Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Self-Regulated Learning Strategies in Learning English as a Second Language

Azizah Mohd Zahidi[*]

Pusat GENIUS@Pintar Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

Sy Ing Ong

Pusat GENIUS@Pintar Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract—These case studies provide a description of five undergraduates' self-efficacy beliefs and use of self-regulated learning strategies related to learning English as a second language. A qualitative research design with a purposive sampling method was used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the context of learning English language and to explore the undergraduates' self-reported self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies. Classroom observations and document analysis were also used for data collection. The findings showed a relationship between self-efficacy, self-regulated learning strategies, and participants' English language proficiency. Pedagogical implications for language instructors are highlighted. ESL learning may be enhanced through positive and successful past experiences and constructive feedback and scaffolding by language instructors. Self-regulated learning instruction should be incorporated by ESL instructors in developing self-regulated learners.

Index Terms—self-efficacy beliefs, self-regulated learning strategies, learning English as a second language

I. INTRODUCTION

Musa et al. (2012) stress that English language proficiency among Malaysian university graduates is still not satisfying, and there are mismatches in terms of students' perceptions and employers' expectations (Siti Zaidah et al., 2019). Generally, students in Malaysia learn English language for eleven years. Normally, at the university level, English Language classes are offered to students based on their level of proficiency. However, research findings have shown that the high unemployment rate among graduates is often attributed to their low English proficiency and lack of communication skills (Lim & Bakar, 2004; Siti Zaidah et al., 2019). Zainuddin et al. (2019) further highlight that employers and students come to an agreement that English proficiency is vital for employability. Although both parties agree that good grammar and a wide range of vocabulary are important, the findings show several incongruities in terms of students' perceptions and employers' expectations. An example is employers do not favour the use of colloquial forms of English at the workplace. Although English is the second official language in Malaysia, it has not been widely used in some students' daily lives outside of the classrooms (The Star, January 21, 2017).

Researchers (Dornyei, 2010; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Ehrman et al., 2003; Roberts, 2012) have highlighted individual differences in English Language learning which were influenced by personal and environmental factors. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the participants' self-efficacy and self-regulated learning strategies use and its influence in learning English Language as a second language.

This study was approached from both social cognitive and sociocultural perspectives and qualitative case studies were conducted to provide an in-depth exploration of the ESL participants' self-efficacy and SRL behaviours. Through the five case studies, the researchers provide evidence for the relationship between self-efficacy for learning English as a second language and SRL strategies use.

The purpose of this study is to describe five ESL undergraduates' self-efficacy beliefs and use of SRL strategies. It also aims to investigate the relationship between the participants' self-efficacy beliefs, use of SRL strategies, and success in learning English as a second language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as individuals' judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of actions required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997). Research findings have shown that there is a relationship

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[*] Corresponding author

between self-efficacy and academic achievement in learners of different levels of education and in different contexts (Goulão, 2014; Köseoğlu, 2015). Research findings have evidenced that learners' self-efficacy is influenced by their academic performance, and their academic achievements are influenced by their self-efficacy beliefs (Hwang et al., 2016; Wang & Pape, 2005). Hwang et al. (2016) stressed that there was a reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and academic achievement. In the context of ESL learning, review of the literature revealed that several factors enhance the level of students' self-efficacy, and self-efficacy is a strong predictor of performance in different language skills and tasks (Raoofi et al., 2012). Wong's (2005) findings showed that there was a significant positive relationship between language learning strategies and language self-efficacy where pre-service teachers who had high self-efficacy reported more frequent use of more number of language learning strategies compared to the low self-efficacy pre-service teachers.

B. Self-Regulated Learning

Bandura (1986) indicated that in the social cognitive theory, self-regulation encompasses the interaction of personal, behavioural, and environmental triadic processes. Zimmerman (2000, p. 14) defined self-regulation as "self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals". There are 14 categories of self-regulated learning strategies associated with academic achievement: self-evaluation, organising and transforming, goal-setting and planning, seeking information, keeping records and monitoring, environmental structuring, self-consequences, rehearsing and memorising, seeking peer assistance, seeking teacher assistance, seeking adult assistance, reviewing tests, reviewing notes, and reviewing texts (Pape & Wang, 2003).

