

# Language Learning Strategies and the Importance of Cultural Awareness in Indonesian Second Language Learners

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**Abstract**—This study examined the foreign/second-language learning strategies employed by eight Indonesian learners learning different languages (English, Chinese, and Arabic) and the role cultural awareness played in determining these strategies. The strategy inventory for language learning was used to record the participants' learning strategies, and in-depth interviews were conducted to determine their cultural awareness acquisition when learning the foreign/second language and the effects this cultural awareness had on determining their language strategies. It was found that six main learning strategies were being used by the participants, and the interview data revealed that participants became more aware of the cultural aspects of their languages when reading authentic texts, communicating with native speakers, and attending their language courses. Cultural awareness was found to encourage participants to be selective learners when choosing learning materials and when using certain learning strategies. The results of this study broaden the insights of education practitioners and can guide foreign/second language teachers/lecturers in directing their students to use certain learning strategies.

**Index Terms**—cultural awareness, language learning strategies, language learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language and culture have an inextricable relationship. For example, Byram (1989) described language as a way to mark one's cultural identity, and Oxford (2018) claimed that the nexus of language and culture was pragmatic, that is, language appropriateness and situational contexts are inevitably linked. Research into cultural awareness and learning English as a second language (ESL) has found that effectively learning to use English in authentic situations requires an awareness of culture, with learners not having been immersed in an English language culture found to be weak English users (Omar & Altaieb, 2015). Therefore, it could be surmised that any trial that disassociates language and its cultural contexts would lead to language learning failure (Omar & Altaieb, 2015).

It has been proposed that language and its associated culture be taught together because learning a language requires more than just linguistics to assist and guide the teaching of syntax and phonology, and it also depends on pragmatics and sociolinguistics to understand the cultural relationships in language functions (Byram, 1989). The main language acquisition goal can be achieved by upgrading the learners' awareness of their own cultures and the language target culture and building sensitivity and empathy toward the target culture (Negoescu et al., 2017). By including culture in the foreign language learning process, learners can learn the target language culture, which can enable them to communicate more easily with native speakers (Abushihab, 2016). Consequently, research on significant foreign/second language teaching has examined approaches to methods that encourage language skills, cultural awareness (Agudelo, 2007; Cardona et al., 2015; Pateşan et al., 2017), intercultural understanding (Koro, 2018), intercultural competence (Karimbojevna, 2020), etc.

In this context, research has also investigated the learning strategies being used to accomplish these goals. Language learning strategies (LLSs) are conscious and deliberate learner actions that can assist them in learning the language (Wood, 2020). Balc and Ügüten (2018) examined the relationship between English language learner strategies and language learning achievements and concluded that effective LLSs had a positive impact on achievement. Habák & Magyar (2020) found that students who used LLSs had greater confidence in organizing their learning targets, more consciously planned their learning, and had better self-efficacy and motivation. Significant correlations have also been

found between LLSs and performance/achievement in grammar tests (Azizmohammadi & Barjesteh, 2020) and between metacognitive, social, cognitive, and compensation strategies and academic achievement (Ipek & Yesilbursa, 2017; Taheri & Bagheri, 2019).

Research on language, culture, and LLSs has also been conducted. For example, Oxford (2018) suggested that culture, language, and LLSs need to be integrated and key cultural topics explored, and Rachmawaty et al. (2018) investigated the relationships among cultural intelligence, LLSs, and English proficiency and found that the frequency and type of LLS were influenced by the learners' embedded culture.

Few studies have explored how cultural awareness influences the LLSs of English, Arabic, and Chinese language learners. However, a good understanding of the role cultural awareness plays in the LLSs used by learners could assist foreign/second language teachers in better embedding cultural awareness into their teaching and learning activities and better guiding the learners in directly or indirectly learning the language.

This study identified the LLSs used by Indonesian learners when learning English, Arabic, and Chinese as foreign languages, explored how the learners became aware of the target language culture, and assessed the contribution of cultural awareness to LLS selection.

