

LLS of Indonesian primary school

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Language learning strategies of Indonesian primary school students: In relation to self-efficacy beliefs



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ABSTRACT

This study examined Indonesian primary school students' strategy use in learning English. It also explored how these young learners' strategy use relates to their self-efficacy beliefs. The Indonesian Children's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and the Children's Self-efficacy in Learning English Questionnaire (C-SELEQ) were administered to 522 sixth graders. The young learners reported high use of socio-affective and metacognitive strategies and moderate use of cognitive strategies. The preferred strategies involved learning with/from others and regulating one's own learning, while the less preferred strategies mainly dealt with memorizing words and practicing outside the classroom. The results also indicated significant differences in strategy use between students who perceived themselves capable of performing English tasks and self-regulating their learning and students who did not. The study contributes to knowledge on the influential roles of self-efficacy — particularly self-efficacy in self-regulated learning.

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1. Introduction

Learning strategies have been a major focus in second language acquisition (SLA) studies over the last four decades. The main driver of interest in the topic is the belief that strategy use contributes to language learning. Language learners need to adopt active roles in their learning and, accordingly, they need to be equipped with strategies that allow them to regulate their own learning (Griffiths, 2013; Oxford, 2011). Research evidence has shown that the distinction between proficient and less proficient learners lies not only in the frequency of the strategy use but also in the flexibility and appropriateness of strategy use (Bruen, 2001; Vandergrift, 2003; Zhang, Gu, & Hu, 2008). Studies have also revealed that strategy use relates to various factors other than proficiency, such as gender (Khalil, 2005; Lan & Oxford, 2003), learning styles (Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006), beliefs (Yang, 1999), and nationality (Griffiths, 2003; Nguyen & Godwyll, 2010).

The participants in most studies investigating language learning strategies have been adolescent and adult learners. Only a small number of participants in studies have been young learners, especially in a foreign language context (Cunning, 2011; Kirsch, 2012; Macaro, 2007). Students of different ages are believed to approach language learning differently. Older learners are more likely to employ cognitively complex strategies, while their younger counterparts tend to opt for less complex (and surface) strategies (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Tragant, Thompson, & Victori, 2013). The difference suggests that, to some

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extent, the capacity to exercise learning strategies is dependent on cognitive and motoric development (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997).

Strategy use is determined by the students' belief in their own capability, the so-called self-efficacy (Usher & Pajares, 2008; Zimmerman, 2000). Self-efficacy provides learners with "staying power" that means they persist longer in the face of obstacles and distractions (Caprara et al., 2008, p. 526). Possessing strong self-efficacy could allow the learners to persist with particular strategies. However, despite its pivotal role, self-efficacy has received only little attention in both second language research and strategy research (Kim, Wang, Ahn, & Bong, 2015; Woodrow, 2011). The current study extends the work on learning strategies by exploring primary (or elementary) school students' strategy use and examining how their strategy use relates to self-efficacy beliefs.

2. Literature review

2.1. Language learning strategies

Second language (or L2) strategy research has lacked agreement on how to define and classify learning strategies. That is why Ellis (1994, p. 529) viewed this construct as fuzzy, and Tseng, Dörnyei, and Schmitt (2006) even advocated a shift from learning strategies to self-regulation. However, fuzziness cannot justify discarding four decades of strategy research, and the shift to self-regulation will lead only to more fuzziness (Gu, 2012).

In her latest work, Griffiths (2015, p. 426) defined language learning strategies as "actions chosen by learners (either deliberately or automatically) for the purpose of learning or regulating the learning of language". This definition underscores the notion that being self-regulated requires strategy use (Gao, 2007; Griffiths, 2013; Oxford, 2011). Different models of strategy classifications have also been developed (e.g. Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Rubin, 1981). Oxford's (1990) model, which groups strategies into six categories (i.e. memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social, affective), draws upon an eclectic theoretical foundation (Griffiths & Oxford, 2014). The model has been widely used and is considered comprehensive (Radwan, 2011). Even so, the model lacks empirical support. Much research seeking the factor structure of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) across learning contexts has failed to fit with the six-category model (e.g. Heo, Stoffa, & Kush, 2012; Robson & Midorikawa, 2001; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Woodrow, 2005). For this reason, Griffiths (2013) suggests that strategy researchers not use predetermined strategy classification models.

