STRATEGIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH OF THE NON ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the English language learning strategies employed by students of the PG-PAUD (Early Childhood Teacher Education) Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University—students who are not from an English education background. A quantitative descriptive method was used, involving a total population of 163 students from the 4th and 6th semesters who had completed English courses. Data were collected using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 by Oxford (1990), which categorizes strategies into memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social. The findings revealed that the most frequently used strategies were metacognitive, memory, and affective, indicating strong internal motivation, reflection, and emotional regulation. Meanwhile, cognitive, compensation, and social strategies were moderately applied. The results suggest that PG-PAUD students predominantly rely on internal, self-directed strategies to learn English, while social interaction and adaptive communication strategies are less frequently employed. These findings contribute to the understanding of English learning among non-English majors and highlight the importance of promoting balanced strategy use in language instruction

Keywords: English learning strategies, non-English majors, SILL, metacognitive strategies.

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language has been used in various aspects such as education, technology, business, and communication in a global scope. English has become a global lingua franca that strengthens cross-cultural communication, supports international collaboration, and expands access to knowledge and economic opportunities worldwide (Wy & Kurniawan, 2024). In the field of Education, English is not only a means of communication, but also plays an important role as the main medium in international learning, global curriculum development, and increasing student readiness to face global challenges (Haryadi & Aminuddin, 2023). In the world of work, as Rido (2020) reported, both final year students and employers in Indonesia emphasize the importance of mastering English skills in professional contexts, including job interviews, corporate training, presentations, and communication with international parties. The four main skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—are considered important in supporting performance in a global work environment. Good English skills can not only increase the chances of being accepted for work, but are also very much needed in professional communication in multinational companies (Perdani, 2023).

In the Indonesian educational context, English is a compulsory subject for the secondary school students. At the university level, English is also a subject that students have to enroll. For instance, at Sriwijaya University, which is one of the state universities in Indonesia. In addition, students often have difficulty distinguishing words that do not exist in Indonesian from words that have similar sounds or pronunciations (Subandowo, 2017). Lack of understanding of the discussion topic is also an obstacle, making students unable to convey ideas clearly and concisely (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). In addition, anxiety and fear of failure further worsen students' speaking skills (Dansieh et al., 2021). The combination of these factors shows that mastery of English- speaking skills requires special attention in the learning process so that students can be more confident and able to speak fluently. Therefore, identifying effective media and strategies is essential for language learners to improve their English-speaking skills. Various language learning tools and media can be used to support English-speaking mastery. In particular, media that focuses on speaking in the realm of language learning applications plays a major role in improving speaking proficiency (Wagner et al., 2024). Indonesia, English is the subject that the students of non-English Education Study Programs have to study. In non-English study programs, English subject is given because it is considered important to support personality development, professional communication skills, and student readiness in facing the demands of globalization and the international work world (Haryanto et al., 2021).

However, for non-English majors student, learning English is a challenge. According to Yu and Abdullah (2024) who investigated how environmental conditions—such as social support and learning quality—influence the enthusiasm of students who are left behind in learning English listening skills.by involving 428 students from eight vocational schools in China, highlighted the lack of intrinsic motivation to learn English as one of the main challenges faced by students in learning English and this was exacerbated by minimal exposure and environmental support. They further state that the situation of students who were not in an environment that encouraged the active use of English can cause their ability to develop English to tend to stagnate. Anxiety in speaking English is also a major obstacle for non-English students, as Suparlan (2021) reported, many students MTs. Darul Ishlah Ireng Lauk, Lombok Barat, feel embarrassed, afraid of making mistakes, and afraid of being judged by others when speaking English, this causes them to avoid situations where they have to use English. Next, a common problem faced by students from a junior high school in Bandung in learning English is limited vocabulary which has implications for their difficulty in understanding English learning materials (Kulsum et al., 2025). Furthermore, teachers' use of teaching methods that do not consider the needs of students was reported as a challenge for students (Solihah et al., 2023). Limited access to interactive learning media such as educational videos, speaking or listening practice applications, and online platforms designed for English learning that can make the learning process boring and less effective was also reported as the challenge in learning English by the students' of the Faculty of Business, Brawijaya University (Muttaqin et al., 2021).

