# Exploring Students' Difficulties and Strategies in Learning English Grammar at English Education Study Program

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## Abstract

This study aimed to identify the difficulties in learning English Grammar and their strategies to overcome it. The researcher used mixed method with the explanatory sequential mixed methods design. This method involved a two-part project in which the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase, analyzes the results, and then used the results to develop the qualitative part in the second phase. This research took in English education study program, Pattimura University during this year. Batch 2022 was the subject and 99 students were the population. For the sample, Class A which had 32 students and 6 students were selected as the interview participants. The result showed that material and structural difficulties, as well as psychological difficulties, contributed significantly to the overall difficulties experienced by the participants. Furthermore, students learning strategies to overcome their difficulties in learning English, the data suggests that participants in this study employ a diverse range of strategies to support their learning. While all strategies are utilized, metacognitive strategies and affective strategies seem to be particular prominent. Students also agree that psychological difficulties affect students' ability to learn grammar, particularly fear of mistakes and confidence issues. The last that each student has different learning strategies in overcoming the difficulties that exist. All six students have explained how they overcome their difficulties in learning grammar as well as the psychological difficulties that have affected their ability to learn English grammar. The investigation emphasizes the importance of metacognitive and affective strategies in overcoming psychological difficulties to learning grammar.

Keywords: Students, difficulties, strategies, grammar

**The significant finding**:

The result showed that material and structural difficulties, as well as psychological difficulties, contributed significantly to the overall difficulties experienced by the participants. Furthermore, students learning strategies to overcome their difficulties in learning English, the data suggests that participants in this study employ a diverse range of strategies to support their learning. While all strategies are utilized, metacognitive strategies and affective strategies seem to be particular prominent. Students also agree that psychological difficulties affect students' ability to learn grammar, particularly fear of mistakes and confidence issues. The last that each student has different learning strategies in overcoming the difficulties that exist. All six students have explained how they overcome their difficulties in learning grammar as well as the psychological difficulties that have affected their ability to learn English grammar. The investigation emphasizes the importance of metacognitive and affective strategies in overcoming psychological difficulties to learning grammar.

# ARTICLES

## I.    INTRODUCTION

English is a crucial skill in education, and its mastery has been widely researched due to the challenges learners face, especially with grammar. Prasetyaningrum et al. (2023) identified four essential skills in English: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Among these, grammar stands out as a core component for constructing and comprehending sentences. Wahyuningtyas and Bram (2018) emphasized that grammar is fundamental to effective communication, enabling the accurate use of tenses, sentence structure, and ideas. Without proper grammar, learners face misinterpretations and misunderstandings in communication. Despite grammar being introduced early in Indonesian education—from elementary school—it remains a challenging aspect of English learning.

In a preliminary study conducted with first-year college students in Class A (2022), grammar was reported as the most common difficulty. Of the seven participants interviewed, all highlighted their struggles in applying correct grammar during speaking and writing. Additionally, students found it hard to identify grammatical errors in texts and sentences during classroom learning. To address these challenges, students employed various

strategies, including searching for explanations online, watching instructional YouTube videos, and reading grammar books. These efforts illustrate the diverse approaches students use to tackle their difficulties.

Findings from previous research align with these observations. Paputungan (2022) revealed that students struggled with modal auxiliaries, tense displacement, and pronoun usage due to factors such as lack of motivation, ineffective learning strategies, or unsuitable teaching methods. Similarly, Triyogo and Hamdan (2018) found that limited class time for English instruction contributed to students' struggles with grammar. However, they also noted that employing social, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies improved students' learning outcomes. Oxford (1990) categorized effective learning strategies into six aspects: cognitive, metacognitive, memory, compensation, affective, and social. These strategies influence learners' behaviors directly and indirectly, fostering better understanding and performance.