2.2. Self-efficacy beliefs

Self-efficacy refers to people's perceived beliefs in their capability to perform specific tasks (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy, according to Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2003), enables learners to be more cognitively, behaviourally, and motivationally engaged in their learning processes. This means that self-efficacy has a significant role in determining the learners' achievements, along with skill and knowledge (Bandura, 1993; Pajares, 2002). Further, self-efficacy might explain why different individuals' performances differ markedly despite them possessing similar knowledge and skills (Bandura, 1986, 1993), or why the same learners perform differently at different times (Bouffard-Bouchard, 2001).

Self-efficacy is a distinct construct and should not be confused with related constructs. Clear distinctions of the constructs are crucial for appropriate and sound measurements. On one hand, self-efficacy is context-specific, and it is assessed on the basis of individuals' perceived competence to perform specific tasks in specific situations (Bong, 2006; Pajares, 1996). On the other hand, self-concept can be domain-specific and a global assessment of competence (Bong, 2006), and individuals assess it by comparing their performance with that of others or with their own in other areas (Marsh, Walker, & Debus, 1991). Self-efficacy also differs from linguistic self-confidence in that the latter is a stable personal trait composed of perceived L2 competence and L2 anxiety (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clement, & Noels, 1998). Unlike self-efficacy, which is mainly determined by mastery experience, vicarious experience, and social persuasion, self-confidence is more determined by the frequency and quality of previous contacts with the L2 community (Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994).

Extensive studies, mostly undertaken with university and high-school students, demonstrate that self-efficacy in general academic and L2 tasks is a significant predictor of academic achievement across subjects other than L2 learning (Afari, Ward, & Khine, 2012; Al-Harthi, Was, & Isaacson, 2010; Bouffard-Bouchard, 2001; Yeo & Neal, 2006; Zimmerman, 2000) and L2 achievement (Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2007). Similarly, self-efficacy for self-regulated learning, understood as beliefs in the capability to employ learning strategies appropriately (Bandura, 1995), is linked with learning achievements, learning goals and other motivational constructs (Mills et al., 2007; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994).

2.3. Language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs

Despite a growing interest of SLA researchers in self-efficacy beliefs, only a few have examined how L2 learners' self-efficacy beliefs relate to their learning strategies. For instance, Li and Wang's (2010) study of Chinese students of English revealed that reading self-efficacy was significantly associated with not only overall reading strategies but also with all three learning strategy categories (i.e. metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies). The study further showed that learners of high self-efficacy tended to be more self-regulated in their own learning through goal setting, time management,

and material selections. The learners also used learning strategies more appropriately and were more capable of coping with their anxiety and stress. In another instance, [Purdie and Oliver's \(1999\)](#) research into successful bilingual young learners in Australia indicated that self-efficacy was significantly associated with cognitive and metacognitive strategies at moderate to strong levels, but not with social mediation strategies.

Overall, the findings on the relationship between strategy use and self-efficacy are relatively consistent; however, they need to be understood with a degree of caution. In several studies, researchers ([Bonyadi, Nikou, & Shahbaz, 2012](#); [Su & Duo, 2012](#); [Yang, 1999](#); [Yilmaz, 2010](#)) administered self-efficacy scales that were not in line with [Bandura's \(2006\)](#) guideline that self-efficacy scale items should reflect context-specificity and judgment of confidence in capability. Failure to follow the guideline could raise concerns over the accuracy of measurement and certainly the validity of research findings. For example, no items intended to assess self-efficacy in [Yang's \(1999\)](#) study of L2 learner beliefs assess the construct accurately. For instance, the item "I believe that I will learn to speak English very well" fails to reflect context-specificity and judgement of capability. The item "I feel timid speaking English with other people" also seems to assess the learner's self-esteem with regard to their English ability rather than self-efficacy, in that emotional instead of cognitive judgement of the self is involved and no judgment is made about capability. Similarly, items in the self-efficacy scales used by [Su and Duo \(2012\)](#) and [Magogwe and Oliver \(2007\)](#) do not gauge self-efficacy, despite the addition of the word "English" to several of the items. Such scales might belong to what [Bong \(2006, p. 288\)](#) labelled "pseudo-efficacy scales". Further, past research in learning strategies has focused on self-efficacy in the performance of specific English language tasks rather than on self-efficacy in self-regulated learning. This focus highlights the lack of empirical evidence about whether strategy use also depends on the learner's confidence in their ability to use the strategies.

