Students' Strategies in Learning English Online: A Case Study in a Private Elementary School in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

Learning contains activities to achieve certain goals. Students have their own strategies to be successful, and they need to be revealed, to be accommodated in the teaching and learning process. The purpose of this study aimed at investigating English learning strategies used by fifth grade students of a private school in Yogyakarta in learning English online during pandemic. The research used mixed methods design with forty-one student respondents to the learning strategy questionnaire for quantitative data. Two students were interviewed for qualitative data. The quantitative data from questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistic, while the interview was analyzed using the thematic analysis. The results show that first, memory strategy is the type of learning strategies often used by the students under category direct strategies (66.66%), while under indirect category, the respondents applied social strategy most (87.79%). Second, the students have a greater demand to apply direct strategies than indirect one, with percentage as much 23.57% and 14.08% consecutively. Of the two learning strategies, direct and indirect strategies, the learning strategy that is in great demand by fifth grade students is indirect strategies (23.57%) compared to direct strategies (14.08%). The results of the interview showed the fifth-grade students used writing strategies, so that they could easily remember new vocabulary (memory strategies); listening to English music to help students learn English (cognitive strategies); and asking people who are fluent in English when they have difficulty or don't understand English material (social strategies).

Keywords: Learning strategies, Young learner, Mixed methods, Direct strategies, Indirect strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning strategy is a plan that contains a series of activities designed to achieve certain educational goals. O' Malley (in Griffiths, 2004) defines learning strategy as stages or operations a learner use to help him/ her reach the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use

of information. In addition, learning strategies also facilitate students to learn how to think better, as well as help teachers find ideas to help students in their learning activities.

Students 'learning strategies are different from one another depending on their ability, motivation to learn, socio-cultural background and economic level. This situation is very influential on the activities and student learning outcomes to develop knowledge of skills and attitudes. Meanwhile, Oxford (1990) categorizes learning strategies into six groups, namely memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. The usefulness of the strategy is to provide a formulation of reference teaching and learning activities to obtain innovative learning experiences about knowledge and the ability to think rationally in preparing students for life into adulthood.

Speaking about learning strategy in this pandemic times is truly important as it basically connect to students' situation. The disastrous impact of Covid-19 has enforced government and society to adapt with new way of life, and online learning is the most, or may be the only one, potential method of learning currently. Surely students need to comprehend and to implement appropriate learning strategies in order to survive in learning. Otherwise, they would be stressed and feel low motivation to learn English.

There are some previous studies related to learning strategies. The first is a study conducted by Tezcan & Deneme (2015) "A Study on Language Learning Strategy Use of Young Turkish Learners." They found that metacognitive, social and affective strategies the most often used as language learning strategies, while memory and cognitive strategies are rarely found.

The second study is from Hastuti (2014). In this study, the researcher identified 49 STAIN Pekalongan students and 5 students from different tertiary institutions. For data collection, the researcher used Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to answer questions 49 students and five students participated in the Think Aloud Protocol (TAP) session. Data analysis from the SILL Questionnaire showed that students were users of social, metacognitive, cognitive, affective, compensation, and memory strategies. Then, for TAP it was presented that the students utilized three main strategies in learning English cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and compensation strategies.

The third study was done by Saputra (2016). This research was aimed at finding out vocabulary learning strategies employed by English Department students of State Polytechnic of Bengkal across different proficiency levels. This study used a questionnaire

in collecting data and used 32 items classified under three strategy categories; discovering the meaning of new vocabulary (DMV), retaining knowledge of the newly-learned vocabulary (RKV), and Further Consolidation Vocabulary strategies (FCV).

Furthermore, to strengthen theories underlying this study, the researchers used some related theories. According to Smith (2012), Nurasiah (2017) and Wardani (2017), young learners are explorers who want to know and build knowledge through their actions or with learning coming naturally to them. Young learners at their age require character building, in character building students will choose activities they like according to their character. The teacher can help young learners better develop their character and competence through the teaching and learning process in the language class.

