

# A Contrastive Analysis of ESL and EFL Learning Strategies

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**Abstract**—This study examined language context effect on selecting language learning strategies. The participants were 150 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, and 150 English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used for data collection. The data were analyzed quantitatively using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). At the individual strategy level, ESL and EFL students differed significantly in the use of 18 (36%) out of 50 strategies. There was also some agreement between them as both ESL and EFL students used 12 (24%) of individual strategies most often, 18 (36%) to a medium degree and 2 (4%) least often. At the category level both groups used the metacognitive strategy category “organizing and evaluating your learning” most frequently, and used both the affective category “managing your emotions”, and the memory category “remembering more effectively”, least frequently, with no significant differences. The overall strategy use for both groups was medium.

**Index Terms**—affective, cognitive, compensation, memory, social, achievement

## I. INTRODUCTION

English is a global language. It is the language of technology, commerce and science. It is common that people learn a second or foreign language differently to succeed in learning it, and they also deploy different strategies that depend on its context. ESL students use the English language for social communication in an English speaking context; whereas EFL learners learn the English language in a non-English speaking context.

Strategies are effective for learning second or foreign languages. Teachers and researchers showed increased concern in the process of language learning more than in the product. They focused on the study of the influence of context on language learning strategies to inspire learners to use strategies to improve self-efficacy in their learning.

### A. Background to Study

The Status of English Language in Malaysia Versus its Status in Saudi Arabia

### B. First, the Status of English Language in Malaysia

In Peninsula Malaysia the Malay population forms the majority and they speak Bahasa Malaysia as their mother tongue. Although there are a number of dialects in Bahasa Malaysia, most of them are mutually intelligible. The Malaysian Chinese use many dialects such as Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Foochow, Teochiu and Hainanese. Nearly, all Chinese in Kuala Lumpur speak the locally dominated dialect, Cantonese; even if they have different mother tongues. The majority of Malaysian Indians speak Tamil as their mother tongue. They also speak a variety of dialects such as Malayalam, Telegu, Punjabi, Urdu and Gujarati (Hirschman, 1984).

The government of Malaysia has set for itself year 2020 as a target known as Vision 2020 when Malaysia will become a fully developed country. As English is important for progress and international integration, this Vision cannot be achieved without improving the Malaysians' competence of the English language. Nowadays, English is considered as the second language in Malaysia. It is used for a variety of functions, such as everyday communication, trade and commerce, and for certain other professions. It is taught in both primary and secondary schools. (The Hurian Sukatan Pelajaran, 1995, cited in Chitravelu, Sithamparan, & Choon, 1995).

### C. Second, the Status of English Language in Saudi Arabia

The largest ethnic group in Saudi Arabia is the Arabs and the official language is Arabic. English is considered as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia; it is included as a subject in the school curriculum. It is not used as a means of communication; the medium of instruction at the institutes of higher education is either Arabic or English.

### D. Statement of the Problem

Language context of learner plays a great role in the choice of language learning strategies. Oxford (1990) states that “some learning strategies might be easier to use in second language contexts than in foreign language settings, or vice versa” (p.6). Several studies have been conducted to investigate the influence of second language context and foreign language context separately. There was a need to integrate the separate works conducted in each context in the analysis, in order to provide information to help adapt the findings into present teaching methods, in order to help provide students with successful foreign and second language contexts.

### E. Objectives

This study proposes to examine whether the language learning strategies exhibited by Malay and Saudi undergraduate students vary according to context. The findings will be especially useful to lecturers and others who are interested or involved in the teaching ESL and EFL undergraduate students, particularly within Malay and Saudi populations.

The following major research questions are addressed specifically:

What are the similarities and differences in the use of English language learning strategies among ESL and EFL learners at the individual level?

What are the similarities and differences in the use of English language learning strategies among ESL and EFL learners at the category level?

What is the overall strategy use of ESL and EFL learners?

