

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Every day, countless English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners around the world open their smartphones and laptops to access an unprecedented amount of English-language content, ranging from online videos and podcasts to language learning applications and digital communities. This pattern is supported by recent global digital reports showing that more than six billion people worldwide are connected to the internet, with mobile devices serving as the primary gateway for digital access (DataReportal, 2026). Despite this abundance of digital resources, stronger language proficiency and more effective learning outcomes do not automatically follow. This raises an important question: if learners have constant access to technology, why do many still struggle to make meaningful progress in their English acquisition?

One possible explanation lies not in technology itself, but in how learners strategically approach their learning process. In language education, this strategic behavior is explained through Language Learning Strategies (LLS). According to Oxford (1990), Language Learning Strategies are conscious and deliberate actions or techniques used by learners to improve language acquisition (Oxford, 1996). These strategies serve as an important bridge between access to learning resources and actual language development, helping learners manage, regulate, and maximize their learning

process. Without strategic awareness, learners may use available resources passively without achieving optimal learning outcomes.

Oxford (1990) classifies Language Learning Strategies into six categories, divided into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies involve direct engagement with the target language, consisting of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies. Memory strategies help learners store and retrieve information, cognitive strategies assist learners in processing and practicing language, while compensation strategies help overcome gaps in knowledge during communication. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, support the overall learning process and consist of metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies help learners plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning; affective strategies help regulate emotions and motivation; and social strategies facilitate learning through interaction with others. Together, these strategies form a comprehensive framework for understanding how learners manage their language learning (Oxford, 1990).

Strategic use of Language Learning Strategies is essential for learners to move beyond passive engagement with digital resources. Oxford's (1990) framework emphasizes that the deliberate application of diverse strategies from memory and cognitive techniques to metacognitive planning and social interaction enables learners to maximize the potential of available learning tools. When learners employ a variety of strategies across different learning contexts, they transform their interaction with digital resources from passive

consumption into purposeful, goal-directed learning. This strategic intentionality becomes particularly crucial in modern learning environments where students have unprecedented access to digital content but must take responsibility for how they use it effectively (Oxford, 1990).

In recent years, the development of digital technology has significantly changed the way language learning takes place. This transformation has led to the emergence of Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), which Godwin-Jones (2018) defines as the integration of digital tools and technologies into the language learning process. TELL provides learners with broader access to authentic language materials, communication opportunities, and flexible learning resources beyond the classroom. In TELL contexts, Language Learning Strategies can be practiced in new forms (Jones, 2018). For example, learners may apply memory strategies through digital flashcards, cognitive strategies through instructional videos, compensation strategies through online dictionaries, metacognitive strategies through progress-tracking tools, affective strategies through engaging digital content, and social strategies through online interaction platforms.

For Indonesian EFL learners, TELL plays an especially important role. In Indonesia, English is still considered a foreign language and is rarely used in everyday communication. As explained by Lauder (2008) and Kirkpatrick (2014), Indonesian learners generally have limited opportunities for authentic English exposure outside the classroom (Kirkpatrick, 2010;

Lauder, 2008). This makes technology an important alternative for accessing English input and practicing language skills. For university students majoring in English Education, this situation carries greater significance because they are expected not only to improve their own language proficiency but also to become future educators capable of integrating technology into their teaching practices.

However, the availability of technology does not automatically guarantee strategic language learning. Warschauer (2002) argues that technology can either reduce or widen educational inequalities depending on how learners use it (Warschauer, 2002). Based on preliminary observations conducted by the researcher at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, many sixth-semester students in the English Education Department are highly familiar with digital technologies and frequently use online platforms, digital dictionaries, social media, and video-based content for learning English. However, their engagement is often limited to passive activities such as searching for vocabulary meanings, translating words, or consuming content without applying deliberate learning strategies such as planning, monitoring progress, reflective evaluation, or structured communication practice. This indicates that although students have access to digital resources, their strategic use of technology for language learning may still be limited.

This condition reflects what Lai and Gu (2011) describe as a strategy-access gap, namely the gap between having access to digital learning tools and having the ability to use them strategically for language learning.

Students who can effectively apply a variety of strategies in digital environments are more likely to achieve better learning outcomes than those who use technology passively (Lai & Gu, 2011).

