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Construction and Development of a Questionnaire of Grammar Learning Strategies with a Focus on the Most and Least Utilized Strategies: Insights from Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract: This quasi-experimental, quantitative study aimed to explore the most and least used grammar learning strategies employed by Iranian EFL learners in validating and utilizing a strategy-use questionnaire grounded in Zeinali et al.'s (2024) theoretical framework. The tool was pilot-tested for reliability and construct validity using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), possessing a satisfactory internal consistency. The questionnaire, translated into Persian to ensure clarity to participants, was then administered to study 270 learners of elementary and advanced proficiency levels at the Iran Language Institute, using convenience sampling. The results indicated that learners used communicative strategies most frequently, matching their need for active, purposeful use of language, and memory strategies least frequently. The instrument was seen to be valid in assessing learners' strategic tendencies and gaining insight into the processes of their learning grammar. These findings highlight the central role of communicative and metacognitive strategies; they also suggest that teachers and curriculum designers need to pay more attention to interactive and self-regulated teaching of grammar. Implications emphasize adjusting grammar teaching to learners' most liked strategies in the Iranian EFL context.

1. Introduction

In contemporary education, the instructor plays a pivotal role not only in teaching content knowledge but to facilitating the scholarly progress of

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the students in both disciplinary and communicative domains. English, being a global language, has evolved to be utilized as the main instrument of communication in the majority of academic settings. Among the vital aspects of language learning, grammatical knowledge is widely recognized as the key gateway to learners' overall language acquisition. Grammar is the internal structure of language, defining correctness in spelling, vocabulary usage, pronunciation, and syntactic form. Consequently, the instruction of grammar remains a central topic in foreign language acquisition (Janzen Ulbricht, 2023; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Nguyen et al., 2021; Zaker & Bajelany, 2025).

Language teachers are repeatedly faced with the conflict of balancing form and meaning in choosing between prescriptively rule-governed teaching of grammar and relaxed communicative use. While the goal of communicative competence is the norm in most classrooms today, neglecting grammar invariably results in broken or flawed language production(Zhang & Kang, 2022). Consequently, instructors try to include methods that offer linguistic accuracy while also supporting natural language use. One aspect of the process is to find and implement grammar learning strategies (GLS) that align with learners' requirements and thinking styles.

While the teacher employs various strategies to render the instruction of grammar natural and interesting, learners' strategic behavior is largely accountable for the success or failure of these strategies. Needs analysis, as emphasized by Richards (2006), constitutes the basis of understanding learning environments in which grammar is acquired and how learners process and internalize grammatical structures. With such understanding, teachers can align their instruction with students' real interests and study patterns. In keeping with this line of reasoning, the present research aims to develop and evaluate a grammar learning strategy (GLS) model designed particularly for Iranian EFL learners.

The instructional role of grammar has been controversial in applied linguistics for many years. Researchers and practitioners have tended to argue over the suitability of implicit versus explicit teaching or inductive versus deductive approaches to instruction (Chai & Bao, 2023; Ellis, 2006; Ghiabi et al., 2024). In the last decade or so, more and more consensus has emerged about the benefits of integrated instruction—combining explicit attention to grammar with communicative tasks. This hybrid model, referred to as Form-Focused Instruction (FFI), allows students to learn structural knowledge without using language in situ

passively (Alsuhaibani et al., 2024; Shobeiry et al., 2025; Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

While these theories have long existed, however, grammar teaching continues to encounter resolute resistance in most EFL contexts, including in such places as Iran, where schooling systems favor precision over fluency(Aliakbari et al., 2024; Zhang, 2020). There, students tend to use heavy amounts of memorization, with little exposure to the actual use of language. Such places hardly offer a chance for the application of grammar in open-ended situations, thus undermining learners' capacity to internalize the grammar. Moreover, grammatical competence, although an essential skill for listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency, has been quite overshadowed by studies on Language Learning Strategy (LLS) (Oxford, 2016; Tribushinina & Boz, 2025).

