



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i6/13977>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i6/13977

**Received:** 14 April 2022, **Revised:** 19 May 2022, **Accepted:** 30 May 2022

**Published Online:** 07 June 2022

**In-Text Citation:** (Soupi et. al., 2022)

**To Cite this Article:** Soupi, F. N. S. M., Zulkiflee, Z. N., Kenol, N. I. H. H., Chin, L. Z., Neithanantan, P., & Hashim, H. (2022). Language Learning Strategies Used among ESL Graduates. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. 12(6), 357–372.

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**Vol. 12, No. 6, 2022, Pg. 357 – 372**

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## Language Learning Strategies Used among ESL Graduates

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### Abstract

The application of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) could provide more positive impacts towards the learning process among learners. However, understanding LLS among Malaysian students of higher education, mainly ESL graduates, has been identified as a gap in several research studies. Therefore, the objectives of the study were to determine the common pattern of LLS among the ESL graduates and to evaluate the differences among the various strategies used in different courses. The aim of this study was to focus on the LLS used by two different groups of graduates which are TESL graduates and non-TESL graduates. A quantitative approach involving a survey design using The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, known as SILL survey by Oxford (1990) was utilised in this study. The data was presented using descriptive data analysis. Samples were taken from 30 TESL graduates and 30 non-TESL graduates from Malaysian local higher education institutions. The findings showed that there are no significant differences between the percentages of the LLS used among the two groups. The results were used to identify the most and the least used LLS categories by both groups of graduates. According to the findings, there are no significant differences between the most and the least preferred LLS between the two groups. This study is hoped to provide positive contributions to identify LLS used by two different groups of ESL graduates.

**Keywords:** Language Learning Strategies (LLS), English as a Second Language (ESL), Graduates.

### Introduction

Language learning strategies among learners are still at a level that needs to be emphasized in terms of awareness of its importance to language acquisition and the benefits gained during the use of learning strategies that are suitable for the skills that need to be mastered. Learning a language takes an extended period due to the *complex nature of the process*. Language learning strategies (LLS) aimed at cognitive, metacognitive, memory, compensation, social and affective with variations from O'Malley and Chamot (Thomas & Janosy, 2020). Cook (2001) defines learning strategy as "a choice that learner makes while learning or using the second language that affects learning".

The importance of learning English has been interconnected with higher studies. There was a gap within understanding the language learning strategies among students of higher education (Chanderan & Hashim, 2022) and the application of LLS could have provided a more positive impact towards the learning process among learners (Habók & Magyar, 2018; Alshaghel & Pappuswamy, 2021). As a result, an appropriate strategy needed to be selected in order to foster learning among the graduates and facilitate the development of the English Language skills. LLS play crucial roles in second language acquisition as stated by many researchers and also, many studies have been conducted to explore them (Rubin, 1975 and 1981; Naiman et al, 1978; O'Malley et al, 1985 and 1990; Ellis, 1985; Oxford, 1990 and Cohen, 2000).

### **Research Objectives**

There are two research objectives in this study. Those objectives are:

- (1) To determine the common pattern of LLS among the undergraduate students.
- (2) To evaluate the differences among the various strategies used by students of different courses.

### **Research Questions**

- (1) What is the common pattern of LLS that has been identified among undergraduate students?
- (2) What are the differences among the various strategies used by the students of different courses?

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Definition of Language Learning Strategies (LLS)***

Strategy is defined as plans, designs and systematic procedures in language teaching and learning (Chanderan & Hashim, 2022). LLS provides students with the understanding that LLS can be grouped into several parts: formal practice of the language related to grammar and syntax, use of language for purposive communication and drawing conclusions on guesses of the unknown meaning (as cited in Chanderan & Hashim, 2022). The researchers stated that cognitive and metacognitive are related to the progress in learning the language, whereas socio-affective helps in stabilizing the anxiety in language learning.

