

## Investigating Indigenous Learners' English Language Learning Strategies

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARSS/v13-i12/20268> DOI:10.6007/IJARSS/v13-i12/20268

**Published Date:** 29 December 2023

### Abstract

As language learning strategies on indigenous learners are still scarce in Malaysia, a linguistic predicament is apparent where English language is acquired as a third or foreign language compared to their mainstream peers. This study aimed to investigate the English language learning strategies among Indigenous learners from the Temuan sub-ethnic in a district of a state in Malaysia. A set of Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire was utilised to collect quantitative data from 32 indigenous pupils. Descriptive analysis was made by providing mean, percentage, and frequency. Findings show that indigenous learners have a moderate level of usage in language learning strategies. The use of indirect strategies of affective and social strategies was found to be habitual and more engaged than direct strategies. Although the level of usage of all six language learning strategies among indigenous learners in this study indicates average intensity, the dominance of Affective and Social strategies is indisputably apparent. This study reveals that the indigenous learners are more inclined towards using indirect strategies in language learning. This implies that an integration of communicative approaches and "fun learning" are recommended to accommodate better language acquisition for the indigenous learners.

**Keywords:** Language Learning Strategies, Indigenous Learners, English Language Learning, Indigenous Language Learning Strategies, Language Acquisition.

**Introduction**

The linguistic stature of the English language is predominant within the educational context of Malaysian everyday classrooms as distinguished by the New Education Policy 1971 in which the English language is regarded as the "second most important language" (Omar, 1994; Shaaruddin & Mohamad, 2017; Ishak & Mohamad, 2018) after the national Malay language. The notion of accentuating both languages was manifested in the founding of the Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening the English Language (MBMMBI) policy. This bilingual empowerment policy was deliberately executed from the year 2010 (Ministry of Education, 2014) where several measures were exerted by the Education Ministry to circumvent the proficiency of both languages in a parallel momentum (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Nevertheless, the linguistic disposition of the English language and the Malay language are chidingly divergent to the linguistic context of the indigenous demographics whereby these languages are not their mother tongue (L1), indicating that these indigenous learners are learning the Malay language as their second language (L2) and the English language as their third or foreign language instead (Adnan & Saad 2010). Nevertheless, the learners from the indigenous demographics are enrolled in mainstream schooling with mainstream learning expectations (Renganathan & Kral, 2018; Renganathan 2016).

As language learning strategies are sublime elements that can accommodate to the amelioration of language acquisition (Hashim et al., 2018), identifying them could be principal constituents to the validation of language competencies and wherewith learners' acquisition of a second or foreign language (Zakaria et al., 2018). The pivotal variable of individual differences in language learning strategies is parallel with indigenous learners whereby their unique cultural and linguistic premonitions contrasted to their mainstream peers in national schools. This exploration could distinguish insights into indigenous learners' language learning strategies and comprehend their language acquisition processes. Therefore, identifying the language learning strategies among the Malaysian indigenous demographic is vital in describing a further acumen into their acquisition of the English language and the destination of its trajectory.

This study is conducted in a rural national school within the countryside vicinity of the Jelebu district in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. The pupils of this school span from a majority of indigenous learners from the Temuan sub-ethnic of the indigenous proto-Malay group, along with a minority enrolment from the predominant Malay race. Similar to any other race, the indigenous learners have their own mother tongue; the Temuan language. Even so, the medium of instruction in this school is the Malay language, as all the staffs and teachers are non-indigenous who could not converse the learners' L1 even though the Malay language is the learners' L2. The English language naturally became their third or foreign language due to minimal exposure towards the language as the input was only from the English language classrooms. Nevertheless, the syllabus provided for these indigenous learners is designed to benefit learners who learn the English language as L2 like the mainstream learners. The research gap of exploring the English language learning strategies among the Malaysian indigenous demographics is yet to be narrowed down as no studies like this have been done before. This study aimed at exploring the density of employing language learning strategies in learning the English language among the indigenous learners while investigating the

proximities of preference among indigenous learners in employing such language learning strategies.

## **Literature Review**

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

As Oxford (1990) exuded the importance of strategizing in learning a language, it is apparent that attaining the capacity to recognise and discern tactics of a learners' language learning is beneficial in supporting language acquisition. Naiman et al. (1980) illustrated that strategies are a mode of operation in delivering a design for managing and manipulating information, whereas Chaudron (1988) associated these operations with cognitive processes. The capacities of strategising learning are elucidated by Schumaker & Deshler (1992) as a person's approach in planning and managing a distinct assortment of abilities in learning content or performing tasks efficiently. The mechanism of these learning strategies was evident in many forms throughout the academic landscape.

