

Grammar Learning Strategies Employed by Pre-Service English Teachers of a University

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Article Info	Abstract
Received : 2022-01-27 Accepted : 2022-09-30 Published : 2022-09-30	This study aims to find out what kinds of grammar learning strategies are mostly employed by a group of pre-service English teachers. The subjects of this study were second-year students of the English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of a university in Indonesia. This study used a total population sampling technique which means the entire population is used as the sample (n= 90 students). Data were collected using a set of questionnaires consisting of three types of grammar learning strategies, namely cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies. This study found that the pre-service English teachers employed various strategies when they learn and use grammar. The three types of grammar learning strategies appeared to be the commonly used strategies, with cognitive strategies as the most frequently employed by the pre-service English teachers as indicated by the average score of 4.12 and the lowest strategy was metacognitive strategy indicated by the average score of 3.86.
Key words: grammar; learning strategies; pre-service english teachers	

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is one of the language components that play an important role in learning English. According to Murcia (1995, in Liasari, 2017), grammar is a study of systems and patterns in combining words. It is the system of rules of words arrangement and words connection in sentences (Brown, 2001). Grammar must be learned by people who want to communicate in English because it is a very basic and important part of communication. Grammar is an important component of a language because it contains the rules of language use. In English skills area, among listening, speaking, reading and writing. We need to pay attention to grammar to make the language systematically correct and be meaningful. Among the grammatical items that need to be learned by learners in English include tenses, nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, active and passive sentences, adverbs, clauses, conjunction and others.

Learning strategies are the necessary aspect of language learning. It consists of the methods, techniques or behaviours that learners use to help them comprehend, learn and memorize the information of the language (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Language learning strategies are one of the main elements that enable people to determine how well the learners learn a language. When the learners deliberately choose strategies that suit their learning strategies, it will become a useful tool for active, conscious, and purposeful self-management of learning (Oxford, 2003).

Students may face many difficulties in mastering grammar material on campus. According to Ameliani (2020), there are several factors that cause students' difficulties in understanding grammar. Some of these factors are the background of the learners, teaching techniques and student environment.

The background of students means something that comes from the internal of students themselves. Then teaching techniques are one of the factors that play an important role in improving student achievement. Then teaching technique is one of the factors that come from the teacher while teaching the material. Another factor is the environment that comes from the student environment which can influence students in mastering and learning English. Those factors can be solved by choosing the right learning strategies for students.

For students, language learning strategies enable them to deepen and master the language according to their own passions and learning ways. By using their own learning strategies, students can learn enthusiastically and without feeling overwhelmed. That way, it can encourage them to optimize their potential in mastering grammar. For teachers, it can be used as a reference in designing appropriate learning and achieving good learning results for students. Thus, students can learn grammar with their own techniques or strategies and teachers can manage the class not only based on their teaching perspective but also pay attention and provide various strategies according to student needs in learning grammar. Therefore, students need a strategy in learning grammar which is called as grammar learning strategies.

This study implements a questionnaire with three types of learning strategies suggested by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990), namely cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy, and socio-affective strategy. Cognitive strategies are directly related to information processing performance such as practicing, resourcing, grouping, translation, note-taking, etc. Metacognitive strategies seek to regulate language learning such as planning, monitoring and self-evaluation. Socio-affective strategies are related to interactions with others or own self in learning such as cooperation, asking questions for clarification and self-talk.

There are some early researchers conducted studies related to the grammar learning strategies use. The first study is conducted by (Abri et al., 2017), which showed that the students in Oman use metacognitive strategies more often than cognitive and socio-affective strategies. This study also shows that students who are proficient in grammar use more metacognitive strategies in their learning process. The second study is conducted by Zhou, Z. (2017). The results showed that the level of grammar learning strategies for high school students was still low. Among the three types of grammar learning strategies, cognitive strategies are the most widely used strategies, then meta-cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies. Further research was conducted by Haryani, E.D. (2019), which revealed that almost all of O'Malley's strategies were used by the research subjects. Moreover, metacognitive strategies are the most frequently used by high achievers. This indicates that students who excel tend to use various strategies when studying.

The purpose of this research is to find out what kinds of grammar learning strategies are mostly employed by a group of pre-service English teachers of a university in Indonesia.