Oxford (2018) stated language learning strategies as actions by the learners' self-consciousness to decide on their preferred learning strategy, where sometimes attributed by their education policies, commitments and multicultural backgrounds. As cited in Norlund & Wedin, (2019), language learning strategies are defined as activities selected by students consciously for the purpose of their own language learning. Further, the researchers stated that advanced students are prone to metacognitive strategies and use learning strategies more frequently compared to less successful learners. Language learning strategies are also defined as ways, actions, or steps used consciously during language acquisition (as cited in Alfian, 2021). Further, metacognitive and cognitive strategies are mostly used strategies where students are able to plan, monitor and evaluate their own progress.

Rubin (1975) as cited in Lestari and Fatimah (2020), defined language learning strategies are methods used by learners in obtaining knowledge. Chamot (2004) as cited in Lestari and Fatimah (2020) defined language learning strategies as thoughts and actions

which have the characteristic of consciously. Gagne and Oda (2022) stated Strategy Inventory of Language (SILL) has been proven to be helpful to the teachers to determine students' learning styles and their preferences of learning strategies. Through SILL, teachers are able to identify the next move to help students' in improving their selection of learning strategies based on their proficiency and its suitability to the tasks.

### **Classification of Language Learning Strategies (LLS)**

Language learning strategies aimed at cognitive, metacognitive, memory, compensation, social and affective with variations from O'Malley and Chamot (as cited in Thomas & Janosy, 2020). Language learning strategies could be classified into three broad categories - (a) metacognitive, cognitive, and social mediating strategies, (b) students prefer to use learning strategies when answering easier questions than more difficult questions (c) strategies students used most often tended to require little cognitive processing of the learning materials, and (d) teachers' insensitivity to the importance of explaining each selection of learning strategies that are more appropriate to students (O'Malley, et. al.,1985).

Language learning is a process in which an individual will go through an increased stage of development of the language learned (Chanderan & Hashim, 2022). Researchers also describe English as a bridge that connects the outside world globally in line with the increasingly sophisticated quality of learning with the availability of learning materials that are easily available online. Learners with multilingual backgrounds are better at learning additional languages (Kemp, 2007). As cited in Chanderan & Hashim, 2022, research on the effectiveness of language learning strategies (LLS) has become one of the most significant subjects in the study of students' language acquisition. However, there was a gap within understanding language learning strategies use by students of higher education, particularly within the private universities (as cited in Chanderan & Hashim, 2022)

Research conducted by Thao (2020) showed that participants employed strategies for learning English language autonomously at a low frequency and gender plays an important role in the differences. The researcher claimed the differences could be due to differences in the characteristics of females and male's brains. Habók and Magyar (2018) claimed that young learners mostly prefer social, affective and compensation strategies where memory strategies were neglected (Doro & Habok, 2013) as cited in (Habok & Magyar, 2018). Moreover, more proficient learners use more language learning strategies than their counterparts (Habók & Magyar, 2018; Erdogan, 2018). Besides, the application of LLS provided a more positive impact towards the learning process among learners (Habók & Magyar, 2018; Alshaghel & Pappuswamy, 2021).

According to Pawlak and Kiermasz (2018), language learning strategy use was higher by the second language learners, in contrast to the third language learners, which both employed mostly traditional and memory strategies in their learning acquisition. Hashim, Yunus and Hashim (2018) stated successful learners preferred to choose cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio affective as their learning strategies. Whereas, Adan and Hashim (2021); John, et al (2021) in their studies, stated ESL learners were very receptive towards Metacognitive Strategy, while Compensation Strategy (Adan & Hashim, 2021) and memory related (John, et al., 2021) were the least preferred. Further, a study conducted by Nair, et al (2021) on the language learning strategies used by learners in a rural primary school revealed memory strategy is the most preferred strategy among the participants.

Dawi and Hashim (2022) in their study stated affective strategies were the most preferred strategies by the participants, while cognitive strategy was the least preferred. In contrast, Dawi, et al (2021) stated the most employed language strategies were the affective strategy and the cognitive strategy. The researchers concluded that teachers should equip learners with information by introducing all the learning strategies during ESL classrooms for better understanding. Many researchers have agreed that teachers played important roles in getting learners to understand the functions and benefits of using the correct language learning strategies and become good language learners.