Rubin's Taxonomy exhibited dual processes of language learning strategies, whereby it concerns directly to learning such as the strategies of clarification, monitoring, memorisation, guessing, deductive and practice, or it concerns discursively to learning in which strategies of creating opportunities for practice and production tricks transpired (Rubin, 1981). In contrast, a taxonomy by Carver (1984) unveils language learning strategies into four strategies; which hovers on coping with the rules of a targeted language and three fragments of performative elements.

A contemporary model was eventually developed by Oxford (1990), who proclaimed language learning strategies in two indispensable categories. The first category is the direct strategies consisted of memory, cognitive, compensation strategies while the second category is the indirect strategies of metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Even so, the matter of selection for language learning inventories are perennially trivial as no rigorous criteria were outlined to what strategies are along with its volume and classifications (Chilkiewicz, 2015).

Nevertheless, language learning is a tenuous process (Rubin & Thompson, 1994), whereby diverse learners constitute of distinctive learning capacities and individual preferences that may elongate the process of desirable information absorption and attainment of skills and knowledge. An understanding of such a variable highly gravitates on the background of the targeted learners.

### ***Indigenous Learners and English Language Learning***

Hanlen (2010) interpreted that indigenous learners are frequently and ordinarily distinguished as a population with a high rate of illiteracy as such circumstance is not bizarre to the entirety of one's country. Johari & Nazri (2007) also acquaint such internationally discussed issue amongst indigenous groups was indistinguishable to the circumstances of the Malaysian indigenous diaspora. Ahmed et al (2012) also accentuated the notoriety of disadvantageous educational attainment, health care and overall socio-economic situation among the indigenous communities of Malaysia.

The amelioration of the English language in Malaysian educational settings is upheld simultaneously with the empowerment of the national Malay language (Yamat et al., 2013; Ministry of Education, 2016). Even so, the advocacy towards the bilingual policy of English language and Malay language is not parallel with the linguistic disposition of the Malaysian indigenous demographics. A study by Adnan & Saad (2010) elucidated that these indigenous learners have their own L1 whereby the exposure and familiarity towards the English language qualify as a third language and to a large sum a foreign language. Such linguistic situation is contradictory to the English language learning expectations as they are learning the language with a nationally standardised mainstream expectation of English as a second language (Renganathan & Kral, 2018; Renganathan 2016).

Immerse support in the everyday classroom is explicated by Adnan & Saad (2010) whereby the role of teacher of accommodating better learning advantageous is needed. Renganathan (2013) interjected the tenuous persistency of this issue in Malaysian indigenous classrooms as her study found that teachers have inadequate comprehension of the cultural context and practices of the indigenous learners that could have been a useful tool for a better learning experience. The propensity of teachers' capacity to administer and adopt effective teaching approaches was also elucidated by Sani & Idris (2013) to be substantial in warranting the pace of learning achievements amongst indigenous students.

The capability of comprehending the worldview of these indigenous learners and detecting issues that might influences their learning disparities might be an excellent way for teachers and learners to circumvent the disadvantageous predicament that these demographics encountered as shown by past studies.

### **Methodology**

A sum of 32 learners with Temuan Indigenous background was selected as the sample. The sample was taken from a school with a majority enrolment of the Temuan Indigenous schoolchildren in the district of Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan. Therefore, the results of this study cannot simply be generalised for other Temuan indigenous learners across the country, along with the diverse Malaysian Indigenous schoolchildren in general. These respondents have a different level of proficiency, aptitude, and attitude towards the English language.

The questionnaire utilised for this study is adapted from (Oxford, 1990; Gani et al., 2018). Gani et al (2018) investigated rural Indonesian students' learning strategies via an adapted form of Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). Since the demographics of this study's target group similarly resides in remote and rural regions, the adaptation from the study was justified. However, this study made more local adaptations by modifying some segments in the instrument with rephrasing and distinctive choices of words to suit the level of comprehension and socio-cultural context of indigenous learners based on its literature review and pilot study. In addition, the items are rendered bilingually in both English and Malay language to stimulate further comprehension due to the English language being learnt as their third or foreign language. The questionnaire had 30 items comprised of all six strategies from Oxford (1990), in which it measures the memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies exercised by these learners in learning the English language. A five-point Likert scale was instrumentalised, whereby the learners measure their real-life relativity towards each agreeable statement. The five-point

scales were (1) strongly disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) somewhat agree, and lastly (5) strongly agree.