C. Previous Studies on Self-Efficacy and SRL Strategies in ESL Learning

A recent study finding, Shi (2018) reported that the 198 college-level English Language Learners (ELLs) at a south eastern university in the United States had positive self-efficacy toward their English learning. The most often used language learning strategies were compensation, social, and metacognitive strategies. It is demonstrated in this study which investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and strategy use, that self-efficacy was positively correlated with cognitive, compensation, memory, metacognitive, and social strategy. It was suggested that ELLs' self-efficacy, language proficiency, and learning autonomy be enhanced through strategy instruction on self-regulated learning strategies and focused on ELLs' improvement and mastery of content.

Similarly, Genç et al. (2016) stated that student's beliefs about language learning are affected by their self-efficacy as English Language learners. The researchers recommended that students' self-efficacy be enhanced by teachers and teacher trainers. Students must also have positive beliefs about foreign language learning such as belief in their ability to improve their language proficiency.

Conducted under the theoretical framework of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, Chen's (2007) findings showed that English listening self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of English listening performance compared to English listening anxiety and the perceived value of English Language and culture. Although, English listening anxiety and perceived value of English Language had an effect on the two hundred and seventy-seven Taiwanese college students' English listening performance, the EFL students' levels of English listening self-efficacy had a greater impact on their English listening performance.

In relation to the role played by self-regulated learning strategies in English language learning, Kim et al. (2015) who studied the relationship between English language learners' self-efficacy beliefs and their SRL strategies, found that efficacious students reported more frequent use of SRL strategies. This finding proves the positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and English language learners' SRL strategies use.

Findings of Wang's (2004) qualitative case study showed that the participants reported self-efficacy beliefs across a variety of language-learning tasks in all the four English Language skills. The researcher stressed that self-efficacy is a task-specific construct as each participant's self-efficacy varies across specific tasks. Moreover, the participants reported higher self-efficacy for listening and speaking activities compared to reading and writing activities. The participants' self-efficacy beliefs were related to their expertise in the content area, self-perceptions of English proficiency level, task difficulty level, social persuasion, physiological or emotional state, interest, attitude toward English language and the English speaking community, and the social and cultural context. As for self-regulated learning strategies, the participants used more strategies in reading than writing. Moreover, the most SRL strategies used by the participants were seeking social assistance, seeking information, reviewing records, and environmental structuring.

The review of literature shows that self-efficacy and self-regulated learning play a significant role in learners' English language learning and performance. However, there has been little qualitative research on self-efficacy and self-regulation of ESL learners in the multicultural and multilingual English language learning context in Malaysia. Lee (2003, p. 137) stressed that language learning process is a "complex interplay of many variables in which social roles, relationships, power relations, and identifies are constantly reconstituted'.

This case study intends to investigate the following research questions:

1. How do the learners' self-efficacy beliefs affect their English Language learning?
2. How do the learners use self-regulated learning strategies in their language learning?

III. Method

Qualitative case study approach within an interpretivist paradigm was employed for this research. Merriam (2001, p. 19) proposed that case study design allows the researcher to focus on the "process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation". Multiple methods of data collection were used to investigate the participants' self-efficacy and self-regulation and to afford a rich, contextualised description of the findings. Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis provided the data. The documents such as language course proforma and textbooks, writing assignments and drafts of work, notebook, and journal were collected for data analysis.

Semi-structured interviews with the participants and the English language instructors enabled the researcher to explore the participants' self-efficacy and use of self-regulated learning strategies in dealing with their language learning. The interview questions were developed based on Chuang and Pape's (2005) ESL Self-Efficacy Questionnaire and also the constructs in Pintrich and De Groot's (1990) Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). The constructs consist of motivational (expectancy, value, and affective) and learning strategies (cognitive and metacognitive strategies and resource management strategies) dimensions. Interview questions on participants' self-efficacy were constructed based on Wang's (2004) Questionnaire of English Language Self-Efficacy (QESE) scale.

Classroom observations were conducted twice for each participant to triangulate the findings from the interviews and also to enrich each participant's case. Each observation lasted for two hours. The observations allowed the researcher to gather data on the context such as language learning activities and tasks and teacher teaching techniques that had an effect on the participants' self-regulation and use of self-regulated learning strategies. The qualitative data gathered data were analyzed using thematic analysis and presented using Atlas. ti version.