### **Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategy**

Oxford (1990); O'Malley and Chamot (1990) emerged with the most widely used taxonomies of language learning strategies (Norlund & Wedin, 2019; Ernomo, 2018). Oxford's (1990) taxonomy is known for a very comprehensive, structured and clearer overview of LLS, and accordance to students-teacher's needs. In contrast, O'Malley and Chamot's framework (1990), are made in accordance with the information-processing model by looking into the cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective strategies.

There are two large divisions of LLS introduced by Oxford (1990) which include direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include memory strategy, cognitive strategy and compensation. Indirect strategies include metacognitive strategy and social strategy.

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<p><b>Memory strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating mental linkages           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Grouping</li> <li>· Associating/elaborating</li> <li>· Placing new words in context</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Applying images and sounds           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Using imagery</li> <li>· Semantic mapping</li> <li>· Using keywords</li> <li>· Representing sounds in memory</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Reviewing well           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Structured review</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Employing action           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Using physical response</li> <li>· Using mechanical techniques</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Metacognitive strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Centering learning           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Overviewing and linking</li> <li>· Paying attention</li> <li>· Delaying production to focus on listening</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Arranging and planning your learning           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Finding out about language learning</li> <li>· Organizing</li> <li>· Setting goals</li> <li>· Identifying the purpose of a language task</li> <li>· Planning for the language task</li> <li>· Seeking practice opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Evaluating your learning           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Self-monitoring</li> <li>· Self-evaluating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Cognitive strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practicing           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Repeating</li> <li>· Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems</li> <li>· Recognizing formulas and patterns</li> <li>· Recombining</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Affective strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lowering your anxiety           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Using progressive relaxation</li> <li>· Using music</li> <li>· Using laughter</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Encouraging yourself           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Making positive statements</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

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- Practicing naturalistically
- 2. Receiving and sending messages
- Getting the idea quickly
- Using resources for receiving and sending messages
- 3. Analyzing and reasoning
- Taking risks wisely
- Rewarding yourself
- 3. Taking your emotional temperature
- Listening to your body
- Using a checklist
- Writing a language learning diary

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#### Oxford's Taxonomy of LLS (1990)

Oxford (1990) also classified LLS as actions, behaviors, steps and methods taken by students in reinforcing understanding in learning. Oxford (1990) was inspired to produce other alternatives through the LLS taxonomy due to the emphasis given more to cognitive and metacognitive strategies and neglecting socio-affective strategies. Furthermore, direct strategies are the direct learning that involves direct learning using thinking skills alone. Meanwhile, Oxford (1990) continues to state that indirect strategies involve learning indirectly because it is a learning process that involves the students as a whole and more generally (as cited by Oxford, 1990 in Alhaysony, 2017).

Direct strategies are strategies used by learners while learning something new in the class and indirect strategies used by learners where learning processes are not directly involved (Ernomo, 2018). Metacognitive, compensation and cognitive strategies are the most commonly used in language learning strategies (Habók & Magyar, 2018). Chamot (2004) as cited in Habók and Magyar (2018) pointed out that learners with different cultural contexts tend to use different strategy preferences. To enhance language learning, teachers should be exposed to the language learning strategies more through various training programs to provide better insights on the benefits of using LLS in the classroom for better planning of lessons and as well as promoting LLS to their learners (Alwehebi & Ghareeb, 2021).

