

**A STUDY ON COGNITIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USED
BY THE SIXTH YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM OF
FKIP UNISMA**

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Abstract: This study aims to determine and analyze the use of cognitive strategies that play a role in helping English learning, especially among sixth semester students of the English language education faculty of the Islamic University of Malang (UNISMA). This study uses a quantitative research method with a descriptive questionnaire survey approach that processes quantitative data collection through the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire. with a research sample consisting of 44 students who were selected randomly but represented them as having an advanced level of English proficiency, this selection was intended to investigate English language proficiency. Research participants were assessed using standardized tests to ensure a strong foundation in the research. The results of the study showed that many students chose to use the cognitive strategies, for instance "The students are able to do English conversation" which was reflected in daily learning activities such as class discussions, academic presentations, and informal interactions between students. This finding shows that the application of cognitive strategies in learning can provide a positive impact and contribution to improving English language skills, especially speaking skills and understanding of context. This study also provides a disclosure that cognitive strategies can help students increase their self-confidence in learning English. As a result, with this recommendation for teachers is to increase awareness and understanding in learning and provide a discussion environment that supports learning through innovative teaching methods and is oriented towards the use of technological advances. Overall, this research has an impact on future learning in English language learning by developing cognitive strategies that can be used in learning as a development tool to increase the effectiveness of learning and learning independence.

Keywords: cognitive strategies, English language learning, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), EFL students.

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly globalized world, English proficiency has become indispensable for success in education, business, and international communication (English, 2024). Despite its compulsory status in Indonesia, a significant gap persists in English proficiency among university students, with Indonesia ranking 80th out of 113 countries. This challenge stems from limited opportunities for students to explore diverse learning styles, reliance on traditional teaching methods, and insufficient awareness of effective learning strategies. Addressing this, the Indonesian government's new curriculum emphasizes mastering basic English skills through cognitive strategies to enhance global competitiveness.

English language mastery encompasses four core skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing) and three fundamental components (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation), all dynamically interconnected. For future English educators at FKIP UNISMA, understanding these interconnections is vital for both personal proficiency and pedagogical development.

Cognitive strategies are mental techniques learners employ to understand, process, and retain linguistic information (Oxford, 2016). Proven strategies like note-taking, repetition, and elaboration significantly improve English skills. However, students often face obstacles such as limited vocabulary, low self-confidence, and communication difficulties. This study aims to identify the most frequently used cognitive strategies among FKIP UNISMA students and explore their integration into the learning process.

While extensive research exists on cognitive learning strategies (Oxford, 1990), a systematic review reveals limitations, particularly the predominance of quantitative methodologies and a neglect of psychological constructs like self-efficacy (Bandura & Walters, 1977; Warouw & Neman, 2024). This oversight has implications for teacher education, where linguistic competence and teaching assurance are crucial. Pre-service teachers at FKIP UNISMA often struggle to transfer cognitive strategies to teaching contexts, possibly due to psychological barriers and suboptimal technology integration.

This study addresses these gaps through an innovative mixed-methods design, combining quantitative surveys with phenomenological interviews. By focusing on pre-service teachers at FKIP UNISMA, this investigation will provide context-specific insights for teacher education and theoretical contributions to cognitive strategy development. The research outcomes are expected to inform language pedagogy, psychological support mechanisms, and technology integration frameworks, ultimately enhancing educational quality and preparing Indonesian students for success in the global market.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey approach to investigate the cognitive strategies utilized by 44 sixth-semester English Language Education students at FKIP UNISMA. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representativeness across various demographic and experiential backgrounds. The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire adapted from Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), specifically focusing on its 14 cognitive strategy items.

Data collection involved distributing the questionnaire, which used a 5-point Likert scale, to the selected students. The collected data were processed in two stages: first, calculating the overall percentage score for each respondent to determine their general strategy usage level, and second, analyzing individual items to identify the most frequently chosen strategies, presented through rankings.

For data analysis, quantitative descriptive statistical methods were applied. Responses were scored from 1 to 5 based on the Likert scale. Individual percentage scores were calculated, and the frequency of each strategy item was analyzed to determine the most commonly used strategies. The results were then interpreted to identify dominant learning strategies. Throughout the study, strict ethical protocols were observed. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants after a comprehensive explanation of the study's purpose and methodology. Anonymity was guaranteed, with all data processed to prevent individual identification. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that participation would not impact participants' academic grades, thereby maintaining the integrity of the study and fostering trust.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Cognitive strategies are frequently employed across all levels of English language learning. This study specifically investigates how advanced students utilize these strategies to enhance their English comprehension. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) served as the primary instrument, measuring students' understanding and application of various learning methods. While SILL encompasses multiple strategy groupings (e.g., Memory, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, Social), this research specifically focuses on identifying the prevalence and preferred sets of cognitive strategies among advanced learners. Analysis of cognitive strategy use, measured by the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) among 44 sixth-semester English Education students, revealed distinct proficiency levels: 27 participants (61.4%) were high proficiency users (employing strategies like note-taking, summarizing, deductive reasoning); 13 (29.5%) were moderate proficiency users (inconsistent use of repetition, translation); and 2 (4.5%) were low proficiency users (minimal engagement in active learning techniques). Analysis of the findings revealed the dominance of English conversational ability of 44 participants, which is in line with Oxford's, (1990) theory on the ease of adoption of language production-based cognitive strategies in active learning environments, supported by the habit of using language in class and the high level of student self-confidence.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the comprehensive analysis of data collected from 44 sixth-semester English Education students using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), this study concludes that a significant majority of respondents (61.4%, n=27) demonstrated high proficiency in employing cognitive learning strategies, consistently applying advanced techniques such as systematic note-taking and deductive reasoning. A substantial group of learners (29.5%, n=13) exhibited intermediate-level strategy use, characterized by inconsistency and occasional reliance on translation or irregular repetition. Conversely, a small but noteworthy minority (4.5%, n=2) displayed limited engagement with cognitive strategies, primarily showing passive learning behaviors with minimal evidence of structured approaches to language learning. Based on the study's findings and conclusions, several suggestions are proposed to improve English language teaching and learning. For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope to include multiple institutions and diverse academic levels for better generalization, investigate the complex interplay between strategy use and other critical variables like learner motivation and classroom environment, and adopt mixed-methods approaches for a more comprehensive understanding of cognitive strategy utilization. Practically, students are advised to develop cognitive awareness to regulate their strategy use, actively experiment with different

cognitive techniques to find optimal methods, and join peer learning groups to share and learn successful strategies, thereby fostering a more effective and adaptable learning process.

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