The documents such as writing assignments and project drafts provided evidence of self-regulatory strategies, and course proforma, textbook and class exercises, and exam questions provided the contextual information.

A. Participants

Five first-year undergraduates who are ESL learners were purposively selected to be involved in the study. There were three male and two female participants. Their age ranged from 19 to 25 years old. The participants were from different backgrounds where two resided in urban areas and four were from rural areas. First-year undergraduates were chosen as it was compulsory for all first-year undergraduates to take English language courses as part of the graduation requirement. Data collection required three months, thus participants were selected based on their willingness to be committed to participating and communicating effectively with the researcher. Suggested students from English Language instructors were approached to be recruited as participants. Dornyei (2007, p. 126) stressed that for qualitative enquiry, the main objective of participant requirement is to have participants who are able to provide "rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation". The criteria established for the suggestion of participants from instructors were students who were motivated and put effort in language learning.

B. Procedure

Each participant was scheduled for interview four times and each interview was conducted between 40 minutes and one hour. The first interview elicited the participants' background information, past language learning experiences, opinions of language learning experiences at the university, the importance of English Language, strengths and weaknesses in learning and using English, and their views on their responsibilities in learning English. The second interview focused on participants' self-efficacy and use of self-regulated learning strategies in learning and using English language. Follow-up interviews were conducted to elicit clarification on the participants' reported self-efficacy and use of self-regulated learning strategies and based on the data from classroom observations and document analysis. Field notes were written during classroom observations.

C. Data Analysis

Participants' self-efficacy and self-regulated learning strategy use were determined from the responses in the interviews, observed behaviours in the classrooms, and also from the participants' work such as notes in the notebooks. Coding of the self-regulated learning strategy was guided by Pape and Wang's (2003) 14 categories of self-regulated learning strategies: self-evaluation, organising and transforming, goal-setting and planning, seeking information, keeping records and monitoring, environmental structuring, self-consequences, rehearsing and memorising, seeking peer assistance, seeking teacher assistance, seeking adult assistance, reviewing tests, reviewing notes, and reviewing tests, and Zimmerman and Pon's (1986) categories of self-regulation strategies. The two categories were added to the learning strategies used by the participants in this study to ensure a more detailed coding of self-regulation learning strategies use by the participants in this study.

Decisions on the participants' self-efficacy were established from their statements related to their abilities and confidence to perform language learning tasks, and to use English.

IV. FINDINGS

Each of the participants is presented as a case study. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identities. From the five cases, the trends of the relationship between self-efficacy, self-regulated learning strategies use, and performance in language learning were explored.

A. Case One – Afwa

Afwa was a nineteen-year-old first year male student studying at the Faculty of Economics and Management at the time of this study. His language proficiency was at the upper intermediate level despite his rural background where English language is not widely used in communication. This was due to the effort that he put in improving his language skills especially in his spoken ability. Afwa attributed success in his English Language learning to his effort. He persisted to reach his learning goals.

Afwa could be described as the most efficacious among the five cases as he reported being able to listen, read and write well in English language. However, he was concerned about his speaking ability. Afwa's high self-efficacy in learning English language may be linked to his awareness of strategies to improve his language proficiency. The following excerpt from the interview demonstrates Afwa's use of specific language learning strategy to understand the meaning of words:

If I do not know certain words from my reading or during a conversation, I refer to the contextual clues.

Afwa reported goal-setting and planning strategy in improving his English language proficiency. He set specific mastery orientation goals for the increase of his language competence. He was highly motivated as he understood the crucial role of English for his survival during his undergraduate studies as most of the teaching and learning materials were in English. He also recognised the importance of English for his career later. He utilised many self-regulated learning strategies. As he was concerned with his speaking abilities, he formed friendship with other English speakers through social media. He reported that he learnt vocabulary and language styles from the communication. Although there were limited English speakers on campus, he had a circle of close English speaking friends. He sought social assistance such as asking his close friends to correct his pronunciation. He also practised some personal strategies to improve his pronunciation by referring to the lyrics while listening to English songs. Moreover, watching movie and listening attentively to other better speakers of English helped him improve his pronunciation. He reported positive experiences of completing a socially shared group project as his group members cooperated well. He used seeking peer assistance strategy while working collaboratively in completing course assignments. The following excerpt from the interview demonstrates his seeking assistance strategy:

For my accounting course, all the reading materials are in English. When I don't understand certain terms, I discuss with my room mates and friends. I also ask my group mates to explain the requirement of tasks assigned.

