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Language Learning Strategy Use of Dilla University English Major Students

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Abstract

This study investigated the patterns of language learning strategy (LLS) use among English major students at Dilla University, with particular attention to variations across different achievement levels. The participants were thirty second-year students enrolled in the English program. Adopting a descriptive research design that combined both quantitative and qualitative methods, the study gathered data through Rebecca Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and a series of follow-up interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 20, employing descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential tests, including one-way ANOVA and post hoc analyses, to determine group differences. The findings revealed that students with higher academic achievement utilized a broader range and higher frequency of language learning strategies compared to their average- and low-achieving peers. The statistical results also confirmed significant differences among the three groups in their overall use of learning strategies. These outcomes highlight a strong positive relationship between the effective use of language learning strategies and academic success in English language learning.

1 Introduction

In contemporary language education, the ability to learn effectively has become as important as the content being learned. Within second and foreign language contexts, researchers consistently emphasize that learners' strategic behavior plays a crucial role in determining learning outcomes. As noted by scholars such as Griffiths (2013) and Oxford (2017), language learning strategies are not merely supplementary techniques but central mechanisms that shape how learners process, retain, and apply linguistic knowledge.

The global expansion of English has further intensified the need for effective learning practices. English functions as a primary medium for academic communication, access to digital information, professional networking, and international collaboration. Consequently, it occupies a central position in educational systems worldwide, where it is taught either as a second language or as a foreign language across all instructional levels. In such contexts, learners are required not only to acquire linguistic knowledge but also to develop the capacity to regulate their own learning processes.

A considerable amount of research has been devoted to examining the ways in which learners employ various strategies to facilitate their English language learning. Empirical evidence indicates that students adopt multiple techniques aimed at improving their comprehension, memory retention, communication skills, and self-regulation during the learning process (Khamkhien, 2011; Oxford, 2011). Numerous studies have also focused on determining which specific strategies are most

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commonly utilized and how their use varies according to learners' proficiency levels (Foster *et al*., 2017; Phonhan, 2016; Rardprakhon, 2016). Consistent with these investigations, several scholars have observed that high-achieving learners tend to use language learning strategies more frequently and in more diverse ways than their less proficient counterparts (Al-Qahtani, 2013; Habok & Magyar, 2018; Rao, 2016). However, other studies have reported that the correlation between strategy use and language proficiency is not always statistically significant (Phonhan, 2016; Rardprakhon, 2017). These mixed findings imply that learners' strategy use may depend on a combination of contextual factors, individual learner characteristics, and instructional environments.

Research has also examined which categories of strategies learners prefer. Some studies indicate that cognitive strategies—such as analyzing, practicing, and summarizing—are used more frequently than memory-based techniques (Al-Qahtani, 2013; Charoento, 2017; Bonyadi *et al*., 2012; Khamkhien, 2011). In contrast, other studies have highlighted the importance of social strategies, reporting either high or relatively low levels of usage depending on the educational setting (Suwanarak, 2015; Tieocharoen & Rimkeeratikul, 2019; Foster *et al*., 2017). Such variations suggest that language learning strategy use is neither uniform nor universal but shaped by specific instructional, cultural, and motivational contexts.

Within the Ethiopian higher education environment, enrollment in English programs has increased in recent years due to the expanding role of English in employment, academic mobility, and international engagement. Despite this growth, noticeable disparities in academic performance persist among university students majoring in English. At Dilla University, for instance, fluctuations in enrollment and academic achievement have raised concerns. A considerable proportion of students demonstrate performance below expected standards, and some discontinue their studies due to academic challenges. These patterns highlight the need to examine factors beyond curriculum and instruction, including how students approach the learning process itself.

Low academic achievement in English may stem from multiple sources, such as instructional practices, availability of learning materials, assessment systems, teacher preparation, and learner attitudes (Cross, 1995). However, learners' own strategic engagement with language tasks is equally important. Understanding whether high-, average-, and low-achieving students differ in their strategic behavior may provide insight into the mechanisms underlying achievement gaps.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to investigate the language learning strategies employed by English major students at Dilla University and to determine whether differences exist across achievement levels. By examining how learners regulate, monitor, and support their language development, this study aims to contribute to a clearer understanding of the relationship between strategy use and academic performance in an Ethiopian university context. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. Which language learning strategies are most frequently employed by high-, average-, and low-achieving students?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference among high-, average-, and low-achieving students in their use of language learning strategies?

2 Review of Related Literature

Language Learning Strategies: Conceptual Perspectives

Over several decades, language learning strategies (LLS) have attracted sustained scholarly attention within second and foreign language research (Griffiths, 2013; Griffiths & Cansiz, 2015; Habok & Magyar, 2018; Khamkhien, 2011; Macaro, 2006; Oxford, 2011; Wu, 2008). Rather than viewing learners as passive recipients of instruction, contemporary perspectives frame them as active agents who deliberately employ techniques to enhance comprehension, retention, and communication. Within this framework, strategy use is considered a mediating factor between instructional input and language achievement.

Empirical studies consistently suggest that strategic engagement contributes to improved language performance. However, the extent and type of strategies used vary considerably among learners. Researchers have identified multiple variables that shape strategy selection, including proficiency level, duration of language study, academic goals, gender, personality characteristics, learning styles, disciplinary background, aptitude, instructional context, task type, cultural background, emotional factors, and age. This indicates that strategy use is dynamic and context-sensitive rather than fixed or universal.

Strategy Use and Language Proficiency

One of the most debated issues in the literature concerns the relationship between strategy use and proficiency level. A number of investigations report that learners with higher proficiency tend to utilize a broader range of strategies and apply them more systematically (Al-Qahtani, 2013; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011; Giang & Tuan, 2018; Habok & Magyar, 2018). These learners not only report more frequent strategy use (Foster *et al*., 2017; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011), but also demonstrate more purposeful and contextually appropriate application (Chen, 2009).

Similarly, recent research underscores that effective learners are often characterized by strategic flexibility and conscious regulation of their learning processes (Al-Qahtani, 2013; Charoento, 2017; Rao, 2016; Wu, 2008). In this sense, strategy use appears to function as both a cognitive and metacognitive resource supporting academic success (Habo, 2017).

