

**A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON THE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES  
(LLSS) OF THE TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS AT MA DARUL HUDA  
BANYUWANGI**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Most of learners considered that English is difficult to learn. It is because the learners do not know what learning strategies they should use. The appropriate learning strategies help the learners to facilitate their learning to be easier, effective and enjoyable. This research aimed as investigating language learning strategies (LLSs) used by the learners. In this research, the researcher identified learners language learning strategies based on Oxford's classification which consist of six strategies, namely: Memory Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, Compensation Strategies, Meta-cognitive Strategies, Affective Strategies, and Social Strategies. The researcher used descriptive qualitative as the research design and the research subject was twelfth grade students at MA Darul Huda Banyuwangi. The researcher collected data by using Oxford's Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire from version 7.0. Adaptation was done to make items easier to be understood. The research result shows that the learners used almost all six strategies. The most frequently strategies used were Cognitive, Compensation, Meta-cognitive, Affective, and Social Strategies. On the other hand, Memory Strategies were seldom used by the learners. This researcher hoped that the learners are aware and able to apply all learning strategies to increase their English.*

**Keywords:** *English learning, Language Learning Strategies (LLSs), Oxford's Classification, Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL)*

**Introduction**

Language learning is the process of learner to know a language. The results of each process can be different depending on the learners. It means that although every

individual experiences through the same process but they can get different final results. It is because many factors influence the process such as internal and external factors. The internal factor comes from the inside of the individual learners like their intelligence and skill. The external factor comes from outside the learners such as their experience, teaching and learning strategy, social environment, learning facilities and teaching and learning methods. As a foreign language, English is still difficult to learn by learners. It is because they do not know what learning strategies they should use. According to Brown (2007:119) strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. The appropriate strategy in learning is a tool for learners which help them to make their learning easier, more effective and enjoyable. In addition, Chamot in Brown (2007:132) states broadly strategies as procedures that facilitate a learning task.

In learning, every individual has different strategies. A learner who is capable of using a wide variety of language learning strategies (LLSs) appropriately can improve his language skills in a better way. Many factors affect the choice of LLSs, as states by Oxford (1990:13) factors influence the choice of strategies used among learners language learning are degree of awareness, stage of learning, task requirements, teacher's expectations, age, sex, nationality or ethnicity, general learning style, personality traits, motivation level, and purpose for learning the language. All of factors above will influence kinds of language learning strategies itself. Radwan (2011:130) carried out a research entitled "The Effect of L2 Proficiency and Gender on Choice of Language Learning Strategies". He investigates the use of LLSs of 128 learners at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in Oman. The result shows that the learners use meta-cognitive strategies significantly more than any other categories of strategy.

The researchers classify LLSs in many types such as states by Oxford (1990:14) that LLSs is divided into two major categories, direct and indirect strategies. Direct learning strategy consists of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies whereas indirect strategy consists of meta-cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Besides that, O'Malley et al. in Brown (2007:134-135) divides learning strategies into three main categories those are Meta-cognitive, Cognitive and Socioaffective.

The identification of LLSs can be done in many ways. These include self reports through interviews, written diaries and journals, observe the student's behavior through class observation, think aloud protocol and many others. Some of researchers like Brown give instrument to identify learning strategies by a self check questionnaire with a self help guide for English language learners. Peterson in Chamot (2004:16) states that student learning diaries have also been used to collect data about pronunciation strategies. That is related with statement of Rubin in Chamot (2004:16), he suggests using diaries for instructional purposes as a way to help learners develop meta-cognitive awareness of their own learning strategies. Moreover, Oxford also gives other instrument which is called Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL), a questionnaire with Likert scale in which in each part represents types of learning strategies itself.

Basically, each learner uses different specific strategy in gaining ability especially in learning English and absorbs new information. However, the problem is that they do not know about learning strategy which they used. We can imagine when the learners do not know what strategies have to be used, of course the learners will be difficult to follow the lesson and passive because they cannot manage their own learning and will be difficult to improve it. It also will be a problem for learners to develop their language learning ability especially in English. Not only the learners but also the teachers sometimes do not understand the learning strategy which is used by the student. The teachers cannot identify the learning strategies which are used by their student because they do not have adequate information about it. The lack information about the learning strategy will make the teachers more difficult to understand what the student favorite kinds of class activities or what purpose of their learning and select the appropriate method in teaching especially in teaching English. .