The data obtained from the study is analysed using descriptive analysis by providing mean, mode, percentages of responses for each strategy, and an additional measurement of their level of usage derived from the mean of each strategy for overall comparative purposes. Variations of individual items can be described as positive, negative, or mixed via examining the percentage of responses and report their usage either high, medium, or low (Green & Oxford 1995). Similarly, the density of these learners' overall usage of each strategy can be reported through a set of indicator table to interpret the mean scores obtained in this study. The level of usage obtain from the Likert scale data was aligned with three levels of use; point 1 and 2 (M=1.0 – 2.4) as “low usage”, point 3 (M=2.5 - 3.4) as “medium usage” and lastly point 4 and 5 (M=3.5 - 5.0).

Table 1  
*Indicator for Level of Usage (Green & Oxford, 1995)*

Level of Usage	Responses	Mean Scores
High	Strongly agree & Somewhat agree	3.5 - 5.0
Medium	Neither agree nor disagree	2.5 - 3.4
Low	Strongly disagree & Somewhat disagree	1.0 – 2.4

## Findings

### **Overall Strategy Use**

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was developed by Oxford (1990) whereby learning strategies were compartmentalised into two categories: direct strategies where memory, cognitive and compensation strategies were devised and secondly the indirect strategies, where metacognitive, affective, and social strategies reside.

Table 2  
*Mean Scores and Level of Usage According to Categories and Strategies*

Strategy Category	Strategies	Mean	Level of Usage	Rank
Direct	Memory	2	Low	6
	Cognitive	2.625	Medium	3
	Compensation	2.425	Low	5
Indirect	Metacognitive	2.581	Medium	4
	Affective	3.144	Medium	1
	Social	3.025	Medium	2
Overall		2.633		

As shown in Table 2, the overall use was M=2.633, a moderate level of usage is accentuated based on the indicator provided for this study. A medium level of frequencies utilised by the respondents was remarked from the overall mean; this betokens that the

practice of strategising in learning the English language among the majority of the Indigenous learners are not yet a prevalent practice and therefore still at its infancy.

Indirect strategies were recommended by the data to be the most prevalent category of language learning strategies among the respondents with all the three strategies under the indirect category were found to be utilised more frequently than the ones in the direct category. Overall, the strategies of Affective, Social, Metacognitive, and Cognitive seemed to gain higher precedence than the other strategies, ranging between  $M=2.581$  to  $M=3.144$ , albeit their level of usage is still moderate. It is apparent that affective strategy  $M=3.144$  is the most frequently used strategy followed by Social Strategy  $M=3.025$  as compared to the other strategies. The lowest mean score is from the Memory strategy whereby  $M=2$ , indicating it as the least used strategy among indigenous learners. The rank of strategy usage from a descending order of mean is memory strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, social strategies, and lastly effective strategies.

### **Overall Individual Strategy Use**

This section discusses the Overall Individual strategy use, whereby mean, mode, and percentages of frequencies were presented. Such element is utilised in this section to exude the overall level of usage of all six types of strategies, the percentages of respondents who agreed to each item along with the most commonly agreeable item in all six types of strategies to generalise the perception of respondents toward each strategy.

#### **a. Memory Strategies**

Item number one until five from Table 3 is based on the proximities of memory-related strategies in absorbing knowledge via mental linkages to imageries, sounds or location of the information.

Table 3

#### **Data from memory strategies**

Items	Accumulated responses & its percentage (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I always practice using new English words that I learnt so I can remember them.	22 (68.8%)	4 (12.5%)	3 (9.4%)	2 (6.3%)	1 (3.1%)
2. I always look for meanings of new English words from a dictionary.	17 (53.1%)	8 (25%)	2 (6.3%)	4 (12.5%)	1 (3.1%)
3. I always "imagine" the objects or situations related to new English words that I learnt.	7 (21.9%)	13 (40.6%)	2 (6.3%)	7 (21.9%)	3 (9.4%)
4. I always review English lessons.	16 (50%)	6 (18.8%)	4 (12.5%)	2 (6.3%)	4 (12.5%)
5. I always remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or a street sign.	19 (59.4%)	5 (15.6%)	4 (12.5%)	3 (9.4%)	1 (3.1%)