## II. METHOD

This research study was qualitative as the procedures used to collect the data were open-ended and involved non-numerical data, which were analyzed using non-statistical methods (Dornyei, 2011).

### A. Participants

The participants of this study were university students with the age range from 19 to 23 years old. They had contacted with foreign languages for minimum 5 years. They were using Indonesian in their daily lives as it is their mother tongue. Purposive sampling technique was used to determine the participants. Participants were selected based on specific criteria: learning English, or Arabic, or Chinese as a second/foreign language; having good proficiency in the target language as evidenced by language proficiency tests (TOEFL/IELTS/IBT for English learners, TOAFL (Test of Arabic as Foreign Language) for Arabic language learners, and HSK (*Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi*) for Chinese language learners); and having visited the native speaking country (optional). In addition, the participants were learning the target languages in various periods, either in formal education (as part of curriculum) or informal. The final participants were eight language learners, and their details are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNER PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Gender	Target language	Visited country	Language proficiency test	Score
NIIW	Female	Arabic	Saudi Arabia	TOAFL	500
KRS	Female	Arabic	Saudi Arabia	TOAFL	550
DNS	Male	Arabic	-	TOAFL	530
ANL	Male	English	The United States	IBT	107
DF	Female	English	Singapore	IELTS	7
FADL	Female	English	The United States	IBT	87
FEB	Male	Chinese	China (mainland)	HSK 5	197
ML	Female	Chinese	China (mainland)	HSK 5	194

### B. Data Collection and Analysis

The participants' LLS data were obtained using Oxford's (1990) strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) version 7.0, and several in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain an in-depth understanding of the participants' awareness of the cultural aspects of the learned language and the influence this awareness had on their choice of LLS.

The SILL instrument was used to assess the frequency of language learning strategies employed by learners of English as a second/foreign language. This instrument was designed by Oxford. The inventory comprised of 50 items. Each of described strategy used Likert-scale with five respond options i.e., never or almost never true of me, generally not true of me, somewhat true of me, generally true of me, and always or almost always true of me. SILL was organized in six strategy groups, namely, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Moreover, Oxford also provided scoring worksheet, either for each of the strategies or overall average. The data gained was served in frequency of the used strategy by participants. The SILL has been reported to have high reliability as the Cronbach alpha scores gained from several times test done, either in English version or other languages (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Puerto Rican Spanish). The showed scores were ranged from .91 to .95 (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

Furthermore, Oxford (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995) portrayed the ESL/EFL SILL validity based on content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity studies. The content validity by professional judgement reached the agreement at .99 against entries in a comprehensive language learning strategy taxonomy. Meanwhile, the criterion-

related validity, which was demonstrated by several studies, showed the significant relationships between the SILL and language performance. In addition, the construct validity has been performed by many studies. The results showed that the ESL/EFL SILL is valid as it is related to language performance in which the  $r$  values ranged from .21 to .73.

The interviews were conducted in Indonesian as it was the participants' native language and allowed them to easily express their views. The interviews were open-ended and flexible, that is, the proximate questions were determined by the responses given to the previous questions, which allowed for the gathering of additional information related to the research focus. All interviews were recorded and notes were also taken. The interviews were conducted in two ways either by direct meeting or online. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in certain place agreed by participants. These interviews were recorded using audio recorder. Meanwhile, the online interviews were recorded in video and audio using zoom application. Notes were made in both offline and online interviews. Each interview took approximately 60 minutes (depends on the data sufficiency). Semi-structured interviews were used to delve into the participants' cultural awareness deeply and to understand the given answers thoroughly. The interviews were arranged in three steps: introduction, explanation of ground rules, and asking core questions.