Concerning with the phenomenon, the researcher was interested to conduct a research that relates to student's learning strategy. The researcher wants to help the learners identify their learning strategy and help them to manage their own learning. Thus, the research entitled "A Descriptive Study on The Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) of the Twelfth Grade Learners at MA Darul Huda Banyuwangi" has been conducted.

## **Language Learning Strategies (LLSs)**

Sometimes we learn about something but we do not realize it. We do not know how we can learn but from learning process all of it can be answered. For example in learning English, everyone can understand this language but sometimes we find that some non native speakers can use it very well. It can be happened in our beyond believe. This case shows us how the people can learn every subject very well and how the others have problems in their learning. So that, the researcher try to find the solutions to help the learners solve their problem in learning. During the time, many researchers have begun to investigate about the language learning strategies itself.

Chamot in Radwan (2011:118) defines that LLSs as the conscious thoughts and actions that learner take in order to achieve a learning goal. In line with this, O'Malley and Chamot in Zare (2012:163) also states that LLSs as special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information. In other word, LLSs as a special ways of processing information that improve comprehension, learning, or retention of the information. On the other hand, Wenden in Khan (2012:142) also says that learning strategies are the various operations that learners use in order to make sense of their learning.

In additon, Oxford (1990:8) states that LLSs is a specific action taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. As stated by Oxford (1990:9) there are 12 features of learning strategies namely:

1. Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence
2. Allow learners to become more self directed
3. Expand the role of teachers
4. Are problem-oriented
5. Are specific actions taken by the learner
6. Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive
7. Support learning both directly and indirectly
8. Are not always observable
9. Are often conscious
10. Can be taught
11. Are flexible
12. Are influenced by a variety of factors

Rigney and Rubin in Khan (2012:142), identify LLSs as behaviors, steps, or techniques that learners apply to facilitate their learning. On the other hand, Rubin as cited by Silvia (2010:5) also identify characteristics of the LLSs :

1. Language learning strategies refer to specific actions or techniques. They are not characteristics that describe a learners' general approach.
2. Some of these actions will be observable and other will not observable.
3. Language learning strategies are problem oriented. Learners utilize them to facilitate the acquisition, storage, or retrieval or use information.
4. Language learning strategies could be consciously employed, but for some learning problems they are automated.
5. Language learning strategies are behaviors that are amenable to change.

### **The Definition of SILL**

Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) is a standardize measurement with Likert scale version for learners of a variety of languages, and as such can be used to collect and analyze information about large numbers of languages. According to Setiyadi (2006:58) Likert scale is a scale used to gather the ordinal data by questionnaire in general way. Oxford develops SILL which is a useful instrument designed to test ESL /EFL learner's strategy use. SILL has two versions namely 5.1 and 7.0 version which for 5.1 version consist of 80 items that represent 6 strategies with part A (15 items) for Memory strategies, part B (25 items) for Cognitive strategies, part C (8 items) for Compensation strategies, part D (16 items) for Meta-cognitive strategies, part E (7 items) for Affective strategies and part F (9 items) for Social strategies. The 7.0 version consist of 50-items and in each part represents types of learning strategies. The 50-items include 6 parts whereas part A (9 items) for Memory strategies, part B (14 items) for Cognitive strategies, part C (6 items) for Compensation strategies, part D (9 items) for Meta-cognitive strategies, part E (6 items) for Affective strategies and part F (6 items) for Social strategies.

The learners respond to each strategy item using a scale of 1 up to 5 in which 1 represent never or almost never true of me means rarely or never used, 2 represent usually not true of me, 3 means somewhat true of me, 4 represent usually true of me, and 5 means always used or almost always true of me. SILL also gives the following

key to help interpret what averages means in terms of the learner's strategy used: 3.5 to 5.0 means high use, 2.5 to 3.4 means medium uses, and 1.0 to 2.4 means low uses.

As cited by Sheu et al. (2013:135) SILL is acknowledged as being the most consistent with learner's strategy use and is widely adopted for its high reliability and validity. On the other hand, Chamot also suggests that teachers could see SILL to obtain a more comprehensive picture of learner's learning strategies.

SILL has been used extensively to collect data on large numbers of mostly foreign language learners. In many cases SILL is used by many researchers to identify learner's LLSs and had been translated in many languages likes Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and many others. For example a research which used SILL as instrument to know about understanding EFL learners' strategy and strategy awareness of Korean student.

### **Research Methodology**

In this research, the researcher collected data through of questionnaire. In the beginning, the researcher delivered the background questionnaire to the learners and asked to fill it. Afterwards, the researcher gave explanation about of SILL and how to fill this questionnaire.