Nevertheless, not all findings align with this positive association. Some studies report weak or non-significant relationships between strategy frequency and proficiency level (Phonhan, 2016; Rardprakhon, 2016). Such inconsistencies suggest that strategy effectiveness may depend on contextual variables, including instructional quality, learner beliefs, and cultural expectations (Chen, 2009; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011; Giang & Tuan, 2018; Habok & Magyar, 2018). Thus, while a general trend supports a positive relationship, the literature remains nuanced rather than unanimous.

Influence of Educational Context and Culture

Strategy use does not develop in isolation; it is shaped by the educational and sociocultural environments in which learning occurs. Chamot (2004) and Oxford (1989) argue that instructional practices and curriculum design significantly influence how learners approach language tasks. In systems that emphasize competition and individual accountability, learners may gravitate toward independent strategies, whereas collaborative environments may encourage social engagement.

Grainger (2012) further emphasizes that cultural norms affect learners' preferences for certain strategy types. Zhong (2015), for example, documented how two Chinese immigrant learners adjusted their strategy repertoire after exposure to new pedagogical practices in New Zealand. Their beliefs about learning and their strategic behaviors evolved in response to the new educational setting. Additional studies also highlight the socially mediated nature of strategy use (Habok & Magyar, 2018; Hashim *et al*., 2018; Tieocharoen & Rimkeeratikul, 2019). Collectively, these findings reinforce the view that strategy adoption is contextually embedded and subject to environmental influences.

Motivation and Strategic Learning

Motivation represents another central variable influencing language learning strategies. Learners with stronger motivational orientations generally report higher frequency and diversity of strategy use (Al-Qahtani, 2013). Beyond frequency, motivation also enhances strategic appropriateness by enabling learners to align chosen strategies with long-term learning goals (Oxford, 1990).

Research indicates that motivation and strategy use operate interactively rather than independently (Griffiths, 2013; Kunasaraphan, 2015; Macaro, 2006; Taguchi, 2002). Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations contribute to persistence, task engagement, and sustained effort. Consequently, strategic behavior may be understood not merely as a cognitive tool but also as a motivationally driven process that supports autonomy and self-regulation. Understanding these interconnections is essential for educators and researchers, as it clarifies how learners translate intention into effective action within EFL contexts.

Oxford's Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies

Among the various classification systems proposed in the literature, Oxford's (1990) framework remains one of the most widely applied. Her model organizes strategies into two overarching categories: direct and indirect strategies. This taxonomy has gained prominence because it integrates cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of language learning into a coherent structure (Paredes, 2010).

Direct Strategies

Direct strategies involve active manipulation of the target language. They encompass memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies.Memory strategies facilitate retention and retrieval of new linguistic material by forming associations through imagery, grouping, sound patterns, or physical movement (Oxford, 2003). Such techniques enable learners to encode vocabulary and structures in meaningful ways.

Cognitive strategies involve deeper processing activities, such as analyzing, summarizing, reasoning, note-taking, and practicing language forms. These strategies directly engage learners in constructing and restructuring linguistic knowledge.Compensation strategies allow learners to overcome gaps in knowledge. Through guessing meanings from context, paraphrasing, or using alternative expressions, learners maintain communication even when linguistic resources are limited.

Indirect Strategies

Indirect strategies support language learning without directly manipulating linguistic content. They include metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Oxford, 1990).

Metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's learning process (Fewell, 2010). Learners employing these strategies set goals, organize study time, seek opportunities for practice, and reflect on their progress. Affective strategies address emotional regulation. Managing anxiety, maintaining confidence, and sustaining motivation are central components of successful language learning (Vlckova *et al*., 2013). Emotional stability enables learners to participate more actively in communicative situations.

Social strategies facilitate interaction with others. By asking for clarification, requesting feedback, or engaging in collaborative practice, learners enhance both comprehension and communicative competence (Canale, 1983; Paredes, 2010). Although definitions of LLS vary across researchers, most agree that strategic engagement promotes learner autonomy and self-direction (Vandergrift, 2002; Paredes, 2010).

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) has become one of the most extensively used instruments for measuring strategy use. Ellis (1994) describes it as one of the most comprehensive tools available for large-scale data collection. Numerous studies have employed SILL across diverse cultural and educational contexts (Green & Oxford, 1995; Wharton, 2000; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Lan & Oxford, 2003).

The instrument has been translated into multiple languages and applied to investigate relationships between strategy use and variables such as gender, proficiency level, learning styles, cultural background, and years of language study (Green & Oxford, 1995; Wharton, 2000). Its structured format allows for systematic comparison across groups while maintaining internal consistency.

Given its theoretical grounding and empirical validation, SILL provides a reliable framework for examining how learners deploy different categories of strategies. For the present study, its comprehensive classification system offers an appropriate basis for analyzing variations in strategy use across achievement levels.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative data were coded and entered into SPSS version 20 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed to determine the overall frequency of strategy use across categories. To identify differences among high-, average-, and low-achieving groups, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Where significant differences emerged, post hoc

comparisons were applied to determine specific group contrasts. Qualitative interview responses were analyzed thematically. Emerging themes were compared with the quantitative findings to identify convergence or divergence in reported strategy use patterns (Griffiths, 2013; Oxford, 2011).

3.2 Target Population and sampling

This study, conducted at Dilla University, sought to investigate the strategies employed by high, average, and low achievers. Just like the setting, the subjects were purposefully selected by the researcher because the present investigator assumed that the students had better awareness of language learning strategies than freshmen at the university. The total population that took part in this study was thirty EFL students, based on a comprehensive sampling technique.

All participants in this study were first-degree learners. High, average, and low achievers were identified among these participants based on their three semester cumulative results. Students who managed to score between 2 and 2.5 points in their English language learning were considered low achievers, and the students whose grade ranged from 2.5 to 3.00 points were called average achievers in this study. The high achievers are the ones who were able to achieve a 3.0 or higher GPA in their English language learning. The ages of these students ranged from 19 to 22 years old. Participants have nearly the same year of English learning experience. They studied English beginning in primary school and progressing through tertiary school. All participants in this study neither entered language schools nor lived in English-speaking countries.

3.3 Data Gathering Instruments

Two research instruments were employed in this study to gain the required information from the respondents and assess their strategy use. These were a self-report questionnaire for ESL/EFL learners (SILL) and a semi-structured interview.

The self-report questionnaire (SILL):
Data were collected using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) developed by Rebecca L. Oxford (1990). The SILL is one of the most widely utilized instruments for assessing language learning strategies and has been applied extensively in international research contexts (Ellis, 1994; Green & Oxford, 1995; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Wharton, 2000).