#### **Good/Successful Language Learners**

In providing answers for the frequently asked question of why some language learners acquire a language better compared to the others, several studies and research have been conducted in the second language acquisition field. Previous studies on good language learners (GLL), by Naiman et al (1978); Rubin (1975); Stevick (1989) demonstrate that GLL inclines to have mutual strategies for learning. Thus, research on their strategies might facilitate our comprehension of the second language's learning process. Learning strategies are the conscious actions and beliefs that learners yield to accomplish a learning goal (Parviz Maftoon, 2012). In ascertaining the strategies favoured by GLL and the factors affecting their practice, numerous amounts of empirical studies have been conducted. Chamot (2004) claimed that strategic learners have metacognitive knowledge about their own thoughts and learning approaches. They display a good understanding of the task requirement and the ability to compose the best strategies that meet both the task demands and their own learning strengths are evident. According to Viknesh et. al (2021), successful language learners or GLL plan their goals and work toward them indicating that they utilize strategies to help them improve in the language learning process.

From the findings of the research conducted by Naiman (1978); Stern et al (1983); Reiss (1985); Naiman (1996), several types of strategies lead the learners to success. Reiss

(1985) had conducted a study using a self-report survey method to validate Rubin's findings. According to Haryanto Atmowardoyo and Geminastiti Sakkir (2021), Reiss (1985) in his study, examined the characteristics of successful language learners using the self-report survey method and formulated a list of GLL characteristics as follows:

- a) Having a strong urge to communicate.
- b) Constantly trying to find linguistic patterns.
- c) Like to do exercises.
- d) Monitoring own speech as well as the speech of others.
- e) Be able to find learning situations that they like.
- f) Being actively involved in the language learning process.
- g) Recognizing language as a system and means of communication.
- h) Constantly expanding and revising the personal understanding of the target language.
- i) Gradually developing a habit of thinking in the target language.
- j) Showing practical demands in language learning.
- k) Tending to use guessing techniques.
- l) Paying more attention to meaning than form.
- m) Being able to take advantage of the opportunity to practice the language.

In addition, Oxford (1990) claimed that successful language learners utilise various kinds of language learning strategies which have high compatibility with their language learning styles. Learners should be able to study and practice for the language use and the application of the language learning strategies. Consequently, the adaptation and adoption of the strategies to their individual learning styles would be present. Rubai (2019) stated that it is important to identify learning strategies used by the successful learners in assisting the poor learners to become proficient. In distinguishing GLL and poor language learners, the most significant factor involves the frequency and preferences of employing language learning strategies (Zakaria et al., 2018). On a positive note, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) indicated that language learning strategies can be trained and it will be beneficial to the learners. Above all, Kehing et al (2021) claimed that learners should have the desire to become a good language learner to apply all those learning strategies.

### **Methodology**

In this study, a quantitative approach using The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, also known as SILL survey by Oxford (1990) was applied in order to determine the common pattern and the differences of the LLS used by TESL and non-TESL graduates in learning language.

### **Research Design**

A survey design was chosen for this study as it allows the researchers to collect the data from the intended respondents in a relatively short period as this study was conducted using a quantitative approach. Creswell (2012) stated that survey design would assist the researchers in recognising samples' opinions, attitudes, behaviours or features.

### **Instrumentation**

The SILL survey was put into an online platform for data collection purposes. The survey was divided into two sections: the demographic part and the SILL. In the SILL part, there are a total of 50 questions which were put into six divisions of LLS. The survey used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 - 5 to show the graduates' tendency in using the strategy to learn languages. The data collected from the scales was then turned into percentages to get the data to answer the research question.

### **Respondents**

The respondents involved in this study consisted of 30 TESL graduates and 30 non- TESL graduates. They graduated with degrees from various Malaysian local higher education institutes such as local universities, private institutions and teacher learning institutes. The respondents consist of male and female graduates, ranging from 20 to 50 years old.

### **Sampling Technique**

A purposive sampling was used to ensure the survey reached both groups of graduate students. The researchers shared the link of the SILL survey to groups of TESL graduates and some of the groups with the inclusion of non- TESL graduates.

### **Data Analysis**

In the survey, the respondents' data about LLS was in the form of Likert scale ranging from 1-5. After all the respondents finished answering the survey, the data was then analysed and turned into percentages to get the data required in determining the common pattern of LLS and the differences among the various strategies used by both groups of graduates.