The researcher gave coding to each type of strategies. It is done to simplify the writing and analyzing the data. In this research, each strategy was given different in coding. In direct learning strategies, Memory Strategies simplified to be MEM, Cognitive Strategies be COG and Compensation Strategies be COMP. On the other hand, in Indirect learning strategies, Meta-cognitive Strategies be MET, Affective Strategies be simplified AFF and Social Strategies be SOC.

The result from questionnaire was interpreted by the descriptive statistic. Hence, the result was answered the research problem. The result and interpretation was presented in the following chapter.

This research used purposive method to determine the study area. This method is chosen because the researcher has purpose to know about LLSs used by the learners. As stated by Arikunto (2006:139) that purposive method is used to choose a research area based on the certain purpose, not strata or area. In this research, the researcher chose MA Darul Huda Banyuwangi as the area to conduct research. The reason why the researcher chose this school because there is a possibility for the researcher to get permission to

conduct the research at that school and there is no similar research conducted in this school.

Respondent determination method means that person who involves as the subject of study. In this research, the subject of study is the learners who are in the twelfth grade of MA Darul Huda. In this research, the researcher used population sample because in this school there is only one class on the twelfth grade which consist of 18 students.

### **Research Result and Discussion**

The researcher has conducted research about LLS in MA Darul Huda especially for twelfth grade by using SILL questionnaire. Before the questionnaire was given, the researcher also tried out the questionnaire on 22 July 2013 in that school. It was given to check the learners' understanding of the statements in SILL questionnaire which might be many words were unfamiliar for them.

SILL questionnaire was given to the learners on 18 September 2013. The learners finished this questionnaire in about 60 minutes. In the beginning, the researcher gave explanation about of SILL and how to do the questionnaire. After that, the researcher spread the background questionnaire and explained how to fill it. Then, the researcher asked the learners to fill SILL questionnaire. The learners were permitted to ask question related with questionnaire items.

This questionnaire was divided into six sections which in each part were given coding by the researcher to simplify the writing and analyzing the data. The coding were "MEM" for Memory strategies, "COG" for Cognitive strategies, "COMP" for Compensation strategies, "MET" for Meta-cognitive strategies, "AFF" for Affective strategies and "SOC" for Social strategies. Meanwhile, the researcher also used coding for "MEM 1" represented "I related new words to my previous knowledge" up to "SOC 50" represented "I try to learn English culture". The mode of each strategy and the mode of strategies used were calculated by the researcher to know what strategy almost used in this class.

**Table 3. The Result of SILL Questionnaire**

Memory strategies		Cognitive strategies		Compensation strategies		Meta-cognitive strategies		Affective strategies		Social strategies	
Cod e	Mod e	Code	Mod e	Code	Mod e	Cod e	Mod e	Cod e	Mod e	Cod e	Mod e
ME M 1	2	COG1 0	4	COM P 24	3	ME T 30	3	AFF 39	3	SOC 45	5
ME M 2	2	COG1 1	3	COM P 25	3	ME T 31	5	AFF 40	4	SOC 46	3
ME M 3	1	COG1 2	3	COM P 26	1	ME T 32	5	AFF 41	1	SOC 47	3
ME M 4	4	COG1 3	5	COM P 27	4	ME T 33	5	AFF 42	5	SOC 48	5
ME M 5	5	COG1 4	1	COM P 28	1	ME T 34	1	AFF 43	3	SOC 49	3
ME M 6	1	COG1 5	5	COM P 29	3	ME T 35	3	AFF 44	3	SOC 50	1
ME M 7	2	COG1 6	1			ME T 36	1				
ME M 8	2	COG1 7	3			ME T 37	3				
ME M 9	2	COG1 8	1			ME T 38	3				
		COG1 9	3								
		COG2 0	1								
		COG2 1	3								
		COG2 2	1								
		COG2 3	3								

		3									
Mode of part MEM	2	Mode of part COG	3	Mode of part COM P	3	Mode of part MET	3	Mode of part AFF	3	Mode of part SOC	3

Based on the table above, the frequently used strategy in Memory strategies was MEM 5 (“To remember new words, I sing it”). Meanwhile, the least strategy used were MEM 3 (“I use pictures to remember new English words”) and MEM 6 (“To remember new words, I use flashcards”).

