

## PAPUAN EFL LEARNERS' STRATEGIES IN ACQUIRING ENGLISH

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### Abstract

This article aims at identifying Language Learning Strategies (LLS) used by Papuan EFL Learners in acquiring English. This research adopted a quantitative research design by adapting the strategies in learning and acquiring English as EFL Learners. The instrument used was questionnaire as data source which is adopted from Min et al (2021). The research was conducted at English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong West-Papua Indonesia. The participants were selected by using total sampling that the researchers took all Papuan EFL learners. The result showed that the participants used various learning strategies to acquire English. They use Metacognitive strategies as the first rank that helps them in acquiring English. Participants tend to use self-plan and self-monitoring in regulating their own cognition toward their learning process. However, it followed by affective strategies in the second rank. The third strategies were social strategies. The participants used cognitive strategies in fourth rank and followed by memory strategies. The last learning strategies used by participants were cognitive strategies. These findings underline the vital role of metacognitive strategies in successful language acquisition for Papuan EFL learners. The study significantly contributes to the EFL education field by offering a unique insight into the learning strategies of a previously understudied learner group. The findings carry crucial implications for educators and policymakers, informing pedagogical approaches, and guiding effective resource allocation for this demographic. Further research is encouraged to expand on these findings and explore their application in other EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** acquiring; English; EFL learners; learning strategies

### INTRODUCTION

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) have emerged as a key component in facilitating and helping pupils acquire a second or foreign language. As stated by Oxford (2003) Learning strategies have emerged as a key element that assists students in effectively learning a second or foreign language. Wael, Asnur, and Ibrahim (2018) stated as learners at higher education levels sometimes may not feel secure when communicating in English inside or outside the classroom, regardless of they are from the department of language learning. In other words, students are EFL learners do not guarantee that they can use English to communicate inside or outside the classroom.

Hashim et al (2018) It has been suggested that learners need to understand their own learning styles and strategies so they can determine which methods work best for them. Over time, these methods can become habits, helping them develop into effective language learners. As stated by Aresta, et al. (2021) The beginning of learning is the first stage to set the learning process. However, learning strategies can also be considered as the aspect and critical idea which are used by the students to help them in assisting and affecting their learning process (Wael, Asnur, and Ibrahim, 2018) according to Loganathan, Zafar, & Khan (2016) proposed that learning strategies are described as the approach for reaching a specific target typically during the use of a language.

Moreover, Human language abilities may be increased in two ways: acquisition and learning. Acquisition is the process by which a language is learned without conscious effort (unknowingly), typically in an informal, social setting, including the needs of communication, and having social repercussions (community or neighborhood). With learning, that will change significantly. The students need to facilitate and take their own ways of learning as their strategies to obtain the goals of the learning (Wael et al. 2023). Learning is the planned, systematic, systematic process of acquiring a language, with competency as a main goal, that occurs in the classroom, related to educational expectations and knowledge. This crucial challenge of learning not only focus on knowledge transfer, but also how the knowledge could be applied successfully in daily life (Rusdi, Suhermanto, & Ali, 2022).

Teachers should have a deeper understanding of linguistic education approaches around imperative to better support learners and encourage acquiring independence. (Lee, 2010). The human capacity to generate awareness and comprehend the speech of others in order to deduce the meaning of communications is closely linked to language learning. Furthermore, a youngster can make speech or speech if he understands the rules learned from infancy. (Soenjono, 2010). In addition, Krashen (1982) The human capacity to generate awareness and comprehend the speech of others in order to deduce the meaning of communications is closely linked to language learning. Furthermore, a youngster can make speech or speech if he understands the rules learned from infancy.

In acquiring English, students should have own knowledge schemes inside directive to find the effective technique. The procedure of linguistic acquirement, which is the nature of language learning, is governed by intrinsic experiences of human beings (Brown, 2000). In other words, discovering a new etymological is a innate process. As stated by Macoro (2006) there is a lot of interest in the learning mechanisms employed by persons who speak an additional etymological. The finding of educational institutions is the main problem that the students can be facilitated to have deep understanding and development of critical thinking on learning strategies (Maftuh, 2023).

