

THE STUDY OF LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS IN LEARNING ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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Abstract: The study aimed to investigate the grammar learning strategies frequently used by Indonesian EFL learners in general and grammar learning strategies frequently used by successful and less successful students in learning grammar. The research design of this study is a quantitative study in the form of comparative design. There were 70 students of the second years of English education department participate in this study, and they divided into successful and less successful categories by using the TOEFL structure test consisting of 15 multiple choices and 25 error analysis. Besides, 70 items of the GLSI questionnaire used to know the grammar learning strategies used by the students. The result of the study showed that EFL students used social strategies more frequently than the other strategies. Moreover, both successful and less successful students used the same grammar learning strategies while they were different in frequency use levels. It was also proved that there is no significant difference between successful and less successful EFL students in using grammar learning strategies.

Keywords: Learning Strategies, grammar, achievement

INTRODUCTION

Learning strategies are necessarily needed by the learners to achieve the target language. However, most of the learners are not aware of and understand what strategies they use. Learning strategies can help learners to comprehend the learning material properly. (Hakan et al., 2015) assumed that language learning strategies help learners to get materials and store them, which encourages and also speeds up the learning. (Oxford, 1990, p. 1) also described learning strategies as learners' measures in improving their learning. Lately, learning strategies that become the most popular issue in the education area is language learning strategies. Language learning strategies are tactics used to make the learners easier in learning a language. Oxford (Milla & Gutierrez-Mangado, 2019, p. 3) defined language learning strategies as learners' detail and fluid ideas and action with a

level of awareness in a particular context for their several characteristics adjustment.

In language learning, grammar has become one of the most complicated and essential components of language to be mastered in English language Learning. As stated by (Zhou, 2017) that the most challenging and complicated element in English Language Teaching for teachers and learners is grammar. He said that the teacher and the learners need to spend much time in teaching and learning English with the right use of grammar. Learners' understanding of grammar can support them to know how words arranged and can create meaningful and comprehensible sentences for the listener and writer. On the other hand, there some learners that have understood the grammar rules perfectly still cannot use the grammar in their real communication (Nagaratnam & Al-mekhlafi, 2011, p. 71). Therefore, grammar is not only about knowing the rules and theories; however, it truly important to practice directly. In order to achieve the target of learning English grammar, grammar learning strategies become one of the ways needed by the learners.

There are some early researchers conducted studies related to the grammar learning strategies use. The first study is conducted by (Al Abri et al., 2017), which showed that the learners use all of the strategies equally to different levels, and there are no differences in using grammar learning strategies between learners with high scores and learners with a low score in grammar. Moreover, learners with high proficiency used metacognitive more frequently than learners with low proficiency. The second study was conducted by (Zhou, 2017) about grammar learning strategy, and it was exposed that the learners often use cognitive strategies than metacognitive strategies and social-affective strategies to improve their grammar ability.

Moreover, the finding of this study indicated that there was no correlation between student's grammar learning strategies and their grammar achievement. Another study conducted by (Supakorn et al., 2018) showed that learners with high grammar achievement applied all categories of grammar learning strategies more frequently than learners with low grammar achievement. The study showed

that both the higher and the lower achievers most often apply the compensation strategy.

Azizmohammadi & Barjesteh (2020) also completed a study about grammar learning strategies used by different gender at the university level. The first finding of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between all of the grammar learning strategies with learners' grammar achievement. Besides, there was a significant difference between male and female learners' in learning strategies and grammar performance. A study toward the grammar learning strategy used by different gender of the university-level was also done by (Alsied et al., 2018). They found that Libyan EFL learners used all the strategies equally, and there was no significant difference in using grammar learning strategies between males and females.

In this case, the current researcher found some differences in early studies above. The first, second, and third studies were conducted to research about grammar learning strategies and grammar achievement of the senior high school learners in general. The subject of the first, second, and third studies were high school learners. On the other hand, in the fourth and fifth studies, the researchers completed the studies under the university level in which they focus the grammar learning strategies use and gender differences. Subsequently, the current researcher conducts a study under the university level with English department learners as participants. The study focuses on learners' grammar learning strategies and grammar proficiency in which grammar has become one part of a language and compulsory subjects that the EFL learners must learn to improve their language skills.

Based on the background of the study, the questions of the study can be formulated as follow:

1. What are the learning strategies frequently used in learning grammar by English education department learners at Universitas Islam Malang?
2. What are the learning strategies usually used by successful and less successful learners in learning grammar achievement in the English education department at Universitas Islam Malang?

3. Is there any significant difference in the frequency used between successful and less successful EFL learners in using grammar learning strategies?