Knowing the strategies in learning English is important for the non-English majoring students. Language Learning Strategies (LLS) are defined as actions or techniques that are consciously used by learners to facilitate, improve, and organize the language learning process. Oxford (1990, p. 8) describes LLS as "specific actions taken by learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more independent, more effective, and more easily transferred to new situations." In other words, LLS allows students to take an active role in their own learning process. According to Namaziandos et al. (2020), LLS is a conscious process that helps learners

become more effective in foreign language learning and has a significant impact on their achievement. The use of structured LLS can improve language skills and form an independent learning attitude (Ezzaidi, 2020).

There have been previous studies that investigated students' strategies in learning English. For example, it was reported that EFL students applied strategies such as reading online comics, memorizing vocabulary, reading English articles or essays, listening to podcasts, telling stories in English, increasing self-confidence, and memorizing verb forms, while non-EFL students used strategies to follow English activity programs, do English exercises, and get used to English (Suryanto & Sari, 2020). Non-English major students use various learning strategies, especially cognitive and metacognitive strategies; they tend to learn independently and use technology and everyday experiences as learning media (Taufik, 2023). Non-EFL students also tend to rely on strategies related to emotional management and social interaction in English language learning, while more cognitive and metacognitive strategies are used less (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Furthermore, non-English majors who are successful in learning English tend to use compensatory, metacognitive, and cognitive learning strategies intensively. Their success is influenced by their level of motivation, appropriate learning style, and higher English proficiency (Saputri et al., 2024) .

The previous studies (Suryanto &Sari, 2020; Taufik, 2023) show that students face similar challenges, such as limited vocabulary, grammar difficulties, and low speaking and listening skills. In addition, they also adopt various learning strategies, ranging from the use of technology, self-directed learning, to involvement in English-language programs. This present study also focuses on the strategies applied by non-English majors students in learning English. However, this study sees that from the perspectives of the students of PG-PAUD (*Pendidikan Guru-Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*) or Early Childhood Education Study Program within Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University. At this study program, English serves as a compulsory subject for the students. The English subject, Bahasa Inggris Anak usia Dini (AUD) in semester 1, which is offered at the first semester, is a course that focuses on how to teach English to Early Childhood. *Bahasa Inggris* is the English subject offered at the fourth semester and focuses on basic English such as grammar, speaking, writing, and reading."

This present study offers a significant novelty in the field of English language learning strategies by addressing a gap in existing research specifically, by exploring insights from students who are not enrolled in an English education study program. Focusing on students of the PG-PAUD Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University, the study aims to uncover the specific English learning strategies they employ.

METHOD

This study applied a quantitative research design to identify and describe the English learning strategies used by PG-PAUD students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Sriwijaya, who are not from an English education background. A total population sampling technique was used, involving all 163 students from the 4th and 6th semesters who had taken English courses, making them eligible participants. Data were collected using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 by Oxford (1990), which was distributed in Bahasa Indonesia, adapted from Wahyuningsih et al. (2023). The SILL questionnaire includes 50 items categorized into six groups of strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The SILL is a ready-made standardized instrument that has been widely used in various studies across different contexts and populations.

The validity and reliability of the SILL instrument have been extensively tested in prior studies. Oxford (1990) reported that the instrument showed high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.85 to 0.98, depending on the group of strategies being measured. Moreover, its construct validity has been confirmed through multiple studies involving both English major and non-English major students, ensuring that the instrument accurately measures language learning strategies. Because this study used a ready-made, previously validated instrument, no additional validation process was conducted for this sample. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to determine the frequency and preference of strategy use. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always), with the results interpreted based on Oxford's frequency scale: low (1.0–2.4), medium (2.5–3.4), and high (3.5–5.0). This approach allowed the researcher to measure dominant patterns and draw conclusions about which English learning strategies were most and least commonly used by non-English major students. The chosen methodology ensured objectivity, reliability, and comprehensive data representation, offering meaningful insights into how future early childhood educators approach learning English as part of their academic development.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study employed a population and sampling technique. Out of a total population of 163 students who met the inclusion criteria, only 146 returned fully completed questionnaires that were valid for analysis.