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) are the goals of learning which can be built by the learners in order to set their learning by themselves. Learning methods are physical and cognitive processes that happen organically. Griffiths (2008) Effective language learning techniques involve both mental and physical actions that are purposefully chosen and consistently applied to achieve language learning goals. According to Rubin (1975) Language learning styles are mirrored by the way people learn. In other words, language learning strategies are a method of stimulating pupils' drive to study.

The studies under Learning Strategies had been written by many Indonesian researchers and it can be found in many publications or publishing journal. Among these studies, there were some researchers did in the same field. Learning strategies give students with new methods for interactions by using different ways of learning (Lai et al. 2023). Sartika et al. (2019) The report concentrated on the highly commonly operated methods through both effective and ineffective primary high school learners, detailing their strategies. It involved 40 participants, with 20 effective students and 20 ineffective learners. Moreover, the study managed by Lestari and Fatimah (2020) investigate the EFL learners' Language Learning Strategies (LLS) inside learning English. This analysis used descriptive quantitative approach. The participants were involved in this study was 82 international EFL students. SILL consists of 50 statements which have six categories as well as Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social. The studies were in line with this study which conducted by the researchers. The investigation is going to concentrate on the learning strategies used by Papuan EFL students in acquiring English.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) plays an imperative role in learning process. However, the idea of acquiring strategies was proposed by Chamot (2005) stated that strategies quite generally as “regarding handling facilities as a learning assignment, they are often goal-driven and mindful.” (p. 112). It could be said that gathering approaches are the solution used for the learners to overcome the problem in teaching and learning process. As stated by Herrera et al. (2011) stated, “We encouraged educators to develop their own methods for evaluating their classrooms at every stage and utilizing student biographies as a lens to comprehend course design, execution, and evaluation.” (p. 10).

The domain of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) has remained the issue of extensive research, yet it remains marked by a significant debate. The disagreement over what constitutes LLS is at the center of the discussion, as pointed out by Oxford (1993). Such disagreements extend to the types of LLS – whether they are flexible, algorithmic, or heuristic – as introduced by Dansereau (1985) and even the nature of the learning process itself, deliberating on conscious versus unconscious methods (Bialystok, 1985; Cohen, 1998). Dansereau (1985) further opined that learning strategies might differ based on the scope of the task they target, as well as the extent to which they specialize for particular tasks. Adding to this perspective, Donato and McCormick (1994) noted that LLS are most effectively employed when selected in pursuit of specific goals.

However, a prevailing challenge for researchers in this domain is achieving a compromise on the description and grouping of LLS. With hundreds of recognized LLS, attempts to define or organize them invariably lead to diverse outcomes. Oxford (1993) highlighted the complications of comparing research findings when clear agreements on LLS descriptions are absent. Echoing this sentiment, Gu (1996) commented on the challenges researchers face in neatly sorting LLS into established categorization schemes. Yet, in a notable effort, Oxford (1993) proposed a comprehensive classification, dividing LLS hooked on six major types: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies. Each of these approaches serves a distinctive purpose in the language learning process, ranging from aiding memory and cognition to facilitating social interactions and regulating emotions (Oxford, 1990).

Reflecting on the historical context of LLS research, Rubin's (1975) Rubin's major piece, "What the 'Good Language Learner' Can Teach Us," is very noteworthy. Rubin's work had an important influence in creating the notion of "the good language learner distinct research entity." a sentiment echoed by Harlow (1988). Such groundbreaking studies led Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers to posit that LLS could be a principal factor, if not the defining one, distinguishing effective language learners from their peers. Encouragingly, subsequent correlational studies have supported the significance of LLS, revealing a robust association among strategic LLS selection, its procedure, and positive gathering results. This correlation underscores the continued relevance and importance of LLS research. Findings from the studying Strategies in native language directive project, a comprehensive three-year study, further confirmed that all foreign language students, irrespective of their learning success levels, exhibit some degree of rational mechanism over their learning endeavors (Chamot & Kupper, 1989).