In LLS, grammar learning strategies have been less studied compared to vocabulary, reading, or writing strategies. GLS needs more empirical attention, particularly concerning its potential facilitation in assisting learners in acquiring their grammar, as stated by Cohen and Macaro (2013). Previous research has indicated that students benefit a great deal from instruction in strategies when the strategies are explicit and contextually salient (Sistani, 2024; Vaisman & Kahn-Horwitz, 2020; van Koert et al., 2023). However, most of the LLS models that have been advanced are not learner-population-specific and, therefore, more general, hence less applicable.

Batstone (1994) presents two conceptions of grammar: static and dynamic. The static framework conceptualizes grammar as a set of pre-learned rules to be applied. In contrast, the dynamic perspective conceptualizes grammar as a set of devices for constructing meaning in interaction. This latter perspective is better supported by mainstream pedagogical goals that favor meaningful communication. Learners are not only required to learn rules but also when and how to employ them in the spontaneous production of speech and writing(Méndez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019; Zhao & Huang, 2023).

In the Iranian context, teaching grammar often leans toward the demands of national examinations, with an emphasis on correctness and rule memorization. This results in Iranian EFL learners having difficulties applying grammatical forms accurately to communicative situations. Although grammar is acknowledged to be significant, relatively little empirical study has been conducted on Iranian learners' use of grammar learning strategies. This is an important lacuna in the literature, especially given the growing interest in learner autonomy and self-regulation in language learning.

Also, Iranian EFL learners possess specific linguistic and pedagogical challenges as a result of their school curriculum and mother tongue. When these challenges are merged with limited exposure to authentic English inputs, there is a pressing need to investigate how the learners deal with grammar learning by employing self-initiated strategies. The resolution of this issue requires a systematic model of GLS that deals with cognitive abilities as well as metacognitive, affective, social, communicative, memory-based, and resource-based abilities.

Understanding these patterns of preference is valuable to teachers, textbook writers, and policymakers who are devoted to improving grammar instruction. A better understanding of the most and least frequently used strategies by Iranian learners can inform the implementation of more effective pedagogical interventions. In particular, understanding currently underused but possibly helpful strategies—e.g., metacognitive or communicative strategies—can help redirect instructional priorities toward more balanced and purposeful learning activities.

The significance of this study lies in its population-oriented nature. Unlike previous studies, which generalize strategy usage for diverse populations, this study is specifically concerned with Iranian EFL learners and attempts to verify a seven-factor model of GLS for their context. It contributes both to the theoretical formulation of GLS studies and classroom implications in this regard.

Besides, there is also a gap identified in models based on context aimed at the special education and language aspects of Iranian EFL learners. To address this gap, the current study is grounded in a model of grammar learning strategies specifically developed by Zeinali (2024) to divide learners' use of grammar strategies into seven broad categories: cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, memory, resource-management, and communicative strategies. This model was initially designed and validated through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses with Iranian participants. By incorporating Zeinali's framework, the present study moves beyond general strategy taxonomies and provides a tailored approach to grammar instruction that resonates with the needs of Iranian learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1. L2 Grammar Instruction and Strategies

Grammar instruction in second language acquisition has undergone significant theoretical and pedagogical progress. From structural rule-based towards more communicative and integrated models, teachers have

shifted towards helping learners internalize grammar not as standalone rules but as tools for expressing meaning (Ellis, 2006; Dąbrowska et al., 2020; Spada & Lightbown, 2008). Due to this fact, grammar learning strategies (GLS) have emerged as key aspects in helping learners cope with grammar learning more effectively.

GLS explains the specific, goal-directed strategies the learners use to understand, practice, and apply grammar rules (Ghorbani et al., 2024; Oxford, 2016; Ruiz et al., 2018). These vary across a variety of dimensions—cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective, resource-based, memory, and communicative strategies—that support learners at various levels of language processing. During Iranian EFL, several studies have examined the frequency and utilization of these strategies at various proficiency levels, revealing strong patterns and inclinations (Nasimi & Ghaemi, 2022; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2019; Reeder et al., 2017).