Meanwhile, Siti (2019), Kafadar & Tay (2014) Protheroe & Clarke,(2008), Bayuong et al., (2019), Yulianti (2018), Education, (2007) and Oxford (1990) state that developing communicative competence requires real interaction between students in using meaningful and contextual language. Language learning strategies are strategies that provide opportunities for learners to build cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, either through individual activities or social interaction with other learners, teachers, instructions, or others. The learning strategies can help students to participate more actively in communication. By understanding and considering the learners' strategies, the teacher can design the teaching and learning activities supporting the learning achievements in the young learner's class.

Oxford (1990) divides learning strategies into two categories: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Furthermore, these two strategies consist of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies included in direct strategies. Meanwhile, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, social strategies are included in an indirect strategy. Krawec & Montague (2012) explains cognitive strategies as strategies that require pay attention or practice naturally; receive and send messages or can get ideas quickly; can reason deductively and analyze expressions; and create structures for input and exit such as note-taking and summarizing. Next, the third point of direct strategies, namely compensation strategies. Based on the theory of Oxford (1990), Cabrejas-Peñuelas (2012) and Ahmad & Ismail (2013), compensation strategies have come to the rescue to help the learners to overcome their problems in learning a new language.

Related to young learners' strategies in learning English as a foreign language, in one of the primary schools in China, young learners have preferences in attending synchronous

learning sessions. They preferred non-verbal responses before sharing verbal ones to elaborate answers. It was also found that in small group discussion, when unsupervised, better-able students still demonstrated remarkable interactional competence (Cheung, 2021). In a different setting, in a study on students' strategies associated with text-based argumentation with multiple online information resources, it was found out that one third used only one online resource or no resource in their written products. In addition, they mainly copied/paraphrased content but some also tried to integrate ideas. girls at 6th grade of elementary school (Kiili et al., 2020).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

To uncover new information and to create better understanding of the topic, the researchers used mixed-method design in which they combined quantitative analysis supported with qualitative analysis. The respondents were students of a private school in Yogyakarta in the even semester of 2019/2020.

The researchers distributed the questionnaire to 81 students in grade 5 as research subjects, but only 41 students submitted it back. The researchers randomly took two students out of the forty one fifth-grade students for the interview. The researchers also involved the English teacher, and also the parents of the students as research subjects and also as data reinforcement that the researchers took in the fifth grade. In this study, researchers took data during the pandemic, for questionnaire data collection researchers used google forms, and for interview data retrieval using short messages or voice notes. This research was conducted to find out how the students' learning strategies in learning English both at school and at home.

A questionnaire and interview were used to collect the data. The questionnaire in the study was adopted from Nhem, (2019) investigating language learning strategies employed by young and adolescent learners of English in Cambodian context. The questionnaire was translated into Indonesian.

Table 1. Blue Print of Questionnaire

Strategies	No Items of Questionnaire	Total Items
Direct Strategies:		
1.Memory	1,2,3	
2.Cognitive	4,5,6	7
3.Compensation	7	
Indirect Strategies:		
1.Metacognitive	8,9,10	
2.Affective	11,12,13	8
3.Social	14,15	

In this data collection process, the researchers interviewed two fifth-grade students, the English teacher; and the students' parents at that school. In the process of collecting data through interviews, the researchers used a semi-structured interview so that the questions raised could develop Suganda et al., (2013) and Rizqi & Tanjungpura (2017). Due to Covid-19 pandemic, online interviews were conducted to facilitate data retrieval.

In this study, the triangulation was used to get more information from each source so that the information obtained is more diverse. Creswell (2012:259) stated, "validating findings means that the researchers determine the accuracy or credibility of the findings through strategies such as checking or triangulation strategies". In this study, the researchers cross-checked the data from the students with those from parents and teachers. Also, the triangulation was done by asking them to confirm their statements that have been summarized by the researchers by showing them the summary of the interview.

This data analysis was carried out by looking at the results of questionnaire filling and online interviews of students, English teachers, and the parents. In the questionnaire the data were tabulated, the researchers analyzed the questionnaire data. The data collected from the online interviews were recapitulated in transcription records, reduced as necessary, classified, and interpreted. Then the last is interpreting the results of the interview and classifying and reporting it.