2.4. Language learning strategy use among young L2 learners

Past research on young learners' strategy use has indicated that learners employ learning strategies but generally differ in what strategy use they prefer and the effectiveness of that strategy use. For example, a study by [Zhang et al. \(2008\)](#) on the learning strategies of Singaporean primary students studying English as a Second Language (ESL) showed that more proficient pupils used a greater variety of strategies and were able to orchestrate strategy use through combining bottom-up and top-down processing. By contrast, less proficient students found it difficult to comprehend the given texts and relied excessively on a bottom-up approach. A more recent study of Canadian primary learners by [Gunning \(2011\)](#) also investigated general strategy patterns among students of different proficiency. Using an adapted version of [Gunning's \(1997\)](#) Children's SILL, the study's results showed that affective strategies were the most common strategies among the students of any proficiency levels, with memory strategies the least used. Further, the study reported that students of high and low proficiency differed significantly in their overall strategy use, as well as their use of affective and cognitive strategies, indicating that proficient students use more strategies.

In the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), [Lan and Oxford \(2003\)](#) surveyed Taiwanese primary school students to profile their learning strategies. Using the Taiwanese Children's SILL, they found that primary school pupils used compensation strategies more often than metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies to cope with English language tasks. In addition, the students reported using affective strategies to reduce their anxiety and pressure during their English learning process. In another EFL context, [Sugeng \(1997\)](#) investigated the learning strategies of Indonesian elementary school students. Through observations, the study found that the students used cognitive strategies most often and metacognitive strategies least often. The study further showed that the students used more learning strategies when engaged in L1 tasks than when engaged in L2 tasks.

To sum up, despite a growing interest in young learners' strategy use, only a small number of studies on the topic have been carried out in foreign language contexts, particularly in Indonesia. Therefore, the way Indonesian young learners learn a foreign language and the investigation of self-efficacy beliefs as a possible factor affecting strategy use are worth investigating to provide a better understanding of young language learners' strategy use and how that use relates to their self-efficacy beliefs.

2.5. Research questions

The current study attempted to assess the preference of language learning strategies among Indonesian EFL primary school students. Another purpose of this study, different from previous studies, was that it sought to provide empirical evidence that not only the students' English self-efficacy but also their self-regulated learning efficacy affected their use of learning strategies. Specifically, the study addressed the three research questions below:

- 1) What are the reported frequencies of language learning strategies used by Indonesian primary school students of EFL?
- 2) Do students who have different English self-efficacy vary in their use of language learning strategy?
- 3) Does language learning strategy use vary among the students with different self-regulated learning efficacy?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

A total of 522 sixth graders participated in the study, of whom 38% were male and 62% were female. The discrepancy in the gender ratio was mainly because more male than female students withdrew during the data collection process and because the parents of more male students chose not to give consent to collecting the data. Most students were aged 11 and had learnt English for at least 2 years. The students were selected through single stage-cluster sampling; Grade six classrooms in twelve schools located in urban, suburban and rural regions of East Java province were randomly selected, and all six graders in the selected classrooms were invited to take part in the study.

The students learned English as an elective subject. The subject mainly aims to develop students' communicative competence (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan [National Education Standards Agency], 2006). However, Indonesia's national curriculum and the English textbooks used focus solely on the development of language skills. Neither provides information on learning strategies that students can apply to cope with given tasks or to learn English more effectively. The absence of such information has perhaps contributed to many English teachers failing to pay due attention to their students' needs and exercising dominant roles in the classroom (Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011). Accordingly, the students spend most of their time listening to their teacher talk, and have little time to practice (Marcellino, 2005; Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011).