METHODS

Research Design

This research used descriptive-quantitative method as the research data approach. According to Creswel (2014), quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship between research variables using research instruments which are then analyzed using statistical procedures.

This quantitative research was designed using survey research. A survey means a set of questions people are asked to gather information or find out their opinions or the information gathered by asking many people the same questions (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, 2020). In this method, the researcher acquired the information from the respondents by giving them various kinds of questions through a research instrument. In learning strategy research, the instruments commonly used to collect data from respondents are interviews, observations, questionnaires, journals, etc (Gurata, 2008).

A questionnaire was used to examine the grammar learning strategies employed by the pre-service English teachers. According to Picincu (2018), a questionnaire is a data collection instrument that is simple, effective, affordable, collects data in a short time, and can solve problems in a standard way.

Setting and Participants

The population of this research was the second-year pre-service English teachers of English Study Program, faculty of teachers training and education of a university in Indonesia in academic year 2020/2021.

The total number of second year pre-service English teachers is 124 students that are divided into 3 classes.

Table 1. Distribution of the Population

No.	Class	Population
1.	3A	42
2.	3B	41
3.	3C	41
Total		124

This research used total sampling technique to get the sample. According to Sugiyono (2012), total sampling is a sampling technique when all members of the population are used as the sample. Thus in this research, the researcher used all population as the sample.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

In this research, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The data were collected using a questionnaire to examine the grammar learning strategies used by students. The researcher took the data by distributing a questionnaire containing 30 questions to the second year pre-service English teachers. The questionnaire was distributed by link through Google form. The questionnaire was written in easy-to-understand English to help students answer questions easily. The data obtained were then entered into SPSS for analysis. Data from the Likert scales were collected, then the frequency and average for each of the 30 items were calculated. The averages were then ordered in such a way so that the strategies used by students can be determined. Last, the results were analyzed and explained descriptively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section aims to show data findings regarding the research question of what kinds of grammar learning strategies are mostly employed by the students. Table 3 below summarises the data of descriptive statistic generated from the questionnaire completed by 90 respondents 4.18 to a low of 2.51. At the level of strategy use, this means that the use of the strategies is between sometimes used (2.5-3.4) and usually used (3.5-4.4). Neither strategy are rated as always used (4.5-5.0), seldom used (1.5-2.4), and never used (1.0-1.4). These results could indicate that all the grammar learning strategies from the questionnaire are employed by the pre-service English teachers to some extent.

Table 2. The average strategy use for overall strategy

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ITEM 1	90	2	5	3.63	.814
ITEM 2	90	2	5	4.12	.846
ITEM 3	90	1	5	3.39	.968
ITEM 4	90	2	5	3.43	.995
ITEM 5	90	1	5	3.27	1.068
ITEM 6	90	2	5	4.04	.886
ITEM 7	90	1	5	3.23	1.171
ITEM 8	90	1	5	3.88	.897
ITEM 9	90	1	5	3.28	1.152
ITEM 10	90	1	5	3.61	.968
ITEM 11	90	1	5	3.57	.704
ITEM 12	90	2	5	3.71	.864
ITEM 13	90	1	5	3.51	.877
ITEM 14	90	1	5	3.49	.974
ITEM 15	90	1	5	2.51	1.052

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ITEM 16	90	1	4	2.84	.820
ITEM 17	90	1	5	3.29	.915
ITEM 18	90	2	5	3.54	.823
ITEM 19	90	2	5	3.70	.771
ITEM 20	90	1	5	3.73	.859
ITEM 21	90	1	5	3.01	.942
ITEM 22	90	2	5	3.86	.829
ITEM 23	90	1	5	3.17	1.094
ITEM 24	90	1	5	3.78	1.025
ITEM 25	90	1	5	2.94	.904
ITEM 26	90	2	5	4.18	.801
ITEM 27	90	1	5	3.11	.965
ITEM 28	90	1	5	3.57	.862
ITEM 29	90	1	5	2.91	1.312
ITEM 30	90	2	5	3.82	.869
Valid N (listwise)	90				

