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Learning beyond the classroom: Strategies of high-achieving English education students in Eastern Indonesia

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Abstract

English language proficiency in Indonesia remains low, particularly in Eastern Indonesia compared to other regions of the country. This study examines the English language learning strategies (LLSs) used by college students in Eastern Indonesia, focusing on speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, employing adapted versions of Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and Setiyadi's Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire (LLSQ). Quantitative data were collected through Likert-scale items, while qualitative insights were obtained from open-ended questionnaire responses. The participants comprised 38 English majors (GPA 3.7–4.0) from eight universities in Eastern Indonesia. Descriptive statistical analysis indicated that cognitive strategies were the most frequently employed ($M = 68.7\%$), followed by metacognitive strategies ($M = 47.9\%$) and social-affective strategies ($M = 31.2\%$). Repetition, translation, and contextual guessing dominated learners' approaches, while peer correction and collaboration were least practiced. The qualitative findings demonstrate a strong preference for autonomous, technology-mediated English learning, particularly through online videos, podcasts, and AI-assisted tools. Learners blended formal instruction with informal, media-based practices, reflecting a self-regulated and accuracy-focused orientation. The study recommends pedagogical practices that encourage greater use of metacognitive and social strategies to enhance communicative fluency and reflective learning.

Keywords: Eastern Indonesia; English majors; high-achieving students; language learning strategies; self-regulated learning

INTRODUCTION

Language learning strategies (LLS) have gained significant attention in second language acquisition (SLA). These strategies are defined as specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques learners employ to enhance their progress in developing language skills (Oxford, 1990). The classification of LLS has evolved through major theoretical contributions by (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Teng, 2023), who collectively emphasize that strategic learning behaviors can

significantly affect second language achievement. Generally, language learning strategies are categorized into cognitive, metacognitive, and social domains. In the context of Eastern Indonesia, students' low levels of English language proficiency remain a significant concern. Recent evidence indicates that learners in the region may have limited English proficiency, restricted opportunities to use English in academic contexts, and low confidence in their communicative abilities (Pratiwi et al., 2025). These challenges are further shaped by disparities in educational resources and the need for pedagogical approaches that are responsive to local learning conditions (Ningsih et al., 2025). These challenges highlight the importance of understanding how learners employ language learning strategies and how such strategies can inform context-sensitive instructional approaches to support English language development in Eastern Indonesia. Accordingly, examining LLS in this context is important for identifying strategic learning behaviors that can inform teaching practices responsive to learners' needs and contribute to more effective and autonomous English language learning.

Cognitive strategies involve the direct manipulation of language input, including repetition, summarization, and translation, which assist learners in processing and retaining new information for communication (Oxford, 2001). Metacognitive strategies involve higher-order thinking processes such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning activities, helping learners to organize their study and regulate progress (Anthonysamy et al., 2025). In addition, social strategies focus on interaction and collaboration, including group discussions, asking for clarification, and practicing with peers (Tampipi & Bermillo, 2025).

While these strategies are well-documented globally, the focus here is on how these strategies manifest in Indonesia, where unique socio-cultural and educational factors shape language learning. In the Indonesian context, students face a variety of challenges in English language learning, such as limited exposure outside the classroom, uneven instructional quality, and socio-cultural barriers. (Ghafar, 2025) observed that traditional teacher-centered practices often restrict learners' active engagement and communicative practice. As a result, learners depend heavily on internal strategies to compensate for limited opportunities for authentic language use (Alqarni, 2023). Brugliera (2024) further argue that effective strategy use is context-dependent, varying with factors such as age, proficiency, motivation, and learning environment. The integration of technology and multimedia has also been shown to enhance strategic learning, supporting learner autonomy and engagement.