The instrument contains 50 items categorized into six strategy groups: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Oxford, 1990). Respondents indicate the frequency of their strategy use on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("never true of me") to 5 ("always true of me"). Previous research has reported satisfactory reliability and validity across diverse linguistic and cultural settings (Ellis, 1994; Green & Oxford, 1995).

Interview:
A semi-structured interview was used in order to substantiate the information gained via the questionnaire. To obtain detailed information from subjects, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews. By the same token, it permits a free response. Since the purpose of this interview was to supplement the data collected through the self-report questionnaire, it was designed on the basis of the questionnaire. For this reason, the contents of the interview were almost identical to the contents of the questionnaire. Three students from each of the three groups, low, average, and high achievers, were purposefully chosen for the interview.

3.4 Data analysis techniques

Quantitative data were coded and entered into SPSS version 20 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed to determine the overall frequency of strategy use across categories. To identify differences among high-, average-, and low-achieving groups, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Where significant differences emerged, post hoc comparisons were applied to determine specific group contrasts.

Qualitative interview responses were analyzed thematically. Emerging themes were compared with the quantitative findings to identify convergence or divergence in reported strategy use patterns (Griffiths, 2013; Oxford, 2011).

4 Results and Discussions

Table 1: Metacognitive Strategy use

Achievement		Metacogniti ve Strategy 1	MetaStrg 2	MetaStrg3	MetaStrg 4	MetaStrg 5	MetaStrg 6	MetaStrg 7	MetaStrg 8	MetaStrg 9	MetaStrg 10
Low	Mean	2.12	2.53	2.88	2.76	2.65	2.94	2.47	2.53	2.65	2.88
	SD	.781	1.281	1.269	1.348	1.222	1.298	1.281	1.231	.931	1.317
	Skewness	-.219	.432	.039	.658	.079	-.073	.378	-.077	.828	.057
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Medium	Mean	2.71	3.14	3.86	4.43	2.86	2.86	3.00	3.43	2.43	3.43
	SD	.951	1.464	1.215	.787	.900	1.464	1.000	1.272	1.813	.976
	Skewness	-.863	.109	-.414	-1.115	.353	-.109	-1.400	.222	.983	.277
	N	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
High	Mean	3.67	3.33	4.17	4.50	4.67	3.83	4.00	4.33	4.33	4.00
	SD	.816	1.211	1.169	.548	.516	.983	1.549	1.211	1.033	1.549
	Skewness	.857	.075	-1.586	.000	-.968	-1.438	-.968	-1.952	-.968	-1.936
	N	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Total	Mean	2.57	2.83	3.37	3.50	3.10	3.10	2.90	3.10	2.93	3.23
	SD	1.006	1.315	1.326	1.383	1.296	1.296	1.373	1.398	1.363	1.331
	Skewness	.131	.231	-.262	-.335	-.096	-.299	.106	-.109	.391	-.272
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Items 1 to 10 were constructed to assess how often students with high, average, and low achievement levels used metacognitive strategies when facing difficulties in learning English. Among the low-achieving group, the reported mean frequency ranged from 2.21 to 2.94. The least utilized strategy was Item 1 (“When I cannot remember an English word, I replace it with another word or phrase of similar meaning”), whereas Item 6 (“I seek as many opportunities as I can to practice my English”) was the most frequently employed.

Other strategies that appeared relatively common among this group included Item 2 with a mean of 2.53 (“If I forget a word during conversation, I use gestures to express it”), Item 8 with a mean of 3.00 (“I set specific goals to develop my English skills”), and Item 10 with a mean of 2.88 (“I regularly think about my progress in learning English”). These results classify low achievers as moderate users of learning strategies. According to Rebecca Oxford (1990), such learners could benefit from targeted instruction aimed at improving their strategy use.

For average achievers, the mean frequency of metacognitive strategy use ranged between 2.43 and 4.43. Their most frequently used strategy was Item 4 ("I try to learn how to become a more effective English learner"), which had a mean score of 4.43, while their least used strategy was Item 8 ("I set clear goals for improving my English skills") with a mean of 2.43. The mean scores for Items 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9 were 2.71, 3.14, 2.86, 3.00, and 2.43, respectively. These findings show that average achievers, like the low-achieving group, are moderate users of metacognitive strategies, suggesting that strategy-focused guidance could further enhance their learning. This group notably made frequent use of Items 3 and 4, with mean scores of 3.86 and 4.43, respectively.

High achievers, on the other hand, reported mean scores ranging from 3.23 to 4.67. The least frequently practiced strategy was Item 10 ("I reflect on my progress in learning English"), with a mean of 3.23, while the most frequently used was Item 5 ("I monitor my English mistakes and use them for improvement") with a mean of 4.67. The mean values for Items 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 were 3.67, 3.86, 4.50, 4.67, 3.83, 4.00, 4.33, and 4.33, respectively. Overall, these results indicate that high achievers employ metacognitive strategies more consistently and effectively than both average and low achievers.

Table 2: Cognitive Strategy use

Achievement		Cogntv Strg 11	Cogntv Strg 12	Cogntv Strg 13	Cogntv Strg 14	Cogntv Strg 15	Cogntv Strg 16	Cogntv Strg 17	Cogntv Strg 18	Cogntv Strg 19	Cogntv Strg 20	Cogntv Strg 21
Low	Mean	2.35	2.29	2.41	2.82	2.71	2.82	2.59	3.00	2.65	2.59	2.65
	SD	.996	1.105	.870	1.468	1.047	1.074	1.004	1.369	1.115	1.004	.996
	Skewness	.031	.280	.306	.344	-.809	.392	.147	-.166	.501	-.273	1.258
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Medium	Mean	2.57	2.86	2.71	2.71	2.57	3.71	3.57	2.57	2.71	2.86	2.71
	SD	1.397	.900	1.254	.951	1.272	1.113	1.272	1.512	1.113	1.215	1.254
	Skewness	1.079	-1.569	.740	-.863	-.222	-.249	-.222	.620	-.249	1.147	1.450
	N	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
High	Mean	3.67	4.50	4.50	4.33	3.67	4.17	3.83	4.50	4.50	4.67	4.83
	SD	1.506	.548	.837	.816	1.751	1.169	.753	.548	.837	.516	.408
	Skewness	-1.270	.000	-1.537	-.857	-.919	-1.586	.313	.000	-1.537	-.968	-2.449
	N	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Total	Mean	2.67	2.87	2.90	3.10	2.87	3.30	3.07	3.20	3.03	3.07	3.10
	SD	1.269	1.279	1.242	1.373	1.279	1.208	1.143	1.424	1.273	1.258	1.296
	Skewness	.358	-.052	.433	-.021	-.158	.003	.010	-.301	.149	.089	.515
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Items 11 to 21 were designed to assess how frequently high-, average-, and low-achieving students applied cognitive strategies in learning English.