Although several research work address Learners Learning Strategies (LLS) in ESL, but still there is a lack of comprehensive understanding about the full range of learning strategies employed by EFL learners in different cultural and geographical contexts, and the effectiveness of these strategies in facilitating English language acquisition. Min et al.'s (2021) this study offers valuable insights into the preferred learning strategies of Year 5 principal school students in countryside regions of Southern Malaysia, highlighting memory

approaches as the greatest privileged and affective approaches as the least used. However, it remains unclear whether these findings are broadly applicable to EFL learners in other regions, or specific to the sampled population. Moreover, despite the emphasis on memory strategies, the role and effectiveness of other strategies, such as cognitive, metacognitive, social, and compensatory strategies, remains less explored and understood.

This study would bridge the existing research gap by focusing on a varied kind of learning strategies utilized by EFL learners in Southern Malaysia. It could undertake a comprehensive examination of each strategy category (including those less explored like cognitive, metacognitive, and compensatory strategies), assessing their prevalence and effectiveness in facilitating English language acquisition. By doing so, this study would provide to a more holistic supportive part of acquiring plans in English linguistic acquisition among EFL learners. The findings would inform pedagogical approaches, allowing educators to tailor their teaching methods to the specific learning strategies that are most effective for their student population. In addition, they could guide policy decisions regarding resource allocation and curriculum design in the field of EFL education.

## **METHOD**

The goal of the research is to examine the most common Language Learning Strategies (LLS) that Papuan EFL learners use in the process of acquiring English. As quantitative research, the data were collected through survey questionnaire. In this research, the researchers collected preliminary data to obtain comprehensive data. The questionnaire were used as the primary instrument. The major purpose is to investigate language learning techniques in gaining English by Papuan EFL learners at English Language Education in Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong, Indonesia. The study identifies several learning techniques, including memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensatory methods, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. This research aims to riposte the chase examine question: What types of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) perform Papuan EFL learners utilize most frequently in their process of acquiring English?

This research was conducted at English Language Education faculty of teacher training and education in Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong, Indonesia. The samples were taken from all Papuan EFL Learners. The participants were selected by using total sampling technique which is 34 Papuan EFL Learners. The questionnaire or survey has long been employed as the major method of LLS investigative investigation (Gu, 1996). The data for this research was collected using a traditional survey method, specifically formulated to discern the English learning methodologies used by Papuan EFL students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong. This survey, adopted from Min et al (2021), was modelled after the approach array of Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (2003). It was structured into six principal categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies, each corresponding to a unique learning strategy.

Each category contained a number of items or statements, to which participants responded with 'Yes', 'Maybe', or 'No', indicating their frequency of use of each strategy. The responses were then quantified into percentages for ease of data interpretation. The survey responses provided a comprehensive data set to analyze the varied strategies adopted by Papuan EFL learners in their English acquisition journey. This approach facilitated the identification of the most and least preferred strategies within each category, contributing to a broader understanding of the learning preferences and needs of these learners.

A systematic and thorough data analysis procedure ensured that the research findings were both reliable and meaningful, providing valuable insights into the language learning strategies of Papuan EFL learners.

The data analysis technique for this research was carried out as follows:

**Data Cleaning:** The first step involved cleaning the data. This step included checking for any missing responses, incorrect entries, and outliers in the data collected from the survey.

**Data Coding:** Each response on the survey was coded for analysis. 'Yes' responses were assigned a numerical value (for example, 1), 'Maybe' responses a different value (for example, 2), and 'No' responses another value (for example, 3). This numeric transformation of data facilitated statistical analysis.

