Pronunciation Learning Strategies used by EFL Learners in University Context

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Abstract
The students' pronunciation has increasingly received the Standard English Pronunciation British and American Style respectively. Exposed by number of media and applications recognized the students obtaining a lot of activities to practice English pronunciation unrestricted and allowing them to use learning strategies individually within their daily life. The present study aimed at investigating the Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) used by Indonesian EFL university students. Quantitative research design was used descriptively in which participants were made up of ninety eight students and used pronunciation strategies questionnaire based on Oxford (1990) and made small adjustment adapted by Akyol (2013) as the main instrument. It was revealed that students mostly used Cognitive strategies which shown by percentage 40%, whereas memory strategies was minimally practiced which contribute only 4% of the participants. Thus, students' pronunciation learning strategies reflects their ability to have self-learning in imitating with practice naturalistically. The results are also expected to teacher to design learning with drilling and practice orally in the classroom.

*Keywords***:** *pronunciation; learning; strategies; EFL students*

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is one of the essential abilities in realizing the English language orally accurately. Not only as element of productive skill, but pronunciation also contributes to effective communication (Fang & Lin, 2012) and (Afrifa-Yamoah et al., 2021). As EFL learners manipulate their accent to be intelligible which is correlated to speaking (Loka, Assyfa Rahma S P, Imranuddin, 2020) apart from their actual and native language, pronunciation ability is seen to be reflective on their learning autonomy by allowing learners to hear their own mispronunciation and appreciate their ability on the elements of pronunciation (Thompson & Gaddes, 2005). Therefore, English learners are obligated to

understand not only dealing with sound production, but also comprehending the messages spoken while using language in which among students faced difficult however (Praistiana & Budiharto, 2020).

As noted by (Permatasari, 2019), pronunciation has several aspect that should be bear in mind through the teaching, they are segmental and supra-segmental domains (Martin Hewings, 2007) and (Zarzycki, 2020). There are accents to get pronunciation started, stress, and syllable in segmental features, while in conversation, there are features of fluent speech such as linking sounds, intonation in telling, asking and answering, organizing conversation, and toning (Fromkin et al., 1996),(Roach, 2009), (Hudson, 2013), and (Reed, 2015). Those aspects are emphasized in the classroom activities in achieving the communicative competence of EFL learners using understandable English orally.

Several studies on the way of teachers and classroom actions towards improving the learners' pronunciation have been revealed. Initially, (Jafari et al., 2021) presented that classroom activities mostly were imitation and repetition, and drama and role-play were the most common strategies used by teacher in teaching pronunciation. On the other hand, (Tuan, 2021) studied Vietnamese learners by exploitation of an innovative approach to English pronunciation named the L1 point of reference (L1POR) approach and found L1 phonological impacted on L2 pronunciation were taken into account in the teaching process.

Further, since the last three years, learning pronunciation were influenced by techno-based learning in the classroom. (Espinoza et al., 2021) and (Panggabean & Silvia Batubara, 2022) were updating classroom into technological advanced activities such as the use of audiovisual material and the use of Karaoke Application as a tool to learn English pronunciation. Both of these studies showed that materials and tool have assisted EFL learners to produce clear pronunciation devices including word stress, rhythm, intonation and sound. Interestingly, they also contributed to the improvement of learners' pronunciation at different English levels as well as those having different ages and diverse language background.

In the same line, (Abimnui, 2021) also successful to support learners pronunciation by audiovisual material in terms of interest. Moreover, technology-based learning tools using AI by (Sariani et al., 2022) and (Castelo, 2023) were found learners' autonomous to the opportunity in learning pronunciation. Gaining depth understanding on the use of innovation in approach, tools and materials in affecting pronunciation improvement (Kosasih, 2021), EFL learners in university context becomes what present study concerns.