For low achievers, the reported frequency ranged from 2.29 to 3.00. The least used strategy was Item 12 ("I skim through an English passage quickly before reading it carefully"), while the most frequently applied was Item 18 ("I repeat or write new English words several times").

Other strategies used relatively often by this group were Item 14 with a mean of 2.00, Item 16 with 2.82, and Item 15 with 2.71, all ranking just below Item 18 with 3.00. Overall, these results suggest that low achievers are weak users of cognitive strategies. As Oxford (1990) points out, such students require substantial training in strategy use to strengthen their English learning ability.

Among average achievers, the use of cognitive strategies ranged from 2.57 to 3.71. Their most preferred strategy was Item 15 with a mean of 3.71 ("I watch TV programs or movies in English"), while the least employed was Item 17 with 2.57 ("I repeat or write new English words several times"). Items 13, 19, and 21 each had a mean of 2.71, whereas Items 16 and 18 showed higher use, each with 3.57. These findings place average achievers in the category of medium to high users of cognitive strategies.

For high achievers, the frequency of cognitive strategy use fell between 3.67 and 4.83. The most frequently used strategy was Item 21 with a mean of 4.83 ("I initiate conversations in English"). In contrast, strategies such as Item 11 ("I read English for pleasure"), Item 15 ("I try to speak like a native English speaker"), and Item 20 ("I summarize what I hear or read in English") were applied less frequently compared to others. The overall pattern indicates that high achievers are strong users of cognitive strategies.

Interview findings further supported these results. High achievers reported that they frequently employ strategies such as watching English-language films and TV programs, reading for enjoyment, practicing English regularly, summarizing information from texts and audio, and reinforcing vocabulary by repeating or writing new words. They also mentioned engaging in practical writing activities like composing messages or letters in English. Most of them explained that they learn new vocabulary through contextual clues, though they sometimes rely on dictionaries or peers to clarify unfamiliar words. These qualitative findings align with the questionnaire results, confirming that high achievers demonstrate consistent and effective use of cognitive strategies.

Table 3: Memory Strategy use

Achievement		Memory Strg 22	Memory Strg 23	Memory Strg 24	Memory Strg 25	Memory Strg 26	Memory Strg 27	Memory Strg 28
Low	Mean	2.35	2.41	2.82	2.76	2.59	2.29	2.24
	SD	1.115	.870	.883	.970	.870	1.047	.970
	Skewness	.113	.306	-.237	.066	.339	.439	.399
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Medium	Mean	2.29	2.43	2.71	2.71	3.00	3.43	3.14
	SD	.951	1.134	.951	1.496	1.155	1.618	1.773
	Skewness	.863	-.235	-.863	.256	-.909	-.317	-.297
	N	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
High	Mean	3.67	3.17	3.00	3.50	3.50	4.50	4.17
	SD	1.366	.983	1.673	1.225	.837	1.225	.753
	Skewness	-.523	-.456	.384	.490	-1.537	-2.449	-.313
	N	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Total	Mean	2.60	2.57	2.83	2.90	2.87	3.00	2.83
	SD	1.221	.971	1.053	1.155	.973	1.486	1.367
	Skewness	.361	.041	.165	.207	-.198	.203	.148
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Items 22 to 28 focused on examining the extent to which students of varying achievement levels—high, average, and low—utilized memory strategies to retain English language content.

For the low-achieving group, reported mean scores ranged from 2.24 to 2.82. The strategy least employed was Item 28 ("I use new English words in sentences to help me remember them"), whereas Item 24 ("I form a mental image of a context where a new English word could be used") was the most frequently practiced. Strategies such as Item 27 (mean = 2.29) and Item 22 (mean = 2.35) appeared less common, while Item 25 ("I try to remember new words or expressions by recalling where I saw them—on a page, board, or sign," mean = 2.71) and Item 26 ("I make guesses about unfamiliar English words to understand their meaning," mean = 2.59) were somewhat more frequently used following Item 24. Overall, the results indicate that low achievers are relatively weak in applying memory-based learning strategies.

Among average achievers, mean scores for memory

strategy use ranged between 2.29 and 3.43. The most commonly employed approach was Item 27 ("I associate the sound of a new English word with an image or picture to aid recall") with a mean of 3.43, while the least utilized was Item 22 ("I review my English lessons regularly") with a mean of 2.29. In general, the results suggest that average achievers' memory strategy patterns resemble those of their low-achieving peers, showing only minor differences in frequency and preference.

For high achievers, the use of memory strategies ranged from 3.00 to 4.50. Their most favored strategy was again Item 27 ("I connect the sound of a new word with an image or picture to make it easier to remember") with a mean score of 4.50. In contrast, Item 23 ("I link new information learned in English to what I already know," mean = 3.17) and Item 24 ("I visualize a situation where the new word could be used," mean = 3.00) were the least practiced. Collectively, these findings reveal that high achievers rely on memory strategies more effectively and consistently than students in the other two groups.

The interview findings supported these quantitative results. High achievers reported using a wide range of techniques to aid memory, such as reviewing lessons regularly, forming mental pictures of situations in which new words might appear, relating new knowledge to prior knowledge, incorporating new words into sentences, recalling words based on their location on a page, sign, or board, and even writing new vocabulary on paper or their hands to review while walking or sitting.

In contrast, the average achievers interviewed mentioned applying only a few strategies, such as associating word sounds with images, reflecting on what they had been taught, and reviewing lessons periodically. Low achievers, however, admitted that they seldom used deliberate strategies for memorization. Both the statistical analysis and interview responses confirmed that high achievers clearly outperformed average and low achievers in the effective use of memory strategies.