### F. Hypotheses

The study proposes to evaluate the data obtained in the light of some confirmed conclusions reached by previous studies such as Oxford (1990). The following assumption can be made at this point: ESL and EFL students differ in the use of language learning strategies at the individual, category and overall levels.

### G. Significance of the Study

El-Dib (2008) draws attention to the importance of context on the selection of strategies, and argues that the learning context of learners is the strongest variable that has an impact on the choice of their learning strategies.

This study is different from previous studies as it integrates the separate works performed in the second and foreign language contexts. It contributes to the body of research concerning the language learning strategies of both ESL and EFL learners. It identifies the English language learning strategies preferred by undergraduate ESL learners (i.e. Malays), and EFL learners (i.e. Saudis) in order to provide information that benefit English language learners, teachers and researchers.

The findings can be used in classroom instruction and delivery methods, and in the design of teaching and learning materials.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Different authors conceptualized language learning processes in many ways and gave different definitions to strategies used for them. Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986) view strategies as the steps taken in approaching any task that includes how a student chooses, coordinates and applies skills to suit the context. According to Mayer (1988), the term strategy refers to the learning behaviour that assists the students in the process of learning. Brown (1994) defines learning strategies as methods and plans used for language learning and used to aid language acquisition. Similarly, Griffiths (2013) points out the conscious nature of behaviours chosen by learners to manage language learning.

Horwitz (2013) also states that learning strategies are activities or techniques used to learn more effectively. Cohen (2014) views learning strategies as self-generated thoughts or actions taken by the learner consciously to improve language learning and assimilate new information. Similarly Oxford (2018) defines language learning strategies as planned mental actions used by a learner to self regulate his or her language learning. She classifies learning strategies into two categories, direct and indirect. Direct strategies include three subclasses: memory, cognitive and compensation. Indirect strategies involve metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

In general, all behaviours, methods, techniques and actions that are used to learn a language are all elements of language learning strategies as appear across the different definitions above. Understanding how students learn has attracted the attention of teachers and researchers. They are concerned about the actions taken by learners to achieve learning. They are interested in understanding the process of learning to encourage self awareness of the learners and enhance their autonomy.

It is also believed that the use of language learning strategies is influenced by contextual factors. Researchers find interest in investigating the use of language learning strategies in the field of second or foreign language teaching and learning.

The following studies address the impact of learning context and environment on the use of language learning strategies.

Shmais (2003) aimed to identify the language learning strategies of Palestinian EFL students majoring in English. The findings indicated that students are medium strategy users and that they use metacognitive strategies most frequently and compensation strategies least often.

On the other hand, Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) identified the language learning strategies used by 55 ESL students. They were enrolled in an intensive English language program at a Southwestern University. The results indicated that students used metacognitive strategies most often and affective and memory strategies least often.

Likewise, AbdulRazak, Ismail, AbdulAziz, and Babikkoi (2012) conducted a study to assess the use of English language learning strategies by ESL students. The participants were 180 Malaysian secondary school students. The tool

used to collect the data was SILL questionnaire. Results showed that affective strategies were the most popular and compensation as the least popular ones.

On the contrary, Javid, Al-thubaiti and Uthman (2013) investigated the use of language learning strategies and its relationship to proficiency level. The participants were 240 Saudi EFL undergraduate students majoring in English. Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning was used to collect the data. The findings indicated that metacognitive strategies had the highest frequency and memory strategies the lowest.

Likewise, Alhaysony (2017) examined the language learning strategies used by Saudi EFL students and to examine the use of language learning strategies in relation to the duration of English language study and gender. The participants were 134 students at Al-Jouf University. The tool used in the study was a questionnaire adapted from Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory of Language Learning. The findings showed that students used the strategies at a low and medium level in general. Furthermore, students used cognitive, metacognitive and compensation strategies most frequently, whereas memory and affective strategies were used least frequently.