Cognitive strategies are thought processes such as analyzing sentence structures, translating, rehearsing sentence patterns, or identifying patterns. Repetition, imagery, and deductive logic are a few of the most common methods under this category. Such methods, as noted by Lightbown and Spada (2013), help learners internalize grammatical structures and increase retention.

Metacognitive strategies, however, involve more sophisticated skills such as planning, goal-setting, self-regulation, and monitoring learning performance. Jahanbakhsh Javid and Amini (2023) depicted that Iranian students who applied metacognitive strategies daily performed better in grammar exercises due to their ability to regulate and condition their learning processes.

Memory techniques employ association, mnemonics, grouping, and visualization in order to assist in the memorization of the rules of grammar. Although most often associated with rote memorization, they are able to be reinforced with meaningful associations, such as visualizations or everyday examples (Fitzpatrick & McKeown, 2020).

Social strategies are learning grammar through interaction, cooperation, and collaborative feedback. These include peer teaching, participating in group practice, questioning, or receiving corrective feedback from teachers. Scaffolding in peer discussions can be employed to raise learners' sensitivity to grammatical forms and offer a clearer understanding through dialogic engagement, as proposed by Lim and Arcilla (2021).

Affective strategies will manage emotional factors such as confidence, anxiety, and motivation. Students may use relaxation strategies, emotional control skills, or self-motivation in a bid to reduce stress related to

grammar (Narimani et al., 2024). Evidence indicates that reduced anxiety will improve focus and increase students' preparedness to experiment with new grammatical patterns (Nasimi & Ghaemi, 2022).

Resource-based methods involve the use of external resources—like language apps, online quizzes, grammar books, and tutor assistance—to facilitate learning grammar. In high-stakes academic contexts like those prevailing in Iran, where the culture is test-centric, effective resource management can help learners control their time and focus on areas of difficulty (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Nguyen et al., 2021).

Finally, communicative approaches emphasize learning grammar from effective uses of language. These are enabling role-playing, task-based practice, and incorporating grammar in real speaking or writing situations. Baker (2022) holds that grammar is more effective and accessible when put into meaningful contexts. These are closest to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the impact of social interaction and mediation on the acquisition of language.

2.2. Strategic Behaviour and Perceptions of Students

Furthermore, studies have indicated that learners' beliefs—specifically, their own perceived level of proficiency—may determine what and how they use grammar learning strategies. Brown and Lee (1994) and Janzen Ulbricht (2023) emphasize learner agency and learner self-perception in second-language classrooms. Learners with high self-perceived levels of proficiency are likely to use metacognitive and communicative strategies more actively. In contrast, those with lower perceived proficiency levels may make use of memory-based or affective ones.

Gender has also been said to influence strategic decisions. For instance, studies have shown that female learners could be more inclined to employ social and affective strategies, whereas male learners could employ memory or resource-based strategies (Nasimi & Ghaemi, 2022). Such differences mean instruction must be personalized and responsive so learners can select strategies according to their learning styles and profiles.

In addition, proficiency and use of strategies depend on each other: the more proficiently learners employ strategies, the higher their level of perceived language ability, and the converse. Thus, measuring learners' grammar learning strategies not only informs pedagogical choices but also leads us to comprehend learner diversity and performance further.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research is adapted from three interconnected perspectives: cognitive theory, second language acquisition (SLA) models, and socio-cultural theory.

Cognitive theory forms the foundation of what is known about learners acquiring, remembering, and accessing grammar knowledge. Cognitive strategies such as rule decomposition and exercising the rules through practice are derived from such theory's emphasis on mental processes within(Zhang & Kang, 2022).

SLA theories like the Interaction Hypothesis and Input Hypothesis describe under what circumstances grammar is learned best. These frameworks emphasize the significance of meaningful input, meaning negotiation, and corrective feedback to aid in grammar acquisition(Chai & Bao, 2023).