Several studies have examined language learning strategies across diverse cultural and educational contexts, indicating that strategy use varies according to learner characteristics and learning contexts. Hajar & Karakus(2024) highlighted the evolving nature of LLS research and the importance of examining strategy use across different contexts. Navío et al. (2023) further demonstrated an association between language learning strategy use and learner motivation, suggesting that motivational factors may contribute to differences in how learners employ strategies. In the Indonesian context, Bambang (2016) examined successful language learners and identified the use

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of multiple strategies across language skills. Meanwhile, Martina & Afifi, (2024) specifically examined the relationship between gender and LLS among Indonesian students and reported mixed findings, with some studies finding no significant gender differences and others indicating differences in strategy preferences and frequency of use between male and female learners. Similarly, Sukying(2021) examined the relationship between LLS use and English proficiency, demonstrating that strategy use is associated with learners' proficiency levels. (Stanton et al. (2021) further emphasized the role of metacognition in learning, particularly learners' use of strategies, monitoring, and control of their learning. In CLIL contexts, Zarobe & Smala(2020) highlighted the interrelationship between metacognitive awareness, language learning strategies, and strategy instruction. More recently, Zhang(2025) found that Active Language Learning was associated with improvements in listening proficiency, motivation, engagement, and confidence among Chinese university English learners, although gains in reading were smaller and less consistent. Taken together, these findings indicate that LLS use is shaped by multiple learner and instructional factors rather than following a uniform pattern. Sengkey (2024) further examined the relationship between LLS use and English proficiency among Indonesian university students, while Norazah Khamis et al. (2024) synthesized findings from Malaysian ESL research and highlighted variation in strategy use across learning contexts. .

Despite these findings, important contextual and population-specific gaps remain. Previous studies have examined LLS in relation to gender, proficiency, motivation, metacognition, strategy instruction, and general university populations (Bambang, 2016; Martina & Afifi, 2024; Sengkey, 2024; Stanton et al., 2021; Sukying, 2021) , while other studies have examined strategy instruction and learner outcomes in specific educational contexts (Zarobe & Smala, 2020; Zhang, 2025) or synthesized findings across broader contexts (Hajar & Karakus, 2024; Norazah Khamis et al., 2024). However, limited research has specifically examined high-achieving English majors in Eastern Indonesia, particularly in relation to their use of cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies across speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Therefore, the specific language learning strategies employed by high-achieving English majors in Eastern Indonesia remain underexplored. The present study addresses this gap by examining strategy use among English Education students with high academic achievement (GPA 3.7–4.0) from eight universities in Eastern Indonesia across four language skills. Its novelty lies in providing a context-specific profile of LLS among high-achieving English majors in Eastern Indonesia, supported by both quantitative and qualitative evidence and encompassing learners' experiences of strategy use in formal and technology-mediated learning environments.

Taken together, these studies underscore the complex and dynamic nature of language learning strategies. The interplay among cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective dimensions is shaped not only by individual learner characteristics but also by contextual factors such as curriculum design, institutional culture, and access to authentic communication. In the Indonesian EFL context, these dimensions may be reflected in learners' different patterns of strategy use across language skills, including strategies for language

practice, comprehension, self-monitoring, social interaction, and affective engagement. Understanding these patterns is therefore important for identifying how learners draw on different strategy dimensions within their specific learning contexts. In this context, the present study examines the language learning strategies employed by high-achieving English majors in Eastern Indonesia, with particular attention to the strategies they use most frequently across speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Building upon this body of research, the study focuses on learners with GPAs ranging from 3.7 to 4.0 to examine patterns of strategic behavior associated with academic success and language proficiency. The overarching research question guiding this study is: “What language learning strategies are most frequently used by high-achieving English majors in Eastern Indonesia?”

METHOD

Research Design and Context

This study employed a mixed-methods utilizing both closed- and open-ended questionnaires as the primary data collection instruments. The questionnaire was adopted by constructing the theory of language learning strategies, which cover cognitive, metacognitive, social strategies, from Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and Setiyadi’s Language Learning Strategy Instrument (LLSQ) with qualitative responses from open-ended questionnaires. From the questionnaire, the students were asked to rate the frequency of learning based on the strategies. The criteria consist of five degrees of Likert Scales ranging from 1-5, started from never to always. Data obtained from the questionnaire were students’ preferences on using certain learning strategies to support their English learning process distributed into four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Participants

The study involved 38 undergraduate students majoring in English Education from eight universities in Eastern Indonesia, all of whom provided informed consent prior to data collection, with ethical approval duly obtained for the study. All participants were enrolled in their sixth semester and had a reported Grade Point Average (GPA) ranging from 3.7 to 4.0, indicating consistently high academic achievement. The participants were aged between 20 and 22 years and comprised 17 male and 21 female students. The participants exhibited comparable academic characteristics, including their program of study, semester level, and academic performance, and were all from Eastern Indonesia, creating a consistent educational context for English-language instruction and academic literacy.