Table 4: Social Strategy use

Achievement		Social Strg 30	Social Strg 31	Social Strg 32	Social Strg 33	Social Strg 34
Low	Mean	2.18	2.82	2.47	2.76	2.24
	SD	1.074	1.131	1.179	1.033	1.200
	Skewness	.293	.388	.469	.146	.962
	N	17	17	17	17	17
Medium	Mean	2.14	2.71	3.86	2.71	3.00
	SD	1.215	1.113	1.215	1.496	1.155
	Skewness	.414	1.784	-.414	.256	.909
	N	7	7	7	7	7
High	Mean	4.83	5.00	5.00	4.17	4.17
	SD	.408	.000	.000	1.169	1.169
	Skewness	-2.449	.	.	-1.586	-1.586
	N	6	6	6	6	6
Total	Mean	2.70	3.23	3.30	3.03	2.80
	SD	1.466	1.331	1.466	1.273	1.375
	Skewness	.280	.198	-.139	.041	.386
	N	30	30	30	30	30

Items 30 to 34 were designed to attain data on how frequently high, average, and low achievers employ social strategies to accelerate their progress in English. The result revealed that the frequency of social strategy use for low achievers ranges from 2.18 to 2.82. Item 31: "If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again." was the most frequently used

strategy, and Item 30: "I try to learn about the culture of English speakers." was the least frequently used strategy.

Average learners' social strategy use ranges from 2.14–3.86. The most frequently used social strategy for average achievers is Item 32, with a mean score of 3.86 ("I ask questions in English"), and the least frequently used strategy was Item 30, with a mean score of 2.14 ("I try to learn about the culture of English speakers"). The data revealed that average achievers' use of social strategies was not different from that of low achievers.

The frequency of social strategy use for high achievers ranges from 4.17–5.00. Item 31 and 32 received a 5.00 mean score. "If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again" and "I ask questions in English" were the most frequently used social strategies used by high achievers. However, Item 33, with a mean score of 4.17, "I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk," and Item 34, with a mean score of 4.17, "I practice English with other students," were the least frequently used social strategies, though the range is high for strategy usage.

Table 5: Compensation Strategies use

Achievement		Compensation Strategy 35	Compensation Strategy 36	Compensation Strategy 37
Low	Mean	2.47	2.47	2.00
	SD	.943	1.007	1.000
	Skewness	-.158	.091	.425
	N	17	17	17
Medium	Mean	2.57	2.71	2.43
	SD	.787	1.604	1.272
	Skewness	1.115	.305	1.581
	N	7	7	7
High	Mean	3.67	4.33	4.33
	SD	1.211	1.211	.516
	Skewness	-.075	-1.952	.968
	N	6	6	6
Total	Mean	2.73	2.90	2.57
	SD	1.048	1.373	1.331
	Skewness	.387	.192	.411
	N	30	30	30

Items 35 to 37 were intended to gather information on how often students at different achievement levels—high, average, and low—used compensation strategies to enhance their English learning progress. The findings showed that low achievers reported using such strategies with mean scores ranging from 2.00 to 2.47. The least practiced strategy was Item 37 ("When I do not know the correct English word, I invent one"), while Items 35 ("I try to predict what the other person will say next in English") and 36 ("I read English texts without checking every unfamiliar word") were the most frequently used, each with a mean of 2.47. However, even these mean values indicate a generally low level of compensation strategy use among this group.

For average achievers, the reported range of strategy use was between 2.43 and 2.71. The most often applied strategy was Item 36 ("I read English without consulting a dictionary for every new word") with a mean of 2.71, whereas the least utilized was Item 37 ("I create new words when I do not know the correct ones in English") with a mean of 2.43. These results suggest that the pattern of compensation strategy use among average achievers closely mirrors that of low achievers, with minimal variation in frequency or approach.

In contrast, high achievers reported a noticeably higher frequency of compensation strategy use, with mean values ranging from 3.67 to 4.33. Items 36 and 37—"I read English without looking up every new word" and "I make up new words if I do not know the correct ones"—both received mean scores of 4.33, making them the most frequently used strategies. Item 35 ("I attempt to guess what the speaker will say next in English"), with a mean of 3.67, was the least used among this group, though it still reflects a relatively high level of strategic engagement compared to the other groups.

Interview findings further supported these quantitative results. High achievers were able to mention several compensation strategies they employed, including the use of gestures, synonyms, and paraphrasing, among others. Conversely, both average and low achievers identified far fewer strategies. This indicates that more proficient learners tend to employ a broader and more effective range of compensation strategies than their less successful peers.

Table 6: Affective Strategy use

Achievement		Affective Strategy 38	Affective Strategy 39	Affective Strategy 40
Low	Mean	2.24	2.47	2.41
	SD	1.251	.943	1.064
	Skewness	.798	-.158	.084
	N	17	17	17
Medium	Mean	2.71	3.00	3.57
	SD	1.496	.816	1.134
	Skewness	.256	.000	-.725
	N	7	7	7
High	Mean	3.33	4.50	3.50
	SD	1.211	.548	1.225
	Skewness	.075	.000	-.490
	N	6	6	6
Total	Mean	2.57	3.00	2.90
	SD	1.331	1.145	1.213
	Skewness	.411	.000	-.045
	N	30	30	30

Items 38–40 were set up to collect data on how frequently the target population of this study applies affective strategies. The result revealed that the frequency of affective strategy usage for low achievers ranges from 2.24 to 2.47. Item 38, "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English," was the least frequently used affective strategy, and Item 39, with a mean score of 2.47, "I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English," was the most frequently used strategy, though the mean score was very close to low strategy usage.

Average learners' affective strategy usage ranges from 2.71 to 3.57. The most frequently used affective strategy for average achievers is Item 40, with a mean score of 3.57. "I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English" was the most frequently used strategy. However, Item 38, with a mean score of 2.71, "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English," was the least used affective strategy.

The frequency of affective strategy usage for high achievers ranges from 3.33 to 4.50. item with a mean score of 4.50 "I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English." was the most frequently used affective strategy used by high achievers. However, Item 38, with a mean

score of 3.33, "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English," was the least frequently used affective strategy, which is in the category of medium strategy usage.

The findings from the interview also support the results from the questionnaire. Respondents in the interview were asked to describe the types of language learning strategies they often utilize to control their anxiety when they speak in front of people, such as during presentations. In this regard, according to the high achievers in the interview, recognizing their anxiety, encouraging themselves, talking to someone else about their feelings, and trying to relax during using English are the four types of strategies that they mostly use to reduce their negative feelings when using English.