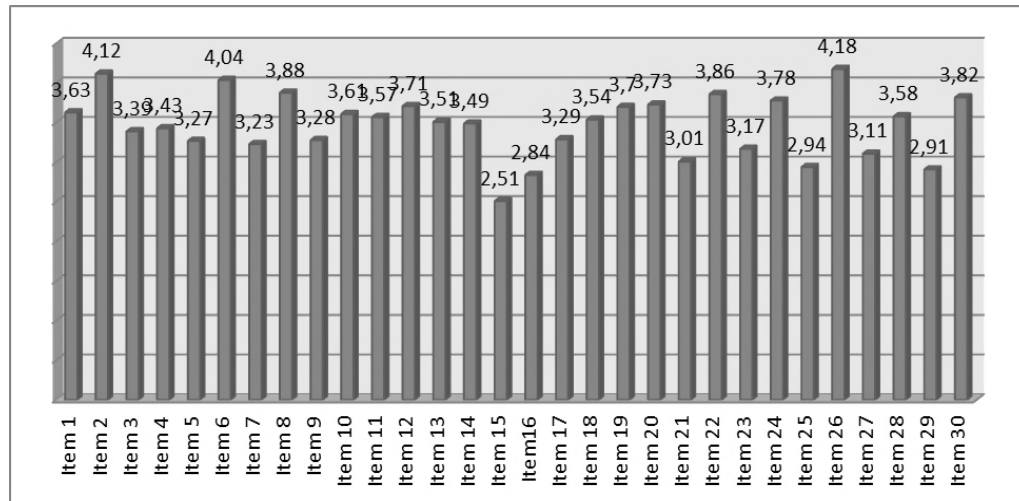


Figure 1. Frequency of grammar learning strategy use

The most frequently employed strategies

The sixteen strategies listed below fall into the usually employed range (3.5-4.4). These strategies have the highest average value in the use of grammar learning strategies. Thus they are the most frequently employed by the pre-service English teachers among the 30 items of the questionnaire.

Based on the results of the questionnaire answered by the respondents, the average (mean) frequency of the most frequently employed strategies in grammar learning can be seen as below:

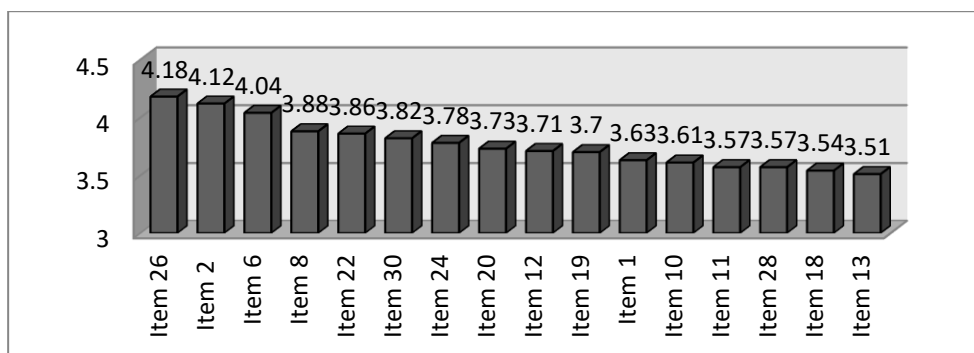


Figure 2. Usually employed strategies

About the three types of grammar learning strategies used in this study, the results show that there are 5 strategies that are socio-affective strategies (item 26, item 30, item 24, item 28 and item 13), four are metacognitive strategies (item 22, item 20, item 19 and item 18) and the remainder 7 strategies are cognitive strategies.

These findings show that the second-year pre-service English teachers of the English Study Program employ strategies when they learn and use grammar structures. The three types of grammar learning strategies appear among the usually employed strategies, but cognitive strategies are mostly employed by the pre-service English teachers. Then followed by socio-affective strategies as the second strategies that are usually employed and the last is metacognitive strategies.

Finding of Each Category of the Questionnaire

a. Cognitive Strategies

Based on the data collected from the respondents and calculated by SPSS version 23, the average results the cognitive categories are shown as below.