Based on the learners' pronunciation achievements in three years; 2019, 2020, and 2021, most of them were able to be classified as those as well practice learners in pronunciation. According to classroom activities, lecturers in teaching pronunciation also were they who trained by IALF tutors in which media and innovation applied in the classroom. Also, mobile apps and internet- used were variously exposed to learners to help them improve pronunciation. It is not reliant to state that learners were pronouncing English accurately and intelligible. Instead of these occasions, circumstances were built in the classroom context, where individual learner strategies could not be reached completely as their self-learning strategies. Because situation in the classroom cannot be reflected to all members of

class exclusively to separate person. Based on this background, the study was design to investigate the individual learner's pronunciation strategies apart from classroom activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) used by EFL learners have been established by various researches with different contexts which derived scholars to association of knowledge about strategies in learning this productive skill. Prior to this view, PLS (Peterson, 2000), Oxford' strategy group the pronunciation learning strategies into memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social.

Table 1. Oxford's Pronunciation Learning Strategies

Strategy Group	Pronunciation Learning Strategies
Memory	Representing sounds in memory
Cognitive	Practicing naturalistically
	Formally practicing with sounds
	Analyzing the sound system
Compensation	Using proximal articulation
Metacognitive	Finding out about TL pronunciation
	Setting goals and objectives
	Planning for a language task
	Self-evaluating
Affective	Using humor to lower anxiety
Social	Asking for help
	Cooperating with peers

Researches on the pronunciation learning strategies have been interested in various context and revealed different way of understanding on how the English learners strategically learn pronunciation. Initially, (Murat Hişmanoğlu, 2006) and (Ezza & Saadeh, 2011) invented that students involved in their own learning detached from classroom and teachers. They worked on their dictionaries to look up word in the TL which represented transcription how to pronounce a word. This strategy may include to the metacognitive in which learners reading and acquiring a general knowledge of phone.

Another study revealed by (Akyol, 2013) that cooperation strategies were mostly used by participants in Turkish context in which involved specific tactics such as talking to classmates in English and interaction frequently to the native speakers. Still in the Turkey context, (Şakire Erbay, 2016) found that three

strategies; cognitive, metacognitive and memory strategies were employed by students, despite affective tactics were rarely used by them.

Different from this view, as cited by (Rahmah & Rosyid, 2018), pronunciation learning strategies used by students are the cognitive strategies in which almost contributes 30% of the six strategies. In addition to the use of cognitive, (Permatasari, 2019) stated that Indonesia learners used compensation strategies by using similar sounds, circumlocution, and synonym while learning pronunciation. PLS also used by students (Baihaqi, Yasmika, Siagiyanto Bambang Eko, 2021) moreover, showed that English students applied strategies by listening the English songs, watching English movies and reading aloud the English textbook.

Further reveal was shown by (Taladngoen et al., 2020), beside frequent used of cognitive, Thai students were supported by online applications, like Translator on Google, which was provided by pronunciation demonstration. Addition made by (Jang, 2021), beside cognitive strategies, Korean students also used affective learning tactics such as having a sense of humor about mistakes in pronunciation. However, (Kim, 2021) and (Yoon, 2022) relied as the least strategies used by Korean EFL learners was metacognitive by avoiding saying difficult words and they wanted to speak with natural intonation or Korean-like accent.

Lastly, investigated by (Jarosz, 2021), the study presented the incidental development found of the Polish pronunciation learning strategies by using PLSs in the classroom assisted by teachers. Teacher exposed students to learn pronunciation with different kind of strategies. Upon experimental group, students were indicated to be more improved rather than control group by means of listening to English songs.

Beside Oxford's PLS, there is taxonomy of PLS proposed by Eckstein as cited in (Muhammad & Othman, 2018), PLSs are divided into four types; concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

Table 2. Eckstein's Pronunciation Learning strategies

PLSs types	Strategies
Concrete experience	Enhancing intent listening
	Representing sounds in memory
	Focusing on individual syllables
	Reading aloud
	Imitating or mimicry of native speakers
	Memorizing the pronunciation of words
Reflective observation	Focusing on supra-segmental
	Distinguishing errors among other speakers
	Acquiring self-monitoring
Abstract conceptualization	
	Obtaining general knowledge of phonetics
	Self-correcting

Active experimentation	Monitoring themselves to eliminate negative transference
	Selecting clear speech Rehearsing sounds Skipping difficult words during conversation and communication with others

METHOD

Population and Samples

Participants were made up of ninety eight university (n= 98) students of English Education Department at a university in Indonesia. They were the students studying English in the first year of their four-year degree program. The selection of the students was done randomly regardless gender and race. This department especially chosen for the study since the students were estimated to be learning English intensively one year taught by professional English teachers tutored by IALF Bali, Indonesia with great deal of learning more in the dormitory and developing simultaneously their English pronunciation in their majoring. The students ranged in age from 20 to 25 and only 9 of the 98 students were male. All of the students were considered to reveal the data for the present study.

