



AN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY EFL STUDENT TEACHERS AT ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM IN UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG

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Abstract

The current study was carried out with the intention of investigating the EFL student teachers' Language Learning Strategies (LLS) in learning English. This study also aims for exploring the level of using LLS and identifying the most and least preferred strategy employed by EFL student teachers at English Language Education Program, *Universitas Negeri Padang*. This research used a descriptive quantitative method. The total sampling technique is used to all participants of EFL student teachers grouped at International classes enrolled in 2017-2019. The data were gathered through the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire version 7.0 developed by Oxford and administered to all 82 international EFL student teachers. SILL consists of 50 statements which have six categories as well as *Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social*. The data were analyzed through M.Excel and SPSS version 25. The result indicated all international EFL student teachers employed all strategies categorized as the High level with the average Mean score (M=3.80). The most frequently used is *Metacognitive* strategy (M=4.01) and the least frequently used is *Affective* strategy (M=3.53). It can be concluded that language learning strategies are important in raising the learners' learning awareness and improve educators' teaching preference.

Key words: *Learning Strategies, Language Learning Strategies, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), higher education, student teachers, Indonesian context*

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian learners have studied English previously for several years in high schools. However, Indonesian learners are still lack of English proficiency as well as having a poor proficiency level (Haryanti, 2017). The problem is

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highlighting on the least duration of learning English in the classroom setting. Even English has become the compulsory lesson in secondary or tertiary schools, but the duration of learning English is limited to only three hours in a week and four credits maximum for the university students that are not majoring in English. Also, Indonesian learners are lack exposure in practicing English that might be caused by the use of *Bahasa Indonesia* by the teachers when teaching English in high schools or universities.

In learning English, many experts and researchers have conducted studies on English learning strategies and have different ideas about the theory of language learning strategies (LLS). Hismanoglu (2000) confirms the fact that LLS have been identified by many scholars such as O'Malley (1985), Rubin (1987), Oxford (1990), and Stern (1992). One of the most well-known theories about LLS is the theory from Oxford in 1990. The taxonomy of LLS by Oxford (1990) has gained much attention especially in learning English as a foreign and second language. According to Oxford (1990), the taxonomy of LLS can be divided into two main strategies, they are direct and indirect strategies. Direct and indirect strategies consist of several sub-strategies that can support good language learners in improving the quality of language learning process.

Most experts and researchers around the world agreed that more proficient learners utilize a wider range of strategies more efficiently than the less proficient learners (Green & Oxford, 1995; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Oxford, 1996; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Philips, 1991; Gan and et. al., 2004; Takeuchi, 2003; and Griffiths, 2008 cited in Gerami & Baighlou, 2011). Also, successful learners are commonly laying down on developing a specific task and considering strategies in difficult language settings (Vann & Abraham, 1990). Some studies have investigated the language learning strategies used by successful learners to be the reference in training the less successful learners.

The studies about LLS have gained attention from many researchers around the world. For example, studies were done by Yang (2007), Kavasoglu (2009), and Suran and Yunus (2017). These three studies are equally administered the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire by Oxford (1990). Yang (2007) investigating the use of LLS for junior college students in Taiwan. Based on the result, the students' strategy enables the EFL teachers to incorporate the training of LLS for junior college students and help the students to improve their English language skills. Kavasoglu (2009) researched LLS used by pre-service teachers of English and investigated the effect of the variable such as gender, the grade of school, and type of high schools on the LLS. The result showed all students indicated using *Metacognitive* strategies at the highest level, and the factors influencing are gender and grade of the class. Thirdly, Suran and Yunus (2017) investigating the LLS of the students in the rural secondary school in *Meradong* district. The study revealed the students' LLS can help educators in improving the effectiveness of the language learning process.

Most researchers studied the primary, secondary and tertiary school students' LLS (Amir, 2018; Zakaria, Zakaria & Azmi, 2018; Edvardsdóttir, 2010;

Kaur & Embi, 2011; Nayan & Krishnasamy, 2018; and Lan, 2005). As a result, the studies which focus on university students are not very common, especially the study about LLS of the EFL (English as a foreign language) student teachers. Based on the previous studies, mostly only focused on certain language skills of language learning strategy within specific skills such as listening, speaking, reading, or writing (Jannah, 2015; Hadi, Adnan & Wahyuni, 2016; Patmawati, Amri & Fatimah, 2018; Zukang, 1994; McMullen, 2009).

