

The Use of English Language Learning Strategies in learning as Foreign Language

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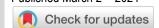
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive study is to identify the English language learning strategies employed by university students in North Sulawesi. It also explains the ways in which male and female students approach learning English differently, as well as the kinds of strategies that they most frequently employ. The survey included 91 students enrolled in a Business English course during the second semester of 2020/2021. The SILL questionnaire, with 50 items over six categories, namely, cognitive, metacognitive, affective, memory, and social strategies, was the instrument utilized in this investigation. The findings indicate that when learning English, students in Business English classes mostly employ Cognitive, Compensatory, and Metacognitive strategies. Based on gender, male students tended to use metacognitive strategies. This study is significant for the English teachers, students, and the school to inform them about the learning strategies that they usually use in learning English.

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KEYWORDS

English; Foreign Language; Language Learning Strategies.

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1. Introduction

In learning a language, a learner usually uses a strategy or even more. The word strategy is rooted from the old Greek concept 'strategies', which means steps or actions taken for the purpose of winning a war. As stated by Naiman et al., (1978), in the context of language learning, the term 'strategy refers to a specific kind of action to which the learners apply to improve their performance in learning and using a language. Moreover, according to Oxford (1990), language learning strategy is "a specific action taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more selfdirected, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p.8). Therefore, it is considered very important for the English teachers and the students to know about their English language learning strategies to improve their language skill (Aswad et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2019; Hasnia et al., 2022). However, research indicates that most language learners cannot identify the language learning strategies they are using well. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) argued that since the power of consciously using second language learning is not perceived by most of the students, skilled teachers can help their students to develop an awareness of learning strategies for making learning guicker and more effective. On the other hand, research on the domain of strategies such as Rubin (1975); Abraham & Van (1987), O'Malley et al., (1989) and Naiman et al., (1978) are all noted that language learning strategies were employed more frequently and appropriately by successful learners. They believe that language learning strategies play a key role in foreign language learning because these strategies can be helpful in facilitating such learning stages as acquisition, retrieval, and use of information.

Students who are taking Business English classes in Universitas Klabat are usually those who got high scores in English placement test. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze the strategies of language learning applied by the students who are taking Business English classes in Universitas Klabat.

The purpose of this study is to describe the strategies in language learning used by Business English classes students of Universitas Klabat, and to find out the differences between male and female students in using strategies in Learning English. Strategies for language learning are classified in different ways. Oxford 1990 identifies six language learning strategies, namely, memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensatory strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy. Memory Strategy involves simple tasks such as storing and retrieving new information while Cognitive strategy consists of tasks such as analyzing and summarizing. With this Cognitive Strategy

learners manipulate and transform the target language (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Amalia et al., 2022; Hanafiah et al., 2022; Suzanne et al., 2023). In Compensatory Strategy, learners overcome knowledge and communication problems in the target language by using available knowledge and information. This strategy involves actions such as guessing the meaning of new words and reconstructing the grammar of the target language (Oxford, 1990).

In Metacognitive Strategy learners actively and authoritatively control their own cognitive processes. This includes managing, planning, focusing, and evaluating the language learning process they are experiencing while improving their communicative competency in the target language. The Affective Strategy, in contrast, involves learners' developing confidence and perseverance in learning a language by controlling their own emotions and feelings. Finally, the Social Strategy stresses collaborative initiatives in language learning. This involves asking for repetition and clarification, paraphrasing, slowing down when speaking to be better understood by others (Oxford, 1990). Oxford (1990) classifies the six strategies into two types, i.e. Direct Strategies and Indirect Strategies. Direct Strategies refers to those strategies that are sub-conscious in nature, inherently learned and related directly to the language being learned. Belonging to this type of strategy are the Memory Strategy, the Cognitive Strategy, and the Compensatory Strategy. Indirect Strategies are strategies that are conscious in nature or under the learner's conscious control or acts and seek to organize the language learning process in general. This type of language learning strategy includes the Metacognitive Strategy, the Affective Strategies, and the Social Strategies. These strategies can be measured by using Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire by Oxford (1990).