Although previous studies have investigated Language Learning Strategies and Technology-Enhanced Language Learning, several gaps remain. Studies conducted by Rianto (2020), Tanjung (2018), Marto et al. (2021), and Nasution and Losi (2023) primarily examined students' Language Learning Strategies using Oxford's SILL in conventional EFL contexts. Meanwhile, studies by Bin-Hady et al. (2020), Chen (2023), An et al. (2020), and Mekheimer (2025) explored strategy use in technology-enhanced or online learning environments. However, most of these studies focused on general online learning strategies, technology-based self-regulated learning, or e-learning satisfaction rather than comprehensively examining Oxford's six categories of Language Learning Strategies within Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) contexts. Furthermore, research involving Indonesian EFL students, particularly those in Islamic higher education institutions, remains limited. Therefore, further investigation is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how EFL university students employ Language Learning Strategies in TELL contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the frequencies, and pattern of Language Learning Strategies used in TELL contexts among sixth-semester students of the English Department at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, specifically in classes TBI-A, TBI-B and TBI-C. By using a descriptive

quantitative design and an adapted questionnaire based on Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), this study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how future English educators strategically engage with digital learning environments. The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically by enriching the literature on Language Learning Strategies and TELL in the Indonesian EFL context, while also providing useful insights for students, educators, and curriculum developers in improving strategic language learning practices in digital contexts.

B. Identification of the Problem

1. Passive Use of Digital Resources:

Although university students have wide access to various digital resources, many still use them passively for entertainment, casual browsing, or simple translation rather than as structured tools for language learning. This limits the potential of technology to support meaningful English acquisition.

2. Limited Strategic Use of Language Learning Strategies in TELL Contexts:

Many students use digital tools for language learning, but their use often lacks conscious and deliberate strategy application. Instead of systematically applying Language Learning Strategies such as planning, monitoring, memorizing, and evaluating, students tend to use technology only for immediate and practical purposes.

3. Imbalance in the Use of Language Learning Strategy Categories:

Students may not equally apply all six categories of Language Learning Strategies proposed by Oxford (1990). Some strategies, such as compensation and social strategies, may be used more frequently, while memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies may be underutilized in digital learning environments.

4. Lack of Strategy Awareness:

Although digital environments provide students with tools for language learning, many still lack deliberate and conscious strategy application in digital learning. Without clear understanding of the different strategy categories and their functions, students cannot deliberately select and employ appropriate strategies to maximize their learning in digital contexts.

C. Limitation of the Problem

This study focuses on investigating the use of Language Learning strategies in TELL contexts among EFL university students. The research is limited to the sixth-semester students of the English Department at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang specifically in classes TBI-A, TBI-B and TBI-C.

The study specifically examines the frequency and pattern of Language Learning strategies in TELL contexts used by students in supporting their English language learning through digital tools such as mobile applications, online platforms, and multimedia resources.

Furthermore, this research is limited to the analysis of Language

Learning Strategies in TELL contexts use and does not investigate other factors such as English proficiency level, motivation, learning styles, gender, or socio-economic background.

D. Formulation of the Problem

1. What is the frequency and pattern of Language Learning Strategy use among EFL university students in TELL contexts, particularly across the six strategy categories?

E. Purpose of the Research

1. To identify the frequency and pattern of Language Learning Strategy use among EFL university students in TELL contexts, particularly across the six strategy categories.

F. Significance of the Research

The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of English language education.

1. **For Learners:** This study provides insights into the types of Language Learning strategies in TELL contexts used in learning English. By understanding these strategies, students may become more aware of how to utilize digital tools effectively to support their language learning process and develop more autonomous learning habits.
2. **For Educators:** Particularly for lecturers in English Education programs, the findings may provide useful information about how students use

technology in learning English. This information can help educators design more effective technology-integrated instruction and encourage the use of appropriate learning strategies in digital learning environments.

3. **For Future Researchers:** This study may serve as a reference for future studies related to Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), language learning in EFL contexts. It can also provide supporting literature for researchers who are interested in investigating technology-based language learning practices in higher education.
4. **For Curriculum Developers:** The findings of this study may contribute to the development of English language learning curricula by emphasizing the importance of integrating technology and strategic learning practices into language instruction, especially in higher education contexts.

G. Definition of Key Terms

1. Language Learning Strategies

In this study, Language Learning Strategies (LLS) refer to the strategies used by EFL students to facilitate their English learning. This study adopts Oxford's (1990) classification consisting of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

2. Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL)

In this study, Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) refers to the use of digital technologies, such as online platforms, mobile applications, websites, and multimedia resources, to support English

language learning.

3. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

In this study, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) refers to Oxford's (1990) questionnaire, which was adapted into Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) contexts to measure students' use of Language Learning Strategies.

4. EFL University Students

In this study, EFL university students refer to sixth-semester students of the English Education Department at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang who learn English as a foreign language.

5. Language Learning Strategy Use

In this study, Language Learning Strategy Use refers to the frequency with which students employ Language Learning Strategies while learning English through technology. The level of strategy use is categorized into high, medium, and low based on Oxford's (1990) classification.