Despite the inherent challenges of mastering grammar, it remains a vital skill for EFL learners. As highlighted by Shi (2017), the use of multiple learning strategies boosts learners' confidence, motivation, and efficacy. While grammar cannot be mastered overnight, tailored strategies, personalized to each student's needs, can significantly aid the learning process. Ultimately, success in learning English depends on consistent effort and the effective application of learning strategies.

Based on the explanation above, research that look into identifying students' difficulties and strategies in learning grammar is a great benefit to be conducted to explain the current phenomena and to support the improvement of grammar in English Education Study Program. This research was conducted under the title "*Exploring Students Difficulties and Strategies in Learning English Grammar at English Education Study Program*"

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, as described by Creswell (2014, p. 347). This design involves two phases: quantitative data collection and analysis in the first phase, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis in the second phase, guided by the results of the initial phase. In this approach, the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were gathered first through a survey questionnaire to identify students' difficulties in learning English and the strategies they used to overcome these challenges. The qualitative data were then collected to provide deeper insights and to enrich the findings from the quantitative phase, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the research objectives.

This study was conducted at Pattimura University, focusing on batch 2022 students of the English Education Study Program, with a total population of 99 students. Using Simple Random Sampling (Cohen & Manion, 2007), the researcher selected Class A (32 students) as the sample, as they had completed grammar-related courses. Six students were further chosen for interviews to provide qualitative insights.

The researcher used two data collection methods: a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree, to gather quantitative data on students' difficulties and strategies in learning English. The second method, the interview, was guided by an interview protocol to obtain detailed, qualitative insights that complemented the questionnaire results. The interview allowed participants to respond based on their perspectives, with no right or wrong answers, providing the researcher with in-depth information to address both research questions.

## III. FINDINGS

**The students' difficulties in learning English grammar**

The following tables categories of difficulties in more detail. By perceiving the highest and the lowest means on each difficulty.

| Category of Difficulties | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Material and structural factor | 2,67 | High |
| Psychological factor | 2,87 | High |

The table shows that psychological difficulties had a higher mean score (2.87) compared to material and structural difficulties (2.67), indicating that students faced more challenges with psychological aspects while learning English grammar.

Derived from the description above, the following tables present the results of each category, starting from material and structural

difficulties and as well, psychological difficulties.

*Material and Structural Difficulties Results*

| Questionnaire statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Q1: I feel difficult to understand grammar because of its complicated rules and structures | 2,81 | High |
| Q2: I feel difficult to use verb tenses (e.g., present, past, future) in speaking or writing | 2,50 | Low |
| Q3: I find it difficult to maintain consistent use of verb tenses within the same paragraph essay | 2,91 | High |
| Q4: When creating complex sentences, proper sentence construction becomes difficult for me | 2,94 | High |
| Q5: I find it hard to apply grammar rules consistently in my writing and speaking | 2,88 | High |
| Q6: Understanding the correct order of words in questions and statements can be confusing | 2,50 | Low |
| Q7: Choosing the right preposition that fits the context is difficult for me | 2,38 | Low |
| Q8: I have difficulty identifying and using passive voice correctly | 2,50 | Low |
| Q9: The use of pronouns (e.g., subject, object, possessive), modal verbs (e.g., can, could, may), articles (a/an, the), and determiners (e.g., some, any, many) in learning English grammar, accurately can be challenging for me | 2,69 | High |

The table shows that participants reported high levels of difficulty with some material and structural aspects of grammar learning, with mean scores of 2.94 for Q4, 2.91 for Q3, 2.88 for Q5, 2.81 for Q1, and 2.69 for Q9. These included challenges with constructing complex sentences, maintaining consistent verb tenses, and applying grammar rules. On the other hand, participants found some areas less difficult,

such as understanding verb tenses (Q2), word order in questions/statements (Q6), passive voice (Q8), and prepositions (Q7), with lower mean scores of 2.50 for Q2, Q6, Q8, and 2.38 for Q7.