To give more contribution to the study of language learning strategy, it is better to investigate the level of learners' LLS and identify the most and least frequently strategies used by EFL student teachers. This study focused on seeing the strategies employed by the EFL student teachers of the international classes and can be used for being criteria in training the less successful EFL student teachers. Thus, the comprehensive research that investigated all language learning categories is necessary.

Based on the explanation above, the research questions are specified in the form of questions as stated below:

- 1) Are the international EFL student teachers of English Language Education Program at Universitas Negeri Padang high, medium, or low 'language learning strategy' users?
- 2) What are the most and the least strategy used by international EFL student teachers of English Language Education Program at Universitas Negeri Padang?

One of the reasons that make this research different from the previous research is in this research it investigated the LLS of the international EFL student teachers in all categories (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social) and involved all skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Then, this research used the original questionnaire of Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford version 7.0 to investigate the LLS used by the international EFL student teachers. The researcher will focus under the title "*An Analysis of Language Learning Strategies Used by EFL Student Teachers at English Language Education Program Universitas Negeri Padang*".

Language Learning Strategies

According to Rubin (1975), language learning strategies are the methods used by learners in obtaining knowledge. However, Chamot (2004) believes language learning strategies are the human thoughts and actions which used consciously to be able to reach out the learning goal. Therefore, Chamot (2004) defines language learning strategies are not only the method and special acts but language learning strategies more about thoughts and actions which have the characteristic of consciously.

The conscious trait is in line with Hurd & Lewis (2008) if language learning strategies are the conscious process chosen and utilized by the learners in

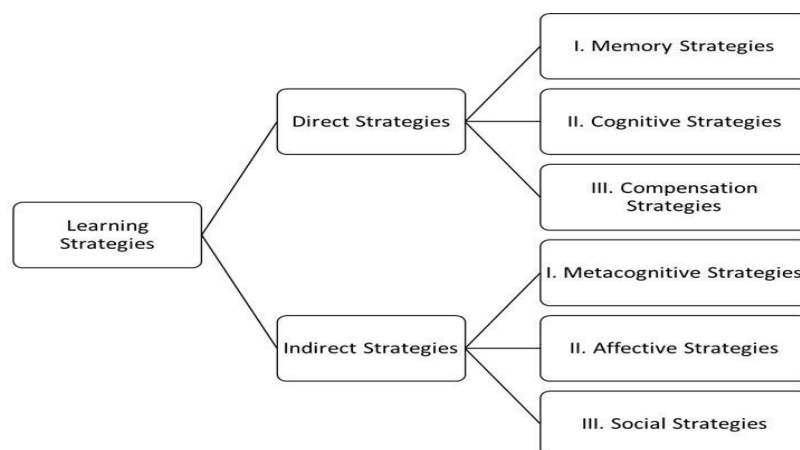
learning the target language. Griffiths (2008) proposes language learning strategies are can be the mental and physical activities that consciously selected, and can occur intentionally to automatically in reaching the goal in learning the language. Besides, Oxford (1990) focuses if the language learning strategies are the method, but language learning strategies are the exclusive and special acts used by the learners to understand the learning easily, quickly, with more fun, fit to individual self-compatibility, and transferable.

Based on what Rubin (1975) explained, language learning strategies are considered as a method used in learning. Rubin (1975) seems described this in general which might make the reader get misinterpret the meaning. Then, Chamot (2004) claims that language learning strategies are not only limited to the methods, but can also be interpreted as specific actions used consciously. Chamot (2004) gives a more specific description that language learning strategies are actions that are consciously used in the language learning process. Besides, Hurd and Lewis (2008) support if language learning strategies are more directed on the conscious process of learning the target language. While Griffiths (2008) argues if language learning strategies are not only limited to the conscious process, because language learning strategies are the mental and physical processes that can occur consciously or unconsciously. Whereas, Oxford (1990) claims language learning strategies are a special way used by learners in learning languages, to make learners able to learn the target language quickly, fun, and fit the needs of each individual. It seems Oxford (1990) is explained more comprehensive about language learning strategies because the needs of every individual learner are different.

Based on the previous explanation from some experts above, it can be summarized the definition of language learning strategies are all the certain mental and physical actions which chosen consciously and sometimes can be used automatically to have a better language learning process.

The taxonomy of LLS by Oxford (1990: 17) puts more emphasis on direct and indirect strategies in the language learning process.