Table 1 *Participants*

University Code	City	Number Of Participants		Age Range (Years)	Study Program	Average Gpa
		M	F			
Univ A	Makassar	3	3	20-22	English Education Department	3.90

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University Code	City	Number Of Participants		Age Range (Years)	Study Program	Average Gpa
		M	F			
Univ B	Makassar	3	3		English Education Department	3.75
Univ C	Makassar	1	3		English Education Department	3.8
Univ D	Bulukumba	2	3		English Education Department	3.85
Univ E	Majene	2	2		English Education Department	3.90
Univ F	Palu	2	2		English Education Department	3.75
Univ G	Kolaka	1	2		English Education Department	3.95
Univ H	Merauke	3	3		English Education Department	3.70

Data Collection

To gain data about the students' English language learning strategies, the researcher collected data through closed and open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of closed and open-ended items on students' language learning strategies. Questions in the section were developed from each component of learning strategies.

Data Analysis

Data obtained through questionnaire were analyzed by finding out the mean score of each of the components of learning strategies. Data from were presented in tables. Those data were then compared. On the other hand, data from the open-ended questionnaire were obtained from students' answer. These data were used to strengthen the result of the closed questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Result**

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative findings concerning the English language learning strategies employed by Eastern Indonesian college students.

Speaking Strategies

To explore how learners enhance their oral proficiency, participants were asked to report the specific strategies they frequently used when speaking English. The data in Table 2 summarize the distribution of speaking strategies according to their type, frequency, and functional interpretation. These findings illustrate which strategic behaviors were most and least preferred among respondents,

offering insight into the dominant learning orientation in speaking skill development.

Table 2. Speaking strategies used by participants (n = 38)

No.	Speaking Strategy	Type	Frequency (%)	Interpretation
1	Repetition of words or sentences	Cognitive	63.2	Most common strategy for pronunciation and recall
2	Code-mixing between English and Indonesian	Compensation	60.5	Used when vocabulary is limited
3	Translation before speaking	Cognitive	55.3	Helps structure sentences accurately
4	Self-evaluation after speaking	Metacognitive	47.4	Indicates reflective awareness
5	Preparing topics or grammar beforehand	Metacognitive	42.1	Planning to enhance accuracy
6	Using gestures to convey meaning	Compensation	26.3	Used when facing lexical difficulty
7	Recording own speech	Metacognitive	23.7	Minimal use of reflective review
8	Asking peers for correction	Social-Affective	15.8	Least used; low peer collaboration

Analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that students predominantly employed cognitive strategies to improve their oral proficiency. The most frequently reported actions included repetition of words or sentences (63.2%), code-mixing between Indonesian and English (60.5%), and translation prior to speaking (55.3%).

A considerable portion of respondents also demonstrated metacognitive behavior, such as self-evaluating their speech (47.4%) and preparing topics or grammar points before speaking (42.1%), suggesting awareness of planning and self-monitoring processes. However, recording speech (23.7%) and peer correction (15.8%) were rarely practiced, indicating limited engagement in reflective or collaborative speaking activities. When facing lexical gaps, learners compensated by using gestures (26.3%) or code-mixing, strategies that allowed them to sustain communication despite linguistic limitations.

Overall, the data indicate that students' speaking strategies were self-directed and accuracy-oriented, focusing more on linguistic correctness and preparation than on spontaneous fluency or interactive communication.

Listening Strategies

To explore how participants improved their listening comprehension, various strategies were identified and categorized into cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective types, as summarized in Table 3.