During the classroom observation, Afwa was seen utilising seeking information strategy by using the dictionary to look for meaning and usage of words. In completing his assignments, he made use of organising and transforming strategy. For example, he referred to various sources to get information for his project. Then he synthesised the information by using a mind map which was shown in the notes that he prepared for his assignments. Afwa structured his learning environment to ensure conduciveness. If there were disturbances from friends, he did not hesitate to ask them to keep quiet or he moved to a quieter place. Another self-regulated learning strategy that he used was self-evaluation where he reflected on his previous actions and considered the constructive comments from his language instructor and friends to perform better in future tasks. The following excerpt from the interview shows him self-evaluating his progress:

After completing a task such as project presentation, I always ask myself of my performance and progress. If I did not achieve what I had set to gain or the outcome did not meet the expectations, I will reflect on the mistakes that might have been done. I also change the learning strategy.

Afwa also highlighted the classroom influences on his self-regulation where his motivating and approachable previous language teacher managed to make him motivated to be proficient in English. The following notes from classroom observation show his active involvement in class activities:

Afwa willingly volunteer to share his thoughts on the issues discussed in class and contribute actively to the group discussion.

He highlighted that language instructors must be able to make the class interesting and challenging through a variety of class activities and the integration of technology in teaching and learning. Besides the effective teaching and learning strategies, the instructor's friendly personality and concern towards the students' progress also played crucial role in students' achievement. The following excerpt from the interview shows his thoughts about the important role of instructors in making the students interested and motivated in language learning:

Teacher must introduce different activities in order for the students to be attentive. Concerned teachers who guide us and care for our progress will really ensure us being motivated.

In summary, Afwa was an efficacious language learner who was motivated to improve his English Language skills. His self-efficacy influenced his judgement of his ability in performing a particular language learning task. This is in line with Kim and Kim's findings (2020) which showed that self-efficacy plays a mediating role, and that explains the positive relationship between learners' reading strategy use and reading proficiency. Afwa believed that he was able to

achieve his learning goals through the utilisation of a variety of self-regulated learning strategies. His social seeking assistance strategy assisted him in improving his speaking ability and also in the completion of his course assignments. When he did not understand words or terms, he used the dictionary or discuss them with his friends.

B. Case Two – Jijie

Jijie was a twenty-year-old female undergraduate of the Business and Economics Studies faculty. Similar to Afwa, she had a high level of language proficiency, and she attributed her fluency in English language to her early exposure to English. She attended an English-medium school during her pre-school years. Jijie's self-efficacy to learn English language and to achieve better proficiency was high. She had a high belief that she could achieve her learning goals through effort and the usage of effective strategies. Jijie was intrinsically motivated as her motivation extended beyond scoring in the examination because she wanted to master the language. This was because high fluency in English Language would be helpful for her career in the Business field. Similar to Afwa, she utilised a variety of self-regulated learning strategies. She chose to seek information from online language learning websites and other types of reading materials such as newspapers, magazines, and books. She learnt the different styles of writing from those sources. She was aware that to achieve fluency in her spoken English, she needed to improve her pronunciation. Therefore, she used online pronunciation learning materials. This was shown in the field notes of the classroom observation:

Jijie checks the pronunciation for the word 'ambiguous' using her mobile phone and teaches her classmate how to correct his pronunciation

She not only searched for the meaning of words in the dictionary, but she also looked for the correct pronunciation from the pronunciation guide. She found the Howjsay, the free English Pronunciation Dictionary very helpful when she had doubts about word meaning and correct pronunciation. The following excerpt from the interview shows her seeking information strategy:

Besides using the printed dictionary to search for meaning of words and the usage, I found the online pronunciation guide really is helpful as I could listen for the accurate pronunciation.

