayasan Multimedia Sastra, Jakarta
- 2002 Poems in *Annida biweekly Magazine*

Attitude English Learning Academic

State Institute of

What are the indicators of communicative competence success in learning a second language? They are considered to be successful if they use appropriate linguistic systems, morphology, and syntax in the target language. Besides, they use socially acceptable manners in the context of English as a foreign language. Success can be assessed through, among others, their achievements in English learning.

Relying on the indicators, it is expected that success in learning a second language will come instantly. There is a long process to be able to adapt the second language to the already known, Indonesian language. Indonesian and English are linguistically different. Due to the difference, it is expected that success in learning a second language will be linguistically and culturally different.

The burden of Indonesian English study program in universities is heavy. It is expected that students will complete the courses that they have to complete in an English study program. It is expected that students will be successful in completing the courses concerning education.