Similarly, Alnujaidi (2017) investigated the use of language learning strategies by EFL students. The subjects were 178 students from different higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. Strategy Inventory of language learning was used to collect the data. The results showed that the overall use of strategies was average (medium). In addition, students used the Metacognitive strategies most and the affective strategies least.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. *Research Design*

The educational research literature abounds with examples of a survey research. There are two types of survey designs, longitudinal and cross-sectional. Longitudinal design focuses on the collection of data over time and at specific points in time, while the cross-sectional design includes sampling two or more populations at one point in time.

This study is a survey research and follows the cross sectional design. Random samples were selected from two populations, Malay undergraduate students and Saudi undergraduate students. Every sample filled in the same questionnaire, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. The results of the different samples were then compared. The data were analyzed by using SPSS as follows:

First, descriptive statistics were used such as frequencies and mean scores.

Second, comparing statistics were used such as Analysis of variance (ANOVA).

#### B. *Participants*

The sampling includes two populations, Malay and Saudi students.

#### C. *Malay Students*

The subjects participating in this study were from University Malaya, Malaysia. Their total number was 150 Malay undergraduate students.

#### D. *Saudi Students*

The subjects were from King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. Their total number was 150 Saudi undergraduate students.

#### E. *Instruments*

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning self-report questionnaire designed by Oxford (1990) was administered to both the Malay and Saudi undergraduate students. It was used to assess the frequency of strategies used by ESL/EFL learners. SILL has been widely used in numerous studies that reported its reliability coefficients that ranges between .85 to .98 (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Bremner, 1998; Wharton, 2000). The questionnaires consisted of fifty items divided into six sections, each section focuses on a specific type, details given in Table 8.

Section one aims at investigating the memory strategies used by students. Section two specifies the cognitive strategies that take place in learning the English language. Section three focuses on the compensation for missing knowledge strategies used by students. Section four secures information about the metacognitive strategies students use to organize their learning. Section five examines the affective strategies and how students manage their emotions. Section six focuses on the social strategies that students use in learning with others.

### IV. RESULTS

This section provides a holistic description of ESL and EFL learning strategies. Statistical procedures were employed for the data analysis by using SPSS (version 10). Descriptive statistics like mean scores were computed first.

Next ANOVA was used to test its significance from the multiple comparisons of means. The level of significance of 0.05 shows the probability of making the wrong decision when the null hypothesis is true. The keys that were given by Oxford (1990) in her SILL profile of results have been used in the analysis of data such as follows:

TABLE 1.  
KEY TO UNDERSTAND AVERAGES ACCORDING TO OXFORD, 1990.

Average	How often the Strategy Used	Mean
High	Always or almost always used	4.5 to 5.0
	Usually used	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Generally not used	1.5 to 2.4
	Never or almost never used	1.0 to 1.4

Thus, in the data analysis procedures, the findings from the questionnaires will provide answers to the research questions.

*A. What Are the Similarities and Differences in the Use of English Language Learning Strategies Among ESL And EFL Learners at the Individual Level?*

Results generated from the data analysis of the items of SILL at the individual level indicated that ESL and EFL students in this study tend to use a variety of language learning strategies with some variation in their use of several strategies.

ANOVA exhibited some significant differences in the use of language learning strategies at the individual level between Malay and Saudi students.

Table 2 shows the type, degree of freedom, mean score, F values, and Significance level for each strategy.