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Table 3. *Listening strategies used by participants (n = 38)*

No.	Listening Strategy	Type	Frequency (%)	Interpretation
1	Listening to English songs or podcasts	Cognitive	71.1	Most common exposure-based learning source
2	Watching English films or online videos	Cognitive	68.4	Supports comprehension through authentic media
3	Guessing meaning from context	Cognitive	63.2	Effective comprehension strategy
4	Mental translation into Indonesian	Cognitive	57.9	Aids understanding through L1 scaffolding
5	Taking notes during listening	Metacognitive	44.7	Moderate planning and retention effort
6	Using prior experience for inference	Metacognitive	39.5	Connects meaning with known information
7	Paying attention to grammar forms	Cognitive	21.1	Low awareness of structural input
8	Asking for repetition or clarification	Social-Affective	18.4	Minimal social listening interaction

The data in Table 3 indicate that participants relied heavily on cognitive strategies, especially those involving exposure to authentic English media. The most common practices included listening to English songs or podcasts (71.1%) and watching films or online videos (68.4%), which provided natural input and reinforced vocabulary acquisition. Guessing meaning from context (63.2%) and mental translation into Indonesian (57.9%) also appeared frequently, showing that learners often combined comprehension with first-language support to process meaning effectively.

Meanwhile, metacognitive strategies such as taking notes (44.7%) and using prior experience to infer meaning (39.5%) were moderately applied, suggesting some awareness of learning management and monitoring. However, social-affective strategies, such as asking for repetition or clarification (18.4%), were rarely employed, indicating limited interactive engagement in listening practice.

Reading Strategies

To understand how participants enhanced their reading comprehension, this study identified and categorized their reading strategies into cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective types, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. *Reading strategies used by participants (n = 38)*

No.	Reading Strategy	Type	Frequency (%)	Interpretation
1	Guessing meaning of unfamiliar words	Cognitive	84.2	Most dominant meaning-building strategy
2	Identifying key words in text	Cognitive	79.0	Common for summarizing ideas
3	Rereading difficult passages	Metacognitive	71.1	Used to check and confirm comprehension
4	Translating text into Indonesian	Cognitive	65.8	Assists in comprehension through L1 mediation
5	Relating text to prior experience	Metacognitive	57.9	Links new input with existing knowledge
6	Monitoring grammar and vocabulary	Metacognitive	47.4	Reflective but moderate use
7	Group discussion of text	Social-Affective	36.8	Limited collaborative strategy
8	Reading aloud for pronunciation	Cognitive	31.6	Least used; focuses on accuracy over fluency

The data in Table 4 demonstrate that cognitive strategies were most frequently employed in reading activities. The majority of participants reported guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words (84.2%) and identifying key words within the text (79.0%) as their primary approaches to extracting meaning. Additionally, rereading difficult passages (71.1%) and translating text into Indonesian (65.8%) were commonly used to confirm comprehension and facilitate understanding through first-language mediation.

Metacognitive strategies, such as relating the text to prior experience (57.9%) and monitoring grammar and vocabulary (47.4%), were moderately utilized, indicating learners' developing ability to regulate and evaluate their reading processes. In contrast, social-affective strategies—including group discussion of texts (36.8%) and reading aloud for pronunciation (31.6%)—were less frequent, showing limited collaborative engagement in reading practice.

Overall, the results suggest that participants' reading development was dominated by cognitive and metacognitive control, emphasizing comprehension, inference, and accuracy. The relatively low use of social strategies reflects a more individual and analytical approach to reading rather than interactive or communicative engagement with peers.

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Writing Strategies

To examine how participants developed their writing competence, the study categorized their reported strategies into cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social types, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Writing strategies used by participants (n = 38)

No.	Writing Strategy	Type	Frequency (%)	Interpretation
1	Using dictionary to check vocabulary	Cognitive	76.3	Most frequent tool for lexical accuracy
2	Rewriting drafts for correction	Metacognitive	73.7	Common revision-based learning practice
3	Translating ideas from Indonesian	Cognitive	68.4	Typical for conceptual transfer
4	Applying known grammar rules	Cognitive	63.2	Ensures syntactic precision
5	Outlining key ideas before writing	Metacognitive	52.6	Moderate planning before drafting
6	Writing informal messages in English	Cognitive	39.5	Supports spontaneous use of language
7	Creative writing or diary use	Affective	28.9	Enhances expressive freedom
8	Requesting peer feedback	Social	23.7	Least used; limited collaborative writing

The data in Table 5 reveal that participants primarily relied on cognitive and metacognitive strategies to enhance accuracy and structure in their writing. The most frequently used strategies included consulting dictionaries to check vocabulary (76.3%) and rewriting drafts for correction (73.7%), both of which indicate a strong focus on lexical precision and revision-based learning. Translating ideas from Indonesian into English (68.4%) and applying known grammar rules (63.2%) further demonstrate learners' tendency to rely on familiar linguistic resources to ensure syntactic correctness.