Figure 1. Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) (Oxford, 1990)



B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a descriptive research in order to answer the research questions. The descriptive quantitative method was used in investigating the level of using language learning strategies of the international EFL student teachers. Also, to see the strategies that are commonly used and least used. This research conducted in English Language Education Program (ELEP) at *Universitas Negeri Padang*, West Sumatra, Indonesia.

The population was the EFL student teachers of international classes. The total sampling technique was used to all participants of EFL student teachers in 2017-2019 international classes within approximately 82 student teachers (the total of K1-2017, K1-2018, and K1-2019).

The data were gathered through the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire version 7.0 developed by Oxford. SILL consists of 50 statements which have six categories as well as the *memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social*. Item number 1-9 is memory; 1-23 is cognitive; 24-29 is compensation; 30-38 is metacognitive; 39-44 is affective and; 25-50 is social. SILL questionnaire has five options that were a Likert-Scale, with the detail are: 1 means never true of me; 2 means rarely true of me; 3 means sometimes true of me; 4 means usually true of me and; 5 means always true of me. Due to the validity and reliability of the SILL questionnaire are high across many different cultural groups or ethnicities, the original questionnaire was used without translated into the source language since it administered to the proficient learners.

In collecting the data, the researcher used the online platform (Google Form) and shared the link through the chairman of each class. Then, the data analyzed by using Microsoft Excel version 2007 and SPSS version 25 in order to get a more accurate mean, minimum score, maximum score, and standard deviation. Then based on the result, the researcher identifies the result rank based on the language learning strategies level by Oxford (1990).

Table 1. Language Learning Strategies Level (LLS Level) (Oxford, 1990: p. 300)

Level	Interpretation	Score
High	Always or almost always	4.5 - 5.0
	Usually used	3.5 - 4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5 - 3.4
Low	Seldom used	1.5 - 2.4
	Never used	1.0 - 1.4

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

The data analysis revealed the differences in the overall use of strategies by international EFL student teachers (see Table 2 below). Specifically, the overall result of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) indicated the level of respondents' as High users of language learning strategies (LLS) while learning English within the Mean score is 3.80 categorized as High Level (Mean 3.50 or above). In detail, the findings showed that the respondents using *Metacognitive, Social, Compensation, Cognitive, Memory, and Affective* strategies respectively. The result showed that the *Metacognitive* strategy as the most frequently used strategy by the respondents, meanwhile, *Affective* strategy as the least frequently used. The overall result of using LLS in SILL are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Rank Order of LLS Used by Respondents

No	The Strategies	Mean Score	Level of Frequency Use	Std. Deviation
1	Metacognitive Strategies	4.01	High use	0.57
2	Social Strategies	3.95	High use	0.61
3.	Compensation Strategies	3.90	High use	0.55
4	Cognitive Strategies	3.86	High use	0.54
5	Memory Strategies	3.54	High use	0.52
6	Affective Strategies	3.53	High use	0.65
Total		3.80	High use	

Table 2 above illustrated that the *Metacognitive* (M=4.01) as the most frequently used strategy by all respondents and this is followed by *Social* strategy (M=3.95), *Compensation* strategy (M=3.90), *Cognitive* strategy (M=3.86), *Memory* strategy (M=3.54), and *Affective* strategy (M=3.53). *Memory, cognitive, and compensation* strategies are categorized as direct strategies, while the *metacognitive, affective, and social* strategies are indirect strategies. The result showed that indirect strategies are used much more frequently within the average score at Mean=3.83. This result was almost similar to the use of direct strategies at the memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies that have average Mean=3.77. In short, international EFL student teachers were categorized as the High Users in employing both direct and indirect strategies while learning English.

In brief, the result of LLS used by individual three international classes can be seen below:

Table 3. The Summary Score (Mean) of LLS Used by International EFL Student Teachers of 2017, 2018, and 2019.

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Class of 2017	29	3.09	4.70	3.74	0.403	High use
Class of 2018	24	2.92	4.67	3.75	0.447	High use
Class of 2019	29	2.64	4.86	3.89	0.502	High use
All International Student Teachers	82	2.64	4.86	3.80	0.453	High use

The mean score between 3.5 until 5.0 indicates that the use of language learning strategy is high. Table 3 above showed that all international classes (2017, 2018, and 2019) were using LLS in the High Usage (All Mean score is above 3.50). The highest mean is employed by the class of 2019 (M=3.89), followed by the class of 2018 (M=3.75), and the class of 2017 (M=3.74). The minimum score for all classes were categorized as the Medium level (Mean score 2.5 until 3.4).