TABLE 2.  
VARIATION IN THE INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY USE BY ESL AND EFL STUDENTS

ANOVA						
Strategy		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English	Between Groups	7.680	1	7.680	6.865	.009
	Within Groups	333.400	298	1.119		
	Total	341.080	299			
I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them	Between Groups	14.083	1	14.083	10.265	.002
	Within Groups	408.833	298	1.372		
	Total	422.917	299			
I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word	Between Groups	32.013	1	32.013	24.271	.000
	Within Groups	393.067	298	1.319		
	Total	425.080	299			
I use flashcards to remember new English words	Between Groups	22.413	1	22.413	24.185	.000
	Within Groups	276.173	298	.927		
	Total	298.587	299			
I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign	Between Groups	109.203	1	109.203	107.783	.000
	Within Groups	301.927	298	1.013		
	Total	411.130	299			
I say or write new English words several times	Between Groups	14.520	1	14.520	14.211	.000
	Within Groups	304.480	298	1.022		
	Total	319.000	299			
I try to talk like native English speakers	Between Groups	27.000	1	27.000	21.509	.000
	Within Groups	374.080	298	1.255		
	Total	401.080	299			
I practice the sounds of English.	Between Groups	4.813	1	4.813	4.045	.045
	Within Groups	354.573	298	1.190		
	Total	359.387	299			
I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English	Between Groups	43.320	1	43.320	29.428	.000
	Within Groups	438.680	298	1.472		
	Total	482.000	299			
I read for pleasure in English	Between Groups	144.213	1	144.213	117.377	.000
	Within Groups	366.133	298	1.229		
	Total	510.347	299			
I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English	Between Groups	66.270	1	66.270	52.443	.000
	Within Groups	376.567	298	1.264		
	Total	442.837	299			
I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully	Between Groups	15.413	1	15.413	12.179	.001
	Within Groups	377.133	298	1.266		
	Total	392.547	299			
I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English	Between Groups	61.653	1	61.653	60.039	.000
	Within Groups	306.013	298	1.027		
	Total	367.667	299			
I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand	Between Groups	55.470	1	55.470	43.130	.000
	Within Groups	383.260	298	1.286		
	Total	438.730	299			
I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English	Between Groups	44.083	1	44.083	32.255	.000
	Within Groups	407.287	298	1.367		

	Total	451.370	299			
When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures	Between Groups	7.053	1	7.053	5.210	.023
	Within Groups	403.467	298	1.354		
	Total	410.520	299			
If I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing	Between Groups	8.670	1	8.670	10.218	.002
	Within Groups	252.860	298	.849		
	Total	261.530	299			
I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better	Between Groups	7.363	1	7.363	8.585	.004
	Within Groups	255.607	298	.858		
	Total	262.970	299			
I pay attention when someone is speaking English	Between Groups	11.603	1	11.603	16.006	.000
	Within Groups	216.033	298	.725		
	Total	227.637	299			
I try to find out how to be a better learner of English	Between Groups	24.083	1	24.083	38.896	.000
	Within Groups	184.513	298	.619		
	Total	208.597	299			
I look for people I can talk to in English	Between Groups	8.003	1	8.003	5.403	.021
	Within Groups	441.393	298	1.481		
	Total	449.397	299			
I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English	Between Groups	62.563	1	62.563	55.024	.000
	Within Groups	338.833	298	1.137		
	Total	401.397	299			
I think about my progress in learning English	Between Groups	19.763	1	19.763	19.950	.000
	Within Groups	295.207	298	.991		
	Total	314.970	299			
I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English	Between Groups	7.363	1	7.363	4.530	.034
	Within Groups	484.433	298	1.626		
	Total	491.797	299			
I write down my feelings in a language learning diary	Between Groups	30.720	1	30.720	22.963	.000
	Within Groups	398.667	298	1.338		
	Total	429.387	299			
I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English	Between Groups	84.270	1	84.270	66.312	.000
	Within Groups	378.700	298	1.271		
	Total	462.970	299			
If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again	Between Groups	12.403	1	12.403	12.457	.000
	Within Groups	296.727	298	.996		
	Total	309.130	299			
I practice English with other students	Between Groups	28.830	1	28.830	24.587	.000
	Within Groups	349.420	298	1.173		
	Total	378.250	299			
I ask for help from English speakers	Between Groups	6.750	1	6.750	4.624	.032
	Within Groups	435.047	298	1.460		
	Total	441.797	299			
I try to learn about the culture of English speakers	Between Groups	12.403	1	12.403	8.039	.005
	Within Groups	459.793	298	1.543		
	Total	472.197	299			

Another analysis of the SILL at the individual item level using descriptive statistics is shown in the following tables. The results indicated that the ESL and EFL students in this study employed a variety of language learning strategies with some strategies receiving more frequent use than others.