General introduction was given by the interviewer to the participants before the questions given. The introduction includes three kinds of information which were the identity of the researchers, the aim of the research, and the researchers' reason to request the participants to participate in the research. In the next step, researchers elucidated the basic rules of interview which consisted of the interview duration, guarantee of safeguard information about the participants that should not be disclosed, and the type of report would come from the interview data. The core questions came next. The questions were arranged by considering the sufficiency of required data and how the conversation might flow naturally.

To get an agreement from the research participants, the researchers provided consent form to be fulfilled by the candidate participants. The form involved several information as the consideration for them to decide whether or not they would participate in the research. The information consisted of research project details, personal contact of researchers, about information (collected information during research, information usage, and information ownership), participants' rights, compensation, and signature of participant candidate.

Descriptive quantitative analysis was used to assess the SILL data, which involved calculating the frequency of the strategies used by the participants when learning their foreign/second language. The collected interview data were analyzed using the three concurrent activities suggested by Miles and Hubberman (1994): data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The data reduction activity was done by selecting and transforming in transcription the obtained data from the interviews. The collected data of the reduction activity were displayed by classifying and organizing based on specific criteria from which the conclusion could be drawn. The last stream of analysis activity was drawing conclusion. The conclusion activity was done based on the prior analysis process.

### III. FINDINGS

#### A. *Language Learning Strategies*

The data regarding the LLSs employed by the participants were collected from the SILL and categorized into six strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social. The data revealed that while all six strategies were used by participants, the usage frequencies varied, as shown in Figure 1. The metacognitive strategy was used most frequently (3.4), followed by the social (3.1), memory (2.9), cognitive (2.7), affective (2.6), and compensation (2.5) strategies; therefore, the usage frequencies were in a medium range.

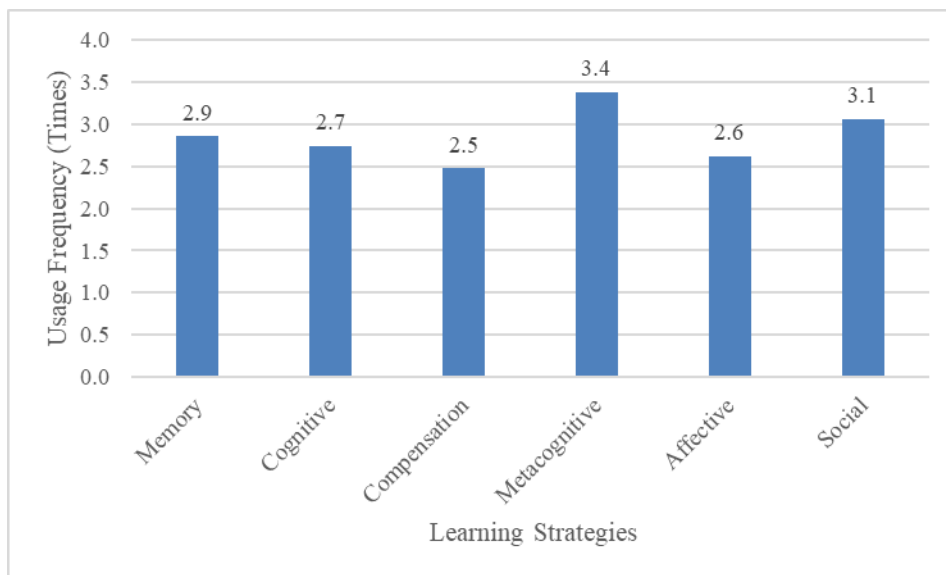


Figure 1. Language Learning Strategies Used by the Participants.

**B. Cultural Awareness**

The interview data revealed that various situations stimulated the learners’ cultural awareness when learning their chosen language, such as when reading authentic texts, communicating with native speakers, and during class.

KRS revealed that reading Arabic authentic texts made her realize the culture inherent in Arabic, saying that reading Arabic authentic text required understanding the vocabulary and having a good knowledge of the grammar and culture.