The researcher has formulated a hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the frequency used between successful and less successful learners in the use of grammar learning strategies. This study aims to know the grammar learning strategies most frequently used by EFL learners. Moreover, it is also conducted to know the learning strategies used by the successful and less successful learners in learning grammar and to determine whether there is a significant difference in the frequency use of grammar learning strategies by successful and less successful EFL learners.

Grammar learning strategies has become one of the critical methods that will help the effective learning of a new language and processing the different characteristics (Zekrati, 2017, p. 131). Grammar learning strategies encourage learners to comprehend and master the English grammar knowledge. In other words, grammar learning strategies described as deliberate thoughts and acts that intentionally implemented by learners to learn and gain better control over the use of grammar structures Cohen and Pinilla Herrera (Pawlak, 2018, p. 353). Pawlak (2018) specifically categorized grammar learning strategies into four classifications: they are metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

Metacognitive strategies help learners in controlling and managing L2 grammar learning through the processes of preparation, establishing, observing, and self-assessing. Besides, (Pawlak, 2018) divided cognitive strategies into four subcategories. The first, GLSI used in communication tasks by helping grammar production and understanding. The second, GLSI used to improve the explicit grammar knowledge, including for deductive and inductive learning. The third, GLSI used to improve implicit grammar knowledge in comprehension and production of grammar. Moreover, GLSI also used to give corrective feedback on grammar production errors.

Affective strategies help the learners to regulate and motivate themselves in learning second/foreign language grammar. Moreover, it can be used to make the learners relax when dealing with the problems in grammar used. Social

strategies also needed by the learners in interaction with other people, such as teachers, classmates, proficient TL users, and parents, to develop their grammar learning processes. In this case, the learners can improve their ability to use grammar through conversation practice in peers or ask the teacher to help them in understanding specific grammar topics.

METHODOLOGY

The research used a quantitative approach in the form of a comparative research design. There were two variables in this study, including; learners' grammar learning strategies as an independent variable and grammar achievement as a dependent variable. The population of this study was the second year of English education department learners of Universitas Islam Malang. The researcher selected the sample of this study by using a cluster sampling method. Accordingly, the researcher took 70 participants of three classes.

The instruments used in this study were GLSI questionnaires by (Pawlak, 2018) and an English grammar test by using the TOEFL structure test. The GLSI questionnaires consist of 70 items including four categories of learning strategies: 8 metacognitive strategies, 50 cognitive strategies consist of 4 parts: they are ten items for GLS used in assisting the production and comprehension of grammar in communication, 24 items for GLS used to develop explicit knowledge of grammar, ten items for implicit knowledge of grammar, and six items for GLS used in dealing with corrective feedback on errors in the production of grammar. There were seven affective strategies and five social strategies. This questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale adopted from (Pawlak, 2018, p. 362) ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) to measure action, opinion or perception, and identify what the strategies used by learners in learning grammar are.

The researcher conducted an individual grammar test in which the learners were instructed to complete 40 questions of grammar consisted of 15 multiple choices and 25 error analyses adopted from the TOEFL test. The questions will be in the form of multiple-choice with four options for each question. The instrument was administered in an online way due to the COVID-19 in which

the English grammar test and grammar learning strategies inventory (GLSI) questionnaire was administrated to the learners by google form.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The data were analyzed and classified by using the SPSS 20 Statistical Program. Descriptive statistics used to measure standard deviation, mean, and sum in which to find out the grammar learning strategies frequently used. Besides, an independent T-test was used to measure the grammar learning strategies usually used by both successful and less successful learners and to measure the significant differences between successful and less successful learners and their grammar learning strategies.

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics of Grammar Learning Strategy and Achievement (N=70)

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar achievement	70	3654.0	52.200	20.8678
GLSI_D	70	257.8	3.683	.8140
GLSI_B4	70	256.3	3.661	.8080
GLSI_A	70	254.9	3.642	.7113
GLSI_B1	70	254.7	3.639	.6459
GLSI_B	70	246.4	3.520	.7082
GLSI_C	70	243.3	3.476	.6656
GLSI_B2	70	241.4	3.449	.6408
GLSI_B3	70	233.3	3.333	.7381
Valid N (listwise)	70			

Through the descriptive statistics of learners' grammar learning strategy, the researcher found the results in Table 4.1, which answered the first research question, "What are the learning strategies frequently used in learning grammar by English Department Learners of University of Islam Malang?" The result showed that all the English foreign learners at University level apply different extent s of all grammar learning strategies.