3.2. Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to collect the data: the Indonesian Children's SILL and the Children's Self-efficacy in Learning English Questionnaire (C-SELEQ). Both instruments were administered in the Indonesian language. The Indonesian Children's SILL, adapted from Gunning's (1997) Children's SILL, was used to assess the participants' use of learning strategies. It was chosen for adaptation because it was designed for primary school students and had a good internal consistency reliability of 0.96 (Oxford, 2011, p. 163). It has been used in several studies on young learners' use of strategy (Lan & Oxford, 2003; Lan, 2005) and was itself adapted from Oxford's (1990) SILL, the most widely used strategy questionnaire. Initially the Indonesian Children's SILL consisted of 30 items with a 5-point Likert scale, with 6 strategy categories (i.e. memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social). Unlike Gunning's SILL, in this study the instrument employed a 5-pictorial point scale instead of numbers, primarily to raise the interest of the young participants when completing the questionnaire. The pictorial points comprised five face icons, ranging from "a weeping face" meaning *never* to "a laughing face" meaning *always*. Pictorial responses instead of numbers, used in previous research studies with young children, did not create response bias (Reynolds-Keefer, Johnson, & Dickenson et al., 2009). The Indonesian Children's SILL was pilot-tested with 29 sixth graders not participating in the main study. Following the pilot testing, minor changes were made, including the rewording of several items. For instance, item "I practice what I learn with my parents" became "I practice what I learn with my parents or siblings" because the participants indicated that they often studied with their older siblings.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), using data obtained from the main study, was run to evaluate the Indonesian Children's SILL's construct validity. The EFA was necessary for two reasons. First, a questionnaire translated into another language or administered to participants of a different culture must go through rigorous assessment for its validity and reliability (Oxford,

Table 1

Internal consistency reliability, communalities, cumulative extraction sums of squared loadings, and final EFA results of the Indonesian Children's SILL.

Item No	MSA	Reproduced communalities	CESSL (%)	Cognitive	Socio-affective	Metacognitive
Eigenvalues				5.854	1.446	1.120
Cronbach's alpha				0.858	0.671	0.729
2	0.917	0.537	33.007	0.799		
11	0.923	0.415		0.665		
10	0.932	0.355		0.652		
1	0.942	0.411		0.616		
3	0.926	0.393		0.596		
7	0.946	0.422		0.585		
6	0.946	0.418		0.578		
14	0.943	0.406		0.577		
16	0.946	0.388		0.510		
18	0.902	0.266	38.477		0.786	
27	0.886	0.387			0.601	
28	0.920	0.439			0.543	
29	0.887	0.594			0.529	
21	0.952	0.420	42.100			0.753
22	0.919	0.373				0.500
24	0.869	0.512				0.483

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation method: Promax. Rotation converged in 6 iterations. Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA). Cumulative extraction sums of squared loadings (CESSL).

Table 2

Internal consistency reliability, communalities, MSA, cumulative extraction sums of squared loadings, and final EFA results of C-CELEQ.

Item no.	MSA	Reproduced communalities	CESSL (%)	ESE	SRLE
Eigenvalues				5.558	1.215
Cronbach's alpha				0.860	0.774
1	0.927	0.509	38.487	0.627	
2	0.916	0.434		0.601	
4	0.936	0.305		0.490	
5	0.929	0.511		0.800	
6	0.941	0.483		0.659	
7	0.949	0.479		0.579	
8	0.934	0.449		0.542	
10	0.930	0.386		0.711	
11	0.928	0.341	43.359		0.566
12	0.921	0.385			0.635
13	0.936	0.465			0.621
15	0.918	0.377			0.693
16	0.920	0.514			0.598

Extraction method: Principal axis factoring. Rotation method: Promax. Rotation converged in 3 iterations. Measures of sampling adequacy (MSA). Cumulative extraction sums of squared loadings (CESSL). ESE (English Self-Efficacy). SRLE (self-regulated learning efficacy).