*“Waktu saya membaca sebuah percakapan di dalam buku Al Arabiyah li Annasyi’in, saya menemukan ada kata “قمر الدين” Karena saya tidak tahu artinya, saya mencoba cari di kamus. Tapi saya tidak menemukan arti yang pas dengan konteks kalimatnya. Setelah berusaha bertanya kepada beberapa teman juga tidak menemukan jawabannya, akhirnya saya iseng mengetik kalimat tersebut di Google. Saya tidak menyangka akan muncul gambar makanan. Dan di dalam artikel-artikel yang saya temukan di sana, saya menemukan penjelasan bahwa itu adalah nama salah satu makanan khas orang Arab yang mereka makan pada bulan Ramadhan. Pernah sih dulu mendapatkan penjelasan dari dosen, tapi gak paham maksudnya. Setelah mengalami sendiri, baru benar-bener sadar ada benaran.” (S1)*

(When I read a conversation in *Al-Arabiyah li Annasyi’in* (book’s title), I found the phrase قمر الدين. I looked for the phrase in dictionaries, but I did not find a suitable meaning based on the context. I also tried to ask my friends, but they could not answer my *question* well. Then, I dabbled in typing the phrase in the internet browser, but I did not expect images of a beverage to appear. From the articles, I knew that قمر الدين was kind of juice from Arab cuisine that is typically consumed during the holy month of Ramadan. Well, I heard this (language phenomena) from my lecturer’s explanation, but I did not understand it until I had experienced it myself.)

Different from KRS, FEB, DNS, and ML had similar experiences in the way they became aware of the cultural aspects in learning their languages. They were aware of the appropriateness needed when using the target language to communicate with native speakers. FEB recognized the inextricable link between the language and its culture when he had an unpleasant experience when communicating with a native speaker.

*“Ketika saya bertemu dengan seorang penjaga masjid yang secara usia lebih tua dari pada saya. Kemudian saya menanyakan namanya dengan pertanyaan ‘你叫什么名字？’. Penjaga itu menyebutkan namanya. Tapi saya menyadari perubahan raut wajahnya setelah mendengarkan pertanyaan saya. Karena saya merasa bersalah, kemudian saya berusaha mengevaluasi perkataan saya. Kesalahan apa yang telah saya lakukan hingga menyinggung penjaga itu. Dari situ, saya baru ingat pernah mendengarkan penjelasan bahwa kalimat pertanyaan yang saya tanyakan bukan digunakan untuk orang yang lebih tua. Seharusnya waktu itu saya menggunakan adalah ‘您贵姓？’ karena lebih sopan. Dari situ, saya percaya kalau belajar bahasa itu gak bisa cuma belajar kosa kata dan tata bahasanya aja.” (S2)*

(When I met a mosque keeper who was older than me, I asked her name by saying ‘你叫什么名字？’. The keeper answered my question by giving her name. However, I realized that her facial expression changed after listening to my question. I then tried to evaluate my sentence because I felt guilty. What mistake did I make to offend her? Then, I remembered that the question I asked was not intended for older people and that it was more appropriate to say ‘您贵姓？’ as it is more polite (for older people).

From this experience, I believe that when learning a (foreign) language, it is not enough to (memorize) know the vocabulary and (learn) grammar.)

Rather than mentioning the precise time they became aware of culture when using their foreign/second language, NIIW, ANL, and FADL referred to their learning activities in the classroom, such as the teacher's explanation and the reading materials.

NIIW talked about learning *al-balāgha* (the science of rhetoric) and *fan al kalam* (the art of rhetoric) when learning Arabic.