By gravitating on the highest percentages of agreeable items by respondents, most respondents strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed to most of the items in memory strategies as displayed in Table 3. Such finding is apparent when point 1 (strongly disagree) dominated the data 81 times and became the mode for memory strategies. 68.8% strongly disagreed and 12.5% somewhat disagreed that they always practice new English words to stimulate better memory retention. In finding the meanings of new English words, only a small percentage ranging from 3.1% and 12.5% used dictionaries to help with the meaning-making process while a majority percentage of 53.1% and 25% did not along with 6.3% neutral responses. Next, 40.6% and 21.9% of these respondents disagreed that that they can generate mental linkages between imagination and knowledge by visualising new knowledge while only 9.4% and 21.9% can do that. Concurrently, a majority of 50% and 15.6% of them admitted that they never reviewed English lessons as compared to the 9.4% and 3.1% who did. Lastly, 59.4% strongly disagreed that they devised the strategy of remembering the location of new knowledge followed by 15.6% respondent who somewhat disagreed, 12.5% who neither agree nor disagree, and 3.1% and 9.4% who did devise this strategy. The mean for the overall memory strategies where  $M=2$  indicates the disapproval of memory strategies supplemented by the dominant percentages of disagreements in each item.

### ***b. Cognitive Strategies***

Table 4

Data from Cognitive Strategies

Items	Accumulated responses on Likert scale & its percentage (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
6. I always speak or write new English words repeatedly to remember them.	5 (15.6%)	6 (18.8%)	13 (40.6%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (12.5%)
7. I always watch TV shows, YouTube videos or movies spoken in English.	4 (12.5%)	1 (3.1%)	5 (15.6%)	8 (25%)	14 (43.8%)
8. I always read English text i.e.; stories from storybooks, etc.	8 (25%)	10 (31.3%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (12.5%)	6 (18.8%)
9. I always write notes, messages or letters using English.	19 (59.4%)	8 (25%)	2 (6.3%)	2 (6.3%)	1 (3.1%)
10. I always try to avoid translating word-for-word when I read English sentences.	16 (50%)	7 (21.9%)	5 (15.6%)	0 (0%)	4 (12.5%)

Based on the highest percentages of agreeable items, most of the respondents strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed with most of the items as displayed in Table 4. Such finding is apparent when point 1 (strongly disagree) dominated the data 52 times and became the mode for cognitive strategies. 18.8% strongly disagreed, and 40.6% were neutral on practising new words to remember better. A strongly agree surge of 43.8% was apparent in exploring English words in visual resources, although this became an outlier when the three remaining items fell to a disagreeable pattern where 25% strongly disagree to routinely read

text resources, 59.4% strongly disagree on practising writing and 50% strongly disagree on avoiding word-for-word translation. The mean for the overall cognitive strategies where  $M=1$  signifies the disapproval of this strategy enhanced by the high percentages of disagreements in the majority of the items.

### c. Compensation Strategies

Table 5

Data from compensation strategies

Items	Accumulated responses on Likert scale & its percentage (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
11. I always guess the meaning of English words that I don't know.	12 (37.5%)	5 (15.6%)	4 (12.5%)	7 (21.9%)	4 (12.5%)
12. When I can't think of a word in English, I always use gestures to make people understand.	15 (46.9%)	5 (15.6%)	4 (12.5%)	2 (6.3%)	6 (18.8%)
13. I always try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	11 (34.4%)	5 (15.6%)	7 (21.9%)	5 (15.6%)	4 (12.5%)
14. I always read English language books without looking up every new word.	14 (43.8%)	3 (9.4%)	5 (15.6%)	6 (18.8%)	4 (12.5%)
15. If I can't think of an English word during a conversation, I always use other words or phrases that mean the same thing like using a synonym.	18 (56.3%)	2 (6.3%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (12.5%)

A similar pattern of a low level of use is evident in compensation strategies, as shown in Table 5, whereby  $M=2.425$  when compared with the indicator of the level of usage in Table 1. The mode of the overall responses is point 1 (strongly disagree) indicating the respondents' lack of use in compensational strategy. In compensating unknown English words in conversations, a cumulative of 37.5% respondents strongly disagreed, and 15.6% somewhat disagreed with having used the guessing strategy. In contrast, only 12.5% strongly agreed, and 21.9% somewhat agreed to have practised it. The strategy of gestures is also declined by 46.9% majority and another 15.6% who somewhat do not practise it. A contrasting minority of 18.8% and 6.3% does practise it instead.