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3.   RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Learning strategies of grade 5 elementary school students

The results show that out of the fifth-grade students of the school, 80.48% of students choose to use learning strategies using new English vocabulary in sentences so that they can remember easily. This learning strategy goes into the types of memory strategies.

As for other learning strategies, 90.23% of students ask for help from English speakers such as English teachers and people who are proficient in English. This learning strategy is a type of social strategy. Table 2 presents types of learning strategies of fifth grade students investigated in the school under the study.

Table 2. The Types of Strategies Used by the Fifth Grade Students in Learning English

	Strategies	Strongly agree	Agree	Sometimes	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Direct Strategies	Memory	19.51%	47.15%	24.39%	6.5%	2.43%
	Cognitive	17.88%	36.58%	34.95%	11.38%	0%
	Compensation	4.87%	24.39%	34.14%	36.58%	0%
Indirect Strategies	Metacognitive	27.64%	40.65%	27.64%	3.25%	0.81%
	Affective	11.38%	49.59%	28.45%	9.75%	0.81%
	Social	31.7%	56.09%	9.75%	2.43%	0%

Table 2 shows types of learning strategies used by the students of fifth-grade students in learning English. Related to direct strategies, the type of strategy often used is memory strategies. Then the indirect strategies the type of strategy that is often used is metacognitive strategies.

Table 3. Students' Learning Strategies

Learning Strategies	Strongly agree	Agree	Sometimes	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Direct Strategies	14.08%	36.16%	31.16%	18.15%	0.81%
Indirect Strategies	23.57%	48.77%	21.94%	5.14%	0.54%

Table 3 presents the comparison between the use of both direct and indirect strategies. It can be seen that fifth-grade students often used indirect strategies when learning English.

3.2. The Results of Student, English Teacher and Parent Interviews

3.2.1. The way students overcome problems in learning English

The way students solve problems in learning English is by asking parents questions or by using tools such as dictionaries etc. In addition, students also have a way of learning English by listening to English songs or watching films with English accents, using props also helps students in learning English. Students sometimes turn to people who are proficient in English such as teachers or parents to help solve problems in learning English.

> *"Never ..., if in doubt ask my father".* (int. 29th of July 2020)
> *"Yes, ... I usually use an English dictionary".* (int. 20th of August 2020)
> *"Yes, I have found many ways to learn English. By listening to songs, watching films, watching television in English. Sometimes my father's props are used, because he is an English teacher".* (int. 29th of July 2020)
> *"Usually, I use an English dictionary .... Singing in English, ..., because it can help me enthusiastically learn English".* (int. 20th of August 2020)
> *"I asked my father for help when I had difficulty learning English. My father helped, for example the teacher gave an extension of the material, my father could shorten it so that it was easy to remember. For example, home sweet home means "rumahku istanaku" With my father being told that Sweet home can already be done. What is perfect is home sweet home, for sweet home just so it's easy to remember".* (int. 29th of July 2020)
> *"Yes, when I have difficulty asking for help, when I am at school, I usually ask my teacher or friends for help and when I am at home, I ask for help from my mother".* (int. 20th of August 2020)

3.2.2. The learning strategies used by students in learning English

The learning strategies used by students when learning English, can use learning strategies using new English vocabulary in sentences, students like to rewrite the new vocabulary given by the teacher, and then students if they receive instructions from the teacher to write in sentences the students will write down the vocabulary in the form of a sentence. Students also use flashcards to help memorize new English vocabulary words.

Another learning strategy used by students when learning English can also be to repeat the material that has been presented by the teacher at home, but to repeat the material students only do it at certain times such as when there is an exam or school assignment. Try not to translate word for word, while learning English and also reward yourself to be more enthusiastic about learning English.

