THE DIFFERENCES ON THE GRAMMAR LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BASED ON THE STUDENTS' GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Learning grammar is an essential thing in learning new language and a strategy in learning grammar is needed to cope with it. The research aimed to investigate the grammar learning strategy that was used by English students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu based on the gender. A quantitative reseach design was carried out to collect and analyse the data. The participants were 37 male and 96 female English students who studied at the English education study program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. The data were collected by using questionnaire and they were analysed quantitatively. The result revealed that there was the difference strategy used by male and female students in learning grammar. The male students tended to use the Cognitive strategy meanwhile the female students preferred to use the social strategies. Based on the result, it was concluded that the English students seemed to choose the grammar learning strategy based on their interest to enhance their grammatical competency.

Keywords: Grammar learning strategies, gender perspective, cognitive strategy

INTRODUCTION

Grammar plays an important role in learning English language. It is defined as a set of rules that control how sentences are constructed in a language (Ameliani, 2019). Nuraini (2020) argued that grammar is one of English components that students should master. It can influence the students in improving their English skills (Xiao, 2019). The lack of grammatical understanding can be the obstacle for the students to communicate and express their ideas in written and spoken (Yunita, 2014; Go et al., 2019). Thus, the ability to use grammar correctly and appropriately is essential in learning English.

Although grammar is important, leaning grammar is not an easy matter. The students face some difficulties in learning grammar (Ameliani, 2019). Furthermore, Bandivilai and

Cullen (in Diana et al., 2021) interpreted students' problems in learning grammatical structures; students cannot make sentence and understand the meaning of the sentences correctly. Moreover, they are afraid of making mistakes when they speak. These problems can affect the students` self-confidence when they want to improve their English skill. Therefore, the strategies are required by the students in order to fulfil their goal of learning English grammar.

Regarding some grammar learning issues mentioned above, grammar learning strategies are proposed. Grammar learning strategy assists the English students to study new language effectively (Zekrati, 2017). According to Pawlak (2018) there are four categories of grammar learning strategies. First is Metacognitive strategy. The use of metacognitive strategies enables students to assess their individual grammar learning style and manage the learning process. Through the processes of planning, organizing, monitoring, and self-evaluation, these strategies can assist the students in controlling, regulating. Second is Cognitive strategy. The Cognitive strategies act directly on incoming information, modifying it in ways that improve learning. Third is Affective strategy. The Affective strategies are classified into three categories: reducing anxiety, encouraging yourself, and assessing your emotional temperature. The Affective aspects may become one of the most important factors influencing students' success or failure. Last is social strategy. The Social strategies involve the cooperation or interaction with the teacher, other students with the goal of enhancing the process of learning grammar. As a result, grammar learning strategies are used to help the students to comprehend the knowledge of English grammar.

Numerous research related to the grammar learning strategies had been conducted. Alsied et al. (2018) studied that the grammar learning strategies used by Libyan EFL undergraduate students at the English Department of Sebha University and explored the most frequently used strategies. The result revealed that Libyan EFL students used different types of grammar learning strategies and the most frequent used strategies were memory strategies. Furthermore, Syakhrin (2021) explored the grammar learning strategies used by the students during the pandemic Covid 19. The research discovered that the English students prioritize in using Metacognitive strategy in learning English grammar during the pandemic.

The previous studies had researched the grammar learning strategy that was frequently used by the English students. However, the grammar learning strategies used by the English students based on the students` gender have not discussed yet. Therefore, this research was conducted to identify the grammar learning strategies used by the English students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu based on the students` gender.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research adopts a quantitative research method to investigate and analyze the disparities in grammar learning strategies employed by students, with a specific focus on gender differences. This design aims to contribute valuable insights into the preferences and tendencies of male and female students in utilizing various strategies for learning English grammar.

The study is conducted within the context of the English education study program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu during the academic year 2020/2021. By selecting this specific population, the research aims to explore the grammar learning strategies employed by students pursuing an English education degree, providing insights that may be particularly relevant to individuals immersed in language learning and teaching.

The chosen research method is quantitative, indicating a systematic and structured approach to collecting and analyzing numerical data. This method allows for the examination of patterns, frequencies, and statistical relationships within the dataset, facilitating a more objective understanding of the research question.

Population and Sample

The population under investigation comprises the entire body of students enrolled in the English education study program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu during the specified academic year. The sample selected for the study consists of 133 English students, with a breakdown of 37 males and 96 females. This sample size is strategically chosen to provide a representative snapshot of the larger population, enabling the researchers to draw meaningful conclusions about the grammar learning strategies employed by both male and female students.

Instruments

The instrument in this research was questionnaire adopted from Pawlak (2018) which is called Grammar Learning Strategy Inventory (GLSI). The questionnaire comprised of four strategies in learning grammar; Metacognitive strategies, Cognitive strategies, Affective strategies, and Social strategies. Furthermore, the instruments used the Indonesian language to avoid misinterpretation of the statements and it was answered by rating on a five point Likert scale range.