Table 3 and 4 illustrate that there was no agreement between ESL and EFL students in the use of the following strategies:

TABLE 3.  
THE MOST PREFERRED INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES BY ESL STUDENTS THAT RECEIVED MEDIUM PREFERENCES BY EFL STUDENT

Type	Strategy	ESL students		EFL students	
		Mean Score	Level	Mean Score	Level
Cognitive	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	4.18	High	3.42	Medium
Cognitive	I read for pleasure in English.	3.91	High	2.52	Medium
Metacognitive	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	3.82	High	2.91	Medium
Memory	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	3.58	High	3.26	Medium
Metacognitive	I look for people I can talk to in English.	3.53	High	3.20	Medium
Cognitive	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	3.45	High	2.51	Medium
Social	I practice English with other students.	3.46	High	2.84	Medium

On the contrary, variation is apparent in the use of some strategies. Whereas ESL learners had medium use level of some strategies, EFL students had a high level of using the same strategies. Table 4 revealed such differences.

TABLE 4.  
THE MOST PREFERRED INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES BY EFL STUDENTS THAT RECEIVED MEDIUM PREFERENCES BY ESL STUDENTS

Type	Strategy	ESL students		EFL students	
		Mean Score	Level	Mean Score	Level
Memory	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	3.13	Medium	4.33	High
Cognitive	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	3.11	Medium	4.02	High
Cognitive	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	3.04	Medium	3.90	High
Affective	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	2.96	Medium	4.02	High
Cognitive	I try not to translate word-for-word.	3.43	Medium	3.65	High
Affective	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	3.38	Medium	3.49	High
Compensation	When I cannot think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	3.31	Medium	3.61	High
Cognitive	I say or write new English words several times.	3.28	Medium	3.72	High
Cognitive	I try to talk like native English speakers.	3.28	Medium	3.88	High
Memory	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	3.25	Medium	3.91	High
Social	I ask for help from English speakers.	3.25	Medium	3.55	High

Although there were some differences in the use of some individual strategies, there was also some agreement. Table 5 illustrates the most frequent strategies that were used highly by both ESL and EFL students.

TABLE 5.  
MEAN SCORE OF THE MOST FREQUENT STRATEGIES OF BOTH ESL AND EFL STUDENTS

Type	Strategy	ESL Students		EFL Students	
		Mean Score	Level	Mean Score	Level
Metacognitive	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English	4.01	High	4.58	High
Metacognitive	I pay attention when someone is speaking English	3.98	High	4.37	High
Metacognitive	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better	3.83	High	4.15	High
Compensation	If I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	3.76	High	4.10	High
Metacognitive	I think about my progress in learning English	3.73	High	4.25	High
Affective	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	3.74	High	3.61	High
Cognitive	I practice the sounds of English	3.70	High	3.45	High
Metacognitive	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English	3.69	High	3.49	High
Metacognitive	I have clear goals for improving my English skills	3.65	High	3.84	High
Social	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	3.57	High	3.97	High
Compensation	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	3.56	High	3.53	High
Cognitive	I first skim an English passage then go back and read carefully.	3.46	High	3.91	High

Table 5 shows that the most frequent strategy that was always or almost always used by EFL students was a metacognitive one "I try to find out how to be a better learner of English" All of the rest of the strategies were usually used by both ESL and EFL students.