Socio-cultural theory, most closely associated with Vygotsky and Cole (1978), focuses specific emphasis on the interaction, mediation, and social context of learning. Communicative and social perspectives have a strong alignment with this position, stressing how collaborative learning and scaffolding enable learners to internalize grammatical principles through supported participation(Alsuhaibani et al., 2024).

The integration of these theoretical models calls for the research aim to explore grammar learning as dynamic and not static or dependent, but as a blend of learner cognition, social context, and instructional design. It also calls for the use of a multi-dimensional model of GLS with regard to the nature of complexity in grammar learning in EFL contexts.

The theoretical foundation of the present study is grounded in the model of Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) developed by Zeinali (2024). This model was proposed to address the pedagogical need for a localized, empirically grounded framework tailored to Iranian EFL learners. Drawing from cognitive, socio-cultural, and second language acquisition theories, Zeinali's model classifies GLS into seven key categories:

- Cognitive strategies (e.g., repetition, analysis, pattern recognition)
- Metacognitive strategies (e.g., planning, self-monitoring, goal-setting)
- Affective strategies (e.g., anxiety control, self-encouragement)
- Social strategies (e.g., asking questions, collaborative learning)
- Memory strategies (e.g., mnemonics, association, visualization)
- Resource-management strategies (e.g., time management, use of dictionaries and tools)

- Communicative strategies (e.g., active use of grammar in tasks and interaction)

This model was developed through a mixed-methods design including expert validation, exploratory interviews, and factor analysis conducted with Iranian language learners. Its primary contribution lies in localizing GLS research by taking into account cultural, institutional, and linguistic realities that are often ignored in global models. Therefore, Zeinali's (2024)framework is particularly relevant for grammar instruction in the Iranian context and serves as the conceptual backbone of the current study.

Based on the above aim, the following research question will be developed:

RQ1: Does the researcher-developed questionnaire on grammar learning strategies demonstrate acceptable levels of reliability and validity for use among Iranian EFL learners?

RQ2: To what extent do Iranian EFL learners employ the different categories of grammar learning strategies as defined by the proposed seven-dimensional model (cognitive, metacognitive, memory, affective, social, communicative, and resource-based)?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The researcher adhered to a quantitative descriptive survey design based on the Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) model proposed by Zeinali et al. (2024). The model comprises seven general categories of strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, memory, resource-management, and communicative strategies, well-designed specifically for Iranian EFL learners. A complete questionnaire was then developed on the basis of this model and pilot-tested to determine its validity and reliability using expert review and exploratory factor analysis. The instrument was finalized, and the questionnaire was then distributed to a broad sample of students at different levels of proficiency. The information collected was subjected to statistical analysis in order to determine the most and least frequently used grammar learning strategies among the participants, thereby determining usage patterns and effectiveness of the different types of strategies in grammar learning.

3.2. Participants

The study consisted of 270 Iranian EFL students (139 females, 51.5%; 131 males, 48.5%) who were randomly chosen from a range of Iran Language Institute branches in Hormozgan province using a convenience

sampling technique. The age of participants ranged from 14 to 32 years (M = 20.74, SD = 3.48) and were classified into three levels of proficiency—elementary (n = 119), intermediate (n = 93), and advanced (n = 58)—based on the marks they secured in the institute-conducted Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT).

For the purpose of determining the reliability and validity of the research tool, a pilot study was employed before conducting the main study. To this effect, a separate group of 150 EFL learners (86 males and 64 females) who were also students from the Iran Language Institute in Bandarabbas were recruited for piloting. The proficiency level included 74 elementary, 53 intermediate, and 23 advanced learners according to the same placement criteria.

The preliminary sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula for application in an infinite population, allowing the researcher to establish a minimum number of representative participants with a confidence of 95% and a margin of 5%. Equal representation by age, gender, and level of proficiency was allowed through this statistical technique.

The ultimate questionnaire version, according to Zeinali et al.'s (2024) Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) model, was content validated through expert review and error-correcting. Internal consistency was determined through pilot Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), producing a Cronbach's alpha of 0.722, which was within suitable reliability. The instrument that was validated was administered in Persian during ordinary class time in the main study in an effort to reduce test-related anxiety and enhance ecological validity.