2011; Robson & Midorikawa, 2001). Second, the results of previous studies on strategy classifications have been inconsistent, which then drew criticisms (Woodrow, 2005). Therefore, this study employed Griffiths' (2013) view not to adopt *a priori* strategy groupings. On the basis of both data and existing theories, the EFA yielded a 3-factor solution consisting of 3 strategy categories, namely cognitive, socio-affective, and metacognitive (Table 1). Cognitive strategies mainly involved transformation of information and were intended to help with memory or comprehension. Socio-affective strategies included learning with others and self-motivating. Metacognitive strategies dealt with planning and monitoring. The other 14 items that cross-loaded on 2 factors or had insignificant loadings on any of the 3 factors were deleted. For example, the item "I mime words to remember them" was deleted due to low loading. The reliability coefficients for the three factors were above the criteria of 0.6 for acceptance (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). The 3-factor solution, with the total of 16 items generated by the EFA, was used in subsequent analyses.

The C-SELEQ was used to measure the participants' self-efficacy beliefs. The 5-point scale questionnaire involved 2 subscales: (1) English self-efficacy; and (2) self-regulated learning efficacy; initially with 10 and 7 items respectively. The first subscale was self-developed because "there is no all-purpose measure of perceived self-efficacy" (Bandura, 2006, p. 307) unless generic skills, such as self-regulated learning efficacy, are applicable to different domains. The second subscale was adapted from Usher and Pajares' (2008) Self-Efficacy for Self-Regulated Learning Scale. The subscale in that study had good construct and concurrent validities, as well as an internal consistency of 0.83. Before being administered, the C-SELEQ was pilot-tested; no revisions were necessary.

An EFA was also run with the data from the main study to evaluate the construct validity of the C-SELEQ. As presented in Table 2, a two-factor solution was extracted from the analysis. Factor 1, consisting of 8 items representing self-beliefs in one's ability to perform specific English tasks, was named English self-efficacy. In contrast, factor 2, with 5 items that reflected beliefs in one's own capabilities to regulate learning, was named after its original instrument — self-regulated learning efficacy. The 2-factor solution with their respective items was nearly consistent with the subscales already designated in the instrument. Four items, which either had low loadings or loaded on factors that theoretically did not make sense, were deleted. For example, the item "I am sure that I can act out a dialogue about my favorite sports in English in class," which questioned the confidence in performing a specific English task, loaded together with other items which focused on the confidence in the ability in self-regulated learning. The reliability coefficients of factors 1 and 2 were acceptable. The 2-factor solution with 13 items was used in subsequent analyses.

3.3. Data collection procedure and analysis

All participants involved in the study gave their consent and had their parents' permission to participate. The first author, accompanied by the English teacher of the respective schools, administered the questionnaires. The participants were asked to fill out the Indonesian Children's SILL and the C-SELEQ within about 40 minutes. The participants were also allowed to ask questions if they did not understand the scale items.

To analyse the data, the participants were grouped first by their English self-efficacy and then by their self-regulated learning efficacy level. The data about the participants' reported use of learning strategies were then analysed for medians of strategy use to address the first research question, and for statistical differences in strategy use in relation to the learners' self-efficacy beliefs, using a non-parametric test (i.e. Kruskal-Wallis H tests), to address the two other research questions.

4. Results

4.1. Use of learning strategies among the participants

To determine the magnitude of strategy use frequencies, on a 5-point scale (used in this study) medians of 1–2 are considered as low frequency, a median of 3 as moderate frequency, and medians of 4–5 as high frequency. The results showed that the participants reported a moderate-to-high frequency of using language learning strategies. Specifically, the participants used cognitive strategies at moderate frequency and socio-affective strategies at high frequency. Importantly, high frequency was also reported for metacognitive strategies, often associated with learning successes.