The comparison of using LLS of each class can be seen from the following table:

Table 4. The Comparison of Language Learning Strategies Used by International EFL Student Teachers at three classes

Strategy Category	2017 International Class		2018 International Class		2019 International Class	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Memory	3.40	0.45	3.47	0.59	3.70	0.50
Cognitive	3.80	0.46	3.89	0.54	3.90	0.62
Compensation	3.99	0.43	3.85	0.47	3.86	0.70
Metacognitive	3.93	0.52	3.91	0.50	4.17	0.62
Affective	3.44	0.62	3.54	0.68	3.61	0.66
Social	3.84	0.67	3.86	0.56	4.13	0.60

For the class of 2017, the most frequently used of LLS are the *Compensation* strategies (M=3.99), followed by *Metacognitive* (M=3.93), *Social* (M=3.84), *Cognitive* (M=3.80), *Affective* (M=3.44), and *Memory* (M=3.40). The *compensation, metacognitive, social, and cognitive* strategies categorized as High Usage, while *affective and memory* strategies categorized as the Medium level. The class of 2017 employed more Indirect strategies (M=3.74), while for the Direct strategies (M=3.73). Based on the Mean score, the class of 2017 employed Direct and Indirect strategies in High Usage. It can be concluded that the international class of 2017 used more frequently of *Metacognitive, Affective, and Social* strategies.

The result for the international class of 2018 concluded that the most common strategies used are the *Metacognitive* (M=3.91), followed by *Cognitive* (M=3.89), *Social* (M=3.86), *Compensation* (3.85), *Affective* (M=3.54), *Memory* strategies (M=3.47). The *metacognitive, cognitive, social, compensation, and affective* strategies categorized as the High Level, and the *memory* strategies are categorized as the Medium Level. Class of 2018 employed more Indirect strategies (M=3.77), while for the Direct strategies (M=3.74). Based on the Mean score, the class of 2018 employed Direct and Indirect strategies in High Usage. It can be concluded that the international class of 2018 used more frequently of *Metacognitive, Affective, and Social* strategies.

Compared to the international class of 2017 and 2018, the class of 2019 categorized as the High Users for all language learning strategy categories. The most frequently used is the *Metacognitive* (M=4.17), followed by *Social* (M=4.13), *Cognitive* (M=3.90), *Compensation* (M=3.86), *Memory* (M=3.70) and *Affective* (M=3.61). The class of 2019 employed more Indirect strategies (M=3.97) than Direct strategies (M=3.82). Based on the Mean score, the class of 2019 employed Direct and Indirect strategies in High Usage. It can be concluded that the international class of 2019 used more frequently of *Metacognitive, Affective, and Social* strategies.

2. Discussion

Based on the overall findings above, the international EFL student teachers reported using *Metacognitive, Social, Compensation, Cognitive, Memory, and Affective* strategies respectively, which indicated *Metacognitive* as the most preferred strategies and *Affective* as the least preferred strategies.

The table above (Table 2) indicated that *Metacognitive* strategies, along with the *Social* strategies were the most frequently used, and *Memory* and *Affective* strategies as the least frequently used by international EFL student teachers. It indicated the respondents seem familiar in managing the learning process and indicated enjoy learning through interactions, and less familiar in creating the mental linkages and taking the emotional temperature while learning English.

In terms of *Metacognitive* strategies, respondents enrolled in the classes typically have a strong English proficiency, in other words in the average or

higher intelligence in English. Unlike the other EFL student teachers who might enroll in classes that have an average or lower English proficiency, due to the international EFL student teachers are grouped base on their strong capability of English. According to Oxford (1990), *Metacognitive* strategies deal with the condition in having efficient planning and good self-monitoring progress to complete the goal. These strategies helped the learners develop cognition which suits the participants' background as the outstanding class compared to other classes. The result indicated the participants own *metacognitive* strategies effectively and efficiently regarding the learning process. The researcher assumes the result of using *metacognitive* strategies are relevant to the participants' learning cognition as successful learners compared to less successful learners in other classes.

In terms of *Social* strategies, the respondents saw to learn by asking questions and cooperating with peers or other language users. This means the respondents were already developed their independent learning to see in more detail culturally of their peer speakers. It was also can be interpreted if the respondents were highly being encouraged in interactive learning to develop linguistic capabilities (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006).