Instruments, Data Collection and Analysis

The main instrument used in this study was the Pronunciation Strategies questionnaire based on the taxonomies of pronunciation learning strategies presented by (Peterson, 2000). However the researcher applied a small adjustment of the questionnaire adapted by (Akyol, 2013) to provide understandable wording of statements. Furthermore, the instrument was performed by five-point Likert scale with five description categories of "Never", "Rarely", "Sometimes", "Frequently", and "Always". The purpose was to gather frequency counts pronunciation learning strategies under six categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and cooperation. The questionnaire consisted of 41 items. The researcher also used the students' native language in developing close-ended questions, to ensure students comprehend the question so that answer was addressed accurately. The questionnaire were administered to EFL learners at UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan. The gathered data were analyzed by using descriptive statistic by emerging percentages in each categories.

FINDINGS

### Pronunciation Learning Strategies used by EFL Learners

Based on the Oxford's PLSs, from the six categories, there were found five categories used by learners excluded Compensation strategies which was not responded to present the percentages. Accordingly, **memory strategies** had been

established 4% by representing sounds in memory. Learners used this strategies by specific way such as making up songs or rhythm or using phonetic codes to remember sounds besides almost a quarter of the respondents were revealed never to do so.

Cognitive strategies had been emerged 40% by practicing naturalistically which were figured out by learners exercises to recall how the teacher pronounce words, listening to music, songs, tapes or television through movies. However, by this strategy, learners also were found to not formally practicing with sounds such as using flashcards to practice with 44% contribution on the reluctant to use.

Metacognitive strategies were revealed by 16% of the respondents by planning for a language task and self- evaluating. Learners were preparing for an oral presentation by writing difficult-to- pronounce words very large in one's notes and recording oneself to listen to one's pronunciation. Least of the learners were setting goals and objectives in terms of memorizing the sound or even focusing on learning and listening to particular sounds.

Affective strategies were shown by only 14% of the respondents to use senses of humor to lower their anxiety. Sometimes learners found themselves mispronounced the words which resulted their 5% of the feelings to be seriously treated. Meanwhile **social strategies**, asking for help and cooperating with peers were slightly established by 15% to 17% of the respondents. They were critically presented a social relationship kept them practicing pronunciation. The following figure presents the EFL learners' PLS based on Oxford's categories.
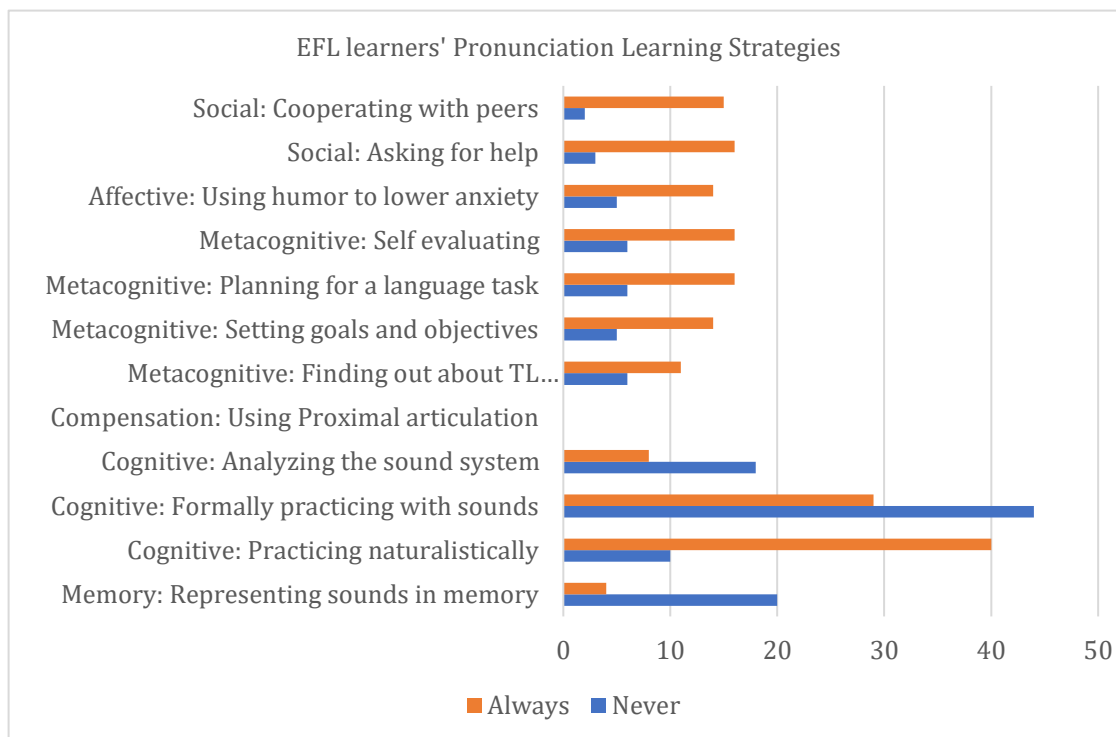
Figure 1. EFL learners' PLSs