**Descriptive Statistics:** Next, descriptive statistics were computed for each item within the six strategy categories. This included calculating percentages of 'Yes', 'Maybe', and 'No' responses for each statement, to determine the most and least often utilized language learning techniques among participants.

**Comparative Analysis:** The frequencies were then compared across all six types of language learning methodologies. This enabled the researchers to determine the general preference patterns of Papuan EFL learners for several types of techniques (memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, emotive, and social).

**Interpretation of Results:** Finally, the findings were clarified and discussed in light of the research objectives. This entailed examining the possible significance of the analysis for language instruction and acquisition techniques in the unique context of Papuan EFL learners.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research would explore concerning language learning strategies in acquiring English by Papuan EFL learners. The strategies would cover memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, emotional, and social strategies. The data description will explain in the next part.

Table 1. Memory Strategies

No	Items	Yes (1) (%)	Maybe (2) (%)	No (3) (%)
1	I reflect on how my prior knowledge connects with the currently things I learn in English.	79.41	14.70	05.88
2	I employ new English words in sentences so that I can remember them.	50.00	35.29	14.70
3	To help me remember a new English word, I associate the word's sound with a picture of it.	55.88	38.23	05.88
4	To memorize a new English term, I mentally envisage a circumstance when it may be utilized.	38.23	41.17	20.58
5	I utilize rhymes to recall new English words.	50.00	23.52	26.47
6	Flashcards help me recall current English terms.	38.23	14.70	47.05
7	I physically demonstrate new English words.	38.21	32.35	29.41
8	Frequently, I go over my English programs.	52.9	41.17	05.88
9	I remember new English words or phrases by associating them with their locations on paper, the board, or road signs.	38.24	50.00	11.76

Approximately half of Papuan EFL learners favor option 1, according to table 1 is 79.41 %. Participants concentrate on the link between their prior knowledge and the newly acquired knowledge they get, particularly in English, and use memory techniques for learning. The next most commonly used item by Papuan EFL learners is item 3, with 55.88% response rate. Participants connect the sound of a new word to its visual representation to aid in memorization. In contrast, the least favored memory strategy is item 7, which has 38.21% response rate, where participants rarely act out new English words during their learning process.

Table 2. Cognitive Strategies

No	Items	Yes (1) (%)	Maybe (2) (%)	No (3) (%)
10	I repeat new English words by speaking or writing them multiple times.	79.41	17.64	02.94
11	I attempt to speak like native English speakers.	55.88	32.35	11.76
12	I practice the pronunciation of English sounds.	76.40	23.52	0
13	I use familiar English words in various contexts.	50.00	32.35	17.64
14	I initiate conversations in English.	64.70	20.58	14.70
15	I watch English-language television movies as well as series.	73.52	26.47	0
16	I read in English for enjoyment.	35.29	32.35	32.35
17	I compose points out, messages, words, and analyses in English.	38.23	32.35	29.41
18	I skim through an English text first (reading it quickly) and then go back for a detailed reading.	38.23	44.11	17.64
19	I search for words in my native language that resemble new English words.	44.11	29.41	26.47
20	I try to find patterns in English.	50.00	29.41	20.58
21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	52.94	44.11	02.94
22	I avoid translating words directly.	44.11	38.23	17.64
23	I create summaries of the information I hear or read in English.	38.23	41.17	20.58

According to the data in Table 2 above, the frequency of cognitive strategies used by Papuan EFL learners is highlighted. The table shows that item 10 had the highest frequency, with 79.41% of participants saying or writing new English words multiple times. The second most frequent item was item 12, with 76.40% of participants practicing English sounds to improve their skills. In contrast, only 38.23% of participants reported making summaries of information they hear or read in English (item 23).