Moderate use of metacognitive strategies, such as outlining key ideas before writing (52.6%), reflects some degree of planning and organization prior to composition. However, affective and social strategies, including creative writing or diary use (28.9%) and requesting peer feedback (23.7%), were less common, showing limited emphasis on expressive or collaborative dimensions of writing.

Overall, the findings suggest that participants' writing practices were form-focused and accuracy-oriented, emphasizing grammatical control, vocabulary precision, and revision rather than creativity or peer interaction.

Comparative Analysis of Strategy Use

To identify overarching tendencies in strategy use, participants' responses across speaking, listening, reading, and writing were compared. Table 6 summarizes the frequency and type of strategies applied across the four language skills.

Table 6. Summarizes cross-skill patterns of strategy frequency

Skill	High-Frequency Strategies (% ≥ 60)	Moderate Use (40–59%)	Low Use (< 40%)	Dominant Strategy Type
Speaking	Repetition (63%), Code-Mixing (61%), Translation (55%)	Self-Evaluation (47%), Preparation (42%)	Recording (24%), Peer Correction (16%)	Cognitive–Metacognitive
Listening	Songs (71%), Videos (68%), Context Guessing (63%)	Translation (58%), Note-Taking (45%)	Clarification (18%)	Cognitive–Exposure Based
Reading	Guessing (84%), Keywords (79%), Rereading (71%)	Translation (66%), Prior Experience (58%)	Discussion (37%), Reading Aloud (32%)	Cognitive–Metacognitive
Writing	Dictionary (76%), Rewriting (74%), Translation (68%)	Grammar (63%), Outlining (53%)	Creative Writing (29%), Peer Feedback (24%)	Cognitive–Accuracy Focused

Students' Qualitative Insights into Learning Strategy Use

To complement the quantitative analysis, qualitative data from Likert scale questionnaire responses and follow-up open-ended questionnaire were examined to gain a deeper understanding of students' learning strategies. The qualitative findings triangulated the quantitative results, revealing that participants adopted a variety of autonomous, technology-assisted, and self-reflective practices to enhance their English proficiency. These behaviors reflected a strong integration between formal learning goals and informal, interest-driven exposure. Selected excerpts are presented below to illustrate these patterns.

Exposure through Digital Media

A substantial proportion of participants reported learning English through exposure to online audiovisual content, particularly English-language movies and videos on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. Several students indicated that they intentionally watched videos without subtitles to increase comprehension skills, as illustrated by the following responses:

“Watching movie in English without subtitles many times” (S1)
“Watching video from YouTube or TikTok without subtitle” (S9).
“Watching video from YouTube or TikTok without subtitle.” – S9

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Learning through Auditory Input

Listening to English songs and podcasts was another frequently reported learning practice among the participants. Several learners also described actively processing unfamiliar words by translating their meanings, as reflected in the following responses:

"Listening to music, podcast, and reading" (S2) and "Watch podcast videos in English and listen to songs in English, then translate the meaning of words that I don't know from watching videos and listening to songs" (S6).

Reading and Imitation for Integrated Skill Development

Several participants reported engaging in reading English texts while simultaneously practicing pronunciation and vocabulary development. In particular, learners described reading articles or magazines aloud and recording new vocabulary to support multiple language skills.

"I do love reading articles and magazines to improve all of my English skills. I read the magazine louder so I can improve my speaking and listening, also write the vocabulary and ideas related to the topic of the magazine" (S8).

Collaborative and Community-based Learning

Students also reported engaging in peer interaction through English clubs and informal social groups. These activities provided opportunities for communicative practice and supported social motivation in using English. One participant highlighted regular interaction with peers, stating:

"Speak with my friend, join English club, text with my friend using English..." (S4).