She practised organising and transforming strategy to record new vocabulary learnt in her vocabulary book. She set a goal of learning twenty new vocabularies every week. She revised the meaning and samples of usage of the vocabulary during her free time and made the effort to use the words in her writing and communication such as in sending messages to her friends. The document analysis of her vocabulary book showed the vast repertoire of her vocabulary. This accords with Choi et al. (2018) who reported that learners' motivation for vocabulary learning positively influenced their vocabulary knowledge through the vocabulary learning strategies used. Jijie shared the challenges she faced in communicating in English at the university as Malay language was the main medium of communication and instruction. Thus, she sought help from her close friends to converse in English. She structured her environment by getting cooperation from her good friends just to communicate in English in their daily communication. She also voluntarily participated in the mentoring programme for international students who studied at the university as she saw that as an opportunity to practise her spoken English. Moreover, to enhance her chances to use English Language, she got acquainted with online friends from English speaking countries. Jijie set goals and planned in order to achieve better mastery of English Language, especially her speaking skills. To keep being motivated, she set distal and short-term goals. Jijie practised seeking information strategy in completing the tasks related to language learning. She referred to various sources to identify topic for her group project and individual presentation. Moreover, she practised information-checking or information-monitoring strategies which include creating the linkage of information and keeping track of information. This accords with the strategies employed by good L2 readers highlighted by Bolanos (2012). She exhibited organising and transforming strategy when she made her notes to synthesise the information from different sources. She also regularly used language learning websites like Live Lingua, LearnaLanguage.com, FluentU, Dave's ESL Cafe, BBC languages, English Club.com to get learning materials and practices to maximise her language learning. Jijie practised a self-evaluation strategy for her progress and language proficiency. In the following excerpt, her self-evaluation strategy is shown:

When I face problem when communicating like grappling for words to use, I know that I must have more vocabulary and speak more in English to be more fluent.

Jijie preferred to seek assistance from friends rather than teachers and she voiced her concern that teachers must be more friendly to encourage students to approach them. The field notes of classroom observation show Jijie's penchant for clarification from classmates:

Jijie requests the girl sitting next to her to clarify her doubts of the answers given by her classmate.

However, she attributed the improvement in her writing skills to the constructive and prompt feedback given by the language instructor. She shared that teacher factor influenced her self-regulation, particularly in her effort to improve her spoken ability as her instructor always made sure that the students participated in class activities and there was two-way communication in class.

Overall, Jijie is highly motivated and exhibited effort regulation in learning and improving her language proficiency. She exhibited a variety of self-regulated learning strategies.

C. Case Three – Rose

Rose was a twenty-five-year-old female first year student of the Islamic Studies faculty. She shared that her great interest to learn English was due to the emphasis given to English at her previous college. English Language Support programme was held every semester break at the college. Although she was from a rural area where the environment for English language learning and acquisition was not conducive, her parents encouraged her to be fluent in English. She believed that she could be proficient in English as it may assist her in getting a job after graduation. The following excerpt indicated Rose's self-efficacy:

I am confident that I can have better language skills. I won't give up.

Rose set long and short-term goals in her language learning. For example, her immediate goal was to have a wider range of vocabulary and improve her listening skills. She was aware that for her planned postgraduate studies, she needed good reading skills (long-term goal), thus improving her vocabulary might enhance her reading ability. She was intrinsically motivated as she realised the importance of English for communication. She put effort into improving her language skills especially her spoken skills. She was not worried about making mistakes while communicating in English. Tanveer (2008, p. iii) highlighted that language anxiety may be caused by "language learners' sense of 'self', their self-related cognitions, language learning difficulties, differences in learners' and target language cultures, differences in the social status of the speakers and interlocutors and from the fear of losing self-identity". Being efficacious in her ability to achieve good language proficiency, and open to differences in cultures, Rose was confident in communicating in English. The following interview excerpt illustrates her self-efficacy in conversing in English despite the tendency to make mistakes:

I am still confident to use English with my friends even though I make mistakes. What important is my friends understand me

To improve her spoken ability, she practised seeking information and rehearsing and memorising strategies. She bought books on examples of daily conversations in English, memorised the samples, and used them in her daily communication. She believed that to attain higher English language proficiency, she must always use it in her spoken and written communication. Thus, she created the avenues to use English by initiating conversations with the international students at the university. The following interview excerpt shows her determination of ensuring that she used English by initiating conversation with other English speakers at the campus:

I don't feel shy starting a conversation with international students. English is not widely used at the campus so I myself must create the opportunities to speak in English.