One average performer in the interview responded that she usually tries to think about her strong side when using English. The other respondent said that she sometimes tries to relax while using English. Low achievers reported that listening to music or religious songs, sharing their feelings, and praying to their creator are three types of strategies they frequently use by the time they have an English presentation. This demonstrates the superiority of the high achievers over the average achievers, as well as the low achievers, in applying affective strategies.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Summeted Variables

Main Variables Vs Achievement		N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	95% CI for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Metacognitive strategies	Low	17	2.6412	.80550	.19536	2.2270	3.0553	1.20	3.90
	Medium	7	3.2143	.28536	.10785	2.9504	3.4782	2.90	3.70
	High	6	4.0833	.44460	.18151	3.6168	4.5499	3.50	4.60
	Total	30	3.0633	.85681	.15643	2.7434	3.3833	1.20	4.60
Cognitive strategies	Low	17	2.6257	.69076	.16753	2.2705	2.9808	1.45	3.73
	Medium	7	2.8701	.54761	.20698	2.3637	3.3766	2.00	3.64
	High	6	4.2879	.43186	.17631	3.8347	4.7411	3.64	4.64
	Total	30	3.0152	.88690	.16193	2.6840	3.3463	1.45	4.64
Memory strategies	Low	17	2.4958	.57169	.13866	2.2019	2.7897	1.43	3.43
	Medium	7	2.8163	.86392	.32653	2.0173	3.6153	1.57	4.00
	High	6	3.6429	.54772	.22361	3.0681	4.2177	3.00	4.29
	Total	30	2.8000	.76665	.13997	2.5137	3.0863	1.43	4.29
Social strategies	Low	17	2.4941	.87783	.21291	2.0428	2.9455	1.00	4.60
	Medium	7	2.8857	1.02539	.38756	1.9374	3.8340	1.60	4.40
	High	6	4.6333	.29439	.12019	4.3244	4.9423	4.40	5.00
	Total	30	3.0133	1.16729	.21312	2.5775	3.4492	1.00	5.00
Compensation strategies	Low	17	2.3137	.69192	.16782	1.9580	2.6695	1.00	3.33
	Medium	7	2.5714	1.08379	.40963	1.5691	3.5738	1.67	4.67
	High	6	4.1111	.17213	.07027	3.9305	4.2918	4.00	4.33
	Total	30	2.7333	1.00725	.18390	2.3572	3.1094	1.00	4.67
Affective strategies	Low	17	2.3725	.78954	.19149	1.9666	2.7785	1.00	4.33
	Medium	7	3.0952	.46004	.17388	2.6698	3.5207	2.67	4.00
	High	6	3.7778	.68853	.28109	3.0552	4.5003	3.00	4.67
	Total	30	2.8222	.89157	.16278	2.4893	3.1551	1.00	4.67

Table 7 presents a summary of descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, and 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variables—metacognitive, cognitive, memory, social, compensation, and affective strategies—across the three achievement groups (high, average, and low) as well as for the combined total. These statistical values provide a clear overview of how each group performed in terms of strategy use.

The average score for metacognitive strategy use was 4.08 for high achievers, 3.21 for average achievers, and 2.64 for low achievers. This demonstrates that students with higher achievement levels tend to employ metacognitive strategies more often, followed by average and then low achievers. Therefore, it can be inferred that there are distinct levels of usage across the groups—high, medium, and low, respectively.

With respect to cognitive strategies, the mean scores were 4.29 for high achievers, 2.87 for average achievers, and 2.63 for low achievers. These results indicate that high achievers make far greater use of cognitive learning strategies than either of the other two groups. Hence, high achievers show strong engagement with cognitive strategies, while average and low achievers demonstrate comparatively limited use.

The mean values for memory strategies were 3.64, 2.82, and 2.50 for high-, average-, and low-achieving students, respectively. This pattern suggests that high achievers make moderate use of memory-based strategies, whereas both average and low achievers exhibit minimal application of such strategies in their learning process.

For social strategies, the mean scores recorded were 4.63 for high achievers, 2.89 for average achievers, and 2.49 for low achievers. This implies that high achievers actively engage in socially oriented strategies—such as interacting with peers or teachers to improve language skills—more frequently than students in the other groups. Thus, social strategy use appears to be highest among high achievers but low among average and low performers.

In terms of compensation strategies, high achievers scored an average of 4.11, while average and low achievers scored 2.57 and 2.31, respectively. These figures reveal that high achievers rely on compensatory methods, such as guessing or using alternative expressions, more effectively and frequently than the other two groups.

Regarding affective strategies, the mean scores were 3.78 for high achievers, 3.10 for average achievers, and 2.37 for low achievers. This trend shows that high achievers surpass the others in using affective strategies to manage their emotions and motivation, while average achievers also engage in such practices more than low achievers. Overall, affective strategy use is moderate among high and average achievers but limited among low achievers.

When ranking the six categories of learning strategies based on their mean values:

For high-achieving learners, the order is as follows:

1. Social strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 4.63, SD = 0.29),
2. Memory strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 4.63, SD = 0.29),
3. Cognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 4.29, SD = 0.43),
4. Compensation strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11, SD = 0.17),
5. Metacognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 4.08, SD = 0.44),
6. Affective strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 3.78, SD = 0.69).

Based on these findings, social strategies—classified under indirect learning strategies in Rebecca Oxford's framework—appear to be the most frequently employed by high achievers. Conversely, metacognitive and affective strategies are the least used, suggesting that top-performing learners tend to favor direct over indirect language learning strategies.

For average-achieving learners, the rank order is:

1. Metacognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 3.214, SD = 0.285),
2. Affective strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 3.095, SD = 0.460),
3. Social strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.886, SD = 1.025),
4. Cognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.870, SD = 0.547),
5. Memory strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.819, SD = 0.863),
6. Compensation strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.571, SD = 1.083).

This ranking suggests that the strategy use of average achievers is moderate overall. Interestingly,

these students rely more heavily on indirect strategies (metacognitive, social, and affective) than on direct ones (memory, cognitive, and compensation), contrasting with the pattern observed among high achievers.

For low-achieving learners, the order of strategy use is:

1. Metacognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.641, SD = 0.805),
2. Cognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.626, SD = 0.690),
3. Memory strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.496, SD = 0.571),
4. Social strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.494, SD = 0.877),
5. Affective strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.373, SD = 0.789),
6. Compensation strategies ($\bar{x}$ = 2.314, SD = 0.691).

The overall pattern reveals that low achievers demonstrate minimal engagement with language learning strategies in general, using them far less frequently and less effectively than their higher-achieving counterparts.