Table 3. Compensation Strategies

No	Items	Yes (1) (%)	Maybe (2) (%)	No (3) (%)
24	To comprehend unfamiliar English words, I try to make educated guesses..	64.70	23.52	11.76
25	When I can't recall a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	61.76	29.41	08.82
26	I create new words when I don't know the correct ones in English.	41.17	23.52	35.29
27	I read in English without stopping to look up every new word.	35.29	35.29	29.41
28	I attempt to predict what the other person will say next in English.	38.23	47.05	14.70
29	If I can't recall an English word, I use a synonym or a phrase with the same meaning.	41.17	35.29	23.52

According to the data in table 3, item 24 shows the highest frequency, with 64.70% of participants guessing to understand unfamiliar words. On the other hand, 61.76% of participants use gestures when they cannot recall a word during a conversation in English, as seen in item 25. However, item 27 was the least favored by participants, with only 41.17% stating that they create new words when they don't know the correct ones in English.

Table 4. Metacognitive Strategies

No	Item	Yes (1) (%)	Maybe (2) (%)	No (3) (%)
30	I look for as many opportunities as possible to use English.	52.94	29.41	17.64
31	I recognize my English mistakes and use them to improve.	79.41	20.58	0
32	I focus on what others say when they speak English.	70.58	20.58	08.82
33	I make an effort to learn how to become a better English learner.	79.42	20.58	0
34	I organize my schedule to ensure I have enough time to study English.	50.00	35.29	14.70
35	I seek out people to converse with in English.	50.00	26.47	23.52
36	I find opportunities to read as much as I can in English.	44.11	47.05	08.82
37	I set clear goals for enhancing my English skills.	61.76	26.47	11.76
38	I reflect on my progress in learning English.	88.23	8.82	02.94

Table 4 presents data on the metacognitive strategies used by Papuan EFL learners in acquiring English. Based on the data, it can be concluded that 88.23% of participants reflect on their progress in learning English, with most of them also making efforts to discover ways to become better learners of English. Additionally, the data shows that 79.42% of participants focus on finding ways to improve their learning methods (item 33). However, 44.11% of participants seek opportunities to read as much as possible in English (item 36).

Table 5. Affective Strategies

No	Item	Yes (1) (%)	Maybe (2) (%)	No (3) (%)
39	I make an effort to relax whenever I feel anxious about using English.	79.41	14.70	05.88
40	I motivate myself to speak English, even when I fear making mistakes.	61.76	32.35	05.88
41	I reward myself when I perform well in English.	58.82	23.52	17.64
42	I pay attention to whether I feel tense or nervous while studying or using English.	41.17	41.17	17.64
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning dairy.	44.11	26.47	29.41
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	64.70	20.58	14.70

Table 5 presents data on the use of affective strategies by Papuan EFL learners in acquiring English. Based on the data, it can be observed that 79.41% of participants try to relax whenever they feel anxious about using English (item 39). Another item that received strong preference is item 44, where 64.70% of participants engage in conversations with others about their feelings while learning English.

The data on social strategies reveal that Papuan EFL learners tend to ask others to slow down or repeat what they say (item 45), with 76.40% of participants indicating this behavior, highlighting the learners' need for assistance in understanding English. However, 64.70% of participants try to learn about the culture of English speakers (item 50).