Medium use of some individual strategies by ESL and EFL students was reported in Table 6 as follows:

TABLE 6.  
STRATEGIES THAT WERE ASSIGNED A MEAN VALUE OF MEDIUM BY BOTH ESL AND EFL STUDENTS

Type	Strategy	ESL Students		EFL Students	
		Mean Score	Level	Mean Score	Level
Compensation	I try to guess what the other persons will say next in English	3.01	Medium	3.24	Medium
Social	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	2.97	Medium	2.56	Medium
Compensation	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	2.95	Medium	3.05	Medium
Affective	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English	2.90	Medium	2.86	Medium
Cognitive	I try to find patterns in English	2.87	Medium	2.75	Medium
Metacognitive	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English	2.83	Medium	2.83	Medium
Memory	I physically act out new English words	2.81	Medium	2.96	Medium
Compensation	I read English without looking up every new word	2.75	Medium	2.61	Medium
Memory	I use rhymes to remember new English words.	2.73	Medium	2.76	Medium
Cognitive	I use the English words I know in different ways	3.35	Medium	3.11	Medium
Memory	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them	3.33	Medium	2.90	Medium
Social	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk	3.30	Medium	3.44	Medium
Cognitive	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English	3.27	Medium	2.51	Medium
Affective	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English	3.22	Medium	2.91	Medium
Social	I ask questions in English	3.20	Medium	3.43	Medium
Cognitive	I start conversations in English	3.17	Medium	2.92	Medium
Memory	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	3.13	Medium	3.29	Medium
Memory	I review English lessons often.	3.13	Medium	3.21	Medium

Table 6 shows that both ESL and EFL learners sometimes used the above strategies at a medium level; the most frequent ones were memory strategies and the least were metacognitive ones.

Likewise, the least frequent individual strategies used by both ESL and EFL students are displayed in Table 7 as follows:

TABLE 7.  
MEAN SCORE OF THE LEAST USED INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES BY ESL AND EFL STUDENTS

Type	Strategy	ESL Students		EFL Students	
		Mean Score	Level	Mean Score	Level
Affective	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary	2.41	low	1.77	low
Memory	I use flashcards to remember new English words	2.17	low	1.62	low

Table 7 shows that students were reluctant to use two strategies, affective and memory.

In sum, the findings indicated that out of 50 strategies that are included in SILL, EFL and ESL students used 12 (24%) strategies most frequently, 18 (36%) strategies were used at a medium level and 2 (4%) strategies were used least frequently. There were also some differences in the use of the rest of the strategies 18 (36%), where some ESL students use them at a high level whereas EFL students use them at a medium level and vice versa.

*B. What Are the Similarities and Differences in the Use of English Language Learning Strategies Among ESL And EFL Learners at the Category Level?*

Oxford (1990) divided the questionnaire into six types in her analysis of results of SILL, as illustrated in Table 8:

TABLE 8.  
OXFORD (1990) QUESTIONNAIRE SECTIONS

Part	Strategies Covered	Strategy Type
A	Remembering more effectively.	Memory
B	Using all your mental processes.	Cognitive
C	Compensating for missing knowledge.	Compensation
D	Organizing and evaluating your learning.	Metacognitive
E	Managing your emotions.	Affective
F	Learning with others.	Social

Analysis using ANOVA as illustrated in Table 9 shows that there was no significant variation in the reported use of strategy categories for both Malays and Saudis.

TABLE 9.  
EQUALITY OF MEANS FOR STRATEGY CATEGORIES OF BOTH ESL AND EFL LEARNERS

ANOVA						
Strategy		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Remembering more effectively	Between Groups	.877	1	.877	2.533	.113
	Within Groups	103.218	298	.346		
	Total	104.096	299			
Using all your mental process	Between Groups	.576	1	.576	1.903	.169
	Within Groups	90.188	298	.303		
	Total	90.764	299			
Compensation for missing knowledge	Between Groups	1.356	1	1.356	3.481	.063
	Within Groups	116.068	298	.389		
	Total	117.423	299			
Organizing and evaluating your learning	Between Groups	.263	1	.263	.569	.451
	Within Groups	137.950	298	.463		
	Total	138.214	299			
Managing your emotions	Between Groups	3.333E-03	1	3.333E-03	.007	.931
	Within Groups	132.487	298	.445		
	Total	132.491	299			
Learning with others	Between Groups	5.926E-03	1	5.926E-03	.012	.913
	Within Groups	149.263	298	.501		
	Total	149.269	299			

The analysis of the SILL categories used by ESL and EFL students indicated that students preferred to use some strategy categories more frequently than others.