There are six studies that have been conducted related to this topic. Firstly, a study conducted by Ali et al., (2018) entitled 'The Use of Language Learning Strategies by Pakistani M.A. English Students in Literature/Linguistics. The study had 450 participants investigated the frequency of language learning strategies used by M.A. in English Literature/Linguistiscs students in Pakistan by using SILL questionnaire. The data was analyses by using SPSS. The result shows that most of these students use LLS at a medium frequency for the overall list of 50 strategies. Out of the six subgroups of strategies only Metacognitive Strategies are used more frequently by all the students.

Second study was conducted by Afshar and Bayat (2018) entitled, 'Strategy Use, Learning Styles and L2 Achievement of Iranian Students of English for Academic Purposes'. The study investigated the relationship between language learning strategy use, learning styles, gender, and second language (L2) achievement of Iranian English for academic purposes (EAP) learners. 120 Iranian EAP learners majoring in various fields of humanities including political sciences, psychology, economics and law participated in the study by completing Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and adapted version of the Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) originally developed by Reid (1987). The results obtained from three separate Pearson product moment correlations indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between (a) language learning strategy use and L2 achievement; (b) learning styles and L2 achievement; and (c) learning styles and strategy use by Iranian EAP learners. Moreover, the results of multiple regression analysis demonstrated that both learning styles were found to be a stronger predictor. Also, the findings of two separate multiple regression analyses indicated that among the components of learning styles and language learning strategy use were stronger predictor. Also, the findings of two separate multiple regression analyses indicated that among the components of learning styles and language learning strategy use were stronger predictor. Also, the findings of two separate multiple regression analyses indicated that among the components of learning styles and language learning strategy use were stronger predictors of L2.

Achievement respectively. In addition, the results of an independent samples t-test showed cognitive and metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used strategy groups by females and males respectively. The results of another independent samples t-test indicated that group and visual learning styles were the most preferred types adopted by the female and male learners respectively.

The third study is coming from Saudi Arabia, conducted by Saud (2019) about a contrastive analysis of ESL and EFL learning strategies. This study examined language context's effect on selecting language learning strategies. The participants were 150 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, and 150 English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used for data collection. The data were analyzed quantitively using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). At the individual strategy level, ESL and EFL students differed significantly in the use of 18 (36%) out of 50 strategies. There was also some agreement between them as both ESL and EFL students used 12 (24%) of individual strategies most often, 18 (36%) to a medium degree and 2 (4%) least often. At the category level both groups used the metacognitive strategy category "organizing and evaluating your learning" most frequently and used both the affective category "managing your emotions", and the memory category "remembering more effectively", least frequently, with no significant differences. The overall strategy used for both groups was medium.

Another study from Indonesia was conducted by Kamil (2017) about TEFL students' language learning strategies: the case of one state Islamic institute in Indonesia. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the language learning strategies of TEFL students at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci. The data were collected through a survey with the Indonesian version Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning and were analyzed through the Rasch Analysis. The results revealed that metacognitive strategy and social strategy were the most and the least frequently used strategy respectively. Considerable differences existed in the second most frequently used strategy across the variable of gender. For male respondents, it was the compensatory strategy, while for female respondents, it was the affective strategy. In addition, cognitive strategy, the third most frequently used strategy by male respondents, is the last for their female counterparts. The first three most frequently used strategies by male respondents were dominated by the direct type of strategies, while for female respondents these were dominated by the indirect ones.

2. Methodology

This research used a quantitative descriptive method to describe the English language learning strategies used by the students in Universitas Klabat. The respondents of this study were the students in Universitas Klabat, particularly the students that are taking Business English classes, namely, Business English Reading and Vocabulary, Business English Correspondence, and Business English Communication enrolled in semester II 2020/2021 with the total of 91 students, divided into 39 male students, and 52 female students.

The sampling technique that was used in this study is a convenient sampling method. Thus, the researcher distributed the questionnaire online to the students who are available in the classroom at the time. The instrument that was used to measure the English language learning strategies of the students is SILL questionnaire by Oxford (1990) (version 7.0). It is a 50-item Likert-scale questionnaire including six components of cognitive, metacognitive, memory, social, Compensatory, and affective strategies. It appears that SILL is the most often adopted strategy use scale around the world, and the only language learning strategy instrument that has been checked for reliability and validity in multiple ways and in various contexts throughout the world including Indonesia.