*Psychological Difficulties Results*

| Questionnaire Statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Q10: I feel anxious or nervous when learning or using English grammar | 2,59 | High |
| Q11: I'm afraid my friends will make fun of me if I use the wrong grammar | 2,50 | Low |
| Q12: My lack of motivation to learn grammar is the cause of my delay in understanding difficult grammatical structures. | 3,50 | Very high |
| Q13: I'm not confident in my ability to learn and use English grammar effectively | 3,09 | High |
| Q14: I'm intimidated of getting judged when I make mistakes in learning Grammar or practicing using it. | 3,41 | Very high |
| Q15: I tend to be perfectionistic when it comes to grammar, and this can create stress | 2,44 | Low |
| Q16: When faced with difficulties in learning English grammar, I tend to give up easily. | 2,31 | Low |
| Q17: I feel uncomfortable speaking in front of others, which makes me doubtmy grammar skills. | 3,13 | High |

The table shows that psychological difficulties significantly hinder grammar learning, with very high mean scores for motivation (Q12, 3.50) and fear of judgment (Q14, 3.41). Other high scores included self-doubt (Q17, 3.13), lack of confidence (Q13, 3.09), and anxiety (Q10, 2.59). Lower mean scores were reported for worries about peer perception (Q11, 2.50), perfectionism (Q15, 2.44), and giving up easily (Q16, 2.31). These results suggest that motivation and self-doubt

are major psychological barriers to grammar learning.

Based on the data, both material and structural difficulties, as well as psychological difficulties, significantly contributed to the challenges faced by participants. However, psychological difficulties were perceived as slightly more impactful than material and structural factors. This is supported by the interview results:

Fear of making mistake. It can paralyze students, preventing students from actively practicing speaking and applying their grammar skill.

**AGBL:** *"Lack of confidence in my abilities makes it difficult for me to learn grammar. Fear of applying grammar in speech often prevents me from demonstrating my skills. Even though there are times when I have to speak in front of many people or write in English, the results are often ineffective because I become very nervous and afraid of being judged or laughed at when using incorrect grammar"*

**AEN:** *"Additionally, using incorrect grammar makes me doubt my abilities and tends to make me feel inferior. I often give up quickly on learning and lose confidence"*

**SRO:** *"Because I fear making mistakes and being laughed at, I lack confidence when applying grammar in English learning, such as speaking in front of class or with friends, and when writing in English, I often fear making grammar mistakes that could lead to not being understood by professors or using incorrect grammar"*

Confidence issues. This can make students hesitant to participate in activities that involve using grammar, which can hinder students' learning process.

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write in English, the results are often ineffective because I become very nervous and afraid of being judged or laughed at when using incorrect grammar"

**AEN:** "Additionally, using incorrect grammar makes me doubt my abilities and tends to make me feel inferior. I often give up quickly on learning and lose confidence"

**DN:** "Additionally, feeling nervous and fearing ridicule from friends makes me lack confidence and find it challenging to improve my grammar skills"

**YAH:** "I lack confidence, often feel nervous, and fear discussing grammar. Especially when speaking and using incorrect grammar, I quickly become pessimistic and even less confident, which affects my ability to learn grammar"

**AKL:** "I feel quite insecure when learning English, especially grammar. It doesn't mean that material and structural factors aren't reasons for my difficulties. However, I believe that when I lack confidence in my grammar learning abilities, it hinders my understanding and development ... When I lack confidence in my grammar learning abilities, I find it challenging to comprehend, understand, and apply grammar in English learning activities"

Demotivation. This can create a cycle of negativity that further hinders students' learning.

**AEN:** "Although mastering the material and structure is challenging as well, rebuilding confidence and motivation to learn grammar will be more difficult if I continue to doubt myself, or fear applying grammar for fear of getting it wrong"

Insecurity. Comparing oneself to others who perceived as more proficient can also contribute to feeling inferior and stressed, also hindering learning.