She also tried to maximise her use of English by finding online friends from English speaking countries. The following excerpt from the interview shows the roles played by her online friends:

I told them that I want to improve my language proficiency and I told them to correct my mistakes. From there, I could improve my spelling. My word choice, and writing style have improved.

She practised seeking assistance strategy as she requested feedback from her instructor for the written assignments submitted. This was shown in the classroom observation field notes:

Rose asks the instructor to check her draft of project report

To improve her grammar, she tried the exercises in the course workbook and sought assistance from her language instructor to check the answers. Besides seeking assistance from the language instructor, she sought help from her peers. She requested her friends who have better language proficiency to help her extract the main ideas from reading materials and understand the requirement of course assignments. She practised a self-evaluation strategy by checking her work before submission. She took the initiative to prepare notes on grammatical rules and revised the notes during her free time. She collected information from a variety of materials to prepare for her course project. She synthesised the information before preparing her notes. Similar to Jijie, she organised and recorded newly learnt words with the meanings in a vocabulary book. Those actions signified her organising and transforming strategy. Rose not only used self-regulated learning strategy for the individual language learning, but she also utilised task-structuring strategy for the group project assigned by the instructor. As the group leader, she encouraged social reinforcing strategy in ensuring effective cooperation from all of the members. Rose reported that she appreciated the socially-shared learning experience as all the group members gave their full commitment to the project completion. Successful collaboration does not only involve self-regulation, but it also gives chances for team members to support each other in regulating their learning. This enables the team to collectively regulate learning (Li, Chen, Su, & Yue, 2021). Overall, Rose showed persistence in achieving her learning goals by using a variety of self-regulated learning strategies. She put effort into maximising her language use to achieve oral fluency.

D. Case Four – Islah

Islah was a twenty-year-old male undergraduate of the Economics and Business Studies Faculty. Islah was highly motivated in improving his language proficiency as he realised the importance of being fluent in English in the business world. He reported high self-efficacy of achieving fluency in English language, especially spoken ability and also of scoring well for his language course. He reported both mastery and performance goal orientation as he highlighted that besides aiming for fluency in English, scoring good grade for his English course was also crucial to him. To be proficient in his English, he used English to communicate with his close friends. The positive peer influence supported him in improving his language. This is shown in the following excerpt:

My friends encouraged and challenged each other to improve. We do not mind being corrected by our friends.

Islah's and his good friends' socially shared goal orientation to be proficient in English was crucial in keeping him motivated. Islah stressed that he purposely chose friends who wanted to use English in their daily communication as he realised the lack of English use at the university. That signified his environmental structuring strategy where he created a conducive environment for his language learning and acquisition. The following excerpt showed the positive influence and support that he received from his good friends:

We set a rule that we can only converse in English. We support each other. There were times we were ridiculed by other students. However, we just ignored them.

Islah's peers positively challenged him to be better in his spoken ability. He was not worried of the lack of his grammatical ability as long as the message was conveyed. Islah was self-efficacious and highly confident that he could attain high English proficiency.

He voiced out his disapproval of some of the students' attitudes who did not show interest to improve their English language proficiency. He highlighted although the main medium of instruction at his university is Bahasa Melayu, students can enhance the use of English language by participating in activities organised by the residential colleges and faculties to improve their language proficiency. He further shared that he used a variety of strategies in his language learning such as seeking information:

When watching movies or reading, I use dictionary to check meaning of words that I don't understand. I prefer online dictionary than the printed one.

Besides the mastery goal to be more proficient in his spoken ability, he also set a performance goal which was to score good marks for his language class. As fifty percent of the course marks were from the group project, he put more emphasis on it. The clear explanation of the course requirements from his language instructor at the start of the semester has helped him in planning and allocating work to all group members. Islah also sought assistance from his language instructor. He asked for feedback of his project draft before the final submission. Islah stressed on language instructors' role in delivering the lessons in a stimulating way to ensure students' engagement. He had his affective strategies to overcome the frustrations in completing the language tasks assigned by his language instructor and also the slow process of achieving speaking fluency. He practised positive self-talk to motivate himself and he also employed self-consequence strategy where he rewarded himself for any achievement. The following excerpt showed the managing emotion strategy that he used:

I always repeatedly tell myself that I can be as fluent as my good friends, and I am great. I practice self-reward such as buying things that I have always wanted for any success achieved.