In summary, the results from Table 7 highlight a consistent pattern: high achievers employ a wider and more effective range of learning strategies, particularly social and cognitive, while average achievers demonstrate moderate use and low achievers exhibit limited strategy engagement.

Table 8: ANOVA Table

Variables		**Sum of Squares**	*df*	**Mean Square**	*F*	*Sig.*
Metacognitive strategies	Between Groups	9.432	2	4.716	10.738	.000
	Within Groups	11.858	27	.439		
	Total	21.290	29			
Cognitive strategies	Between Groups	12.445	2	6.223	16.207	.000
	Within Groups	10.366	27	.384		
	Total	22.811	29			
Memory strategies	Between Groups	5.837	2	2.919	7.032	.003
	Within Groups	11.207	27	.415		
	Total	17.045	29			
Social strategies	Between Groups	20.443	2	10.222	14.471	.000
	Within Groups	19.071	27	.706		
	Total	39.515	29			
Compensation strategies	Between Groups	14.566	2	7.283	13.237	.000
	Within Groups	14.856	27	.550		
	Total	29.422	29			
Affective strategies	Between Groups	9.438	2	4.719	9.359	.001
	Within Groups	13.614	27	.504		
	Total	23.052	29			

Table 8 shows the output of the ANOVA analysis and whether there is a statistically significant difference among our group means. We can see that the significance value for metacognitive strategies is 0.000 (F (2, 29) = 10.738, p = 0.000), the significance value for cognitive strategies is 0.000 (F (2, 29) = 16.207, p = 0.000), the significance value for memory strategies is 0.003 (F (2, 29) = 7.032, p = 0.003), the significance value for social strategies is 0.000 (F (2, 29) = 14.471, p = 0.000), the significance value for compensation strategies is 0.000 (F (2, 29) = 13.237, p = 0.000), and the significance value for affective strategies is 0.001 (F (2, 29) = 9.359, p = 0.001). The result revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean of all six constructs of language learning strategy use among the three ability groups.

In order to identify the specific groups that differed, the post hoc test was used. The multiple comparisons depict which groups differed from each other.

Table 9: Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable	(I) Achievement	(J) Achievement	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	$Sig.$	95% CI	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	Low	Medium	-.57311	.29762	.065	-1.1838	.0376
		High	-1.44216*	.31469	.000	-2.0879	-.7965
Metacognitive	Medium	Low	.57311	.29762	.065	-.0376	1.1838
strategies		High	-.86905*	.36870	.026	-1.6256	-.1125
	High	Low	1.44216*	.31469	.000	.7965	2.0879
		Medium	.86905*	.36870	.026	.1125	1.6256
	Low	Medium	-.24446	.27827	.387	-.8154	.3265
		High	-1.66221*	.29423	.000	-2.2659	-1.0585
Cognitive	Medium	Low	.24446	.27827	.387	-.3265	.8154
strategies		High	-1.41775*	.34473	.000	-2.1251	-.7104
	High	Low	1.66221*	.29423	.000	1.0585	2.2659
		Medium	1.41775*	.34473	.000	.7104	2.1251
	Low	Medium	-.32053	.28934	.278	-.9142	.2731
		High	-1.14706*	.30594	.001	-1.7748	-.5193
Memory	Medium	Low	.32053	.28934	.278	-.2731	.9142
strategies		High	-.82653*	.35844	.029	-1.5620	-.0911
	High	Low	1.14706*	.30594	.001	.5193	1.7748
		Medium	.82653*	.35844	.029	.0911	1.5620
	Low	Medium	-.39160	.37743	.309	-1.1660	.3828
		High	-2.13922*	.39909	.000	-2.9581	-1.3203
Social	Medium	Low	.39160	.37743	.309	-.3828	1.1660
strategies		High	-1.74762*	.46758	.001	-2.7070	-.7882
	High	Low	2.13922*	.39909	.000	1.3203	2.9581
		Medium	1.74762*	.46758	.001	.7882	2.7070
	Low	Medium	-.25770	.33312	.446	-.9412	.4258
		High	-1.79739*	.35223	.000	-2.5201	-1.0747
Compensation	Medium	Low	.25770	.33312	.446	-.4258	.9412
strategies		High	-1.53968*	.41268	.001	-2.3864	-.6929
	High	Low	1.79739*	.35223	.000	1.0747	2.5201
		Medium	1.53968*	.41268	.001	.6929	2.3864
	Low	Medium	-.72269*	.31889	.032	-1.3770	-.0684
		High	-1.40523*	.33719	.000	-2.0971	-.7134
Affective	Medium	Low	.72269*	.31889	.032	.0684	1.3770
strategies		High	-.68254	.39506	.095	-1.4931	.1280
	High	Low	1.40523*	.33719	.000	.7134	2.0971
		Medium	.68254	.39506	.095	-.1280	1.4931

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The results summarized in Table 9 indicate that the use of metacognitive learning strategies differed significantly across the three achievement groups, as confirmed by a one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 29) = 10.738$, $p < 0.001$). Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test revealed that high achievers scored significantly higher than both low achievers (mean difference = 1.442, SE = 0.314, $p < 0.001$) and average achievers (mean difference = 0.869, SE = 0.368, $p = 0.026$). However, no significant difference was found between the average and low achievers ($p = 0.065$).

For cognitive learning strategies, the ANOVA results also revealed a statistically significant group difference ($F(2, 29) = 16.207$, $p < 0.001$). The LSD post hoc analysis showed that high achievers outperformed both low achievers (mean difference = 1.662, SE = 0.294, $p < 0.001$) and average achievers (mean difference = 1.417, SE = 0.344, $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, the difference between average and low achievers was not statistically significant ($p = 0.387$).

A similar pattern emerged for memory learning strategies, where the one-way ANOVA showed a significant variation among groups ($F(2, 29) = 7.032$, $p = 0.003$). The LSD post hoc test confirmed that high achievers used memory strategies significantly more often than both low achievers (mean difference = 1.147, SE = 0.305, $p = 0.001$) and average achievers (mean difference = 0.826, SE = 0.358, $p = 0.029$). Nonetheless, the difference between the average and low achievers was statistically non-significant ($p = 0.278$).