Based on the description above, specific tactics used by learners are necessary to figure out. Based on the most frequent PLSs, **Cognitive strategies** were recognized by practicing naturalistically such as trying to recall how a teacher pronounced something, imitating a teacher's mouth movements, listening to tapes/television/movies/music, speaking slowly to get the pronunciation right, mentally rehearsing how to say something before speaking, concentrating intensely on pronunciation while listening to the TL, talking silently to oneself and trying to avoid producing inappropriate native language sounds.

Likewise, learners also used practicing with sounds such as running into pronouncing a difficult word over and over, repeating sounds silently, and practicing saying words slowly at first and then faster. However, learners underused analyzing the sounds system, such as rarely to notice contrasts between native and TL pronunciation, listening to pronunciation errors made by TL speakers speaking one's native language, and forming and using hypotheses about pronunciation rules. The following chart presents the most frequent PLSs used by learners based on the six categories.
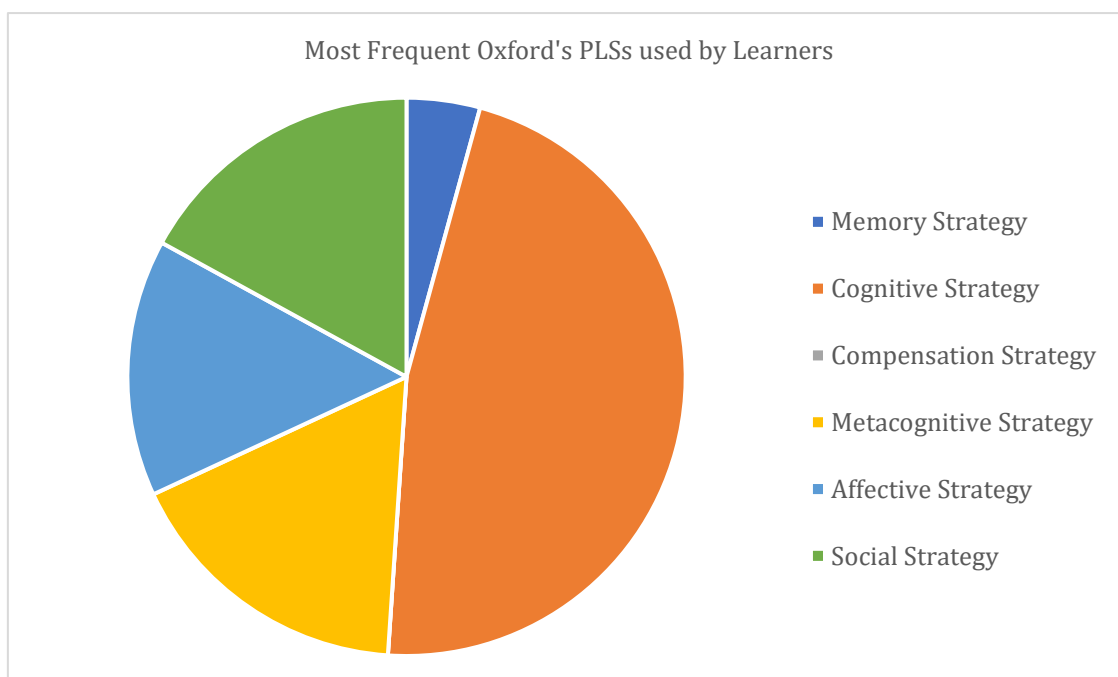
Figure 2. Most Frequent Oxford's PLSs