In guessing an anticipated conversation, only 12.5% tried to use similar guessing strategy along with 15.6% who somewhat followed the strategy. Even so, a neutral response was made by the 21.9%, along with 34.4% and 9.4% who did not agree to have practised it. Reading English books without looking up new words were only practice by the 12.5% and 18.8%, 15.6% of the respondents were neutral about it as a majority of 43.8% and 9.4% did not practise it. Compensating a word with synonyms or other related substitution strategies was shared by a sum of 12.5% with the majority 56.3% admitted to having never practised it before.



*d. Metacognitive strategies*

Table 6

*Data from metacognitive strategies*

Items	Accumulated responses on Likert scale & its percentage (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
16. I always find chances to practice speaking English.	13 (40.6%)	6 (18.8%)	5 (15.6%)	5 (15.6%)	3 (9.4%)
17. I always notice my English mistakes and try not to repeat them again.	4 (12.5%)	12 (37.5%)	3 (9.4%)	4 (12.5%)	9 (28.1%)
18. I always pay attention when someone is speaking English.	4 (12.5%)	3 (9.4%)	13 (40.6%)	7 (21.9%)	5 (15.6%)
19. I always plan a special time outside of class to study English.	17 (53.1%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (12.5%)	5 (15.6%)	2 (6.3%)
20. I always find chances to read more English books.	12 (37.5%)	9 (28.1%)	6 (18.8%)	2 (6.3%)	3 (9.4%)

The metacognitive strategy has relinquished the low level of usage as  $M=2.581$  indicating a medium level of use among the respondents as shown in Table 6. The mode of the overall responses for metacognitive strategies was aggressive in point 1 (strongly disagree) whereby 50 entries were made in point 1. Respondents who find chances to practice speaking the target language is among the minor percentage of 9.4% and 15.6% whereas another 15.6% were fixed on a neutral non-agreement and non-disagreement along with 40.6% and 18.8% who disagreed with having used such a strategy. Consciously noticing mistakes in English were common among 28.1% and somewhat common among the 12.5% whereas a percentage of 37.5% and 12.5% were oblivious of such practice. Next, a staggering amount of 40.6% took a neutral stance of neither agree nor disagree that they paid attention when someone is speaking English, whereas only 15.6% did. In terms of planning a special for studying or preparation before and after lessons were only used by 6.3% only as 53.1% have admitted to having never done this strategy. When it comes to finding chances to read more reading materials, only 9.4% and 6.3% somewhat utilised this strategy in contrast to 37.5% and 28.1% who did not.

**e. Affective Strategies**

Table 7

*Data from affective strategies*

Items	Accumulated responses on Likert scale & its percentage (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
21. I always try to relax whenever I feel afraid of speaking English.	11 (34.4%)	6 (18.8%)	5 (15.6%)	2 (6.3%)	8 (25%)
22. I always encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	4 (12.5%)	9 (28.1%)	8 (25%)	7 (21.9%)	4 (12.5%)
23. I always feel relief and proud when I do well in English.	5 (15.6%)	3 (9.4%)	5 (15.6%)	3 (9.4%)	16 (50%)
24. I always notice if I am tense or nervous when I am speaking English.	3 (9.4%)	7 (21.9%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (12.5%)	14 (43.8%)
25. I always talk to my friends or family about how I feel when I am learning English.	11 (34.4%)	6 (18.8%)	2 (6.3%)	4 (12.5%)	9 (28.1%)

The overall usage of the affective strategies was seen superior in Table 7 whereby  $M=3.144$ , the highest mean from all the other strategies' overall means albeit the level of usage indicator merely explicated that such strategies were still moderately being used as it did not reach a high level of usage. Contrary to other strategies, the mode for the affective type of strategies was 5 point with 51 entries by the respondents, a juxtaposed difference compared to the usually 1-point mode in other strategies. In item 21, 34.4% admitted to actively have never utilised the strategy of relaxing when face with fear in speaking English while 25% strongly did, and 6.3% somewhat did it. Encouragement strategy in item 22 was not shared by many as majority entries have been made on a neutral stance in neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The majority shared the element of relieve and pride in item 23 by a staggering 50 %, with only 15% opposed to it. Self-conscience of tense or nervousness when speaking English is apparent by the majority (43.8%) with 9.4% strongly disagreed with having used such a strategy. Communicating and expressing their thoughts on learning the target to family and friends have never been easy as only 28.1% practised it in contrast to the 34.4% majority who vehemently replied a non-practice to it.