Self-reflection and Pronunciation Practice

Several students reported using independent learning strategies to practice speaking, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy. These strategies included vocabulary memorization, extensive exposure to English input, diary writing, and self-directed speaking practice. One participant provided a detailed description of these practices, stating:

"Starting with memorizing vocabulary, reading English books, listening to English songs or podcasts, watching English movies, and keeping a diary. But from my experience I prefer to talk to myself in the mirror, usually I talk about my daily life. When I didn't know the word in English, I tried to figure out the meaning in the dictionary. When I find a new word, I try to memorize and pronounce it well. Afterward, I proofread my grammar, trying to evaluate my speech after I speak. That way, I think my English is better." (S3)

Technology-enhanced and AI-supported Learning

Some students reported using artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools, such as language learning applications, to support independent practice and extend learning beyond the classroom. These tools were used to personalize learning activities and to check language use. One participant stated:

"Learning with app Duolingo and use AI to check" (S5).

Social Interaction through Digital Platforms

Other participants reported engaging with online English-speaking communities through social media platforms.

“Chatting using English in social media, speaking English directly with my friends, talking with foreigners through social media, watching media like TV, YouTube, listening to songs, etc. Studying by myself, when I watch foreign media, I often get words that I am not familiar with, then I can research about the word and find the meaning.” (S10)

Overall, the qualitative data reveal that students actively integrated English learning into their personal digital ecosystems. Technology served as both a source of exposure and a medium of interaction, enabling learners to practice autonomously and meaningfully. These findings reinforce the quantitative results, which emphasized cognitive and metacognitive dominance, by demonstrating that learners’ strategy use extends beyond classroom contexts into self-initiated, media-rich, and socially mediated environments.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the results in light of existing literature and theoretical perspectives, highlighting key trends, contextual influences, and pedagogical implications.

Cognitive Dominance and Accuracy Orientation

Across all four skills, cognitive strategies emerged as the most frequently employed, indicating that learners favored direct mental manipulation of linguistic information through repetition, translation, guessing meaning, and dictionary use. This pattern aligns with (Oxford, 1990) classification of cognitive strategies as core mechanisms for manipulating and transforming language input. Repetition and translation were the most frequently used strategies, reflecting learners’ efforts to ensure accuracy and comprehension before producing language. This finding aligns with (Farantika & Aimah, 2025) who observed that accuracy-focused learners often rely on memorization and translation to internalize linguistic structures.

In speaking and writing, students emphasized correctness over fluency through practices such as translation, self-correction, and rewriting drafts. These behaviors parallel findings by (Karakuş, 2025; Wang et al., 2024) who observed that Asian EFL learners often exhibit form-focused orientations shaped by examination-driven educational contexts. The current data further suggest that students’ frequent use of translation and code-mixing reflects a cognitive reliance on their first language (L1) as a scaffold for meaning construction, a pattern echoed by (Linh, 2019), who argued that L1 mediation remains a vital support mechanism in EFL contexts with limited exposure to authentic English use.

Metacognitive Engagement: Awareness without Consistency

Metacognitive strategies—such as self-evaluation, note-taking, and planning—were moderately employed, indicating learners’ growing awareness of the need to monitor and regulate their learning. For example, self-reflection and

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rereading were reported in both speaking and reading, while outlining and revision characterized writing activities. These findings correspond with which highlights metacognitive control as central to autonomous learning (Vellanki et al., 2024). However, the moderate frequency levels suggest that self-regulation was situational rather than habitual.

This inconsistency may be attributed to limited strategy training within formal instruction. As (Ishak et al., 2025) emphasize, without explicit metacognitive instruction, learners often underuse higher-order planning and monitoring strategies. The results therefore imply that while students recognize the value of reflection—illustrated by practices such as recording speech or proofreading compositions—their use of these strategies lacks systematic integration. Enhancing metacognitive strategy instruction could foster more deliberate and sustained self-regulation across learning tasks.

Social and Affective Underuse: The Missing Collaborative Dimension

The findings consistently demonstrate minimal use of social and affective strategies. Asking for correction, engaging in peer discussion, or requesting feedback were among the least reported practices across all skills. This echoes findings by (Cheng & Chen, 2022), who observed that learners from teacher-centered cultures often favor independent effort over collaborative learning due to classroom norms that prioritize accuracy and teacher authority.