*"Saya pernah belajar ilmu balaghah dan fan al kalam. Dari penjelasan dosen tentang materi yang diajarkan, buku-buku yang saya baca kan ada penjelasan tentang ekspresi-ekspresi dalam bahasa Arab, kesantunan berbahasa, bagaimana kita menggunakan bahasa Arab dengan bagus dan indah. Dari sana saya jadi paham bahwa untuk menggunakan bahasa Arab, saya tidak bisa hanya menerjemahkan kata per kata dengan menggunakan kamus, akan tetapi juga perlu mengetahui rasa (bahasanya)." (S3)*

(I learned *ilm al-balaghah* and *fun al-kalam*. From my teacher's explanations about the subject matter and from what I had read in several books, I found explanations about some expressions in Arabic, such as politeness and how to use the language nicely and beautifully. Through these materials, I came to understand that to use the Arabic language well, I could not just translate the language word by word using a dictionary, but also need to know its sense.)

Similarly, ANL referred to the learning activities to understand the cultural aspects when learning English.

*"Gimana, ya. Aku gak yakin sih. Dulu sebelum ke Amerika, aku belajar di TBI. Di sana belajar hal-hal kayak gitu. Trus ada tutor yang asli British. Trus baca-baca tulisan di website. Ya sudah." (S4)*

(Well, I am not sure. Before I went to America, I learned in TBI (name of the institution for the English language course). I learned that kind of thing (cultural aspects in using language) there. There was a native British tutor, and I also read some articles on the internet. That's it.)

DF mentioned that she became aware of the importance of cultural awareness when learning English when attending an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) preparation class.

*"Waktu belajar IELTS. Soalnya di sana kan kita diajari macem-macem, ya. Kayak ekspresi-ekspresi, idiom, collocation, trus dosen juga kasih penjelasan..." (S5)*

(When I was learning IELTS, some materials were taught, such as expressions, idioms, and collocations, and the lecturer also gave explanations...)

### C. Cultural Awareness and LLS

The role of cultural awareness in determining the LLSs used by the participants was investigated through the interviews. It was found that cultural awareness led the learners to assess their foreign/second language skills based on the learning materials and the strategies that native speakers used. Therefore, the participants tended to choose materials that broadened their knowledge about how the target language was used by native speakers (considering appropriateness in using language) and understanding the target language from the native user's point of view.

KRS commented on how having a cultural awareness of the target language affected her Arabic learning strategy.

*"eemmm. Saya jadi lebih memilih untuk merujuk dari grup (WA) yang banyak native Arabnya dan orang-orang yang ada di situ orang-orang yang berpendidikan, sehingga bisa meniru ungkapan-ungkapan yang biasa mereka gunakan yang ada di dalam chat. Dengan begitu, saya juga bisa menggunakan ungkapan yang digunakan mayoritas penutur Arab yang bahkan mungkin berbeda dengan yang digunakan oleh kebanyakan orang Indonesia." (S6)*

(eemmm. it made me prefer to choose a group (social media group) in which I could find some Arabic native speakers who were scholars so that I could imitate the expressions they commonly used when chatting in the group. By doing so, I was able to use the expressions commonly used by Arabic native speakers. Indeed, possibly, these expressions were totally different from the expressions used by Indonesian people.)

DF explained that the materials she used to learn English helped her understand the cultural aspects.

*"...Setelah ngerti, kalau mau bilang sesuatu memastikan ketepatan kosa kata atau ekspresi yang mau dipake dulu. Makanya saya prefer baca atau nonton yang dari native gitu. Biar bisa belajar feel bahasa juga. Bahkan untuk pakai kamus, lebih suka pakai kamus inggris-inggris." (S7)*

(...once I understand, I want to ensure the appropriateness of the vocabulary or expressions I use in my sentences before saying something by considering the context, which is why I prefer to read or watch native speakers learn the sense of the language as well. Even when using a dictionary, I prefer to use an English-English dictionary).

ANL explained how he used the dictionary when composing English sentences or selecting words so that he could ensure that the sentences and the selected words fit the context.