*f. Social Strategies*

Table 8

*Data from social strategies*

Items	Accumulated responses on Likert scale & its percentage (%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	
26. If I do not understand something in English, I will always ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	4 (12.5%)	2 (6.3%)	5 (15.6%)	13 (40.6%)	8 (25%)	
27. I always ask someone (a teacher or a friend) to correct my mistakes when I speak English.	3 (9.4%)	5 (15.6%)	4 (12.5%)	7 (21.9%)	13 (40.6%)	
28. I always practice using English with other students by speaking or writing to them.	19 (59.4%)	3 (9.4%)	4 (12.5%)	2 (6.3%)	4 (12.5%)	
29. I always ask questions about new English words.	3 (9.4%)	5 (15.6%)	3 (9.4%)	15 (46.9%)	6 (18.8%)	
30. I always try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	12 (37.5%)	8 (25%)	5 (15.6%)	4 (12.5%)	3 (9.4%)	

The data on social strategies as in Table 8 showed that it has the second-highest mean of frequency, whereby  $M=3.025$  indicated a moderate usage. Even so, it has two modes whereby point 1 and 4 shared the same 41 entries by the respondents. Asking someone to slow down or repeating words were shared by 25% and a staggering 40.6% of the group. While only 12.5% and 6.3% did not utilise it along with 15.6% who neither agreed nor disagreed with it. Another strategy of asking is apparent in item 27 but in terms of requiring someone else to correct their mistakes when speaking. For this item, a majority of 40.6% firmly admitted to such practice with 21.9% who somewhat similarly followed the strategy while a minority of 9.4% and 15.6% did not use this strategy.

However, the results on item 28 were different compared to other strategies in which the strategy of practising the target language with peers is not shared by 59.4% and 9.4% of respondents, compared to the only 12.5% and 6.3% who did. The method of inquiring about new knowledge was somewhat shared by 46.9% of respondents while 18.8% were sure about practising it. In contrast, only 19.4% and 15.6% disagreed with having practised it. The differences between items 28 and 29 might indicate a degree of ambivalence among the respondents in using social strategies. It indicated that utilisation of social strategies is only when exposed to the language in the classroom where they ask about new words but rarely practise using them as that usually happens routinely and outside of the classroom. The conflicting majority agreement between item 28 and 29 indicates that their use of social strategy is still premature, suggesting that they are socially curious about the language, although it has yet to go beyond the practising stage where they eventually practice with each other. Item 30 in the social strategies was the second strategy to be dominated by point 1 response whereby 37.5% and 25% of them did not try to learn the culture of English speakers while 9.4% and 12.5% did explore it when learning.

**Discussion*****Overall Strategy Use***

Ruminating on the results obtained, a summary can be made on the sample whereby these indigenous learners are moderate users of language learning strategies. As the overall mean for each type of strategies only ranged from  $M=2$  to  $M=3.144$  along with the overall accumulated strategies used in all six types of strategies that only reached a medium level of usage where  $M=2.633$  as shown in Table 2. Even so, these learners have yet to achieve the stature of high strategy users as none of the overall mean of the different types of strategies went beyond the high mean score of 3.5 to 5.0.

The overall mean for each type of strategies also indicated the proximities categorical preference amongst the indigenous learners. The direct strategies proved to be shunned among the respondents as a low level of usage among Memory strategy, and Compensation strategy was indicated in Table 2. However, Cognitive strategy obtained a slightly higher frequency compared to other direct strategies, as  $M=2.625$  indicated a medium level of usage instead.

The category of indirect strategies dominated the results whereby Social and Affective strategies obtained higher regality as they achieved higher frequencies ranging went between  $M=3.025$  to  $M=3.144$ . These show that indigenous learners prefer indirect strategies over direct strategies whereby the process of language learning support and management were implemented without directly involving the target language (Oxford, 1990). Even so, only one indirect strategy that was not received with high frequencies, which is the metacognitive strategies. The metacognitive strategies obtained a low level of usage via its mean score  $M=2.581$  which contradicts with other studies that have been done on learners who learn English as a second language (ESL) by (Adel, 2011; Jalal and Karev, 2011; Haifa, 2010). The metacognitive strategies are to be generally favoured by ESL students. Such contrast could have been derived from the nature of linguistic situation of these indigenous whereby Adnan & Saad (2010) accentuated that indigenous children are learning English as “a third or foreign language”, a learning situation that differs from the expectations of ESL learners even though they are “imposed with mainstream educational expectations” (Renganathan & Kral, 2018; Renganathan, 2016). The high status of frequency in social and affective strategies is somewhat shared as one of the top three strategies used by rural students in Indonesia (Gani et al., 2018), although the study found out that metacognitive is instead the most dominating strategy followed by social and affective.