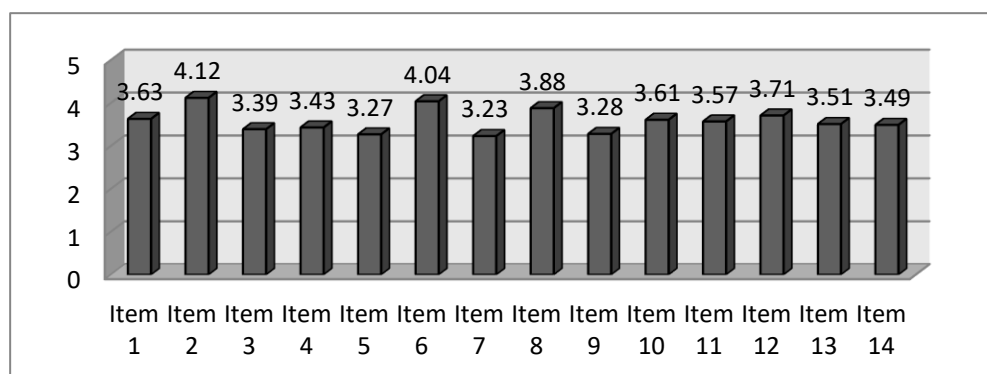


Figure 3. Cognitive strategies result

The table above describes the use of cognitive strategies by the pre-service English teachers when they learn grammar. The highest average is shown by statement number 2 (item 2), which is about the strategy of pre-service English teachers that read English novels or watch English movies to improve their knowledge on English grammar with 4.12. The second is statement number 6 (item 6) which discusses pre-service English teachers' strategies by making important notes on the grammar structure that they learn with 4.04. The third is followed by statement number 8 (item 8), which is underlining or marking the important parts of the grammar rules that they learn with 3.88. Then proceed with the statements of item 12, item 1, item 10, item 13, item 15, item 4, item 3, item 9, item 5 and item 7 as shown in the chart. The lowest average comes from statement number 7 (item 7) which is one of the learning strategies by having a special book for the grammar structure being studied.

From the statement of cognitive strategies with the highest average, it can be concluded that pre-service English teachers tend to use resourcing strategy or using learning materials or references from the target language to improve their knowledge on grammar.

b. Metacognitive Strategies

The mean results of the metacognitive categories obtained from the respondents are shown in the figure below.

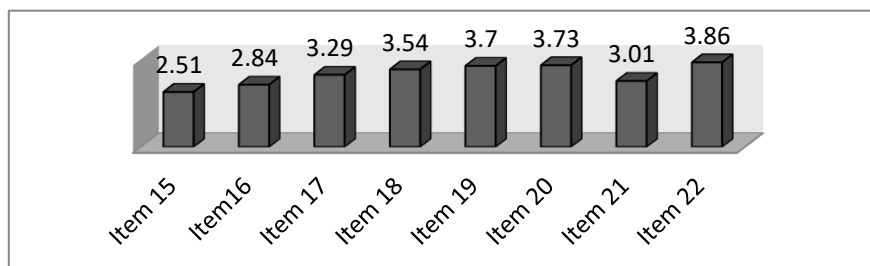


Figure 4. Metacognitive strategies results

The table above describes the metacognitive strategy which pre-service English teachers might use when learning grammar. The highest average is shown by statement number 22 (item 22) which is paying attention to grammar rules when they speak or write with 3.86. The second is statement number 20 (item 20), which is looking for opportunities to practice grammar structures in various ways with 3.73. The third is followed by statement number 19 (item 19) which is determining the grammar structures they don't master and make an effort to improve it with 3.70. Then, the fourth is followed by statement number 18 (item 18) which is paying attention to the specific grammar structures that they learn with 3.54. Then the next sequence is followed by the statement of item 17, item 21, item 16 and the lowest is item 15 with 2.51.

From these statements, it can be concluded the pre-service English teachers usually check for their own mistakes and try to compare them with the correct ones when they are speaking or writing or tend to use a strategy called self-monitoring strategy.

c. Socio-affective Strategies

Based on the result of the questionnaire filled out by the respondents, the average of socio-affective strategy is shown in the figure below.