As Table 3 shows, in terms of individual learning strategies for all the strategy items belonging to the socio-affective and metacognitive categories, such as seeking help and looking for occasions to speak English, students reported high frequency of use. Meanwhile, all the nine strategies reported at low and moderate frequency of use belonged to the cognitive category. Four of the cognitive strategies used at moderate frequencies were ways of memorizing words or other simple information through simply repeating them, associating them with background knowledge, or making mental pictures of them. Guessing words based on contextual clues was another instance of the cognitive strategies with moderate use. Finding opportunities to practice outside the classroom was the least frequent strategy of the cognitive category, which is not surprising. This strategy requires self-initiation and courage, which many young learners in foreign language contexts might not possess.

Table 3
Reported use frequencies of learning strategy items.

No	Strategy item	Category	Median
1	When I don't know a word in English, I ask for help	SA	4
2	When I succeed, I congratulate myself	SA	4
3	I ask others to speak slowly or to repeat what they say if I do not understand	SA	4
4	I practice English with my classmates	SA	4
5	I look for occasions to speak English	M	4
6	When someone speaks to me in English, I listen attentively	M	4
7	I analyse the errors I have made and try not to repeat them	M	4
8	I read books or I play computer games in English	C	3
9	I associate new English words with what I already know	C	3
10	I associate the sound of a new English word with a sound of a word that I already know	C	3
11	When I speak in English, I try to imitate English-speaking people, in order to pronounce the words correctly	C	3
12	I repeat new expressions that I have learned	C	3
13	I try to understand what I read or what I hear without translating word for word	C	3
14	I guess the meaning of unfamiliar words which I hear or read from the context	C	3
15	I make a drawing in my head to help me remember a new word	C	3
16	I try to find opportunities outside of school (sports, extracurricular activities, etc.) to practice my English	C	2

Note: SA (socio-affective), M (metacognitive), C (cognitive).

4.2. The use of learning strategies among students with different English efficacy beliefs

Kruskal-Wallis H tests were run to examine whether there were significant differences in the use of the three strategy categories between students with different English self-efficacy levels: low ($n = 194$), moderate ($n = 156$), and high ($n = 172$). The students who had different English self-efficacy levels showed significant differences in their cognitive ($X^2(2) = 126.195$, $p = 0.000$), socio-affective ($X^2(2) = 50.425$, $p = 0.000$), and metacognitive ($X^2(2) = 89.781$, $p = 0.000$) strategy use. Having determined that differences existed, pairwise comparisons using adjusted p -values were conducted to locate where the differences lay. Table 4 shows that the use of cognitive, socio-affective, and metacognitive strategies was significantly different in all pairwise comparisons, except in the comparison of socio-affective strategy use between the moderate and high groups. The significant differences reflected a linear trend: that is, students who perceived themselves as more capable of performing English tasks were likely to use cognitive, socio-affective, and metacognitive strategies more often than those who did not. As the r values suggested, English self-efficacy had a stronger link with cognitive strategies than with the two other categories.

Table 4
Median, p -value, effect size for language learning strategies as a function of English self-efficacy.

Variable	Median			p/r		
	L ($n = 174$)	M ($n = 181$)	H ($n = 167$)	L & M	L & H	M & H
Cognitive	3	3	4	0.000/.20	0.000/.49	0.000/.27
Socio-affective	4	4	4.5	0.000/.20	0.000/.30	0.080/.10
Metacognitive	3	4	4	0.002/.15	0.000/.41	0.000/.25

Note: L (low group), M (moderate group), H (high group), p (p -value), r (effect size).