On the whole, Islah's mastery and performance goals kept him persistent in using a variety of SRL strategies in his language learning.

E. Case Five – Izz

Izz was a twenty-year-old male first-year undergraduate majoring in Business Management at the Economics and Business Studies Faculty. He attributed his fluency in English Language to the usage of English language among his family members and also the emphasis on improving English at his former school. He made friends with the international students at the university so that he could practise his English. He stressed on his goal of scoring a high grade for his English Language course and that signified his extrinsic motivation.

Izz practised seeking teacher assistance strategy and he found that his language instructor's constructive feedback for his writing helped him to improve his project draft. He practised self-evaluation to gauge his progress in his language acquisition. The following excerpt showed the evaluation of the progress for his group project:

Half way of completing the group project, I realise that we have not achieved a lot. Then, I requested for more frequent group meeting and as the group leader I constantly monitor my group mates' work progress.

To enhance his learning, he structured his learning environment. This helped him have better concentration and he could focus more. He practised seeking peer assistance strategy by requesting feedback from the readers of his blog. Ganji (2009) proposed that Peer-correction and Self-correction were more helpful to language students compared to Teacher-correction, and Peer-correction was proven to be the best method for feedback in assisting language learner to improve. Besides that, Izz highlighted that creating his webpage and interactions in English via social media helped him a lot to be a competent English user. Through seeking information strategy, he learnt a variety of writing styles and vocabulary from newspaper articles. Watching movies and listening to English songs also helped him to be proficient in English. Realising that his active involvement in other campus activities might interfere with his language learning and studies, Izz used planning strategy for his language learning. He prepared reminder and timetable to monitor his course task completion.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings in this study which show that self-efficacy may affect language learners' effort and performance are in line with Marisa and Zaiyana's (2019) findings that there is a correlation between self-efficacy and the TOEFL performance of the students, and self-efficacy contributed to TOEFL score. The participants who reported high self-efficacy, Afwa, Jijie and Rose believed that they could attain their learning goals through their effort. Compared to other participants, they reported using more language learning strategies. The self-regulated learning strategies reported

by the participants can be categorised into three categories of strategies: Resource management, cognitive and metacognitive, and managing emotions. The resource management strategies used by the participants were seeking assistance and environmental structuring strategy. For the cognitive and metacognitive strategies, the participants reported employing seeking information, goal-setting and planning, self-evaluation, and organising and transforming. Moreover, self-consequence was the managing emotion strategy used by the participants.

According to Newman (2008), learners who believe in effort regulation are more likely to seek assistance as one of their problem solving strategy. Participants in this study sought help from both their teachers and peers. From the motivational perspective, seeking assistance is a social self-regulation strategy normally used by students who aim for mastery and achievement (Karabenick et al., 2011). Interestingly, findings from this study showed that teachers' personality such as friendly, approachable and concerned about students' progress determined students' willingness to seek help from them. The participants in this study reported regulation of their learning environment to achieve a conducive and supportive learning environment. This was to ensure the maximisation of language learning and use for the attainment of their learning goals. The participants highlighted the lack of chances to use English orally on the campus due to the main medium of communication which was in Bahasa Melayu. This has prompted them to create the opportunities to use English such as using English with close friends and communicating in English with online English speakers. These actions are consistent with the strategies employed by good language and successful language learners who took the opportunities or created the avenues to use English in real-life communication (Griffiths, 2015).

The cognitive self-regulation strategy of seeking information was reported by the participants and it is a significant predictor of their success in the completion of language course tasks and also language learning. The participants in this study practised a self-evaluation strategy through reflection on their learning progress and the provision of personal feedback to themselves. This finding is in agreement with Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) conceptual model of feedback where students played a central role in all feedback processes. This is shown by the participants in this study who monitored and regulated their learning performance, in relation to their set goals. Organising and transforming strategy was reported by the participants in managing the learning materials to enhance their learning. This corroborates the findings in Nota et al.'s (2004) study which showed that organising and transforming was a significant predictor of their study participants' high school course grades for Italian, mathematics, and technical subjects. Not only that, the strategy also positively contributed to the participants' subsequent university course grades and examinations. Zimmerman (2001) highlighted that self-regulated learners reward themselves for learning goal attained, task completed, and success achieved, and this was shown through self-consequence strategy practised by the participants in this study. This finding supports Nota et al.'s (2004) research findings where motivational self-regulation strategy of self-consequence contributed positively to students' high school diploma grades and their intention to continue studying at the tertiary level.