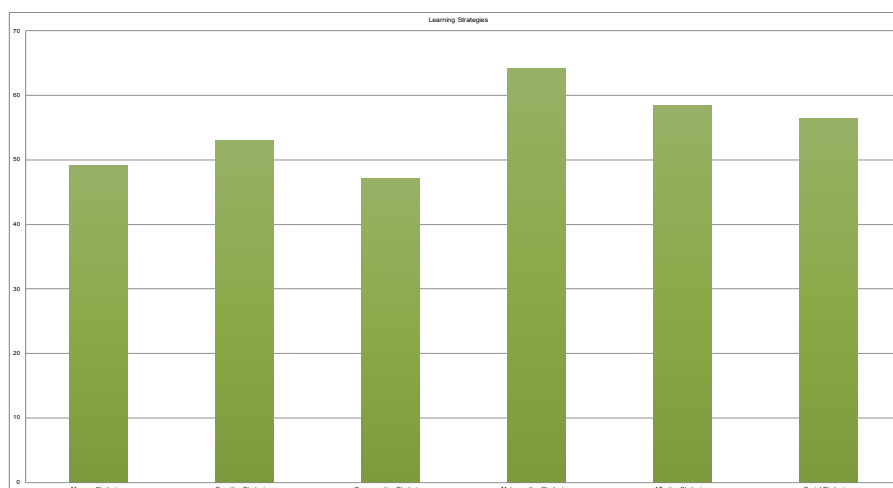


Chart 1. Learning Strategies Used in Acquiring English

Based on the chart above, it can be said that learning strategies are obtained to acquire English by Papuan EFL Learners was Metacognitive as the first rank with 64.05%. Participants tend to use self-plan and self-monitoring to help themselves in regulating their own cognition toward their learning process. However, it followed by affective strategies with 58.33% in the second rank. The third strategies were social strategies in 56.36%. The participants used cognitive strategies in fourth rank with 52.94 % and followed by memory strategies with 49.02%. The last learning strategies used by participants were cognitive strategies.

The findings from our study offer a detailed account of the language learning strategies employed by Papuan EFL learners, aligning well with existing literature on language acquisition. The strategies employed, metacognitive strategies were the most popular, followed by affective, social, cognitive, memory, and compensation strategies. This pattern of preference suggests that Papuan EFL learners lean heavily towards self-regulation and emotional engagement in their learning process. The frequent use of memory strategies, such as establishing connections between new and existing knowledge, aligns with studies like Oxford's (1990) that suggested making associations aids in memory recall and language learning. This pattern was also evident in the cognitive strategies used, with the repetition of new English words being a common method, reinforcing Ellis' (1994) assertion on the importance of active engagement in language learning. The learners' propensity to use compensation strategies, such as guessing unfamiliar English words or using gestures when the correct word is not known, coincides with previous research (Dörnyei, 1995) highlighting the effectiveness of such strategies in maintaining communicative competence despite language proficiency limitations. The frequent use of metacognitive strategies, such as self-reflection and the proactive pursuit of learning improvement, aligns with Zimmerman's (2002) theory of self-regulated learning, which highlights the active role of learners in their educational journey. The reliance on affective strategies, like attempting to relax when feeling fearful of using English, echoes Arnold and Brown's (1999) findings on the crucial role of emotional engagement in language learning. Likewise, the frequent use of social strategies is supported by Vygotsky's (1978) This also reflects sociocultural theory, suggesting that learners acknowledge the significance of social interaction in the process of language acquisition. These findings reinforce the multifaceted nature of language learning, with learners applying a variety of strategies depending on individual needs, context, and preferences. The evidence of a dynamic and flexible approach to learning strategies also



underlines the learners' readiness for successful language learning. It also sheds light on areas of potential focus for pedagogical interventions, such as training in less commonly used but effective strategies (Oxford, 1990; Ellis, 1994; Dörnyei, 1995; Arnold & Brown, 1999; Zimmerman, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978).

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, the conclusions can be drawn that this study shows the various participants apply different types of learning strategies in acquiring language. The language learning strategies employed by Papuan EFL learners are multifaceted and aligned with existing literature on language acquisition. The use of language learning strategies that helps them to have better way in acquiring English. In other hand, the lecturer should have better understanding in providing the learning strategies to the participants in order to stimulate the participants' motivations in learning English. Papuan EFL Learners tend to use metacognitive strategies in acquiring English. It is followed by affective strategies with 58.33%. The social strategies in the third rank with 56.36%. Cognitive strategies in fourth rank with 52.94 % and the last strategies were used by Papuan EFL learners in acquiring English is memory strategies with 49.02%. Predominantly, learners utilize metacognitive strategies, reflecting an active role in their learning process and a high degree of self- regulation. These strategies, coupled with affective, social, cognitive, memory, and compensation strategies, show a pattern of preferences that adapt according to the learners' individual needs, contexts, and proficiency levels.

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