Below are the mean scores and standard deviations for each type of English learning strategy used by the students?

Table 1. Result of Frequency Analysis of each Category

No	Strategy	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Memory Strategy	4,00	0,85
2.	Cognitive Strategy	3,00	0,89
3.	Compensation Strategy	3,00	0,89
4.	Metacognitive Strategy	4,00	0,80
5.	Affective Strategy	4,00	1,00
6.	Social Strategy	3,00	0,99

As presented in Table 1. , in general, students' responses fall within a mean score of 4, which indicates 'often', and 3, which indicates 'sometimes'. Furthermore, the analysis was conducted to examine the responses for each item within each strategy category.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Memory Strategy Items

No	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
	A. Memory Strategies		
1.	"I think about the relationship between things I already know and new things I learn in English"	**4,00**	**0.79**
2.	"I use new words in sentences so I can remember them."	**4,00**	**0.86**
3.	"I associate the sound of a new English word with an image or illustration."	**3,00**	**0.86**
4.	"I remember new English words by imagining the situations in which they might be used. "	**4,00**	**0.80**
5.	"I use rhymes to remember new English words."	**3,00**	**0.90**
6.	"I use flashcards to remember new vocabulary."	**3,00**	**0.96**
7.	I physically act out new words.	**4,00**	**0.79**
8.	I frequently review my English lessons.	**3,00**	**0.75**
9.	"I remember the location of words or phrases in books, on the board, or on signs to help me recall them."	**4,00**	**0.79**

Based on the table above, the most frequently used Memory Strategies by students include connecting new information with prior knowledge, using new words in sentences, imagining situations in which words might be used, and physically acting out words, all of which have a mean score of 4. Meanwhile, strategies such as using rhymes, flashcards, and recalling word locations tend to be used at a moderate level, with a mean score of 3. In terms of standard deviation, most strategies range between 0.75 and 0.96, indicating a moderate to high level of variation in students' responses.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Cognitive Strategy Items

No	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
	B. Cognitive Strategies		
1.	I say or write new English words several times	**4,00**	**0.79**
2.	I try to speak like native English speakers.	**4,00**	**0.83**
3.	I practice English pronunciation.	**4,00**	**0.74**
4.	I use English words I know in different ways.	**4,00**	**0.80**
5.	I initiate conversations in English.	**3,00**	**0.90**
6.	I watch TV shows or movies in English.	**3,00**	**0.89**

7.	I read for pleasure in English.	3,00	0.90
8.	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	3,00	0.96
9.	I skim first, then read more carefully.	3,00	0.91
10.	I look for Indonesian words similar to new English words.	3,00	0.88
11.	I try to find patterns in English.	3,00	0.88
12.	I find the meaning of a word by dividing it into parts I understand.	4,00	0.80
13.	I try not to translate word by word.	3,00	0.88
14.	I make summaries of information I hear or read in English	3,00	0.94

As presented in Table 3. , the average use of Cognitive Strategies falls within a mean score of 4, indicating the category of "often," and 3, indicating "sometimes." This suggests that students are fairly active in consistently applying certain cognitive strategies. In terms of standard deviation, the values range from 0.74 to 0.96, indicating a moderate to high variation in the use of these strategies among students.

C. Compensation Strategies

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Metacognitive Strategy Items

1.	To understand new English words, I guess their meaning.	3,00	0.78
2.	When I can't remember a word while speaking, I use gestures.	4,00	0.83
3.	I make up new words if I don't know the correct English ones.	3,00	0.96
4.	I read English without looking up every new word.	3,00	0.91
5.	I try to guess what others will say in English.	3,00	0.81

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6.	If I don't know an English word, I use a synonym or another phrase with a similar meaning.	**3,00**	**0.93**

As shown in Table 4. , most Compensation Strategies were used by students at a moderate level, with a mean score of 3 ("sometimes"). Only one strategy was used more frequently using gestures when forgetting a word, which had a mean score of 4. In terms of standard deviation, the values range from 0.78 to 0.96, indicating a moderate to high degree of variation in the application of these strategies among students.