For the least favored strategies by the respondents were *Affective* and *Memory* strategies. In terms of *Affective*, the respondents saw not to be good at controlling the emotions, attitudes, and motivation in learning. This indicated the respondents might not be relaxed when speaking English. Besides, for the *Memory* strategies, indicated the respondents were not good at remembering or creating the mental linkages, like classifying the language material to become meaningful topics.

In terms of comparing the researcher' result to other studies, the result of the most and least strategies used have several similarities and differences compare to the previous studies. Gerami and Baighlou (2011) shown that the most frequently used strategy of successful Iranian EFL learners was *Metacognitive* and the least frequently used strategy was *Affective*. It means the result of the researcher's study is supported by the result of Gerami and Baighlou (2011), especially for the strategies used by successful and proficient learners (referred to international EFL student teachers at Universitas Negeri Padang). It is supported and revealed if most successful learners have higher learning cognition, which starts inside of the individual capabilities.

Another study showed that *Metacognitive* was also the most depending strategies used by the fourth and sixth semester of the university students, however *Social* strategies become the least depending strategies used (Lestari, 2015). Compared to Lestari's result (2015), the result of the researcher's study is different from the 'least' strategies used and similar to the 'most' strategies used. The researcher implies the result is different because the participants of this research were all international EFL student teachers of 2017, 2018, and 2019, while the participants of Lestari's study (2015) was one class of the fourth semester EFL student teachers and one class of the sixth EFL student teachers. However, different results can also be related to the participants' intelligence in understanding English. In other words, successful learners are mostly using

different strategies compared to less successful learners, since proficient learners usually have higher English intelligence and proficiency.

Yilmaz (2010) shown that the highest rank strategy was *Compensation* strategy, and the lowest rank strategy used was *Affective* strategies. Compare to the result of the researcher's study, the least strategy used was the same, which is *Affective* strategies. Nevertheless, the most strategy used was different (*Metacognitive* for the researcher's result and *Compensation* for Yilmaz's result). The researcher implies the results are different because the participants of Yilmaz's study (2010) were 140 university students who are majoring in English and who have completed 80 credits hours of study. Compare to the researcher's result, Yilmaz's study seems to investigate the sophomore, junior, and senior year (4th, 6th, or 8th-semester students) due to the minimum credits for the participants. However, the participants of the researcher's study were freshman, sophomore, and junior year students (International class of 2017, 2018, and 2019). In case, the 80 credits are impossible to the freshman year students, and possible for sophomore, junior, and senior year students. It means the difference is coming from the different levels of English intelligence and proficiency of those two groups.

The other studies revealed the least frequently used strategy was *Memory* strategy (Hastuti, 2014 and; Warahmah, Ras, & Nababan, 2017). Compared to the researcher's result, the least strategy used was different. The researcher's result showed *Memory* strategy as the fifth strategy used, before *Affective*. It means *Memory* was the second-lowest strategy used by international EFL student teachers. Compared to Hastuti's study (2014) and Warahmah, Ras, and Nababan's study (2017), the international EFL student teachers (successful learners) are better at *memory* strategies than *affective* strategies, compared to the Hastuti and Warahmah et. al.

In conclusion, the international EFL student teachers were categorized as the High Users of using language learning strategies; and the most-least frequent strategies were *Metacognitive* and *Affective* strategies. Also, the result of this study has several similarities and differences compared to previous studies.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The study showed that international EFL student teachers were aware that leaning strategies were a part of their language learning process. The strategy used indicating these learners as High users for all LLS categories within the Mean score was 3.80 (3.50 or above indicate the High Level). The international EFL student teachers also indicated as High users for *Metacognitive* strategies (M=4.01) which help the learners in directing, organizing, and planning their language learning process. The respondents also indicated the least frequently used strategy is the *Affective* strategy (M=3.53) which mean the learners are lack of controlling the emotions, attitudes, and motivation in learning.

Suggestions

In order to support the teaching and learning process, English educators should consider the learners' LLS and administer the appropriate teaching instruction and activities based on the learners' differences and circumstances in order to make the learners more successful. For the international class educators, it is also better to improve the language learning strategies dealing with the learning task, difficulties, and learning objectives. Then for the educators of none international class, it is better to use the result of this study to become the reference in training the less successful or proficient learners. Also, it is suggested to teach the learners to use LLS to make the learners can have a better language learning process and support their learning achievement.

Hopefully, the result of this study can give a more valuable contribution to the readers, experts, or researchers in order to increase the learners' awareness of language learning strategies, and increase the educators' teaching preferences. Further research also needs to explore how successful learners and less successful learners learn English in the EFL context.

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