### **Findings and Discussion**

This section will explore the findings gained from the SILL survey conducted on the two groups of ESL graduates. The results are shown in scales; 1 – never or almost never true, 2 – usually not true, 3 – somewhat true, 4 – usually true and 5 – always or almost always true. The findings obtained from the scales are then turned into percentages to answer the research questions for this study.

### **Research Question 1**

#### ***The Common Pattern of LLS***

To answer this question, the SILL survey will investigate the most and least used LLS between TESL and non- TESL graduates. The pattern can be determined from the scales the graduates value themselves in learning languages. Table 1 below shows the percentages taken for each scale throughout the survey:



Table 1

*The percentages of each scale selected in the SILL survey.*

SCALES GROUP OF STUDENTS	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
TESL	2.26	7.57	22.24	45.54	22.06
NON-TESL	2.73	10.88	27.26	35.78	24.27

Based on the results shown, there are no significant differences in the percentages of each scale. This shows both groups of TESL and non-TESL graduates' tendency in realising the strategies used when they are learning languages. The widest gap can be seen in scale 4. The differences in that scale showed that the TESL graduates are more aware of what strategies they use in language learning. However, the non-TESL graduates showed higher percentage in scale 2 and 3 which shows their uncertainties of the strategies that they use in learning language.

Table 2

Investigates the findings in depth by showing the percentages of each scale for every strategy used in language learning

SCALES (%) / STRATEGIES	1 (%)		2 (%)		3 (%)		4 (%)		5 (%)	
	TESL	NON-TESL	TESL	NON-TESL	TESL	NON-TESL	TESL	NON-TESL	TESL	NON-TESL
Memory Strategies	0.74	2.22	6.68	11.9	22.64	27.79	52.02	34.82	17.14	24.08
Cognitive Strategies	0.71	2.38	5.51	8.81	27.51	26.17	45.37	36.9	20.88	25.72
Compensation Strategies	1.67	4.45	9.45	15.58	23.33	19.43	39.43	34.43	26.10	26.17
Metacognitive Strategies	0.73	0	3.83	6.66	19.18	30.12	48.16	36.42	28.73	28.22
Affective Strategies	9.98	8.90	13.32	20.02	18.33	32.23	42.22	27.78	16.1	11.1
Social Strategies	2.22	0.55	11.7	7.32	20.63	25.92	41.67	42.95	24.07	23.30

*Table 2* The percentages of each scale in each category selected in the SILL.

The results shown are used to identify the most and the least used LLS by the ESL graduates. For the most used strategies, the results were taken from the total of percentages in scale 4 and 5 as it shows the graduates' confidence in using the strategies whereas for the least used strategies, the results were taken from the total of percentages in scale 1 and 2 as it shows that the graduates never use those strategies in language learning.

The survey conducted on the TESL graduates indicates that the most used language learning strategies is Metacognitive Strategies (Part D) with a percentage of 76.89%. The second most preferred language learning strategy of the TESL graduates is the Memory Strategies (Part A) with a percentage of 69.21% followed by the Cognitive Strategies (Part B) with a rate of 66.25%. This finding is in line with the research done by Nazri et al (2016) on university ESL learners where metacognitive strategy was also ranked first continued by compensation, cognitive, social, memory and affective.

Several research done by Ang et. al (2017), Ahamad (2019) and Adan and Hashim (2021) also showed the same results where metacognitive strategy are the most preferred strategies used by ESL learners. Whereas for the non-TESL graduate students, the most preferred language learning strategies chosen by them is the Social Strategies (Part F) with a percentage of 66.25%, followed by the Metacognitive Strategies (Part D) with 64.64% and the Cognitive Strategies (Part B) which come at the third place with 62.62%. Table 3 below shows the data on the most used language learning strategies by both groups of ESL graduates:

Table 3

*The most preferred LLS by ESL graduates.*

MOST PREFERRED LLS BY ESL GRADUATES		
RANK	TESL (%)	NON-TESL (%)
1	METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES (76.89%)	METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES (64.64%)
2	MEMORY STRATEGIES (69.21%)	COMPENSATION STRATEGIES (60.60%)
3	COGNITIVE STRATEGIES (66.25%)	COGNITIVE STRATEGIES (62.62%)
4	COMPENSATION STRATEGIES (65.53%)	MEMORY STRATEGIES (58.90%)
5	AFFECTIVE & SOCIAL STRATEGIES (58.32)	AFFECTIVE & SOCIAL STRATEGIES (38.88%)
6		

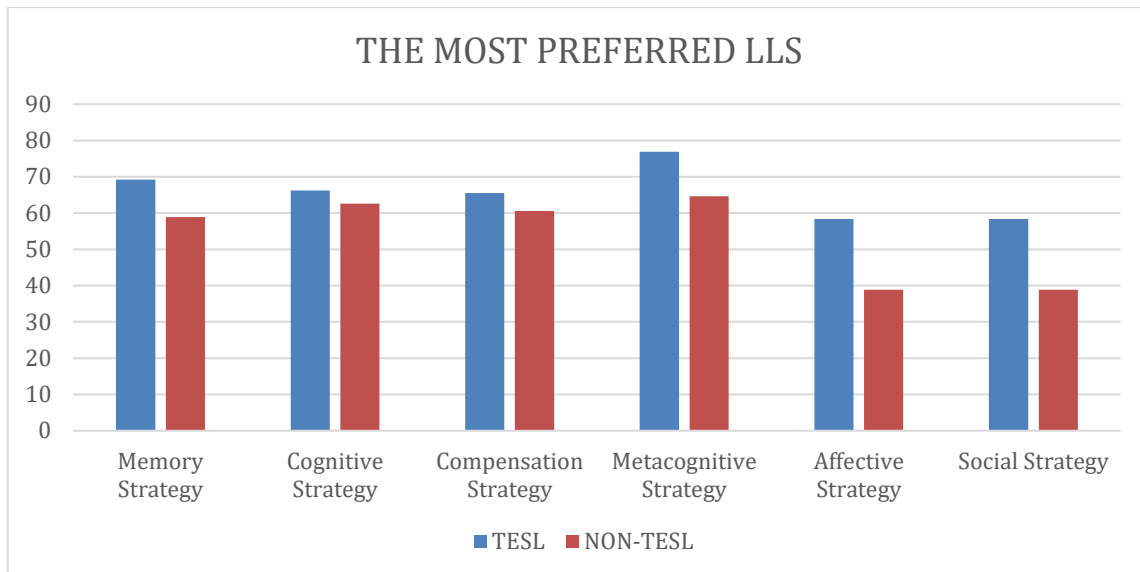


Chart 1 The comparison of the most preferred LLS between ESL graduates.

Besides the most preferred LLS, the results gained from the survey was also used to identify the least preferred LLS by both groups of ESL graduates. The data was obtained from the percentages taken from scale 1 and 2 which showed that the strategies were usually not true and never or almost never true of the graduates. For the TESL graduates, the Affective Strategies (Part E) has shown the highest percentage of 23.30% in scale 1 and 2 which indicates that these strategies have the biggest number of graduates not using it while learning language. This was then followed by the Social Strategies (Part F) with 13.92% and the Compensation Strategies (Part C) with 11.12%. For the non-TESL graduates, they have the same least used language learning strategies which are the Affective Strategies (Part E) with 28.92%, followed by the Compensation Strategies (Part C) with 20.03% and the Memory Strategies (Part A) with 13.31% in the second and third rank of least preferred strategies.

The findings on Affective Strategy as the least preferred strategy used in learning language is corresponding with the research done by Koc (2017) who reported that the English teachers used the Affective Strategy the least because it was not necessary for them to decrease their anxiety in learning English. Instead, they utilise task or practice such as repetitive writing and memorization through the assistance of dictionary or exercise with assessment to master the language.