The most frequently used strategy in Cognitive strategies was COG 13 (“I use English words I know in various sentence”) and COG 15 (“I watch English TV programs or watching English movies”). The opposite of it, the least strategy used were COG 14 (“I like to start conversations with my friends/teacher in English”), COG 16 (“I read comics/ novels/ stories/ magazines in English”), COG 18 (“I read generally first, then read carefully an English text”), COG 20 (“I try to find English sentence pattern”) and COG 22 (“I try not to translate word-for-word”).

On Compensation strategies, the most frequently used strategy was COMP 27 (“When reading English text, I’m not looking at every new word”). On the other hand, COMP 26 (“If I can’t find the right English word, I make it up”) and COMP 28 (“When I have a conversation, I try to guess what the other person will say in English”) were never used by the learners. It can be seen on the table.

In Meta-cognitive strategies, MET 31 (“I realize my English mistakes and that makes me become better”), MET 32 (“I pay attention when someone is speaking English”), and MET 33 (“I try to find out how to be a better learner of English”) were the most frequently strategy used by the learners than all strategies. It was different from MET 34 (“I plan my schedule so I have enough time to learn English”) and MET 36 (“I try to read English text as much as possible”) which strategies were never used by the learners.

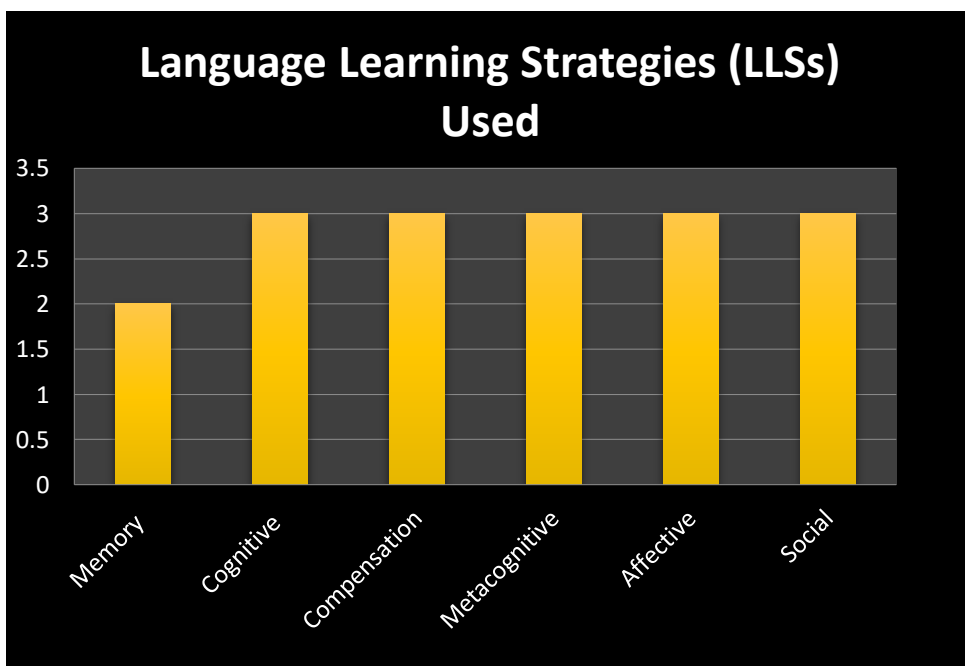
Later on, there was a strategy which was always used by the learners in Affective strategies. The most frequently used strategy was AFF 42 (“I realize if I am nervous in

using English”). The strategy least used (never used) by the learners was AFF 41 (“I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English”).

Lastly, SOC 45 (“If I do not understand what people say in English, I ask them to speak more slowly or repeat once more”) and SOC 48 (“I ask English speaker to help me”) which strategies were frequently used by the learners. The other result was shown in this strategy which SOC 50 (“I try to learn English culture”) was strategies which least used by the learners.

The result of SILL questionnaire was presented on chart to describe the proportion of each strategy used by the learners. It has purpose to make the data easier to be understood. Besides that the researcher also tried to describe the proportion of LLSs used through another data (see appendix 14). The data showed that the percentage of each strategy which was used by the learners.