**DN:** "Comparing my abilities to those of my peers, who are far more proficient, also makes me feel inferior and often stressed about my current level of ability"

**The strategies that students use to overcome their difficulties in learning English grammar**

The exploration of common strategies used by grammar learners in comparable experiences is the main topic of this section. There are 6 types of strategies in each table such as memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy.

| Strategies | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Memory Strategy | 3,02 | High |
| Cognitive Strategy | 3,07 | High |
| Compensation Strategy | 3,13 | High |
| Metacognitive Strategy | 3,23 | High |
| Affective Strategy | 3,21 | High |
| Social Strategy | 2,80 | High |

The mean scores for all strategy types are generally high, indicating that participants used a variety of strategies. However, metacognitive and affective strategies had the highest mean scores, with metacognitive strategies at 3.23 and affective strategies at 3.21, suggesting they were the most frequently used. Social strategies had the lowest mean score of 2.80, indicating they were used less often compared to other strategies. Other strategy types include compensation (3.13), cognitive (3.07), and memory strategies (3.02).

Based on the table above, the following tables will provide the results for each category, starting with memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy.

*Memory Strategies Results*

| Questionnaire statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Q18: I use movies, videos, or songs to memorize vocabulary and grammatical structure | 3,53 | Very high |
| Q19: I notice my error while learning grammar and find the correct ones | 2,75 | High |
| Q20: I do not try to translate word by word into my native language | 2,50 | Low |
| Q21: I use mnemonic techniques (e.g., acronyms, visualization) to remember English grammar rules. | 2,91 | High |
| Q22: Improve my grammar skill by practice speaking English | 3,41 | Very high |

The memory strategies had high mean scores, with Q18 (multimedia learning) at 3.53 and Q22 (practice through speaking) at 3.41 being the most used. Q21 (mnemonic techniques) scored 2.91, while Q19 (noticing errors) had a score of 2.75, and Q20 (avoiding translation) had the lowest score of 2.50, indicating some reliance on translation.

*Cognitive Strategies Results*

| Questionnaire statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Q23: I look up new English words and make a list of different words | 3,09 | High |
| Q24: I read various books and watch TV shows and/or movies in English to learn how to use correct grammar | 2,75 | High |
| Q25: I use the internet to browse more materials about grammar | 3,44 | Very high |
| Q26: I speak English by considering correct grammar and I aware to my pronunciation | 3,00 | High |

The cognitive strategies had high mean scores, with Q25 (using the internet for grammar materials) leading at 3.44, followed by Q23 (creating vocabulary lists) at 3.09 and Q26 (speaking English with attention to

grammar) at 3.00. Q24 (reading extensively) had the lowest score of 2.75, suggesting it was used less frequently.

*Compensation Strategies Results*

| Questionnaire statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Q27: I use different forms of language, such as using the present tense instead of the past tense to overcome my limitations in speaking and writing | 3,28 | Very high |
| Q28: When I don't know an English word, I use synonyms during the presentation, speaking, and writing | 3,28 | Very high |
| Q29: I use body gestures to explain the English words in speaking | 3,97 | Very high |
| Q30: I try to guess the meaning of English words based on its context. | 3,97 | Very high |

Compensation strategies showed very high mean scores, indicating frequent use by participants. Using body gestures (Q29) and guessing word meanings from context (Q30) were the most common, while substituting language forms (Q27) and using synonyms (Q28) were also used frequently, though less so than the other two.

*Metacognitive Strategies Results*

| Questionnaire statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Q31: I always make planning for English grammar project or assignment that I have | 2,97 | High |
| Q32: I try to find out my grammatical errors and comparing them to the proper version | 3,28 | Very high |
| Q33: I concern of what progress that I achieve during learning grammar | 3,28 | Very high |

| Questionnaire statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| and try to practice with my friends | | |
| Q34: I try to notice new grammar structure in listening or reading | 3,38 | Very high |

| Questionnaire statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| grammar | | |
| Q40: I like learning about grammar together with my friends | 2,72 | High |

The metacognitive strategies results show that noticing new grammar structures (Q34) had the highest mean score of 3.38, followed by error correction and comparison (Q32) and concern for progress and practice with friends (Q33), both with a score of 3.28. Planning and goal setting (Q31) had a lower mean score of 2.97, indicating it was used less frequently than the other strategies.