Interestingly, the qualitative data revealed that some students participated in English clubs or engaged with peers through digital platforms, showing emerging social engagement outside formal contexts. However, such interactions remained peripheral compared to solitary learning. As (Oxford, R. L., & Nyikos, 2011; Sakka, 2019) assert, affective and social strategies play a critical role in promoting motivation, risk-taking, and communicative confidence. Thus, limited use of these strategies may partly explain learners' continued focus on accuracy rather than fluency or interactional competence.

Media-Based and Technology-Assisted Learning

The qualitative findings reveal that learners frequently integrated technology into their strategy repertoire—listening to English songs and podcasts, watching films, using AI tools such as Duolingo, and interacting via social media. These behaviors indicate a strong media-based learning orientation that complements formal instruction. This trend aligns with (Godwin-Jones, 2018), who noted that technology-mediated input fosters autonomy and multimodal exposure in language learning.

Listening and reading strategies, in particular, were dominated by digital engagement and exposure-based practices. Students' preference for authentic online materials reflects the shift toward informal learning environments described by (Guo, X., & Lee, 2023), where digital media serve as rich sources of linguistic input and motivation. However, the predominance of passive media consumption over interactive communication mirrors the pattern observed by (Huzairin, H., Putrawan, G. E., & Riadi, 2020) who found that learners often use technology as a receptive tool rather than a platform for active language production.

Integration of Formal and Informal Learning Practices

Qualitative accounts demonstrated that learners blended classroom-based strategies (e.g., grammar review, self-evaluation) with informal, self-initiated learning through digital media. This hybrid approach corresponds with (Daflizar, 2020) concept of “learner autonomy beyond the classroom in Indonesia,” wherein students integrate English learning into daily routines via personal interest and online interaction. Such autonomous engagement fosters sustainable language exposure, particularly in EFL contexts like Eastern Indonesia, where opportunities for real-life communication in English are limited.

The students’ reported use of self-reflection (e.g., mirror speaking, diary writing) and imitation of online speakers also exemplifies integrated skill development, supporting (Vandergrift, Larry., & Christine, 2012) argument that strategic listening and speaking can be enhanced through metacognitive awareness and multimodal practice. These qualitative insights affirm that learners’ cognitive and metacognitive strategies extend beyond rote learning, encompassing adaptive behaviors that link technology, reflection, and authenticity.

Comparative and Cultural Perspectives

When compared across the four skills, the dominance of cognitive strategies suggests a culturally influenced learning style emphasizing individual responsibility and correctness—characteristics often found in Asian EFL learners (Chamot, 2004; Meyer, 2012). Indonesian learners’ preference for translation, repetition, and structured practice parallels findings from Nguyen and (Giang & Tuan, 2018) in Vietnam and (Riazi & Rahimi, 2005) in Iran, where students prioritized comprehension and accuracy over communicative spontaneity.

Moreover, the relative underuse of social strategies may reflect the traditional classroom culture in Eastern Indonesia, where interactional practices such as peer correction or collaborative tasks are less institutionalized. As noted by (Zein et. al, 2020), English learning in many Indonesian universities remains teacher-centered, limiting students’ opportunities to develop communicative competence through cooperative learning.

Pedagogical Implications

The overall pattern—cognitive dominance, moderate metacognitive engagement, and minimal social-affective involvement—suggests that learners are self-regulated yet structurally dependent on accuracy-based learning. To address this imbalance, instructors should integrate explicit strategy training into English courses, emphasizing metacognitive planning, peer collaboration, and affective awareness. Tasks involving peer feedback, group discussion, and reflective journals can promote social interaction and autonomy simultaneously (Oxford, 2016).