4.3. The use of learning strategies among students with different self-regulated learning efficacy beliefs

Multiple Kruskal-Wallis H tests were run to determine whether there were significant differences in the use of cognitive, socio-affective, and metacognitive strategies between students who had different self-regulated learning efficacy levels: low ($n = 203$), moderate ($n = 167$), and high ($n = 152$). The test results revealed statistically significant differences in cognitive ($X^2(2) = 138.505, p = 0.000$), socio-affective ($X^2(2) = 64.346, p = 0.000$), and metacognitive ($X^2(2) = 99.734, p = 0.000$) strategy use between the three groups. Post hoc tests using adjusted p-values were conducted to pinpoint where the differences lay. The results of the tests (Table 5) indicated that students who held moderate or high levels of self-regulated learning efficacy employed strategies in all three categories significantly more often than those who had low self-regulated learning efficacy. Students who held moderate and high self-regulated learning efficacy beliefs differed significantly only in terms of cognitive and metacognitive strategy use. As with English self-efficacy, self-regulated learning efficacy had stronger effects on cognitive strategy use than on the use of metacognitive and socio-affective strategies.

Table 5

Median, p-value, effect size for language learning strategies as a function of self-regulated learning efficacy.

Variable	Median			p/r		
	L ($n = 174$)	M ($n = 181$)	H ($n = 167$)	L & M	L & H	M & H
Cognitive	3	3	4	0.000/.21	0.000/.45	0.000/.23
Socio-affective	4	4	4.5	0.000/.24	0.000/.32	0.145/.09
Metacognitive	3	4	4	0.000/.20	0.000/.41	0.000/.20

Note: L (low group), M (moderate group), H (high group), p (p-value), r (effect size).

5. Discussion and pedagogical implications

The main purpose of the study was to examine young language learners' strategy use and how that use related to self-efficacy beliefs in a foreign language learning context. The data analyses generated several key findings.

5.1. The first finding: high use of socio-affective and metacognitive strategies

The first finding — that socio-affective and metacognitive strategies were reported at high use — might point to the great effort of these young learners to improve their English, and to cope with language tasks through learning from or with others and through regulating their own learning. Cognitive strategies were used at moderate frequencies, which might result from the participants' lower awareness of the benefit of the strategies. These findings are partially congruent with those found in previous studies on young learners — that affective strategies were among the most preferred strategies (Gunning, 2011; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Lan, 2005). On the other hand, some findings of this study also contradict other studies, as they indicated that social strategies were among the least preferred (Gunning, 2011; Lan & Oxford, 2003) and cognitive strategies the most frequent strategies (Sugeng, 1997). One possible explanation for the differences in social strategies might be the cultural value of collectiveness held by Indonesian people (Bowen, 1986). This might affect the students' preference to learn with and from others. A difference in data collection techniques could be the reason for the difference in cognitive strategy use between the current study and Sugeng's (1997) study that was also conducted in Indonesia. Unlike self-report questionnaires used in this study, classroom observations for data collection in Sugeng's (1997) study effectively tapped behavioural activities. He mostly classified these activities as cognitive strategies and not as mental processes. Comparing the findings of the current study with those of previous studies should be done carefully also because of the differences in the strategy classification, number of strategy items, and research methods.

At strategy item levels, seeking help was one of the frequently used strategies, while looking for opportunities to practice outside the classroom was the least frequently used one. The frequent use of the help-seeking strategy was also reported in other studies on EFL/ESL primary school students (Gunning, 1997, 2011; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Lan, 2005). The consistent findings across learning and cultural contexts are no surprise, because this strategy can potentially provide instant, accurate solutions. This strategy is positive in nature, unless students depend on it too much and ignore alternative strategies that might be more effective. Students who frequently seek help are neither necessarily passive nor less persistent. Those students know and choose the people who can offer help, when they need help, and have the courage to ask for help instead of simply giving up. The low frequency of seeking opportunities to practice outside the classroom might reflect that the young students lacked initiative, courage and willingness to seek or create opportunities for practicing English. Perhaps the fact that English is not used in their surroundings caused them to less frequently practice English outside the classroom.

5.2. The second finding: significant difference in strategy use as a function of English self-efficacy

This study also identified a significant difference in strategy use as a function of English self-efficacy. This suggests that students who perceived themselves capable of performing English tasks tended to use learning strategies more often than

those who did not, which concurs with previous studies (Li & Wang, 2010; Purdie & Oliver, 1999). The students with strong self-efficacy were possibly more motivated, and so put more effort in their strategy use. Their more frequent strategy use also indicates that they were more likely to be more engaged (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003) and more self-regulated in learning processes (Zimmerman, 2000). The evidence outlines the role of self-beliefs in the way that learners approach their learning. It further confirms Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1993) theory that self-efficacy affects people's behaviours through influencing the way they think, self-motivate, and persist in the face of taxing situations.