"Yes, I like to write it in sentence form and I like to rewrite it when I get new vocabulary". (int. 29th of July 2020)

"If you get a new English word you don't immediately make a sentence. If you are given the task of making a new sentence, you will make a sentence". (int. 20th of August 2020)

"Of course, I like to use flash cards. Using flashcards feels so excited, it feels like a competition. But I have never participated in a competition, it's more fun to listen to English songs while playing the keyboard". (int. 29th of July 2020)

"I don't like learning new English words with flash cards. But I use kak songs, sung because I like listening to English music". (int. 20th of August 2020)

"Sometimes English material is often used". (int. 20th of August 2020)

"I translate ... word for word and have no trouble composing sentences". (int. 20th of August 2020)

"Yes, I always reward myself for the achievements that I get. Usually, I encourage myself to always get good grades". (int. 29th of July 2020)

"I always reward myself when I get very good English learning results. But, to increase my enthusiasm for learning, I like singing in English, ..., because that way can help my enthusiasm for learning ...". (int. 20th of August 2020)

3.2.3. The difficulties of students when studying in class.

The difficulty students face when learning English in class is reading English without looking for new vocabulary. For the material for reading English stories, the teacher says reading English books is usually in grade 6 because grade 6 already has the ability to read. To find new vocabulary, the teacher always asks students to read first, then after reading the students look for words that the students do not understand and then discuss them together at the end.

> *"Usually in 6th grade, the problem is that in 6th grade there is already a reading comprehension, sometimes using* Malin Kundang's *tales. Usually, I tell them to read first and then I tell them to look for new difficult vocabulary and we will discuss them together later. Asking questions is natural, it's an example that I usually find in class, I usually tell them to look for it first, but sometimes some children ask right away, even though it will also be discussed at the end".* (int. 30th of August 2020)

3.2.4. The teacher's solution enabling students to apply learning strategies

The teacher's solution in solving student problems to be able to apply learning strategies can use new English vocabulary in sentences so that they are easy to remember. But in conveying new vocabulary the teacher adjusts to the grade level. For grade 1 to grade 3, you can use songs or games, for grade 4 to grade 6 because the material provided is more complex, for the introduction of new English words in sentences it's good to do,

besides using sentences to learn new English words sometimes filling in gaps can also be done for learning.

In addition, another solution used by the teacher in solving student problems to be able to apply learning strategies can use flashcards to learn new vocabulary. To convey vocabulary using flashcards according to the material to be presented. If the material allows using flashcards, the teacher will use them when studying in class.

The teacher introduces new vocabulary in a way, the teacher will write on the blackboard and students have to write it back in their book and at the time determined by the teacher, the teacher will give a quiz over the vocabulary that has been given. This strategy can be used as a solution for teachers in learning English. Next, translating word for word, in delivering translating material in grade 5 the teacher rarely provides material translating sentences directly. But if there is an assignment to translate a sentence, the teacher will model it with a sentence pattern.

To solve the solution in learning English, the teacher also said that if there are some students who take private tutoring outside of school, there are also students who use electronic media to learn English, and also use English books to learn English. Asking someone who is fluent in English can also be a solution in learning English.

"The method for introducing new vocabulary depends on what level it is in the class. Maybe if in grade 1 to grade 3 we can use songs to introduce new vocabulary or with games. But for grade 4 to grade 5 the phase is different, using the singing method is no longer the right way, meaning that in grades 4 5 and 6 the material is more complex, so I have made sentences, filled in the gaps by the text. So, for vocabulary for grades 1 to 3, use songs and class 4th to 6th grade can use the sentence ". (int. 30th of August 2020)

"Of course, so if I explain the introduction of new vocabulary words, I write on the blackboard. The students have to write them. So sometimes I give quizzes, later my children tell me to close the book, give me a quiz like guessing the meaning of the vocabulary I just gave. Usually, I give something like that for grade 5 ". (int. 30th of August 2020)

"When it comes to translating, I rarely give it, it means I give sentences and the children translate directly, rarely. For translating a sentence if there is an assignment, I model it with a sentence pattern, for example" She is drawing ", wait for the statement She is a pronoun drawing is a verb. Because in grade 5 there is already material about the Part of Speech about the pronoun "He, She It" and the verb already exists ". (int. 30th of August 2020)

"If there is another way for students to learn other than games, the English book itself, there is nothing else for learning. Unless he participates in the tutoring outside, the children may find other ways to learn English from the tutoring place. Children who take the tutoring outside very rarely openly use the method that is