Furthermore, technology integration should move beyond exposure toward production-oriented learning, encouraging students to actively produce, negotiate, and refine language through digital interaction. Discussion forums

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and collaborative writing platforms provide opportunities for learners to formulate ideas, interact with peers, exchange feedback, and revise their language use, processes that can strengthen communicative development, engagement, and collaboration (Pardede, 2024). Similarly, AI-supported interaction extends opportunities for language practice by enabling learners to engage in repeated communication and receive immediate responses, which may contribute to greater willingness to communicate and stronger perceptions of communicative competence (Wang et al., 2024). In writing contexts, AI-assisted feedback can further promote active engagement by encouraging learners to revise their output and attend to aspects of writing quality (Mekheimer, 2025). These findings suggest that the value of technology lies not simply in increasing learners' exposure to English, but in creating opportunities for purposeful language production, feedback, and revision. Such processes can foster reflective learning by requiring learners to monitor their language use, evaluate feedback, revise their output, and make informed decisions about subsequent language production. Therefore, technology-mediated learning may be particularly valuable when instructional design positions learners as active producers and evaluators of language rather than passive recipients of digital input.

In summary, Eastern Indonesian college students demonstrate a cognitively driven, media-assisted, and self-regulated learning orientation. Their strategies emphasize comprehension and accuracy through translation, repetition, and self-correction, supported by moderate metacognitive reflection and limited social collaboration. These findings not only corroborate earlier studies on Asian EFL strategy use (Aizawa, 2023; Lee & Heinz, 2016; Norazah Khamis et al., 2024; Sengkey, 2024) but also extend them by highlighting the role of digital environments in shaping autonomous and hybrid learning behaviors. Future pedagogical initiatives should aim to balance cognitive strength with communicative adaptability, fostering learners who are both accurate and fluent users of English.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive profile of language learning strategy (LLS) use among high-achieving English majors in Eastern Indonesia across four key language skills. The quantitative and qualitative findings consistently indicate that learners predominantly employ cognitive and metacognitive strategies, particularly repetition, translation, and self-correction, whereas social and affective strategies are used less frequently. Learners also incorporate technology into their learning through online videos, songs, podcasts, and AI applications, primarily for language exposure, practice, and self-assessment. Overall, the findings demonstrate that these learners actively engage in strategic language learning, with a stronger reliance on cognitive and metacognitive strategies than on social and affective strategies.

The study contributes to the existing LLS literature by providing context-specific evidence on the strategic behavior of high-achieving English majors in Eastern Indonesia, a context that remains comparatively underrepresented in LLS research. By examining strategy use across four language skills and integrating quantitative and qualitative findings, the study offers a

comprehensive account of learners' strategic practices in this context. The findings further indicate that learners' strategy repertoires extend beyond formal classroom learning through the use of technology-mediated resources, including online videos, songs, podcasts, and AI applications.

A notable finding is the difference between the relatively frequent use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and the comparatively limited use of social and affective strategies. While learners frequently employ cognitive and metacognitive strategies for language practice, comprehension, and self-monitoring, social interaction and affective strategies are less prominent in their reported learning practices. This difference highlights the uneven distribution of strategy use across LLS categories and underscores the importance of considering multiple dimensions of strategic learning when examining learners' language learning behavior.

The findings have several pedagogical implications. English language instruction should provide opportunities for learners to complement their existing cognitive and metacognitive strategies with greater engagement in social interaction and affective dimensions of learning. Technology can likewise be integrated to support active language use, interaction, feedback, and reflection, rather than serving primarily as a source of language exposure. Such instructional practices may help broaden learners' strategy repertoires and support more balanced engagement across different dimensions of language learning.

Future research should further investigate LLS among English learners in Eastern Indonesia across different learner groups, educational contexts, and language skills. Further studies may also examine how technology-mediated resources are incorporated into learners' strategic practices and how strategy use develops across different learning contexts. Such research would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of LLS in Eastern Indonesian EFL contexts and provide further evidence for context-sensitive approaches to language learning and teaching.

AUTHORS STATEMENTS

All authors contributed substantially to this study. **Sri Ananda Pertiwi** conceptualized the study, designed the research methodology, coordinated the data collection, and drafted the manuscript. **Juvrianto Chrissunday Jakob** participated in data analysis and contributed to the interpretation of the findings. **Dian Agustina Purwanto Wakerkwa** and **Rawuh Yuda Yuwana** were involved in refinement of the analysis, and co-writing the findings and discussion sections. All authors collaboratively reviewed, revised, and proofread the manuscript and approved the final version for publication.

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