### Affective Strategies Results

| Questionnaire statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Q35: I always push myself to learn and stay motivated in learning English grammar. | 3,09 | High |
| Q36: I notice my tense and nervousness when studying grammar | 3,16 | High |
| Q37: I try to decrease my anxiety levels with relaxing techniques. | 3,38 | Very high |

Affective strategies showed high mean scores, with anxiety management (Q37) being the most used strategy at 3.38. Noticing tension and nervousness (Q36) also had a high score, indicating stress during grammar learning. Motivation to learn grammar (Q35) was important but slightly less emphasized.

### Social Strategies Results

| Questionnaire Statements | Mean (M) | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Q38: I ask a good English speaker to correct grammatical mistakes when speaking with me | 3,13 | High |
| Q39: I ask for feedback from my friends on my performance in | 2,56 | High |

All mean scores were high, with seeking feedback from an expert (Q38) having the highest score of 3.13, indicating a preference for expert input. Collaborative grammar learning (Q40) had a mean score of 2.72, suggesting students enjoy group learning. Peer feedback (Q39) also had a high score of 2.56, though slightly less valued than expert feedback.

## Student's strategies to overcome their difficulties in learning English Grammar

To help the students in overcoming their difficulties, students apply two kinds of strategies to overcome their difficulties when learning English: metacognitive strategies and affective strategies.

Metacognitive strategies focus on planning, monitoring and evaluating a learning process, such as setting goals, identifying strengths and weaknesses, reviewing mistakes, and reflecting on progress. Some students have also explained what metacognitive strategies have been used in overcoming difficulties in learning grammar.

Setting goals and planning

The participants make plans to achieve goals such as practicing speaking in front of a mirror (AEN) and set goals to stay motivated in learning grammar (AKL).

AEN: *"I always set goals for myself in learning English and grammar to keep myself motivated to achieve superior skills… Planning is also something I prepare so that I don't deviate from my initial goals For instance, if I want to focus on*

*overcoming the fear of applying grammar, I usually practice speaking in front of a mirror with easy topics"*

**AKL:** *"I always strive to stay motivated in learning grammar such as stay positive even I encounter many challenges when learning grammar, also set a clear goals like improving my grammar skill on months, etc"*

## Self-reflection and Evaluation

In this part, the participants try to reflect on mistakes and identify areas for improvement also reviewing grammar materials (AGBL), reflect on learning performance and actively seek to correct mistakes (DN), self-assess abilities and identify areas needing improvements (YAH), and also identify specific weakness (SRO).

**AGBL:** *", I always try to reflect on my abilities to improve them in the future, such as reviewing what needs improvement in myself and what I need to learn to enhance my grammar. Furthermore, I attempt to identify areas needing improvement in my grammar learning process by practicing to correct grammar errors using proper grammatical structures as taught in the materials"*

**DN:** *"Reflecting on my learning performance to improve it further, I also delve deeper into grammar structures through English conversation videos or comedy in English, which makes learning enjoyable without the heaviness of traditional materials. Additionally, I make an effort to correct every mistake by searching for the correct grammar. For instance, if I realize that the grammar I used was wrong while speaking English, I will try to rectify it by finding the correct grammar structure"*

**YAH:** *"I focus on improving my skills. It starts with assessing my current abilities, identifying what needs to be changed and what needs improvement"*

**SRO:** *"I also work on developing my skills by reviewing grammar mistakes and correcting them, so I no longer fear making mistakes. I also reflect on myself by seeing what I need to improve in this grammar skill. For example, I find it difficult to use past tense, so I will learn about past tense verbs and practice*

*using them in the form of sentences or directly by talking about past events in English"*

Affective strategies focus on managing emotions and motivation while learning, such as using positive self-talk, reducing stress and anxiety, building confidence, and finding ways to stay motivated. Some students have also explained what affective strategies have been used in overcoming difficulties in learning grammar.