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taught in the tutoring area used at school. Usually use this method, if not usually later I will make a Power Point, later learning can use PowerPoint like that, in addition to printed books and games just to support ". (int. 30th of August 2020)
"So far, as long as I teach English, I have never found a student who says" miss I'm afraid I'm wrong "or the others don't exist yet. But if for the way I do it I always approach it personally, for example there are students who are not biased, I will ask the students "who can't ask Miss (....)?", because I am an open person. So, I do not always do treatment, all relax, because at the time of learning I always use the learning method while playing. So, there are no children but relax, feeling nervous or afraid to learn English ". (int. 30th of August 2020)
"If there are students who have difficulty, usually during the lesson they go straight to the front, ask directly to ask them to be taught like that, but if they are not there for outside the classroom". (int. 30th of August 2020)

3.2.5. The parents's support in dealing with the problems in learning English

The way students often use while learning English at home, children usually do questions and answers with their parents, use props to add new vocabulary, and occasionally communicate in English. Also, the way students often use when learning English at home, usually students open English textbooks and listen to English songs and imitate them. Talking with other people about feelings while learning English can also be done, such as telling stories about learning activities at school, while doing exams or assignments, etc.

"The way of learning that is often used: question and answer and discussion with his father. Incidentally, his father is also a teacher of English. Sometimes he uses teaching aids to strengthen his vocabulary knowledge. Occasionally communicates in English for simple instructions, but until now it hasn't been successful. Maybe because it is not a colloquial language like Indonesian / Javanese, so until now my child has only memorized vocabulary and their use in sentences when doing daily tests has not been able to communicate". (int. 29th of July 2020)
"When there is an assignment, the child makes more textbooks and what the children usually use often listen to English songs and then the children imitate the song". (int. 20th of August 2020)
"... rarely shares stories about learning English at school because he feels that the material delivery from the teacher is mediocre. Less wow, he said. What my child shows is only the achievements he got while studying at school". (int. 29th of July 2020)
"Often to share stories for example after doing tests with various kinds of sad or happy stories". (int. 20th of August 2020)

3.2.6. The English learning strategies that children used at home

The strategy used by children at home was to repeat the learning material at home. Parents said it was rarely done to repeat back the material at home because there are still many other subject matters that must be studied as well. The school where they are

studying is a private school that is also a religion-based school that prioritizes student memorization levels. To repeat the material about once a week or when going to the exam.

> *"Do not repeat often because there are also many other subject matters that must be repeated regularly because SD ... is a religion-based school. Which is regularly repeated memorizing Al Quran or Juz-Amma. Repeating English material just before the daily test. About 1 week before. Once a week you must repeat it once a week and the previous material. If there is information about a daily test, the study is added once".* (int. 29th of July 2020)
> *"Often repeat ..., when there is an assignment given from school, the child does it right away".* (int. 20th of August 2020)

3.3. Discussion

The results of questionnaires and interviews that researchers took from fifth grade referring to Oxford (1990) and Juan Antonio Maruri Jiménez (2015) reveal that in memory strategies, the students in learning English more often use new English words or vocabulary in a sentence. They often use these strategies to be able to remember new words or vocabulary well and be able to apply them in sentence form well. The teacher also uses this strategy to learn new words or vocabulary in the classroom, but it is adjusted according to the grade level.

In the fifth-grade students' according to Oxford (1990) and Krawec & Montague (2012) cognitive strategies in learning English are more often used, they say or write new English words several times strategy. Because by saying and writing many times the new vocabulary given by the teacher can be easily remembered. In learning English, the teacher also reminds students to write new vocabulary words that the teacher provides, because at the end of the class the teacher gives a game with the new vocabulary that has been delivered. Next, the third point of direct strategies, namely compensation strategies. Oxford (1990) and Ahmad & Ismail (2013) In compensation strategies, fifth-grade students gave an opinion that they disagreed with learning to read English without looking up every new word. Because in general, if the teacher asks students to read English stories, the teacher always instructs students to look for vocabulary that the students don't know and at the end of the lesson it is discussed together.

After discussing three points of direct strategies then the researchers discuss three points of indirect strategies. The first point is according to Oxford (1990) and Iftikhar (2015) in metacognitive strategies, fifth-grade students prefer learning strategies i.e. noticing my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better. Because by paying attention to mistakes during learning English, students can use many ways such as

opening a dictionary to find out more vocabulary or by listening to music with an English accent.