Procedures

This study employed a systematic data collection procedure, utilizing a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. This procedure was chosen for its efficiency in reaching a wide audience and collecting responses in a standardized manner.

1. Questionnaire Development

   The first step in the data collection process involved the careful development of a comprehensive questionnaire. The questionnaire would likely include items related to various grammar learning strategies, categorized based on the popular frameworks such as Metacognitive, Cognitive, Affective, and Social strategies. Each strategy might be further broken down into specific activities or behaviors associated with language learning.

2. Google Forms Distribution

   Once the questionnaire was finalized, it was transformed into a Google Form. This digital platform allows for easy distribution, accessibility, and automatic data collection. The link to the Google Form was shared with the English students of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. This process could be executed through various communication channels, such as university email, social media groups, or course-specific platforms.

3. Accessibility and Participation

   To enhance accessibility and encourage participation, the researchers might have provided clear instructions along with the link to the Google Form. These instructions could have included information on the purpose of the research, assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, and an explanation of how the collected data would contribute to the study's objectives. Additionally, a timeframe for completing the questionnaire might have been communicated to create a sense of urgency and to facilitate timely data collection.

4. Data Submission

   Respondents, comprised of English students from Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu, would have accessed the Google Form and completed the questionnaire at their convenience. The digital nature of Google Forms ensures that responses are automatically recorded and stored securely.

5. Data Verification and Acceptance:

   Upon the completion of the data collection period, the researchers would have accessed their active email account to retrieve the collected responses. Before proceeding with data analysis, a verification process may have been implemented to ensure the

completeness and accuracy of the data. Any incomplete or inconsistent responses might have been addressed through follow-up communication with participants.

6. Data Analysis

    The accepted data would then be subjected to quantitative analysis. This process involves organizing, summarizing, and interpreting the numerical information collected from the questionnaire responses. Descriptive statistics may have been used to examine the mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions of the grammar learning strategies for both male and female students.

7. Ethical Considerations

    Throughout this entire procedure, ethical considerations would have been paramount. Researchers would have assured participants of the confidentiality of their responses, obtained informed consent, and adhered to ethical guidelines governing research involving human subjects.

In conclusion, the meticulous procedure of distributing a questionnaire through Google Forms to collect data from English students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu ensures a standardized and efficient approach to studying the differences in grammar learning strategies based on students' gender perspectives. The digital nature of this procedure not only streamlines data collection but also facilitates the secure and timely retrieval of responses for subsequent analysis.

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively. Analyzing the quantitative data should be begun by converting the raw data into numeric form, which means by scoring all of the data that has been collected (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this research, all questionnaire responses that were received in active *Email* account were tabulated and calculated into mean score to find out the differences of grammar learning strategies that were used by English students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu based on gender.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Based on the collected and analyzed data, the research found the differences of grammar learning strategies used by the English students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu based on the gender. The result of the questionnaire is presented in the following table.

Table 1. The GLS Based on the students' Gender

Gender	GLS	Total	Mean	Category (Interpretation)
Male	Metacognitive strategies	1108	3,74	High (Often used)
	Cognitive strategies	7212	**3,90**	High (Often used)
	Affective strategies	1006	3,88	High (Often used)
	Social strategies	692	3,74	High (Often used)
Female	Metacognitive strategies	2822	3,67	High (Often used)
	Cognitive strategies	18126	3,78	High (Often used)
	Affective strategies	2534	3,77	High (Often used)
	Social strategies	1859	**3,87**	High (Often used)

The comprehensive analysis of Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) based on students' gender provides valuable insights into the distinctive patterns of strategy utilization among male and female students. The data, presented in the table, showcases the frequency and mean scores for each category of GLS, shedding light on the preferences and tendencies within each gender group.

For male students, the predominant strategy in learning grammar is the Cognitive strategy, as evidenced by the notably high mean score of 3.90. This signifies that male students frequently employ cognitive processes, such as comprehension, analysis, and application, in their grammar learning endeavors. The Affective strategy follows closely as the second most utilized strategy, indicating a heightened awareness of emotional and motivational aspects in the learning process. Metacognitive strategies, though slightly lower in mean score, still fall within the "high" category, emphasizing their significance in the male students' approach to grammar learning. Interestingly, the Social strategy, while the lowest mean score among the categories, is still considered "high," denoting its regular usage by male students.

Conversely, the data for female students reveals a distinctive pattern. The Social strategy takes precedence with a robust mean score of 3.87, positioning it as the most frequently employed strategy in learning grammar among female students. This highlights their inclination towards collaborative and interactive approaches, reflecting a preference for group learning and cooperative activities. The Cognitive strategy, although the second in ranking, still boasts a high mean score, reinforcing its significance in the female students' repertoire of learning strategies. Affective strategies, closely following the Cognitive strategy, indicate a strong consideration of emotional factors in the learning process. Notably, Metacognitive strategies, while having the lowest mean score among the categories, are still deemed "high," indicating their regular application by female students.