Table 4  
 The least preferred LLS by ESL graduates

LEAST PREFERRED LLS BY ESL GRADUATES		
RANK	TESL (%)	NON-TESL (%)
1	AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES (76.89%)	AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES (28.92%)
2	SOCIAL STRATEGIES (69.21%)	COMPENSATION STRATEGIES (20.03%)
3	COMPENSATION STRATEGIES (66.25%)	MEMORY STRATEGIES (13.31%)
4	MEMORY STRATEGIES (7.43%)	COGNITIVE STRATEGIES (11.19%)
5	COGNITIVE STRATEGIES (6.22%)	SOCIAL STRATEGIES (7.87%)
6	METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES (4.56%)	METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES (6.66%)

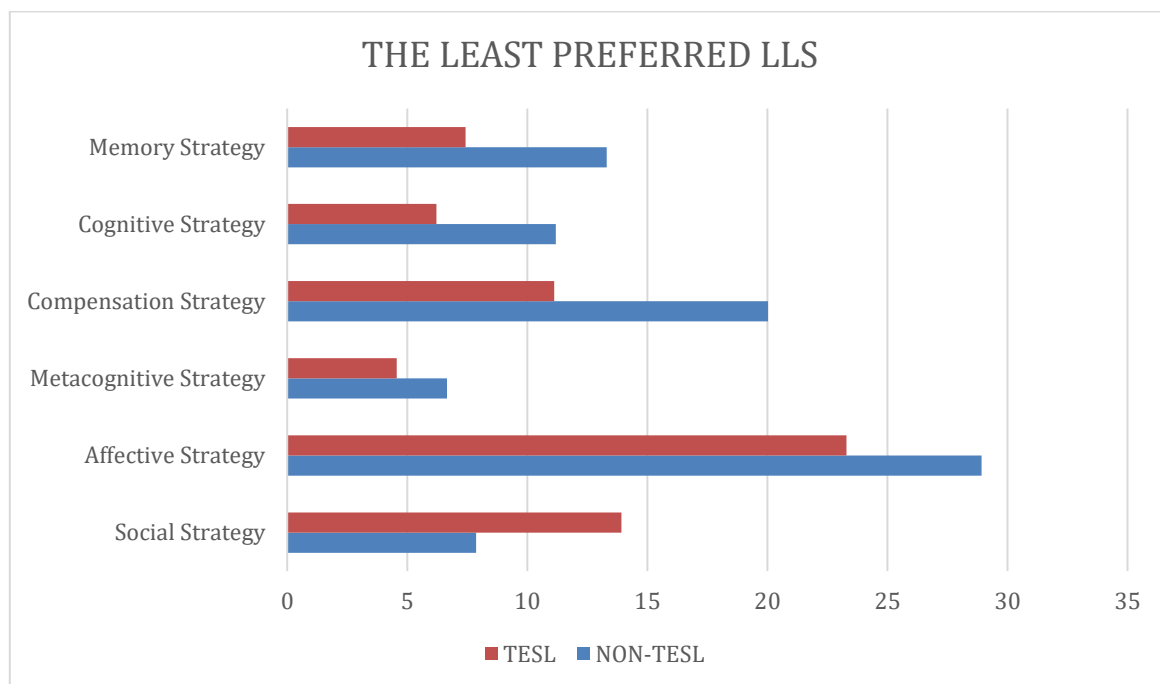


Chart 2 The comparison of the least preferred LLS between ESL graduates.

### Research Question 2

#### *The Differences among the Various Strategies Used in Different Courses*

As portrayed in the results, there are no significant differences between the most and the least preferred LLS of the two groups of ESL graduates. This is reflected in Table 1 which shows the percentages taken for each scale throughout the survey. The gap between the percentages shown to compare the two group of graduates are not big. This finding portrays that both TESL and non-TESL graduates practice almost similar strategies in learning languages and the non-TESL graduates' recognition of the importance of learning English. The recognition of the necessity in learning English may be due to the fulfilment of school or university's requirements and to improve their education; to increase their career

opportunity by having ability to use English as global language; to improve English vocabulary and language proficiency for communication purposes; to increase travelling and abroad studying opportunities and to enhance critical and creative thinking skills as reported by (Heteroba, 2015).