Self-regulated learning models depict that learners can set goals for their learning, monitor the progress made, and regulate their cognition, motivation, and behaviour to attain the goals (Boekaerts et al., 2000). The participants in this study reported setting both mastery and performance goals. The goals set guide them on the use of the language learnt, emphasis on grammatical accuracy, and determine the effort that they put in achieving language proficiency and fluency. They reported trying to maximise the use of English in attaining their communicative focused goal. This was because they realised the crucial role of oral fluency, especially for future employment. According to social cognitive theory (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003), goal setting plays a crucial role in the motivational process and it leads to students' effort regulation.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that self-regulation is not an all-or-none phenomenon; it is the degree that students are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally active in their learning. Moreover, the participants self-regulated different dimensions of their English Language learning. They employed a variety of self-regulatory strategies to manage their English language learning process. These self-regulatory behaviours were influenced by a number of motivational and environmental factors. However, in this study, in relation to motivational influences, the focus was only on self-efficacy. Social cognitive theorists suggested that self-efficacy is the fundamental ground to self-regulation and self-regulatory behaviours (Zimmerman, 2001). Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory shows that an individual's self-efficacy influences his behaviour. Conversely, as highlighted by Pajares et al. (2007, p. 106), …[students] interpret the results of their effort, use the interpretations to develop beliefs about their capability to engage in subsequent talks, and act in concert with the beliefs created". The findings in this study also show the role of both self and social regulation in collaborative language learning tasks, such as group project. Moreover, the ESL learners' self-regulation can be categorised into two; employing self-regulated learning as an English language learner, and being self-regulated as a language user for social interactions. The findings imply that teacher plays an important role in supporting students' self-regulation through effective and stimulating teaching methodology, and positive and supportive student-teacher interaction. Peers' role in the participants' self-regulation and the value of peer learning tasks were evident in the findings. The pedagogical implication of this finding is language teachers may integrate more pair and group work in their classrooms as language learning may be mediated through social support and social regulation. Socially shared

regulation is the predictor for students' engagement, and co-regulation functions as a predictor for students' learning outcomes (Li et al., 2021).

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The participants for this study were from one public research university, thus the findings cannot be generalised to other undergraduates at Malaysian universities such as the private universities where English Language is widely used. There might be differences in self-regulation in the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia, the Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Núñez's (2017) finding suggests that self-regulation and achievement motivational attitudes vary to important extents according to culture, however this study did not explore the cultural influences on the students' self-efficacy and self-regulation.

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Azizah Mohd Zahidi was born in Perak, Malaysia on 26 March, 1970. She is a senior lecturer at Pusat GENIUS@pintar Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. She graduated from Victoria University of Wellington with Doctor of Philosophy (Phd) in Education in 2012. She obtained her Masters of Arts (TESL) Honours in 2003 and B.Ed (TESL) Honours from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in 1993. She completed her Graduate Certificate in Education (Gifted Education) at UNSW, Sydney, Australia in 2018. Her expertise is in TESL and gifted education and her research interests include self and social regulation among language learners, self-regulated learning and academic achievement, conception of giftedness in different cultures and issues related to achievement among gifted students.

Affiliation: Pusat GENIUS@pintar Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. E-mail: deqya@ukm.edu.my Orcid number: 0000-0002-2850-9090 Phone: (+60)123505633 Scopus ID 55513224700 WOS ID AAS-6249-2020

Sy Ing, Ong was born in Johor, Malaysia on 16 July 1987. She is a biology lecturer at Pusat GENIUS@Pintar Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia since 2010. She graduated from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia with a Master of Education in Science (MEd.) in 2014. She owned a Bachelor of Science with Honours degree from Universiti Malaysia Sabah in Biotechnology in 2009. Her expertise is in Biology education and passionate in early childhood STEM education among gifted students.

Affiliation: Pusat GENIUS@pintar Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. E-mail: ongsying@ukm.edu.my Orcid number: 0000-0002-8248-6758 Phone: (+60)187947525 Scopus ID: - WOS: ID -