Besides, the result exposed that the GLSI_D as social-affective strategies ($M=3.683$) was the most frequently used, followed by the GLSI_B4 (cognitive strategies used to deal with corrective feedback on errors in the production of

grammar) ($M=3.661$), metacognitive strategies (GLSI_A) ($M=3.642$), GLSI_B1 (a cognitive strategy used to assist the production and comprehension of grammar in communication tasks) ($M=3.639$), GLSI_B (cognitive strategies) ($M=3.520$), GLSI_C (social strategies) ($M=3.476$), GLSI_B2 (cognitive strategies used to develop explicit knowledge of grammar) ($M=3.449$), and GLSI_B3 (cognitive strategies used to develop implicit knowledge of grammar) as the last rank ($M=3.333$). The researcher also used an independent T-test in the following data (Table 4.2 and Table 4.3) to answer the second research question "What are the learning strategies used by successful and less successful learners in learning grammar achievement in the English department of University of Islam Malang?"

Table 4.2. Grammar Learning Strategies Usually Used by Successful EFL Learners (N=35)

Rank	Strategies	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1	GLSI_D	35	3.775	.7650	.1352
2	GLSI_B4	35	3.706	.8515	.1505
3	GLSI_A	35	3.677	.6729	.1190
4	GLSI_B1	35	3.641	.5780	.1022
5	GLSI_B2	35	3.541	.7219	.1276
6	GLSI_B	35	3.481	.7417	.1311
7	GLSI_C	35	3.453	.6956	.1230
8	GLSI_B3	35	3.338	.8155	.1442

As indicated in Table 4.2 above, the grammar learning strategies used by successful learners ranked from the GLSI_D ($M=3.775$), which refers to social strategies as the most frequently used. While the least frequently used grammar learning strategy is GLSI_B3 (cognitive strategies used to develop implicit knowledge of grammar) ($M=3.338$).

Table 4.3. Grammar Learning Strategies Usually Used by Less Successful EFL Learners (N=35)

Rank	Strategies	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1	GLSI_B1	35	3.637	.7057	.1145
2	GLSI_B4	35	3.624	.7789	.1264
3	GLSI_A	35	3.612	.7498	.1216
4	GLSI_D	35	3.605	.8555	.1388
5	GLSI_C	35	3.495	.6481	.1051
6	GLSI_B	35	3.490	.6809	.1104
7	GLSI_B2	35	3.371	.5618	.0911
8	GLSI_B3	35	3.329	.6774	.1099

The data in Table 4.3 showed that less successful learners used all the grammar learning strategies as successful learners do. It also showed that GLSI_B1 (cognitive strategies used to assist the production and comprehension of grammar in communication tasks) become the first rank of grammar learning strategies usually used by the less successful EFL learners ($M=3.637$). Moreover, the GLSI_B3 ($M=3.329$) (cognitive strategies used to develop implicit knowledge of grammar) became the last rank of grammar learning strategies used by both successful and less successful EFL learners.

Table 4.4. Independent T-test Analysis of the Frequency Use of Grammar Learning Strategy among Successful and Less Successful Learners (N=70)

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
GLSI	Equal variances assumed	.009	.925	1.064	68	.291	.14829	.13938	-.12985 .42642
	Equal variances not assumed			1.064	67.729	.291	.14829	.13938	-.12987 .42644

The data in Table 4.4 showed that the sig. (2-tailed) of grammar learning strategies among successful and less successful learners was 0.291. It was proved that there was no significant difference in the frequency used between successful and less successful EFL learners in grammar learning strategy because of the sig. (2-tailed) > 0.05. It has answered the third research question and proved that the researcher hypothesis “there is a significant difference in the frequency use between successful and less successful learners in the use of grammar learning strategies” was rejected.

Discussion

The researcher found in this study that all of the second years' learners (successful and less successful) in the English education department of Universitas Islam Malang use all the grammar learning strategies in the different amounts in learning English grammar. There was no strategy was found to be "always" used by all of the learners. However, the most frequently used grammar learning strategies for overall learners is social strategies. It is proved that in mastering and understanding the grammar material, the learners need to associate with other people such as their classmates or teachers to solve the problems they face while the process of learning grammar. The learners can ask the teacher/lecturer to explain the grammar material they do not understand yet. Also, the learners asked to accept for every comment, suggestion, or correction given by the teacher/lecturer or more proficient learners in improving their grammar knowledge. Besides, they collaborated with their friends in practicing the grammar rules/ structures for mastering and applying in the real communication. It is in line with (Juniar & Carissa, 2020) that showed that social strategies were strategies used frequently by students in learning grammar in a similar context.