For the most preferred LLS strategies used by the two groups of ESL graduates, both TESL and non-TESL graduates had chosen metacognitive strategies as their first and second most used strategies consecutively. According to Oxford (1990) metacognitive strategy is going beyond the normal cognitive device and learners create their own process of learning. This means that, in order to learn the language, both group of graduates have their own ways of learning language which may help them besides the traditional ways of mastering the language. Next, both groups of graduates have Cognitive Strategies as their third most preferred strategies of LLS. Using this strategy while learning language shows that the graduates process information and structure it by analysing or summarizing what they have learnt while learning language. The only difference shown in the pattern of the most preferred strategies of LLS is the TESL graduates chose Memory Strategies as their second most preferred LLS while the non-TESL graduates have Social Strategies as their first. This portrays that the non-TESL graduates prefer learning the language with the presence of other people to enable to communicate using the target language while the TESL graduates store and retrieve the language information whenever needed.

Both groups of ESL graduates chose Affective Strategy as their first rank for the least preferred LLS. This finding reveals that the graduates' emotional, attitudes, motivations and values are less likely to influence their language learning process. Next, the TESL and non-TESL graduates have Compensation Strategy as their third and second rank of the least preferred LLS respectively. Having to use this strategy less means that the students will not compensate their knowledge gap using guessing, gesturing (Oxford, 1990) or any other action to assist them. For example, instead of guessing the meaning of new words, the graduates will look up for the meaning of it.

In addition, the TESL graduates also have Social Strategy in the second rank of the least preferred LLS which means that they prefer to learn the language individually. In contrast, the non-TESL graduates prefer to communicate with people who use the target language thus having this category as their first rank in the most preferred LLS. Finally, Memory Strategy ranked third as the least preferred LLS by the non-TESL graduates. This finding shows that they dislike memorizing information about languages. It is in contrary with the TESL graduates as they prefer to store information about languages to enable them to retrieve it for later usage. This strategy may develop the TESL graduates into better language learners and users as they have some knowledge and skills to be practiced in real-life.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

English language is widely used in today's world in all levels of education and it is crucial for learners to be able to use and converse using the language both in formal and informal situations. Learning and acquiring a second language are not an easy task. It takes courage, effort and a lot of hard work to acquire and master a second language. The aim of this study was to focus on the language learning strategies used by two different groups of graduates which are TESL graduates and non-TESL graduates. Based on the survey done, the



results clearly show that there are no significant differences between the percentages of the Language Learning Strategy use. It was proven that graduates, irrespective of their age, or type of courses nor nationalities do utilise LLS. They only differ in types of strategies preferred. From this study, it can be concluded that TESL graduates are more aware of what strategies they use in language learning compared to the non- TESL graduates. This study is hoped to channel several positive contributions in identifying language learning strategies used by the ESL graduates.

Despite the positive feedbacks obtained throughout the study, several limitations had also been highlighted. The researchers had not aimed at generalizing the findings of the present research due to the small sample size used in this study. Thus, the results obtained from this study could not represent all Malaysian graduates in the higher education level. The results would be more accurate if it involves larger sample sizes in the future. Furthermore, the mixed method of data collection would have been more useful in proving the results compared to the primary qualitative method. The last limitation involves the data analysis which could have been done using other software to have detailed interpretation of the data collected. As the ESL learners start to learn the language, they will eventually figure out their respective learning styles and will be able to identify the strategies they prefer in enhancing the skills in English language. In conclusion, this study enlightens the patterns of learning language strategies and the differences of the strategies used by both groups of ESL graduates. This study will be significant for several stakeholders especially when it involves the process of mastering the English language.

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