## Stress management and relaxation

Three participants reduced anxiety while learning grammar by using deep breathing (AGBL), staying relaxed in class (SRO), and finding humor to relieve stress (AKL).

**AGBL:** *"I always try to calm myself before speaking English, even if it's just taking a deep breath"*

**SRO:** *"I always practice staying relaxed while learning grammar, especially in class"*

**AKL:** *"when I feel nervous or stressed while learning grammar or other skills, I try to relax my mind by exploring new learning sources. For instance, I take a moment to look at something humorous like memes or funny videos to alleviate the pressure. This really helps me relax while studying grammar and reduces stress when applying it in real-life situations later on"*

## Motivation building

The four participants stay motivated by adopting role models (AEN), practicing with others (YAH), setting grammar goals (AKL), and using engaging resources (DN).

**AEN:** *"First, I need to find motivation in learning grammar. I usually find this by observing others who have better English language skills than I do, which motivates me to study diligently in hopes of reaching their level. I always set goals for myself in learning English and grammar to keep myself motivated to achieve superior skills.*

**DN:** *"I also delve deeper into grammar structures through English conversation videos or comedy in English, which makes learning enjoyable without the heaviness of traditional materials"*

**YAH:** *"I also monitor my progress by seeking feedback from friends and practicing grammar exercises alone or with others"*

**AKL:** *"I always strive to stay motivated in learning grammar such as stay positive even I encounter many challenges when learning grammar also set a clear goals like improving my grammar skill on months, etc"*

## Confidence building

In developing confidence in grammar skills, three participants used positive self-talk to build confidence, such as calming down and saying positive things (AGBL, YAH), and used the debate team to practice confidence and grammar skills (AKL).

**AGBL:** *"I also strive not to stress out when using incorrect grammar and to remain confident despite feeling very nervous. Learning to use positive words while practicing and studying grammar helps me relax more"*

**YAH:** *"I'm learning to be more confident in my abilities by giving me positive words and boosting my motivation to learn grammar"*

**AKL:** *"One way I do this is by joining the debate team of my program, which helps me continually practice confidence and improve my grammar through speaking, writing, listening to conversations"*

## Error tolerance

This involves developing a positive attitude regarding mistakes as opportunities for learning. For example, focused on repairing mistakes rather than fearing them (SRO)

**SRO:** *"I also work on developing my skills by reviewing grammar mistakes and correcting them, so I no longer fear making mistakes"*

## IV. DISCUSSION

## Students' difficulties in learning English grammar

The findings from the questionnaire show that psychological difficulties, such as fear of judgment and lack of motivation, are more challenging than material and structural problems in learning English grammar. This is supported by interview responses, where students highlighted the impact of psychological barriers on their ability to use grammar in writing and speaking. The study also found that a lack of motivation, as noted by Paputungan et al. (2022) and Sultra and Baharudin (2020), makes it harder for students to understand grammar. Motivation is crucial for effective grammar learning and language development (He, 2013).

Fear of judgment, along with a lack of motivation, significantly affects students' grammar learning by creating anxiety and self-doubt. Dörnyei (2005) notes that concerns about mistakes and criticism distract students, leading to low self-confidence and avoidance of grammar practice. This is further supported by Deng (2016), who emphasizes that fear and insecurity hinder the long-term process of grammar learning, creating a negative cycle that impedes progress.

Material and structural difficulties, such as complex sentence construction and grammar rule complexity, affect learning but are less significant than psychological challenges. Psychological issues like lack of confidence, fear of mistakes, and anxiety have a greater impact on students' grammar learning ability.