Essential findings by other studies on the indigenous demographics complemented this study by providing further description of possible variabilities at play in shaping the results of this study. As the affective strategies allot with emotions (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), these results are sublime with a case study by Mihat (2016) who identified that positive and supportive surrounding emotions in one's environment are a prominent factor that contributes to an indigenous learner's success in learning English. In addition, a longitudinal study by Renganathan (2013) exuded that indigenous learners in Malaysia originate from an oral culture at home which indicates that these demographics are profoundly affected by interpersonal exchanges that correspond to a socially communicative culture. These studies complemented the findings of this study, which rendered a further description of the regality of both Affective of Social strategy among the respondents as manifested in the findings.

***Overall Individual Strategy Use***

Distinct individual preferences might also influence the findings as each of the respondents has a different level of proficiency and language attitude. The following elaboration in this subsection would divulge further into the overall individual percentages of responses on the strategies of Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective and Social.

The Memory strategies were the least favoured strategies among these indigenous learners as it was ranked as the sixth strategy to be utilised, as shown in Table 2. Oxford (1990) interjected that memory strategy of learning favours employing imagery and auditory elements in their learning. Even so, the results show that the capacity to generate mental linkages between knowledge and imagination was received with mixed responses that exuded a certain degree of ambivalence among these indigenous learners toward visualising knowledge. As visual literacy is implied by Maria (2011) to be the stimuli for absorbing and composing knowledge, Jandhyala (2017) reinforced that the Memory strategies warrant long-term memory retention. However, the results showed a deprivation of memory strategies as the overall mode indicated that the majority strongly detest that they have utilised such strategies.

Although cognitive strategies are among the category of direct strategies that have a low level of usage among these indigenous learners, this type of strategy was the exception as cognitive strategies are among the higher level of utilisation between the learners as compared to the rest of the strategies. Indulging in films and TV shows were proposed by Donaghy (2014) to make a more entertaining and enjoyable language learning process to motivate and inspire practice. The utilisation of visually vibrant videos is evidently practised by the majority of these indigenous learners as the waves of social media, and the internet is becoming a trending neo-culture among younger generations of indigenous communities. Renganathan (2016) found out in her case study that the emergence and popularity of digital literacy have now reached the social culture of indigenous communities in Perak. Her study found that digital literacy became meaningful and incredibly significant among the younger generations, whereby their engagement with mobile phones is a trending social practice. Her findings are sublimely explanatory to the findings in this study whereby watching TV shows, YouTube videos, or movies spoken in English were common among almost half of the sample. Even so, other cognitive strategies did not obtain a similar high frequency of agreement indicating that these indigenous learner's use of the cognitive strategy was still in its infancy.

Compensation strategies were explicated by Karbalaeei & Taji (2014) to be derived from engaging with shortcomings in vocabulary and grammar while conserving conversations, for better comprehension of the conversational context in the target language. As the low-level usage is accentuated in the mean, mode, and percentages of responses in the findings, the study indicates that these indigenous learners might not yet actively engage in conversational practices to enable conversational conservation techniques in compensation strategies.

The act of rumination before, during, and after learning, the task is explicated by Gagné et al (2009) to be an essential paradigm in metacognition. Although this strategy is under the indirect strategies which dominate high frequencies, the findings accentuated that metacognitive strategies were the exception as diminutive data were found among

indigenous learners when utilising this type of strategy. A study by Renganathan & Chong (2009) indicates a prominent discontinuity between schools & home practices whereby schooling is seen as a separate identity that is detached from the everyday social practices of indigenous Malaysians. Such detachment would explain the findings of this study whereby the strategies of planning an allocated time outside of schooling hours albeit at home or before coming to school might still be scarce among the indigenous' learning habits.