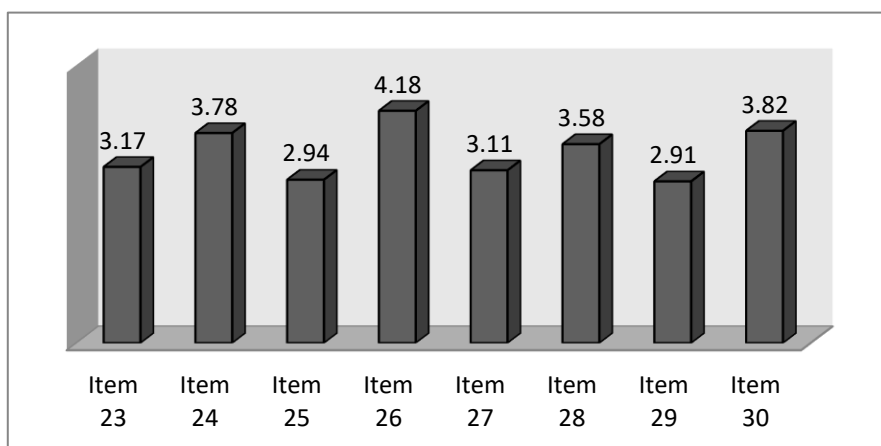


Figure 5. Socio-affective strategies result

The table above shows the socio-affective strategies pre-service English teachers might use when they learn grammar. The highest average is from statement number 26 (item 26) which

asks their friends if they do not understand the teacher's explanation with 4.18. The second comes from item 30 which encourages themselves to dare to communicate with 3.82. The third is item 24 which discuss with friends if they find difficulties in learning grammar with 3.78. Then, followed by item number 28, item 23, item 27, item 25 and item 29.

This means that most pre-service English teachers ask their friends whether the teacher's explanation is not clear enough to them or tend to use a strategy called question for clarification strategy.

DISCUSSION

As discussed in the previous chapter, the writer tried to find an answer to the question related to what kinds of grammar learning strategies are mostly employed by the pre-service English teachers in a university. This research was conducted through an online questionnaire consisting of 30 statements of three types of grammar learning strategies, namely cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective strategies.

The results of this research data were carried out by calculating the mean of the overall grammar learning strategies and classifying them into the high, medium and low categories. The data obtained shows that there were 90 respondents who filled out the questionnaire, there were 34.4% of the total respondents from class 4A, 33.3% from class 4B, and 32.2% of respondents from class 4C. According to Taherdoost (2016), for a total population of 100-150 above, a sample size of 87 and above is acceptable with a 99% confidence level. Therefore, 90 samples in this study are acceptable and can be used to represent the population.

Based on 30 statements in the questionnaire, it found that the pre-service English teachers use grammar learning strategies when they learn grammar which is classified through a Likert scale, namely always, usually, sometimes, seldom and never. This indicates that on average pre-service English teachers have implemented grammar learning strategies when they learn grammar to some extent.

The three types of grammar learning strategies appear among the usually employed strategies, but cognitive strategies are mostly employed by the pre-service English teachers. It is then followed by socio-affective strategies and metacognitive strategies. This finding corresponded to the previous findings by Gurata (2008) and Zhou, Z (2017) that cognitive strategies are mostly employed by pre-service English teachers than other strategies. In contrast to the findings of Abri, A. (2017) and Haryani, E.D. (2019) described in chapter 2 which found that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently employed by pre-service English teachers. This indicated that pre-service English teachers in this study are mostly employed strategies that are directly related to information processing performance or use knowledge when they learn grammar. Such as by using the strategies of practicing, grouping, imagery, elaboration, transfer, and so on which are classified as cognitive strategies.

According to Oxford (1990), cognitive strategies are the most common strategies used by language learners and are very important in learning grammar. Cognitive strategy is a method used by pre-service English teachers to learn or gain a deep conceptual understanding of a material, knowledge or skill. Cognitive learning strategies assist pre-service English teachers in constructing their own knowledge. Pre-service English teachers can control and process the target language by using this strategy. Therefore, this cognitive strategy is important for pre-service English teachers in learning grammar where pre-service English teachers can control and regulate their own learning process and teachers can also help pre-service English teachers to develop their learning abilities with this strategy.