5.3. *The third finding: self-efficacy beliefs in self-regulated learning related to strategy use depends partly on how confident learners are in using the strategies*

Another finding — that self-efficacy beliefs in self-regulated learning related to strategy use — offered empirical evidence for Usher and Pajares (2008), who postulated that the use of learning strategies depends partly on how confident learners are in their ability to use the strategies. In other words, possessing knowledge of learning strategies does not necessarily mean that learners are able to use them effectively under difficult learning conditions (Bandura, 1993). As a motivational process, self-efficacy is also needed to help the learners cope with possible problems in the course of strategy use or even learning processes. In this study the learners with firmer self-efficacy were persistent in seeking practice opportunities outside the classroom and practicing English with others. They perceived this strategy to be effective despite such opportunities having less supportive environments or increasing their fear of making mistakes. These learners also had greater confidence to participate in the classroom interactions and were better at regulating their affects. The students did so possibly because they were more resistant to interesting distractions and resilient in the face of difficulties or failures. Their anxiety or disruptive environments will not easily debilitate them. This study could be the first to probe and display the role of self-regulated learning efficacy in the use of L2 learning strategies among children.

The close link between self-efficacy and strategy use highlights the motivational role of self-efficacy in strategic learning and supports the argument that students not only need skills or strategies but also motivational beliefs for successful attainments (Bandura, 1993; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Pintrich & de Groot, 1990). Students not only need to choose and apply particular strategies to help them learn English; they also have to believe in their own abilities to do so appropriately and envision successes of their strategy use. In short, possessing strategic knowledge does not help much if the learners lack a sense of self-efficacy.

5.4. *Pedagogical implications of the findings*

Pedagogical implications are offered on the basis of the obtained findings. Regarding the finding that seeking practice opportunities was the least frequently used strategy, teachers should encourage their students to actively look for occasions to practice English outside the classroom. The teachers could also design lessons that involve out-of-school activities. They could also help their students become more confident in being able to perform language tasks successfully and use learning strategies appropriately. Building up a student's confidence occurs when the teacher nurtures the source of self-efficacy during strategy instruction or language learning processes. The sources according to Bandura (1997) include mastery experiences, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physical and emotional states. Teachers, for example, could provide students with positive feedback and praise for their learning progresses and strategic behaviours to help them develop their self-efficacy. With a stronger sense of self-efficacy, students are likely to be more persistent in using particular strategies that they perceive as helpful, more resilient in the face of learning difficulties, and more optimistic that they will achieve their designated learning goals. This measure is particularly helpful for young students who are in the early stages of learning a foreign language.

6. Conclusion

One of the major purposes of this study was to probe whether learners with different self-efficacy beliefs differed in their use of learning strategies. The results revealed that students who possessed a higher sense of English efficacy and self-regulated learning efficacy also reported using learning strategies more often than those who did not possess this higher sense. The present findings therefore contribute to knowledge on the influential roles of self-efficacy — particularly self-efficacy in self-regulated learning, which the literature on language learning strategy has not previously documented. Further, this study also sheds light on the use of learning strategies among young learners in a foreign language context (i.e. Indonesia). Although the results were obtained from Indonesian primary students, they could apply beyond the Indonesian context whenever similar characteristics are shared.

Just as in other cross-sectional studies, this study's findings were merely correlational in nature and did not account for any causality. Further research adopting experimental or longitudinal designs is needed to clarify the cause–effect relationship between strategy use and self-efficacy. This correlational study did not focus on tapping into how effective individual strategies are in helping learners cope with specific language tasks. Further studies aiming mainly at identifying task-based strategies, whether using self-reported questionnaires, think-aloud protocols, or other feasible data collection techniques, are also necessary. Results of such studies might be more directly applicable to instruction about strategy.

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