The data analysis was done using a statistical tool. To answer the research question, Mean score was used to find out the frequency of students' strategies in English language learning. The interpretation of the data will be based on Likert scale (Joshi et al., 2015) as following:

4.50 – 5.00 = Very Highly Use 3.50 – 4.49 = Highly Use 2.50 – 3.49 = Medium Use

1.50 - 2.49 = Low Use

1.00 – 1.49 = Very low Use

3. Result and Discussion

The results should summarize (scientific) findings of the study. It should be written clearly and concise. The separation or com-bination of Results and Discussion is accepted. If the result is separated into some subheadings, the subheading should be numbered as following example:

Type of Strategy	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Frequency Category
Memory Strategies	91	2.22	4.44	3.27	Medium use
Cognitive Strategies	91	2.50	4.50	3.60	Highly use
Compensatory Strategies	91	2.33	5.00	3.56	Highly use
Metacognitive Strategies	91	2.44	4.89	3.73	Highly use
Affective Strategies	91	1.67	4.67	3.07	Medium use

Social Strategies	91	2.00	4.67	3.41	Medium use
Overall	91	2.66	4.38	3.47	

The above table 1 reveals that the mean frequency of the strategy used by all students is 3.47. This means that all the students use the strategies at medium range.

		Tab	le 2. The use o	of SILL based on St	udents' Gender		
Gei	nder	Memory Strategies	Cognitive Strategies	Compensatory Strategies	Metacognitive Strategies	Affective Strategies	Social Strategies
	Mean	3.32	3.60	3.65	3.86	3.24	3.53
Female	Ν	52	52	52	52	52	52
remare	Std. Deviation	.40	.47	.59	.55	.66	.60
	Mean	3.20	3.60	3.44	3.55	2.84	3.25
Male	Ν	39	39	39	39	39	39
maic	Std. Deviation	.49	.47	.51	.64	.56	.66
	Mean	3.27	3.60	3.56	3.73	3.10	3.41
Total	Ν	91	91	91	91	91	91
	Std. Deviation	.44	.47	.56	.61	.64	.64

Based on the table above, female students mostly use Metacognitive Strategies in language learning with the mean of 3.86, followed by compensatory strategies (M=3.65). Male students used cognitive strategies (M=3.60) followed by metacognitive strategies (M=3.55).

Table 3. Means for overall 50 strategies of SILL

	Table 3: Means for overall 50 strategies of SILL				
ltem no	Item	SILL Subgroup	Mean	SD	
15	I watch SL language TV shows spoken in SL or go to movies spoken in SL.	Cognitive	4.43	.79	
31	I notice my SL mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	Metacognitive	4.30	.67	
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking SL.	Metacognitive	4.23	.75	
12	I practice the sounds of SL.	Cognitive	4.10	.88	
29	If I can't think of an SL word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	Compensatory	4.09	.81	
33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of SL.	Metacognitive	4.02	.94	
45	If I do not understand something in SL, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	Social	3.91	.96	
11	I try to talk like native SL speakers.	Cognitive	3.88	.84	
3	I connect the sound of a new SL word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	Memory	3.79	.98	

38	I think about my progress in learning SL.	Metacognitive	3.79	.96
30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my SL.	Metacognitive	3.78	.85
1	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in the SL.	Memory	3.76	.74
18	I first skim an SL passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	Cognitive	3.71	.87
25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in the SL, I use gestures.	Compensatory	3.69	1.06
39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using SL.	Affective	3.67	1.00
16	I read for pleasure in the SL.	Cognitive	3.66	.91
24	To understand unfamiliar SL words, I make guesses.	Compensatory	3.66	1.01
13	I use the SL words I know in different ways.	Cognitive	3.65	.86
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using SL.	Affective	3.64	1.17
35	I look for people I can talk to in SL.	Metacognitive	3.63	1.23
10	I say or write new SL words several times.	Cognitive	3.60	.98
19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in the SL.	Cognitive	3.60	.87
22	I try not to translate word for word.	Cognitive	3.58	1.07
40	I encourage myself to speak SL even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	Affective	3.57	1.05
36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in SL.	Metacognitive	3.56	.96
37	I have clear goals for improving my SL skills.	Metacognitive	3.53	.91
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in the SL.	Compensatory	3.51	.99
50	I try to learn about the culture of SL speakers.	Social	3.51	.98
21	I find the meaning of an SL word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	Cognitive	3.49	.89
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in the SL.	Compensatory	3.47	1.12
4	I remember a new SL word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	Memory	3.44	.93
46	I ask SL speakers to correct me when I talk.	Social	3.44	1.08
2	I use new SL words in a sentence so I can remember them.	Memory	3.42	.96
17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in the	Cognitive	3.35	.99