The chart of SILL result is presented as follows:



The SILL’s result had been defined before and showed that the learners applied all six types of strategy in their English learning. Each of strategy has different proportion in its usage. The result showed that Memory strategies were seldom used by the learners. It means that other strategies likes “Produced new language through practicing and analyzing” (Cognitive strategies), “Used language to overcome any limitations and gaps in their linguistic” (Compensation strategies), “Controlled their own learning through monitoring their language used (Meta-cognitive strategies), “Controlled their moods

(Affective strategies), and “Interacted with other” (Social strategies) were more frequently used than “Remembering and storing new English words” (Memory strategies). The learners preferred to guess the meaning of new words than remembering their meaning one by one. Meanwhile, there was a strategy in Memory strategies which were always used by almost all the learners that was that MEM 5 (“To remember new words, I sing it”). This strategy was felt more fun and enjoyable for them in learning English. So, almost all learners used this strategy in learning English especially for Memory strategies. The other strategy which was least used in Memory strategies were MEM 3 (“I use pictures to remember new English words”) and MEM 6 (“To remember new words, I use flashcards”). It means that the learners never used pictures or flash cards to store their new English words.

The different result was shown by Cognitive strategies. In these strategies, the learners were familiar with strategies such as COG 13 (“I use English words I know in various sentence”) and COG 15 (“I watch English TV programs or watching English movies”). Those strategies were preferred because those strategies can give the learners more exposure of English. Besides that, learning English through watching English movies or English TV program was a different alternative strategy as compared with the formal English lesson at school. The learners can get English knowledge through fun learning. It was contradictory with strategies which were never used by learners in Cognitive strategies. Their limited ability in English made them unconfidence when they have to start conversation first with their friends or teacher. Meanwhile, strategy in COG 16 (“I read comics/novels/stories/magazines in English”) was also never used by learners as their strategy in learning English. They have reason that opening dictionary while reading to translate difficult words in that comic or magazines was so difficult for them. It was supported by COG 22 (“I try not to translate word for word”) means that the learners never translated a text word for word. Besides that, the other result found that the learners never read a text by scanning or skimming in same time. It can be shown through strategy in COG 18 (“I read generally first, then read carefully an English text”) which was never used by the learners. The other fact in the field was found by the researcher that grammar is the most difficult lesson for the learners. They just received what the teacher gave without exploring more to make that lesson easier and understandable for them. They admitted that finding English sentence pattern to

make their learning easier especially in grammar was strategy which was never used by the learners.

In Compensation strategies, COMP 27 (“When reading English text, I’m not looking at every new word”) was strategy often used by the learners. The learners always used skimming technique in reading. Meanwhile, the limited vocabulary also made the learners never used strategy in COMP 26 (“If I can’t find the right English word, I make it up”). The lack vocabulary limited them to convey their meaning in other sentence. So, the limitation in vocabulary gave big problem which impact all their English aspects.

Dealing with Meta-cognitive strategies, almost all of learners admitted that they realized their English mistakes and tried to find how to be a better learner. It means that the learners knew that their English limitation did not make them despondent. The learners always train to explore more their ability in English to be better learner than before through paying attention when someone spoke English. It was one of a strategy which was always used by the learners to increase their ability in English. It was contradictory with two strategies least used “I plan my schedule so I have enough time to learn English” and “I try to read English text as much as possible”. In this case, it was known that the role of teacher was much needed to encourage learners’ motivation in learning English. So, the learners were able to frequently use both of strategies which could improve their English ability.

In Affective strategies, the learners always tried to overcome their fright of using English and managed their emotion by being calm down. It is a good strategy to produce positive energy which aroused self confidence when using English. Meanwhile, the other strategy to arouse self confidence likes giving a reward or treats themselves when doing well in English was never done by learners. This strategy was never done because they did not have custom to give themselves reward. Although in fact it was a good strategy to motivate them in learning English.

Lastly in Social strategies, the strategy which always done by the learners was “Asked the people to speak more slowly or repeat once more”. This strategy was usually done by the learners to avoid misunderstanding or make conversation clearly. Other favorite strategy of the most learners was “Asked English speaker to help their English problem”. They usually asked their English teacher or someone who was capable in English to solve their problem in English. They considered this strategy was

needed to minimize their mistakes in learning English. Meanwhile, the other result showed that the learners never tried to learn English culture. Although they learned the language but it did not make them interested in learning about the culture.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the result and discussion in the previous chapter, it could be concluded that generally the learners used all six type of strategies namely Memory strategies, Cognitive Strategies, Compensation Strategies, Meta-cognitive Strategies, Affective Strategies, and Social Strategies. However, each of strategies had different proportion in used. In this class, Memory Strategies was seldom used than all strategies. The learners sometimes used Cognitive Strategies, Compensation Strategies, Meta-cognitive Strategies, Affective Strategies, and Social Strategies as their strategies in learning English.

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