Table 10 shows the mean score and ranking for each category used by ESL students.

TABLE 10.  
MEAN SCORE AND RANKING OF STRATEGY CATEGORIES

Part	Strategy Category	Mean Score	Rank
D	Organizing and evaluating your learning	3.7	1
B	Using all your mental processes	3.4	2
F	Learning with others	3.3	3
C	Compensating for missing knowledge	3.2	4
E	Managing your emotions	3.1	5
A	Remembering more effectively	3	6

Table 10 shows that ESL students used all the strategy categories at a medium level except for the metacognitive strategy category that recorded a high level (mean 3.7). The table also illustrates that the most common category of strategies used by ESL students was the metacognitive one "Organizing and evaluating your learning". The least frequent use of categories was the affective one "managing your emotions" and finally, the memory category "remembering more effectively".

Likewise, Data analysis of the SILL categories on EFL students indicated that students use some categories more frequently than others. Table 11 shows the mean score and rank of each strategy category as follows:

TABLE 11.  
MEAN SCORE AND RANKING OF STRATEGY CATEGORIES

Part	Strategy Category	Mean Score	Rank
D	Organizing and evaluating your learning	3.7	1
C	Compensating for missing knowledge	3.4	2
B	Using your mental processes	3.3	3
F	Learning with others	3.3	3
E	Managing your emotions	3.1	4
A	Remembering more effectively	3.1	4

Table 11 shows that EFL students are similar to ESL students as they learn best by organizing and evaluating their learning. The least used strategy categories were "Managing your emotions" and "Remembering more effectively".

### C. What Is the Overall Strategy Use of ESL and EFL Learners?

To answer the final research question, ANOVA was applied to decide on the similarities and variation in the overall use of strategies between Malays and Saudis. Table 12 below summarizes the results of the analysis.

TABLE 12.  
SIMILARITIES IN MEANS OF THE OVERALL STRATEGY USE BETWEEN MALAYS AND SAUDIS

ANOVA					
Overall	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.110	1	.110	.478	.490
Within Groups	68.526	298	.230		
Total	68.636	299			



Table 12 indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the overall use of strategies between Malays (mean: 3.29) and Saudis (mean: 3.32). Thus, the significant level is insufficient to reject the hypothesis of no differences (null hypothesis).

On the other hand, both Malays and Saudis showed medium overall strategy use as their means are the same (mean: 3.3) which indicated that these strategies are used sometimes.

## V. DISCUSSION

In answering the research questions of the study, the data drawn from the SILL revealed that there were similarities and variation in the use of individual language learning strategies. ESL learners used some strategies highly, while EFL students used them at a medium level.

EFL Saudi students who are not exposed to English outside the classroom reported medium level of using resources such as watching English films, or reading English books for pleasure, or writing notes and letters in English, or speaking English with others. This is probably due to their busy schedules and family commitments. Furthermore, it is difficult for them to watch English films while the other members of their family do not speak English. This situation may also refer to the students' instrumental motivation in learning English which is passing their exam. They are not so highly motivated to use English for communication outside class; whereas some strategies were dominant by EFL students, the same strategies on the contrary were used at a medium level by ESL students.

EFL Saudi students were also more visually-oriented than auditory, tactile or kinesthetic. They like to learn through visual communication. They also did not use word for word translations. However, in learning new vocabulary items, they link the familiar words in their first language that sound like the new words in English, or they break down the new words into parts they understand.

Furthermore, EFL learners know well how to control their emotions and lower their anxiety in their learning, by talking to their peers about their feelings, and by using relaxation. They also overcome limitation in speaking by using gestures in place of giving expressions to stay in a conversation.