The next strategy is found to be most prominently practised. Management of both positive and negative emotions when learning is elucidated by Rossiter (2003) to be essential proximities of Affective strategies. The findings indicated that these indigenous learners have a high degree of conscience over their emotions when learning the English language with most responses acknowledged the existence of both positive and negative emotions when experiencing a language task. The responses indicated that they are aware of negative feelings of tension or nervousness when speaking the target language while simultaneously aware of positive feelings of relief and pride that they experienced when completing a task. Unfortunately, the learners are separated into two contradicting majorities when asked how they manage these emotional consciences. A high majority indicated inadequacy in management while a second-high majority of them are aware of the need to relax and calm themselves when facing a language task.

The last construct in the study is Social strategies, whereby individuals learn from others and with others (Barzallo, 2013). Socialisation and interpersonal interaction were prominent in the findings whereby it has the second-highest frequencies of use, albeit only confined to medium level of usage. Based on the findings, most of the indigenous learners will ask the other person to slow down or repeat the words when they could not fully comprehend a conversation to ensure better absorption of information. In addition, other interpersonal strategies, such as asking someone to correct their mistakes and asking questions about new words, were shared by the majority. Such communicative approach toward learning is sublime as Renganathan (2013) elucidated that the indigenous Malaysians come from an oral culture at home in which interpersonal relations and communication became a crucial factor in learning.

In effect, speaking and listening language skills predominate the usage of language learning strategies among the indigenous learners whereby interpersonal interactions in Social Strategies and the interpersonal emotional conscience in Affective strategies divulged a higher density of communicative practices of speaking and listening. Nevertheless, deprivation of the proximities of reading and writing practices needed sublime supplementary actions in teaching and learning.

### **Implications**

Patterns of below-average use of language learning strategies, especially in Memory and compensation strategies indicate a growing need for learning-to-learn activities in providing these indigenous learners better approaches in learning the English language. O'Malley & Chamot (1990) interjected how the teaching of learning strategies is beneficial. Similar interventive measurements could give a better usage level in language learning strategies as compared to the relatively moderate-intensity found in this study. Nevertheless, educating the indigenous learners with utilising these strategies should simultaneously come with knowledge of strategic applications. Strategy use and learning outcome were elucidated



by Nambiar (2009) to be best applied in the cyclical process. Therefore, a consistent practice under recurring conditions on any of the strategies is crucial in nurturing good language learning habits.

The pivotal role of teachers in assessing learners is explicated by Wu (2018) whereby interventive assistance is needed in identifying compatible strategies that enhance their performance. The various strategies needed to be exposed by teachers to provide a selection of possible practices that would enhance their language acquisition. The knowledge of language learning strategies would compel teachers in adapting learning expectations. These learning aims could be a tangible guide to focus on achieving the desired proficiency level (Thu, 2009). This is vital especially in the process of lesson planning whereby teachers must adapt their teaching approaches and activities to fit students' preferred strategies to ensure better language learning processes take place. As such, learning content could also be adapted to fit their preferences to stimulate a meaningful learning experience in everyday classrooms.

As Nguyen (2008) illustrated how learners should be given hands-on experience to experiment and see how the strategies work, developing learning-to-learn activities and modules for these learners to explore their language learning strategies are essential in creating self-awareness for better language acquisition. Such knowledge would stimulate learners' learning autonomy and personal tools in steering their progress in language acquisition. This personal acclimation in language learning could promote self-evaluation of their practices for better comprehension of their language acquisition.

### **Conclusion**

Although the level of usage of all six language learning strategies among indigenous learners in this study indicates average intensity, the dominance of Affective and Social strategies is indisputably apparent. The categorisation by Oxford (1990) reveals that the indigenous learners are more inclined towards using indirect strategies in language learning. These findings correspond with past studies that annotated the social nature of indigenous learners, signifying that a more communicative approach in language learning is needed to develop better language acquisition. As Nguyen (2008) interjected how strategies should be taught explicitly and taught together with the language skills or components, interpersonal integration in language activities is deemed essential in stimulating a socially communicative atmosphere. Elements of 'fun learning' can cultivate a climate of positive emotions that corresponds with the indigenous learners' inclination for affective strategies as Nordin & Ahmad (2017) explicated that such integration effectively increases their enthusiasm, interest, and participation in pertinent levels. As all these suggested parameters are paramount in catalysing a better acquisition rate of the English language among indigenous Malaysian learners, the exploration in this study is concurrently hoped to be a pivotal signal towards providing a pragmatic pedagogical map for the indigenous learners.

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