## Strategies that students use to overcome their difficulties in learning English grammar

The findings showed that metacognitive and affective strategies were most commonly used by students to overcome difficulties in learning English grammar. Metacognitive strategies help students manage grammatical difficulties by allowing them to take control of their learning through planning, monitoring, and evaluating their progress (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). The most frequently used strategy was noticing new grammatical structures during listening or reading, which helped students improve their understanding and retention of grammar. Interview results indicated that students also reflected on their mistakes and reviewed grammar materials for improvement.

This study supports Prasetyaningrum et al. (2023), who found metacognitive strategies are crucial for grammar learning, enabling students to focus, review, and identify errors. Stephen and Singh (2010) emphasized that metacognitive methods enhance grammar autonomy. Affective strategies, which help manage emotions and motivation, also play a key role, with relaxation techniques being most effective in reducing anxiety and improving focus, aiding in overcoming psychological difficulties in grammar learning.

Oxford (1990) highlighted that affective strategies help students manage emotions, motivation, and attitudes, facilitating better language learning. These strategies, including communication techniques like asking questions and cooperating with others (Ningrum et al., 2018), allow students to link their personal strengths to the learning environment, which aids in emotional regulation and enhances grammar learning. The questionnaire results showed that compensatory, cognitive, memory, and social strategies were least used for overcoming psychological difficulties. Among compensatory strategies, students used body movements and context-based guessing, while cognitive strategies mostly involved online grammar material searches.

Memory strategies, like using movies, videos, or songs, were the most commonly used by students for grammar and vocabulary retention. Social strategies, such as asking proficient speakers for grammar correction, had the lowest mean score and were less effective compared to metacognitive strategies, as they offer less cognitive engagement (Prasetyaningrum et al., 2023; Nasab & Motlagh, 2015). Students also preferred metacognitive and affective strategies over social ones to address psychological difficulties.

## How do the students apply the strategies to overcome their difficulties in learning English Grammar

The participants used metacognitive strategies to manage grammatical challenges, focusing on planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning. They set goals like improving grammar or overcoming speaking anxiety, and reflected on mistakes to track progress. These strategies help students control and adapt their learning for better outcomes (Mitsea & Drigas, 2019; Yulianti, 2018).

For affective strategies, students used various techniques to manage their emotions

and motivation during grammar learning. These included stress-relief methods like deep breathing and humor, as well as motivation-enhancing strategies such as goal-setting, seeking feedback, and identifying role models. Students also focused on building confidence through positive self-talk and practicing in a relaxed setting. Most notably, they stressed the importance of viewing mistakes as learning opportunities. By managing emotions and motivation, students create a more supportive learning environment to overcome grammar challenges (Rositter, 2003; Oxford, 1990).

In summary, metacognitive strategies help students manage their learning processes, while affective strategies focus on managing emotions and motivation. Both are essential for effective language acquisition, as they enable students to regulate their learning and maintain motivation. By combining emotional management with structured planning, students can create a positive environment that supports their grammar improvement.

## V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The researcher concluded that psychological factors like fear of mistakes, lack of confidence, anxiety, and low motivation are the main challenges in learning grammar. These also affect students' performance in writing and speaking. Metacognitive strategies, including goal setting and reflection, helped manage these difficulties, while affective strategies focused on emotion regulation and motivation were also effective in overcoming psychological barriers (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Future researchers can explore students' difficulties and strategies in different contexts,

focusing on other English skills like listening or speaking, and investigating the psychological, material, and structural factors that make grammar difficult. They could also examine the most effective strategies for overcoming these challenges and how to implement them. Additionally, future studies could target various participant levels, such as high school or university students.

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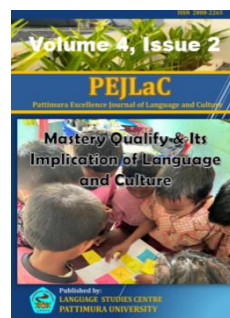## A Short CV of Corresponding author

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Exploring Students' Difficulties and Strategies in Learning English Grammar at English Education Study Program

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