In this study, the highest average use of cognitive strategies is indicated by statement number 2 (item 2), which is about the strategy of pre-service English teachers reading English novels or watching English films to increase their knowledge of English grammar with 4.12. It can be concluded that pre-service English teachers tend to use a resourcing strategy by using learning materials or references from the target language which can be used to improve their knowledge and ability in learning grammar.

Then, metacognitive strategy is a strategy that can control the learner's cognitive and regulate the learning process by planning, monitoring and evaluating learning outcomes. In this strategy pre-service English teachers set their learning goals, monitor and evaluate their own learning progress. According to Kulze in Zulyanty (2017), metacognitive strategies can help pre-service

English teachers determine what they need and use them to achieve student learning outcomes. With metacognitive strategies, pre-service English teachers can regularly control their learning so that they can make the learning process more effective and efficient.

In this study, the use of metacognitive strategies was lower than that of cognitive and socio-affective strategies. For this reason, pre-service English teachers need to be advised to develop their learning abilities by paying attention to and using this strategy considering that this strategy is very good if owned by pre-service English teachers.

In addition, teachers can also build student awareness by inviting them to apply this strategy in the student learning process.

Furthermore, in the metacognitive strategy, the highest mean was indicated by statement number 22 (item 22) who paid attention to grammar rules when they spoke or wrote with 3.86. From the statement, it can be concluded that pre-service English teachers usually check their own mistakes and try to compare them with the correct ones when they speak or write or tend to use a strategy called self-monitoring strategy. This shows that pre-service English teachers tend to find out their mistakes and can then be used as evaluation material for them to practice better in the future. This is very good if used by pre-service English teachers in improving their grammar learning skills.

Then, socio-affective strategies are strategies related to controlling emotions, motivation, attitudes towards learning, as well as relationships or interactions with other people when learning. Soio-affective strategies are often used as the most effective strategies to improve learning among pre-service English teachers. According to (Oxford, 2003), this strategy can help pre-service English teachers work together with others and understand a new language.

This means that this strategy really helps pre-service English teachers learn by cooperating with others. In this strategy we can practice English with strong motivation within ourselves and can also involve others in the learning process to make it more effective.

In this study, the highest average use of socio-affective was from statement number 26 (item 26) which asked their friends whether they did not understand the teacher's explanation with 4.18. This shows that most pre-service English teachers ask their friends whether the teacher's explanation is not clear or tends to use a strategy called the question strategy for clarification. This can clarify understanding and can improve the quality of pre-service English teachers' learning grammar better.

The use of socio-affective strategies ranks second after cognitive strategies that are most often used by pre-service English teachers. For this reason, pre-service English teachers are expected to further increase the use of this strategy when studying in order to get a better quality of learning.

Among the three types of grammar learning strategies used by pre-service English teachers, this study shows that the most frequently used grammar learning strategies by pre-service English teachers are cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies. This can be used as reference material for teachers/lecturers who teach grammar material in class. Teachers are expected to help pre-service English teachers by giving more direction and attention to this strategy to pre-service English teachers and helping pre-service English teachers to apply it well. And for pre-service English teachers, it is expected to be able to provide awareness to them to use grammar learning strategies and or choose which strategies are suitable for them to apply and improve their grammar mastery learning process.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study aims to find out what kinds of grammar learning strategies are mostly employed by the pre-service English teachers of the English Study Program Universitas Riau. There were 90 pre-service English teachers who participated as the respondents of the questionnaire about Grammar Learning Strategies. By seeing the demography of the questionnaire, the sample of this study consisted of 31 pre-service English teachers from class A, 30 pre-service English teachers from class B, and 29 pre-service English teachers from class C filled the questionnaire.

The results of this study indicate that the pre-service English teachers use grammar learning strategies when they learn grammar. The three types of grammar learning strategies appear among the usually employed strategies, but cognitive strategies are mostly employed by the pre-

service English teachers. It is then followed by socio-affective strategies and metacognitive strategies.

In cognitive strategy, pre-service English teachers tend to use resourcing strategy by using learning materials or references from the target language to improve their knowledge on grammar. Furthermore, in metacognitive strategies, pre-service English teachers usually check for their own mistakes and try to compare them with the correct ones when they are speaking or writing. And in the socio-affective strategy, most pre-service English teachers asked their friends when the teacher's explanation was not clear enough for them.

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