*"Pas mau ngomong trus keingat kosakata tertentu yang baru tau gitu kadang ragu apakah penggunaan kata ini konteksnya cocok gak ya. Trus untuk memastikan biasanya buka kamus yang di dalamnya ada penjelasan dan contoh kalimat buat setiap kosa katanya gitu, kaya Wiktionary atau*

*Urban Dictionary. Soalnya sering juga salah pake ungkapan. Konteksnya gak pas, soalnya pakenya asal aja.” (S8)*

(Sometimes, when I want to say something and remember new vocabulary I want to use in my sentence, I have doubts as to whether the word fits the sentence context or not. To ensure (myself), I consult dictionaries in which I can find the explanation and usage of all vocabulary in the sentences, such as Wiktionary or Urban Dictionary. (I) have made mistakes when using expressions many times as they did not suit the context because I used them casually.)

ML noted that her awareness of the differences between Indonesian and Chinese affected her strategies when learning Chinese.

*“Dulu saya membuat kalimat ya menerjemah dari bahasa Indonesia trus dialihbahasakan ke bahasa China. Tapi setelah mengerti kalimat yang kita buat dengan cara seperti itu tidak selalu bisa dipahami oleh native, akhirnya saya lebih banyak nonton film-nya orang sana atau sering coba ngobrol sama teman yang native biar saya tahu gimana sih mereka ngomong, apa yang lazim mereka gunakan dan bagaimana mereka melafalkannya. Setelah itu coba saya praktikkan di kalimat-kalimat saya.” (S9)*

(I used to make sentences by translating from Indonesian to Chinese. However, after knowing that the sentences were not always understandable by the native speakers, I watched more films from China or chatted with my Chinese friends to understand the way they talked, (the sentences) they commonly used, and how they pronounced them. Later on, I practiced these in my sentences.)

NIIW said she carefully used particular terms in Arabic because she understood that using words or particular terms or expressions inappropriately could affect the purpose of a sentence and cause misunderstandings.

*“Saya tu hati-hati kalau mau make istilah atau kata tertentu yang saya belum saya ketahui dengan baik secara hati-hati. Biasanya saya konfirmasi dulu ke teman yang native. Kadang saya memastikan dengan mencari kata tersebut di dalam teks berbahasa Arab. Saya cari di Google dulu. Setelah saya yakin konteks penggunaannya tepat, baru saya gunakan. Soalnya kalau salah kan nanti orang bisa salah paham.” (S10)*

(I carefully use certain terms or words that I don't know well. Occasionally, I confirm (its usage) with my native (Arabic) friends. Sometimes, I look for the word in Arabic text or on Google. After I am sure about the suitability for the context, I use it because if it is wrong (not appropriate with the contexts), it can cause misunderstandings.)

DNS explained how her orientation in using learning strategies changed after she understood that using Arabic was affected by situations and conditions.

*“Orientasi kayaknya. Jadi orientasi belajar itu jadi pengen bisa lebih mirip native. Makanya kalau mau nulis atau ngomong kadang niru-niru gaya bahasanya native. Biar bisa tahu gimana native ngomong, nonton film-film kartun berbahasa fushah gitu. Apalagi, ya. Kadang baca-baca artikel berbahasa Arab untuk memastikan ketepatan penggunaan istilah. Mungkin itu sih.” (S11)*

(I think about the (learning) orientation as I want to be able to speak Arabic more like a native. Therefore, sometimes I imitate the language style of Arabic speakers in my writing or speaking. To understand how native speakers speak, (I) watch Arabic cartoons, which use standard Arabic, and read Arabic articles to ensure the suitability of the term's usage.)

Cultural awareness also affected the strategies employed by the learners. The learner statements indicated how they employed LLSs after becoming aware of the cultural aspects of using the language. FEB exemplified how he used Chinese vocabulary after becoming aware that Chinese people pronounce their words using certain tones.