The finding of this study also indicated that grammar learning strategies usually used by successful and less successful learners are the same. They were only different in the order of the frequency used. The grammar learning strategies used by successful learners were sorted from the most frequently used is social strategies in which it has become an effective grammar learning strategies because it let the learners to ask about what grammar materials/rules they did not understand yet to the teacher or their classmates. In memorizing the grammar

knowledge, the learners need to practice the grammar rules in the communication with their friends or others. Therefore, they can use the grammar structures in the real communication tasks either in the spoken or written form. On the other hand, the finding of (Zhou, 2017) showed that social strategies become one of the least frequently use grammar learning strategies by the learners. This indicates that the students barely interact with teachers, peers, or grammar-learning friends. The social strategy based on the fact that the learners improve their grammatical knowledge through interacting with others. Special attention should be paid in teaching the social technique and improve the learners' interest in learning grammar. Learners need to learn how to collaborate with others in the learning process. In turn, learners also should be given an active, joyful, and fun atmosphere for communication tasks.

On the contrary, the cognitive strategies used to assist the production and comprehension of grammar in communication tasks became the most frequently used grammar learning strategies by less successful learners. It is proved that the less successful learners were more focused on how they use the grammar in communication. They learned the use of the right grammar rules for communication by trying to use the proper grammar clearly in communication such as in telling a story, etc. The less successful learners do more analyzing and comparing their grammar use with more proficient learners in correcting and developing their grammar knowledge. (Azizmohammadi & Barjesteh, 2020) mentioned that cognitive strategies deal with the knowledge obtained and the usage of the knowledge in improving the learning process. Cognitive strategies include careful steps made by language learners to process the information they collect, including making papers, applying resources, and creating and arranging information. In contrast, (Alsied et al., 2018) found that cognitive strategies reported to be the least often employed by the learners. Learners can get the greatest learning opportunity by cooperating with other more proficient learners, such as friends, seniors, and teachers to give the advantages of new concepts, learning experiences, and abilities.

Another finding of this study was there was no significant difference between successful and less successful learners in using grammar learning

strategies. It was proved by an independent T-test with sig. (2-tailed) 0,291 in which it was higher than 0.05. This exposed that all the EFL learners (successful and less successful) of the English education department at Universitas Islam Malang use metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies equally in different extents. This result in line with (Al Abri et al., 2017) that there was a significant difference among learners with high and low scores in using English grammar learning strategies. It was because the differences in the means of the three types of strategies for learning are not high. It also demonstrated that metacognitive strategies are the most frequently implemented categories of strategies by learners. Nevertheless, it has been observed that experienced students utilize meta-cognitive techniques more often than less informed students. This could occur because successful learners usually have more preparation, self-organization, and self-monitoring capabilities that help them for employing more meta-cognitive strategies.

These results have some implications for the English grammar subject at the university level. First, the subjects of this study were second-year learners of the English education department in which they had the same experiences and knowledge in the grammar course from the first semester. Second, the less successful learners are not truly aware of what learning strategies they need and appropriate with their ability in understanding grammar materials. The EFL learners need to understand well what learning strategies they need and are suitable for their interest in the learning process because it can help them in comprehending the learning material easily. The result of this study also showed that successful learners most frequently use social strategies.

This finding of this study gave new knowledge that social strategy was the most strategy frequently used by successful learners of the English education department of Universitas Islam Malang. Therefore, in learning something, the learners still need other people to achieve their learning goals such as teacher, classmate, etc. In this case, teachers have a role in learners' success in the learning process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The result of the study showed that social strategies become the most frequently use grammar learning strategies by all the EFL learners in the English education department of Universitas Islam Malang. The researcher also found that successful learners used the same grammar learning strategies as less successful learners. They were only different in the order of frequency use. It also proved that the hypothesis of the researcher was rejected because of the sig. (2-tailed) was 0.291 (> 0.05).

The researcher hopes that the teacher/lecturer can encourage and give opportunities for the learners to ask and discuss the grammar material or rules that they do not understand yet for improving the learner's awareness about the importance of social strategies (GLSI_D) use in comprehending and mastering the grammar knowledge. The social strategies (GLSI_D) can be a good recommendation for the EFL learners in which this strategy can encourage to have interaction with teachers, classmates, and the society in improving their grammar comprehension and practicing the use of grammar rules in the real communication.

It is suggested to the future researcher to conduct a further study under grammar learning strategies use and grammar proficiency. The researcher hopes that the future researcher will conduct a better study by an offline way in which the researcher can control the participants in filling the GLSI questionnaire and grammar test directly to know whether the learners do their work by themselves. Moreover, the future researcher can use the GLSI questionnaire by (Pawlak, 2018, p. 362) and other instruments to complete the study under grammar learning strategy uses and grammar proficiency.

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