Oxford (1990) and Galti (2016) underline affective strategies. The fifth-grade students tend to use the strategy of trying to relax whenever they feel afraid of using English. The way students do to relax when learning English is usually to chat with friends and ask questions about English lessons that have not been understood. When the teacher teaches English in class, usually the teacher also teaches English material with games so that students are not so serious and remain relaxed while studying, but to find students afraid of learning English the teacher has never found it. Social strategies are the third point of indirect strategies. Oxford (1990) and Etxebarria et al. (2012) stated that in social strategies, fifth-grade students prefer to ask for help from English speakers to cooperate with the use of a new language that is good and to empathize with other people.

Meanwhile, for the results of each type of learning strategy on direct strategies, memory strategies are a strategy that is more dominant than cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. Meanwhile, indirect strategies, social strategies are also more dominating than affective strategies and metacognitive strategies. In general, learning strategies from the calculation of the percentage of indirect strategies are more dominant in those fifth-grade students.

4. CONCLUSION

The types of learning strategies used by the fifth-grade students in learning English as a foreign language in the private school investigated are memory strategies they occupy the highest percentage of cognitive strategies and compensation strategies on direct strategies. Then on the indirect strategies, social strategies account for the highest percentage of metacognitive strategies and affective strategies. Further, the type of learning strategy that is often used is indirect strategies as learning strategies used by students when learning English.

This research can be a starting point for teachers as well as parents to be more concerned with students' learning styles. Thus, the teacher will consider differences in learning strategies in organizing the teaching and learning process. Being aware of the learning strategies, the parents can better guide their children in learning. They might also collaborate for the future research to contribute to the improvement of language learning at the elementary school setting.

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elementary schools, investigating teaching strategies, learning strategies and material evaluation. Fields of study that are also her concerns are literacy skills and translation.

Nur Rifai Akhsan, a lecturer in English Education Department, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He specializes in English Teaching and attained his Master Degree in University of Wollongong, Australia. Some of his research are strategies in handling students' disruptive behavior; using JIRAK traditional game as learning media for teaching children; school creed to promote students' motivation in learning English; strategies to cope learning anxieties, and many more. In addition, he also has strong interest in tourism development and acting as Director of Centre for Tourism and Creative Economy in his institution.

APPENDIX

No	Cara Belajar	5	4	3	2	1
1	Saya menggunakan kata (kosa kata) bahasa Inggris baru dalam sebuah kalimat sehingga saya dapat mengingatnya.					
2	Saya menggunakan *flash card* (kartu bergambar) untuk mengingat kata bahasa Inggris yang baru.					
3	Saya sering menggulang kembali pelajaran bahasa Inggris.					
4	Saya mengatakan atau menulis kata (kosa kata) bahasa Inggris yang baru berkali-kali agar dapat mengingatnya.					
5	Saya menonton acara TV yang berbahasa Inggris atau mendengarkan musik yang dituturkan dalam bahasa Inggris.					
6	Saya berusaha untuk tidak menerjemahkan kata demi kata dalam belajar bahasa Inggris.					
7	Saya membaca bahasa Inggris tanpa mencari kata (kosa kata) baru.					
8	Saya mencoba menemukan banyak cara untuk menggunakan bahasa Inggris.					
9	Saya memperhatikan kesalahan selama belajar bahasa Inggris dan menggunakan alat bantu (buku bahasa Inggris, kamus digital, dll) untuk membantu saya agar bisa belajar lebih baik.					
10	Saya merencanakan jadwal saya sehingga saya memiliki cukup waktu untuk belajar bahasa Inggris.					
11	Saya mencoba untuk rileks (santai) setiap kali merasa takut menggunakan bahasa Inggris.					
12	Saya memberi diri saya hadiah ketika saya berhasil belajar bahasa Inggris.					
13	Saya berbicara dengan orang lain tentang bagaimana perasaan saya ketika saya belajar bahasa Inggris.					
14	Saya meminta orang yang mahir berbahasa Inggris untuk mengoreksi saya ketika saya berbicara.					
15	Saya meminta bantuan dari guru/orang tua/orang yang mahir dalam berbahasa Inggris.					

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