48	I ask for help from SL speakers.	Social	3.35	1.08
7	I physically act out new SL words.	Memory	3.30	.82
20	I try to find patterns in the SL.	Cognitive	3.30	.91
14	I start conversations in the SL.	Cognitive	3.21	.96
9	I remember new SL words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	Memory	3.20	.97
47	I practice SL with other students.	Social	3.19	1.15
5	I use rhymes to remember new SL words.	Memory	3.05	1.16
49	I ask questions in SL.	Social	3.05	.85
8	I review SL lessons often.	Memory	3.02	.83
27	I read SL without looking up every new word.	Compensatory	2.97	.91
23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in the SL.	Cognitive	2.85	1.20
41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in SL.	Affective	2.79	1.21
34	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study SL.	Metacognitive	2.70	1.04
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning SL.	Affective	2.54	1.13
6	I use flashcards to remember new SL words.	Memory	2.44	1.12
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning dairy.	Affective	2.19	1.08

Table 3 above shows the frequency means of the overall language learning strategies of 91 students. There are 28 strategies that are highly used by the students of Business English classes, they are items number 15, 31, 32, 12, 29, 33, 45, 11, 3, 38, 30, 1, 18, 25, 39, 16, 24, 13, 42, 35, 10, 19, 22, 40, 36, 37, 28, 50, with mean range between 3,50-4.43. The highest mean is item number 15, I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English. Most of the students watch English TV shows and English movies as one of the strategies of learning English. which is cognitive category. Followed by items 31 (I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better), items 32 (I pay attention when someone is speaking English), items 12 (I practice the sounds of English), Items 29 (If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing), and Item 33 (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English), item 45 (if I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again), item 11 (I try to talk like native English speakers), item 3 (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word), item 38 (I think about my progress in learning English), item 30 (I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English), item 1 (I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English), item 25 (when I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures), item 39 (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English), item 16 (I read for pleasure in English), item 24 (to understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses), item 13 (I use the English words I know in different ways), item 42 (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English), item 35 (I look for people I can talk to in English), item 10 (I say or write new English words several times), item 19 (I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English), item 22 (I try not to translate word for word), item 40 (I encourage myself to speak English when I am afraid of making mistakes), item 36 (I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English).

SL.

item 37 (I have clear goals for improving my English skills), item 28 (I try to guess what the other person will say next in English), item 50 (I try to learn about the culture of English speakers). There are also two strategies that are not usually used by the students, they are item 6 (I use flashcards to remember new English words), and item 43 (I write down my feelings in a language learning daily).

Table 4. Cognitive Strategies				
ltem No.	ltem	Mean	Status	
15	I watch SL language TV shows spoken in SL or go to movies spoken in SL.	4.43	Highly use	
12	I practice the sounds of SL.	4.10	Highly use	
11	I try to talk like native SL speakers.	3.88	Highly use	
18	I first skim an SL passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	3,71	Highly use	
16	I read for pleasure in the SL.	3.66	Highly use	
13	I use the SL words I know in different ways.	3.65	Highly use	
10	I say or write new SL words several times.	3.60	Highly use	
19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in the SL.	3.60	Highly use	
22	I try not to translate word for word.	3.58	Highly use	
21	I find the meaning of an SL word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	3.49	Medium use	
17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in the SL.	3.35	Medium use	
20	I try to find patterns in the SL.	3.30	Medium use	
14	I start conversations in the SL.	3.21	Medium use	
23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in the SL.	2.85	Medium use	

Table 4 reveals that SILL items 15 (I watch SL language TV shows spoken in SL or go to movies spoken in SL), 12 (I practice the sound of English), 11 (I try to talk like native English speakers), 18 (I first skim an English passage then go back and read carefully), 16 (I read for pleasure in English), 13 (I use the English words I know in different ways), 10 (I say or write new English words several times), 19 (I look for new words in my own language that are similar to new words in English), and 22 (I try not to translate word for word) are the highly used strategies by students with mean frequency values of 3.58 - 4.43. The rest strategies are used at a medium frequency.