Finally, EFL learners feel that practicing English like native speakers, and asking English speakers for help, are very challenging, and help them learn much more. So, they consider practicing English as one of the effective ways to learn.

Although there was a variation in the use of individual strategies between ESL and EFL learners, there were also similarities between them. This can be explained by both types of learners need to use some individual strategies for learning effectively, regardless of the status of their English language.

Most of the strategies used by both ESL and EFL students at a high level were metacognitive ones followed by cognitive ones, then compensation ones and finally the least types used were social and affective ones.

In addition, most of the strategies used by ESL and EFL students at a medium level were memory ones followed by cognitive, then social and compensation ones, then affective ones, and finally the least used type was the metacognitive one.

Likewise, the least popular strategies among ESL and EFL learners were "I write down my feelings in a language learning diary", and "I use flash cards to remember new English words". Students showed that they generally do not use these two strategies. Maybe they feel more comfortable in using their native language to express feelings, and they do not prefer using flashcards as they think that this technique suits children more than adults.

With regard to category level, the findings indicated that the dominant strategy category used by both ESL and EFL learners was the metacognitive one known as "organizing and evaluating your learning", and surprisingly both types of the students reported the same mean score (3.7). This finding is in harmony with the results of the studies by Javid, Al-thubaiti and Uthman (2013); Alnujaidi (2017) on foreign language learners and Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) on second language learners, which stated that both EFL and ESL students used metacognitive strategies most frequently. This result of preferences of metacognitive strategy category showed that students are aware that in order for them to learn a new language, they have to organize and plan their language learning. Teachers of these students can help their students organize their learning by giving them the course plan from the beginning of the semester. They can also help them by relating their prior knowledge to new one when teaching them. They can also teach new vocabulary in groups and categories based on a unifying concept for each group.

Another finding showed that ESL and EFL students used the affective strategy category "Managing your emotions" and the memory strategy category "Remembering more effectively", least often.

Similar results have been reported in a few studies on second and foreign language learners by Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006), and by Alhaysony (2017), who stated that ESL and EFL students used affective and memory strategies least often.

The reason why the affective strategy category was used least often by both ESL and EFL students might be due to the fact that students are well organized. That is seen in the findings. Being well organized, they prepare for their lectures in advance. They plan for situations that may cause emotional pressure. It may have also used it least often because their exposure to the English language is increased with the development of new technology and the various types of social networks. Indirect online social contact probably helps them not to panic if they do not understand anything in a discussion. Social networks may have also helped them to have access to native English speakers and to have more chances of interacting with them.

The low frequency in the use of memory strategy category might be due to the fact that students are not familiar with some memory strategies mentioned such as “Using flashcards to remember new English words”, or “I physically act out new English words”.

Finally, with regard to the overall strategy use by both ESL and EFL learners, results showed that there were no significant differences between ESL and EFL learners, as both groups showed medium overall strategy use. This finding of a medium overall strategy use for EFL students were consistent with the findings obtained from the study of Shmais (2003) and Alnujaidi (2017).

## VI. CONCLUSION

ESL and EFL learners were sufficiently dynamic in utilizing the language learning strategies. Although there was some agreement in the use of individual strategies, there was also some variation, i.e. ESL learners showed a high level of using some strategies, whereas EFL learners showed medium use of the same strategies and vice versa.

At the category level, the findings indicated that there was no significant variation in the use of strategies for both ESL and EFL learners. The most frequent strategy category used by both ESL and EFL learners was the metacognitive one “organizing and evaluating your learning”, and the least frequent ones were the affective one “managing your emotions”, and the memory category “remembering more effectively”.

With regard to overall strategy use, the findings showed that there was no significant differences in the overall strategy use as they both reported medium overall strategy use.

Thus, the findings of the study can provide an understanding of strategy use among ESL/EFL learners. Teachers can improve the quality of their teaching and their students learning by incorporating learning strategies into their teaching methods and into their course materials. They can raise learners ‘awareness of the variety of categories of strategies available to them to promote lifelong learning.

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