For social learning strategies, the analysis demonstrated a significant group effect ($F(2, 29) = 14.471$, $p < 0.001$). The LSD test revealed that high achievers were statistically higher in their use of these strategies compared to low achievers (mean difference = 2.139, SE = 0.399, $p < 0.001$) and average achievers (mean difference = 1.747, SE = 0.467, $p = 0.001$). The comparison between average and low achievers, however, did not show a significant difference ($p = 0.309$).

Regarding compensation learning strategies, a one-way ANOVA also indicated a statistically significant difference among the three groups ($F(2, 29) = 13.237$, $p < 0.001$). Post hoc results revealed that high achievers made greater use of compensation strategies than both low achievers (mean difference = 1.797, SE = 0.352, $p < 0.001$) and average achievers (mean difference = 1.539, SE = 0.412, $p = 0.001$). The difference between the latter two groups was not statistically significant ($p = 0.446$).

When it comes to affective learning strategies, the findings also pointed to a statistically significant difference among the groups ($F(2, 29) = 9.359$, $p = 0.001$). The LSD post hoc test showed that low achievers scored significantly lower than average achievers (mean difference = -0.722, SE = 0.318, $p = 0.032$) and high achievers (mean difference = -1.405, SE = 0.337, $p < 0.001$). However, no statistically significant difference was found between the high and average achievers ($p = 0.095$).

In summary, both the quantitative and qualitative findings support a consistent conclusion: students with higher academic achievement tend to employ language learning strategies more frequently and effectively than their average and low-achieving counterparts. Moreover, interview responses corroborated the statistical data, reinforcing that successful learners actively use a wider range of strategies to enhance their English learning performance.

5 Discussions

Based on the students' responses, the findings of this study indicate that the overall use of language learning strategies (LLSs) among learners of English is relatively limited. The three performance groups—high, average, and low achievers—differed significantly in their employment of these strategies. Low-achieving students were found to use neither direct nor indirect LLSs effectively, reflecting a lack of understanding regarding how and when these strategies should be applied to enhance their learning.

Average achievers, on the other hand, reported frequent use of only two out of the six major types of strategies: metacognitive and affective strategies. This limited application suggests that they have insufficient experience with the three subcategories of direct strategies (cognitive, memory, and

compensation) and with social strategies under the indirect group. Consequently, their overall strategy use appears incomplete and inconsistent.

Unlike the other two groups, high-achieving students demonstrated frequent and consistent use of all six major categories of language learning strategies—both direct and indirect. This finding shows that high achievers engage with a broader range of learning techniques, implying greater awareness, experience, and control over their learning processes. Their effective and diversified strategy use clearly contributes to their superior English performance compared to average and low achievers.

The present findings align with several previous studies that have consistently shown that more successful learners tend to employ language learning strategies more frequently and effectively than their less successful counterparts (Al-Qahtani, 2013; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011; Giang & Tuan, 2018; Habók & Magyar, 2018; Foster *et al*., 2017; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011; Chen, 2009). These studies confirm that effective learners are generally more strategic—they adapt their techniques to suit particular tasks, seek help from peers or teachers when necessary, and possess confidence in their capacity to learn successfully.

Moreover, the current findings correspond with earlier research that distinguishes between the behaviors of good and poor learners. Good learners, as noted in the literature, can articulate the reasons behind their learning efficiency, adjust strategies according to the nature of learning activities, and show adaptability when learning conditions change. They also exhibit self-confidence and demonstrate an active attitude toward learning.

While several studies (Chamot, 2005; Lai, 2005; Vandergrift, 2003) have emphasized that metacognitive strategies are most commonly employed by high achievers, the present research offers a contrasting insight. The results here reveal that social strategies were the most frequently used by high-achieving students. This indicates that these learners rely heavily on interactive and communicative forms of learning, such as collaboration and peer discussion, which enhance their language competence. Additionally, this study challenges Vandergrift's (2003) claim that successful learners predominantly use monitoring strategies within the metacognitive domain. Instead, it shows that they engage more in strategies related to identifying and creating learning opportunities—actions that foster active participation and exposure to language use.

In general, the results of this investigation confirm the strong association between learners' use of language learning strategies and their language achievement. This positive correlation is also supported by previous research, notably that of Oxford and Burry (1995), who asserted that higher and more frequent use of LLSs leads to better language performance.

6 Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the types and frequency of language learning strategies (LLSs) employed by English major students. The analysis of learners' responses revealed clear distinctions among high-, average-, and low-achieving students in their use of the six major categories of LLSs. Each group demonstrated a unique hierarchy in strategy application, reflecting varying levels of awareness, skill, and experience in language learning.

For high-achieving learners, the order of strategy use was as follows: social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, and affective strategies. This pattern indicates that high achievers actively and effectively use both direct and indirect strategies. Their wide-ranging and frequent strategy use suggests that these learners possess the qualities of successful English language learners. Hence, high-achieving Ethiopian English majors can be characterized as effective and autonomous users of LLSs.

In the case of average-achieving learners, strategies were employed in the following order: metacognitive, affective, social, cognitive, memory, and compensation strategies. The findings further indicated that average achievers did not perform better than low achievers in several areas—particularly memory, social, and compensation strategies. This highlights the need for strategic training and tar-

geted instructional support to help these learners enhance their ability to use a broader range of strategies effectively. Teachers should therefore give special attention to developing their students' strategy awareness and application through explicit instruction and guided practice.

For low-achieving learners, the sequence of strategy use was found to be: metacognitive, cognitive, memory, social, affective, and compensation strategies. These learners exhibited minimal and inconsistent use of language learning strategies overall, which correlates with their lower academic performance. Consequently, this group requires deliberate and structured training in strategy awareness, selection, and application to improve both their language learning efficiency and outcomes.

Statistical analyses using one-way ANOVA confirmed significant differences among the groups. High and average achievers showed statistically significant mean differences in nearly all strategy categories except affective strategies. Moreover, significant differences were found between high and low achievers across all six major strategy types. However, no meaningful difference was observed between the average and low achievers.

Taken together, these results lead to the conclusion that high achievers demonstrate strong and frequent use of language learning strategies, average achievers show moderate engagement, and low achievers use such strategies infrequently. This pattern reinforces the notion that students with higher academic performance are also more strategic, reflective, and experienced in their approach to language learning compared to their peers.

Conflict of Interest

The author of this article has declared that there is no conflict of interest. He also confirmed that he has thoroughly read and approved the manuscript to be published in this journal.

Ethical Approval

Consent was sought form the research participants. Confidentiality was maintained in reporting information.

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