*“Misalnya cara saya belajar kosa kata. Sebelum saya ke Tiongkok dan berkomunikasi dengan orang sana, saya menghafalkan kosa kata ya sekedar hafalan artinya saja. Tapi setelah saya mendapati orang-orang yang bingung bahkan salah paham dengan bahasa saya, jadi saya lebih memperhatikan pelafalan dan banyak melatihnya ketika menghafalkan kosakata.” (S12)*

(Such as my strategy to learn vocabulary. Before I went to China and communicated with people, I memorized vocabulary just for its meaning. However, after finding people were confused and even misunderstood me, I paid greater attention to (my) pronunciation and practiced a lot when memorizing vocabulary.)

KRS explained how her cultural awareness affected her strategies when reading Arabic texts.

*“Sekarang kalau membaca teks berbahasa Arab dan ada kata yang tidak saya pahami, saya tidak hanya dengan menggunakan satu kamus untuk mencari artinya karena kan tidak selalu pas ya artinya. Apalagi kalau muncul asumsi bahwa itu idiom atau frase tertentu yang kalau digandeng dengan kata yang lain punya arti tertentu juga, saya bahkan membaca referensi lain juga untuk memastikan artinya. Jika asumsi saya benar, saya akan mencatatnya dan akan saya hafalkan. Makanya catatan-catatan yang saya buat itu bukan hanya daftar kosa-kata saja kayak dulu waktu saya belum ngerti, tapi juga frase, idiom, contoh-contoh kalimat, gitu.” (S13)*

(Now, if I read an Arabic text and there is an incomprehensible word, I don't use one dictionary to look for the meaning because it (the meaning from one dictionary) does not always have a suitable meaning (with the context). If I

assume that it is an idiom or a particular phrase that has a specific meaning if it is put together with another word, I even read other references to clarify the meaning. If my assumption is correct, I will write it (the idiom or phrase) down and memorize it. That is why my notes include a vocabulary list as before and also phrases, idioms, and example sentences).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The study found that the eight participants used six main LLSs: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social, at a medium frequency, with the most used being the metacognitive strategy (see Figure 1), which was consistent with the research results of Griffiths (2015) and Mitits and Gavrilidou (2016). Griffiths (2015) reported that successful language learners used LSSs frequently, and Mitits and Gavrilidou (2016) found that the metacognitive strategy was the most frequently used by the learners of Greek as a second language and English as a foreign language and that these learners used LSSs at a medium frequency.

The higher use of the metacognitive strategy was possibly because the participants wished to communicate as naturally as native speakers, which was also commented on by the participants. For instance, KRS revealed that she wished to be able to use Arabic expressions as well as Arabic native speakers (see S6). By reading or watching authentic resources, DF sought to emulate English native speakers and the situations in which the language was being used (see S7), which allowed her to rearrange and re-plan her learning to gain a better performance. It has been noted that the new elements of a language can overwhelm learners (Oxford, 1990), such as new vocabulary, bewildering rules, unfamiliar writing systems, and inexplicable social customs; therefore, the participants employed the metacognitive strategy a little more often than the other strategies.

The interview data revealed the efforts made to increase the awareness of the cultural aspects associated with using a second/foreign language. For example, KRS realized the correlations between language and culture after having difficulty in understanding a phrase when reading an Arabic text even though the phrase had been mentioned by the teacher (see S1). FEB had also heard an explanation regarding the appropriate context of a sentence but had not been able to apply it until he used a sentence inappropriately (see S2). These findings indicated that both KRS and FEB required a process to gain a full awareness of the cultural contexts, that is, while they were aware of the cultural language aspects during their language classes, the awareness was awakened through two communication processes; when they were in particular situations, such as when communicating with native speakers, when they were reading an authentic text, as experienced by FEB, DNS, ML, and KRS (see S1 and S2), and during the foreign/second language learning process in the classroom, as experienced by NIIW, ANL, FADL, and DF (see S3, S4, S5).