D. Metacognitive Strategies

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Metacognitive Strategy Items

1.	I try to find many ways to use my English.	**4**	**0.76**
2.	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to improve.	**4**	**0.76**
3.	I pay attention when someone speaks English..	**4**	**0.71**
4.	I look for ways to become a better English learner.	**4**	**0.74**
5.	I plan my schedule so I have enough time to study English.	**3**	**0.82**
6.	I look for people I can speak English with.	**3**	**0.88**
7.	I seek opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	**3**	**0.77**
8.	I have clear goals to improve my English skills.	**4**	**0.80**
9.	I think about my progress in learning English.	**4**	**0.78**

Table 5. indicates that the majority of students actively used Metacognitive Strategies in learning English. This is reflected in the mean score of 4, particularly in items related to noticing mistakes, setting goals, reflecting on learning progress, and seeking various ways to improve their skills. However, some strategies were only used at a moderate level, with a mean score of 3. The standard deviation, which ranges from 0.71 to 0.88, suggests that the application of these strategies was relatively consistent among students, although individual differences in frequency of use still exist.

E. Affective Strategies

Table 6. Statistics Descriptive of Affective Strategy Items

1.	"I try to relax when I'm afraid of using English"	**4,00**	**0.81**
2.	"I encourage myself to speak English even when I'm afraid of making mistakes."	**4,00**	**0.73**
3.	"I notice if I am tense or nervous when learning or using English."	**3,00**	**1.00**

4.	"I write my feelings in a language learning diary."	**4,00**	**0.91**
5.	I try to guess what others will say in English.	**3,00**	**1.11**

Table 6. shows that the use of Affective Strategies by students was relatively active, with mean scores of 3 and 4. In terms of standard deviation, the range is fairly high, between 0.73 and 1.11, indicating a considerable variation in the use of affective strategies among students, particularly those that involve personal or emotional aspects.

E. Social Strategies

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Social Strategy Items

1.	"If I don't understand something in English, I ask the person to repeat it or speak more slowly."	**4,00**	**0.80**
2.	"I ask English speakers to correct me when I make mistakes."	**3,00**	**0.78**
3.	"I practice English with other students"	**3,00**	**0.94**
4.	"I ask for help from English speakers."	**3,00**	**1.00**
5.	"I ask questions in English."	**3,00**	**1.08**
6.	"I try to learn about the culture of native English speakers."	**3,00**	**1.08**

Table 7. shows that the use of Social Strategies by students was generally at a moderate level, with a mean score of 3, except for one strategy—asking the speaker to repeat or slow down when something is not understood—which had a mean score of 4, indicating more frequent use. The standard deviation ranged from 0.78 to 1.08, reflecting a considerable variation in the use of social strategies, especially those involving direct interaction and cross-cultural understanding.

Discussions

Based on the data analysis, it was found that PG-PAUD students applied all types of English learning strategies as classified by Oxford (1990), namely memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The variation in the strategies used indicates that the students did not rely on a single approach but instead combined multiple strategies to support their understanding and English language skills development

The most frequently used strategies by the students were metacognitive, memory, and affective strategies. The use of metacognitive strategies was evident in the high mean scores for items such as "I set goals to improve my English skills" (mean = 4.00) and "I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better" (mean = 4.00). This indicates that students demonstrate a high level of learning awareness, are capable of planning their own learning process independently, and engage in reflection on their learning progress. These findings are in line with the studies X by Loviani et al. (2024) and Habók et al. (2022), which showed that metacognitive strategies significantly contribute to the development of language competence among university students. This pattern is further supported by Liu Xiaog-hong (2007), who found that strategy use evolves with increased English proficiency and motivation over college years (Liu, 2007).

Memory strategies were also widely used, as reflected in techniques such as associating new words with personal experiences or situations (mean = 4.00), using words in sentences (mean

= 4.00), and imagining the context in which words might be used (mean = 4.00). These results suggest that students tend to recall information through contextual and visual methods, which are typical of memory strategies. This finding is consistent with the study by Suryanto and Sari (2020), who revealed that non-English major students often rely on memory strategies to overcome vocabulary limitations. This aligns with a recent study showing that non-English majors often struggle with vocabulary memorization and retention due to limited English exposure, and benefit from contextual strategies (Wang, Ge, & Tang, 2023). Another study found that learners use dictionary and monitoring strategies more effectively if they are already high achievers (Shan, 2018).