On the other hand, **metacognitive strategies** were presented by learners by planning for a language task and self-evaluation. Learners were frequently preparing for an oral presentation by writing difficult-to- pronounce words very large in one's notes and recording their mispronunciation to be corrected by themselves.

In relation to their practice in metacognitive, learners also used **social strategies** in improving their pronunciation by asking someone else to correct one's

pronunciation and asking someone else to pronounce something as well as studying with someone else or teaching or tutoring someone else among their classmates. While affective strategies were seemed to be reflected by the learners' emotions in learning pronunciation, mistakes on the pronunciation became no worries on it.

DISCUSSION

Pronunciation learning strategies have been studied for several researchers among different contexts of EFL learners. The present study has depicted that cognitive strategies are the most frequent used by learners. In line with this evidence, (Rahmah & Rosyid, 2018) argued that this assumption on doing this strategies, learners are easier to be conducted in the learning process. However, the present research was not dealing with the classroom activities even though learners solely determine their strategies to be cognitive. So that, strategies used cognitively by some tactics can be seen in the learners activity whether in classroom with teachers or separately by individual learner.

There was also (Permatasari, 2019) who found cognitive as the most strategies used by EFL learners. Comparing to this strategy, she mentioned that cognitive strategy as one of the direct strategies besides memory and compensation strategies. In contrast, the present research did not mention concisely relationship between these three types of strategies. To be more directed, this study also found memory strategies in a bit few of tactics revealed by using songs, codes, and transcription symbols. However, comparing to (Permatasari, 2019), present study did not found any tactics used by learners which classified as compensation strategies, where learners found applying circumlocution such as synonymous words, minimal pairs to look for similar sounds and so on. Thus, distinction can be stated clearly, but context remained in to figure out because cognitive strategies used mostly in previous researches and present study have similar circumstances, namely Indonesia.

Further emphasis occurred by what (Taladngoen et al., 2020) and (Jang, 2021) discovered. Firstly, supported by tools and online learning machines and application, cognitive strategies were found relied on them. Thai learners found themselves using PLSs by numerous pronunciation demonstration provided by application and they were accessible easily. The present study did not depicted that apps and smartphone will not take into account, but stating generally only to the way of learners listening to musing and English songs, watching movies and listening to the podcasts. Surely, learners were exposed to those kind of media to get improved.

Another point is the affective and social strategies which were found equally by the present study. Thai students built intimacy and acquaintance when they did not have access to their tools. As a result, social strategies appeared among them as classmates, valuing ones' pronunciation errors when it were strange, there happened emotional aspect of using affective strategies. Dealing with this indication, present study was minimally found it underused. That suggested learners had their peer to check their accuracy, facilitating friends to repeat and imitate sound in group

or pairs. Thus, cognitive strategies were emerged in the present study with aids and tools besides affective and social tactics were conducted when learners have no admission to them.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, the present study concludes that the most frequent pronunciation learning strategies used by EFL learners in university context are cognitive strategies which contributed 40% of the respondents reacted to the tactics. Precise ways of learning occurred in the recalling how the lecturer pronounce the words and not once using flash cards as a media to help them pronounce words. Metacognitive, affective and social strategies are slightly occurred one into another where it revealed in amount of 14% to 16% of the respondents used. While memory strategies in which learners using rhythm and songs and symbols to improve pronunciation assumed to be least in this study. Therefore, future study will benefit to explore pronunciation learning strategy used, to investigate reason why there were as the way they did. Simply capturing the strategies will elicit number of questions beyond, so that implication to the use of PLSs can be reached.

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