Gaining cultural awareness through communication with native speakers when learning a foreign/second language aligns with a suggestion from Byram (1989), who claimed that learning a foreign language within the language society is recommended as the affective aspect is available and more multiplex and ties the culture and language aspects together. This finding was also in line with Sumbayak's (2013) interview project with English native speakers, who claimed that the project had illuminated the differences between Indonesian culture and English native speaker culture. Using authentic aids, as was done by KRS, was also suggested by Abdalla and Mohammed (2020) as one of the techniques to develop cultural awareness.

Several studies have examined the promotion of cultural aspects in foreign/second language classrooms (Barany, 2016; Irwandi, 2017; Karimboyevna, 2020; Yu & Maele, 2018). For example, Liu (2016) found that 23.35% of the participants claimed they had gained their cultural knowledge from their teachers and 21.57% claimed they had gained this awareness from the interactive activities in class. Several participants in this study also claimed to have gained some cultural awareness from their foreign/second language class, such as *al-Balāgha* (the science of rhetoric) and *fan al-kalam* (the art of rhetoric) (learned by NIIW), IELTS (learned by DF), and English for young learners (learned by ANL and FADL).

There are three main parts discussed in the science/art of rhetoric (Badrudin, 1989): *ʿIlm al-maʿani* (the science of meanings), which discusses the rules and principles associated with speech delivery so that it conforms to the situation; *ʿIlm al-bayan* (the science of metaphor/delivery), which is associated with metaphor and simile; and *ʿIlm al-badiʿ* (the science of eloquence), which examines the techniques and methods needed to embellish the language. As Arabic rhetoric lightens the bridge of syntax, exhibits an overlap among linguistics, pragmatics, and aesthetics, and reveals a genuine intercultural penetration paradigm, Arabic scholars recognize this as a linguistic means to a pragmatic end (Albitar, 2012). The IELTS preparation and English classes in which DF, ANL, and FADL learned English also introduced them to the cultural aspects associated with the language; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that NIIW, DF, ANL, and FADL also gained some cultural awareness through their foreign language classes.

The data revealed that cultural awareness assisted the participants in navigating the LLSs they used to achieve linguistic and cultural comprehension when using the target language. This was evident in the methods used by participants to detail, itemize, sharpen, and transform their strategies to learn all aspects of the language (see S12 and S13). It was evident also that the participants' efforts to gain cultural awareness assisted them in better understanding the need to gain cultural knowledge when learning a foreign/second language. Therefore, the learners' orientations and LLS use widened as they gained more cultural knowledge regarding the target language, which enabled them to use the target language as naturally as native speakers. This finding supported the recommendations by Jawas (2020) that

materials and classroom activity selections that focus on pragmatic functions can increase non-native student cultural knowledge and awareness

This learning orientation (language and culture) to determine learning strategies aligns with the suggestions of Oxford (2018) and Irwandi (2017). Oxford (2018) proposed that the LLSs used by language teachers in foreign language classrooms can promote both linguistic and cultural awareness growth, and Irwandi (2017) suggested that English speaking skills could be taught by integrating intercultural communicative competence into the materials and activities to activate cultural awareness, such as considering the context, the specific intercultural communication obstacles to understanding, and the verbal and nonverbal issues. In other words, as learning a second/foreign language involves learning the language and learning the culture, certain learning strategies that promote both linguistic and cultural aspects are needed.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine the specific LLSs being employed by Indonesian learners of three foreign/second languages (English/Arabic/Chinese) and understand the methods used to gain cultural awareness of learned language and the effects this cultural awareness had on the LLSs they used. It was found that the participants used six main LLSs: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social, at a medium frequency. The interview data indicated that the learners' cultural awareness toward their respective foreign/second language uses was triggered by reading authentic texts, by communicating with native speakers, and from their language classes. The data also showed that the increased cultural awareness altered their learning orientations so that they could focus their language use on gaining native speaker proficiency, which in turn affected their learning material and LLS selection.

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