These findings underscore the gender-specific nuances in grammar learning preferences. Male students exhibit a heightened reliance on cognitive processes, emphasizing comprehension and analysis, while female students favor a more social and interactive

approach, placing a premium on collaborative learning experiences. The high mean scores across all categories for both genders indicate a general inclination towards employing multiple strategies, suggesting a multifaceted and adaptive approach to grammar learning.

Understanding these gender-based variations in strategy utilization is pivotal for educators and curriculum developers. Tailoring instructional methods to accommodate both cognitive and social learning preferences can enhance engagement and effectiveness in grammar instruction. Moreover, recognizing the consistent use of a variety of strategies by both male and female students reinforces the importance of promoting a well-rounded and versatile approach to grammar learning. These insights can inform pedagogical practices and contribute to the development of inclusive language education strategies that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of students based on their gender.

Discussion

The result of the analyzed data showed that the male and female students had different grammar learning strategies using. The male students' preferred to use the Cognitive strategy. It is probably because of the Cognitive Strategy allowed them to comprehend and develop new grammar items by changing grammar structure to make sense of them. According to Oxford (1990), the Cognitive strategies are highly useful for understanding and recalling new information-important function in the process of becoming competent in using the new language. This result was consistent with the previous study conducted by Nuraini (2020) which found that the Cognitive strategies helped students to understand the language material by reasoning, analyzing, note taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, and reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas about the grammatical knowledge. As a result, the male students selected the Cognitive strategy to enhance their grammar ability through doing some activities such as identifying, observing, comprehending, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and practicing the sources that could be related to the grammar learning improvement.

This result was in accordance with some studies had been conducted. Cognitive strategy in learning English grammar as perceived by English students was believed as a beneficial strategy to cope with the learning grammar objectives. As Nakachi (2021) revealed that cognitive strategy was the most commonly utilized strategy that was used by the students to improve the language proficiency test result. Indeed, Vi et al. (2022) confirmed that it was the most frequently used strategy in learning English and it is more effective than other strategies.

On the other hand, the female students chose the social strategy to be used in learning grammar. It could be due to the fact that female students like to interact with other students in

achieving English grammar. Social strategy involves cooperation or interaction with the teachers or other students to enhance the process of learning grammar (Pawlak, 2018). This result was consistent with the previous study conducted by Putra & Sibuea (2015) which found that female students more interested in finding information and learning grammar in the form of a learning community that prioritizes cooperation and mutual need for each other in developing language skills, both oral and written.

Furthermore, Oo (2018) also revealed that the female students chose the social strategy in learning English grammar. The strategy allowed them to receive correction and feedbacks as a form of transferring knowledge from the teachers and other students. Therefore, the female students do an interaction to the teacher and other students as an attempt to improve their better understanding toward the grammar material given. Moreover, Kadir et al. (2020) discovered that EFL students at Islamic University of Malang frequently applied social strategy than other type of strategies.

To sum up, English students need to identify their preferences of grammar learning strategy to be practiced. Indeed, understanding the preferred learning strategies set the focus in planning and striving the grammar learning objectives. In addition, a suitable grammar learning strategies will boost the good mood while studying in which this affects the learning achievement.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, the influence of gender as an individual trait on language learning strategies has been illuminated by the findings of the current study. A notable divergence in the approaches adopted by male and female students in learning grammar was evident, with male students gravitating towards the Cognitive strategy and female students opting for the Social strategy.

The male students' inclination towards the Cognitive strategy underscores their preference for actively engaging with grammar materials through processes such as comprehension and development of new grammar items. This cognitive approach involves restructuring grammar to enhance understanding, as evidenced by activities such as identification, observation, comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and practice. These findings align with established cognitive theories and prior studies, affirming the efficacy of Cognitive strategies in bolstering grammatical knowledge.

Conversely, the female students' choice of the Social strategy suggests a predilection for collaborative learning environments. Seeking interaction with other students, they employ strategies involving cooperation and engagement with teachers and peers. This preference resonates with studies emphasizing the role of social interaction in language learning,

underlining the importance of communication and mutual support within a learning community.

The overarching conclusion drawn from this study is that English students tend to select grammar learning strategies based on their individual interests. This nuanced approach suggests that acknowledging and accommodating diverse learning preferences is crucial in educational settings. However, it is essential to recognize the potential benefits of employing a variety of strategies. Recommending to students the exploration of diverse strategies and cultivating an awareness of their effective utilization can be instrumental in enhancing grammatical competency.

Encouraging students to diversify their learning strategies ensures a comprehensive and adaptive approach to grammar acquisition. By recognizing the multifaceted nature of language learning, students can harness the strengths of both cognitive and social strategies, thereby optimizing their learning experiences. This not only contributes to individualized and effective learning but also fosters a dynamic and inclusive educational environment.

In light of these conclusions, educators and language learning practitioners are urged to promote a balanced and versatile approach to grammar instruction. Acknowledging the nuanced interplay between individual preferences and effective learning methodologies, educators can guide students towards a holistic understanding of language acquisition. By fostering an awareness of various strategies and their applications, students are empowered to navigate the complexities of English grammar with confidence, ultimately enriching their linguistic competence and academic success.

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