Table 5. Metacognitive Strategies				
ltem No.	ltem	Mean	Status	
31	I notice my SL mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	4.30	Highly use	
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking SL.	4.23	Highly use	
33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of SL.	4.02	Highly use	

38	I think about my progress in learning SL.	3.79	Highly use
30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my SL.	3.78	Highly use
35	I look for people I can talk to in SL.	3.63	Highly use
36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in SL.	3.56	Highly use
37	I have clear goals for improving my SL skills.	3.53	Highly use
34	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study SL.	2.70	Medium use

Table 5 lists all metacognitive strategies, and it shows that out of 9 strategies, 8 of them are highly used. Only item 34 (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English) is medium used by the students. It means that the students of Business English classes use almost all metacognitive strategies most of the time when learning English.

Table 6. Affective Strategies				
ltem No.	ltem	Mean	Status	
39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using SL.	3.67	Highly use	
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using SL.	3.64	Highly use	
40	I encourage myself to speak SL even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	3.57	Highly use	
41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in SL.	2.79	Medium use	
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning SL.	2.54	Medium use	
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	2.19	Low use	

Table 6 shows the list of all affective strategies of SILL. It reveals that from affective strategies, there are 3 strategies that are highly used by the students, they are, item 39 (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English), 42 (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English, and 40 (I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistake. The other two strategies are used with medium frequency, and 1 strategy is lowly used by the student is item 43 (I write down my feelings in a language learning diary).

Table 7. Compensatory Strategies				
ltem No.	ltem	Mean	Status	
29	If I can't think of an SL word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	4.09	Highly use	
25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in the SL, I use gestures.	3.69	Highly use	
24	To understand unfamiliar SL words, I make guesses.	3.66	Highly use	
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in the SL.	3.51	Highly use	
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in the SL.	3.47	Medium use	

27 I read SL without looking up every new word. 2.97 Medium use

Table 7 shows the list of Compensatory strategies. 4 out of 6 of these strategies are highly used by the students. They are items 29 (if I can't think of an SL word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing), 25 (When I can't think of a word during a conversation in the SL, I use gestures), 24 (to understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses), and 28 (I try to guess what the other person will say next in English). The other two items are used with medium frequency.

Table 8. Social Strategies					
ltem No.	Item	Mean	Status		
45	If I do not understand something in SL, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	3.91	Highly use		
50	I try to learn about the culture of SL speakers.	3.51	Highly use		
46	I ask SL speakers to correct me when I talk.	3.44	Medium use		
48	I ask for help from SL speakers.	3.35	Medium use		
47	I practice SL with other students.	3.19	Medium use		

Table 8 reveals that the students use 2 out of 5 social strategies most frequently and use 3 strategies are being used at a medium frequency level.

ltem No.	ltem	Mean	Status
3	I connect the sound of a new SL word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	3.79	Highly use
1	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in the SL.	3.76	Highly use
4	I remember a new SL word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	3.44	Medium use
2	I use new SL words in a sentence so I can remember them.	3.42	Medium use
7	I physically act out new SL words.	3.30	Medium use
9	I remember new SL words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	3.20	Medium use
5	I use rhymes to remember new SL words.	3.05	Medium use
8	I review SL lessons often.	3.02	Medium use
6	I use flashcards to remember new SL words.	2.44	Low use

Table 9. Memory Strategies

Table 9 shows the results for memory strategies. It is obvious from the statistics above that only 2 out of 9 strategies is highly used by the students. They are items 3 (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word), and 1 (I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English). Most of the strategies are used at medium frequency level, and 1 of the strategies are used only at low frequency level, which is, item 6 (I use flashcards to remember new English words).

4. Conclusion

From the results and findings of frequency means for overall 50 strategies of SILL, it was found that the students from Business English classes are mostly use Cognitive Strategies, Compensatory Strategies, and Metacognitive Strategies in learning English. Based on gender, Female students used mostly metacognitive strategies, while male students mostly used cognitive strategies. For overall strategies, item 15 from cognitive strategies (I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English) is highly used by all students with mean score 4.43. Item 43 from affective strategies (I write down my feelings in a language learning diary) is used with the lowest frequency level with mean 2.19. From 6 categories of strategies, the students mostly used cognitive strategies.

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