Affective strategies were also significantly employed, as seen in items like "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English" (mean = 4.00) and "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistakes" (mean = 4.00). These strategies reflect students' efforts to regulate their emotions and maintain motivation throughout the learning process. This supports the findings of Adan and Hashim (2021), who emphasized the importance of emotional regulation in second language learning. Zhang (2008) also noted that learners from arts and sports majors tend to prefer cognitive and affective strategies over social ones (Zhang, 2008).

Cognitive, compensation, and social strategies were used at a moderate level. For instance, in the cognitive category, students often "say or write new English words several times" (mean = 4.00) and "try to speak like native speakers" (mean = 4.00). However, other items such as "reading for pleasure in English" and "writing notes or messages in English" only scored a mean of 3.00, indicating that these activities were done occasionally. This suggests that student engagement in productive language practice is selective and not evenly distributed across all language skills. Tang (2010) found similar results among freshmen, with input skills like listening and reading being used more than output skills like speaking and writing (Tang, 2010). Compensation strategies—such as using gestures or synonyms—are often underused due to lack of instruction. Lu (2015) emphasized that students need formal training to use strategies effectively (Lu, 2015). This pattern of variation in cognitive strategy use also aligns with the findings of Li (2023), who observed that students' use of strategies can differ depending on the specific language skill being targeted and their personal learning preferences.

Compensation strategies were also used moderately. One notable item was the use of gestures when students forget a word (mean = 4.00). However, other strategies such as guessing word meaning from context or using synonyms scored a mean of 3.00. This implies that while students are aware of how to compensate for their linguistic limitations, they have not yet fully developed alternative communication methods. This supports the findings of Ibrahim et al. (2023), who observed that compensation strategies are commonly used by non-English major students when facing language barriers.

Social strategies were the least frequently used. Although the item "I ask people to repeat or slow down when I don't understand" received a relatively high mean score (mean = 4.00), other items such as "asking questions in English," "practicing with other students," and "learning about English-speaking cultures" only scored around 3.00. This indicates that students still face challenges in engaging in social interaction using English. The limited use of social strategies may be due to the lack of an environment that supports active English use, as also highlighted by (Yu & Abdullah, 2024), who reported that low environmental exposure poses a major obstacle in foreign language learning. Furthermore, non-English major students rarely develop spoken and social strategies unless they are supported by structured opportunities such as English corners,

public speaking events, and interactive extracurricular programs, as found in a study by (Zheng et al., 2015). Similarly, (Chen Xin, 2007) emphasized that without strategy-based instruction and a learning environment that fosters communication, students tend to underuse social strategies and lack initiative in interacting in English. These findings suggest that improving the use of social strategies among PG-PAUD students will require more than individual motivation—it will also demand intentional classroom practices, teacher guidance, and immersive social learning settings where students are encouraged and supported to engage in authentic English communication.

In conclusion, PG-PAUD students employ all categories of English language learning strategies, with a stronger tendency toward metacognitive, memory, and affective strategies. These dominant strategies reflect a learning orientation that is self-regulated, reflective, and focused on internal management. Meanwhile, the moderate use of compensation and social strategies indicates a need for further development of interaction-based and adaptive communication strategies. These findings not only reinforce previous research but also provide new insights into the learning strategies of non-English major students, particularly in the context of early childhood education, which has its own unique learning characteristics.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study investigated the English learning strategies used by students of the PG-PAUD Study Program at Sriwijaya University. Based on the analysis, it was found that students applied all six categories of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) by Oxford (1990), including memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Among these, the most frequently used were metacognitive, memory, and affective strategies, indicating strong internal motivation and self-awareness in learning. Students showed the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning, manage emotions, and remember vocabulary through meaningful associations."

Meanwhile, cognitive, compensation, and social strategies were used at a moderate level, suggesting occasional engagement in practice, communication, and alternative learning methods. These findings reflect that PG-PAUD students rely more on internal and reflective strategies rather than interactive or externally driven ones. This supports prior research that shows non-English majors tend to use strategies that suit their learning environment, emotional readiness, and language exposure.

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