3.3. Instrumentation

The primary instrument used in the current study was a newly developed questionnaire based on the Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) model proposed by Zeinali et al. (2024). The model differentiates between seven wide categories of grammar learning strategies, which are cognitive, metacognitive, memory, social, affective, communicative, and resource-based strategies. Following this framework, the researcher developed an item pool consisting of 35 new items, which were then clarified through expert consultation and pilot testing.

The initial pool of 35 items for the Grammar Learning Strategies questionnaire was developed based on a thorough review of the literature on grammar learning and language learning strategies (e.g, Oxford, 1990; Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Ellis, 2006; Pawlak, 2012). In addition to the theoretical foundation, semi-structured exploratory interviews were

conducted with five expert EFL instructors, each with over ten years of experience, to gather qualitative insights into strategy use in the Iranian context. These two sources of input—literature and expert interviews—guided the item formulation process. Content validity was subsequently evaluated through expert judgment, during which five applied linguistics experts assessed the items for relevance, clarity, and theoretical alignment. Based on their feedback, the item pool was refined, redundant items were removed, and ambiguous ones were clarified. This process resulted in a final version of 23 items, which underwent further testing for construct validity through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

The survey was designed to evaluate the frequency and character of grammar acquisition strategies employed by Iranian EFL students. It was initially composed in English and later translated into Persian, the native language of all participants, to ensure linguistic clarity and cultural suitability. Translation and back-translation procedures were followed to maintain the semantic equivalence of items in both versions.

The last questionnaire consisted of 23 items, each being linked to one of the seven sub-constructs in the GLS model. The response style was a 5-point Likert scale on which the respondents marked from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). The items were thematically allocated as follows:

- Cognitive strategies (e.g., deduction, induction, note-taking, repetition)
- Metacognitive strategies (e.g., planning, monitoring, evaluating)
- Memory strategies (e.g., association, visualization, mnemonics)
- Social strategies (e.g., peer collaboration, asking for clarification)
- Affective strategies (e.g., anxiety reduction, motivation increase)
- Communicative strategies (e.g., the use of grammar in real-life tasks)
- Resource-based strategies (e.g., grammar books, software usage)

In order to ensure content validity, the original item pool was assessed by a five-member review panel comprising applied linguistics and second language acquisition experts. On the basis of the feedback provided by the panel members, redundant or ambiguous items were removed, and necessary adjustments were made to ensure greater clarity and relevance.

The pilot study was subsequently conducted with 150 students belonging to the same population. The pilot data were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to ensure the construct validity of the instrument. The instrument's final version of 23 items demonstrated an acceptable internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha = 0.722), indicating good reliability.

In the primary phase of the study, the online version of the completed Persian questionnaire was distributed to the participants through a secure online environment. The questionnaire contained two sections:

- Demographic section: age, gender, and language self-reported proficiency
- Main section: 23 questions on the use of grammar learning strategies

The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire during their usual class time, and their answers were automatically recorded for statistical analysis.

This established scale was specially fitted to the Iranian EFL context and employed as an authentic instrument to examine learners' frequency and patterns of use of grammar strategy at different levels.

3.4. Data Collection and Procedures

To ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural sensitivity, the questionnaire was filled in Persian by the researcher, the native language of all participants. Since the study involved only Iranian EFL learners living in Hormozgan province, employing Persian was essential to make sure of complete comprehension of items, minimize ambiguity, and improve response precision. Employing participants' native language in self-report measures has been common practice in applied linguistics studies (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010), particularly when the measure contains abstract strategy-related notions that can be misinterpreted in a second language.

Validation and development of the questionnaire proceeded in a multi-step manner:

- Initial Construction: The first draft of the seven dimensions of Zeinali et al. (2024) Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) model was utilized to construct a 35-item item pool.
- Expert Review: Five university applied linguistics experts reviewed the initial draft. Based on their feedback, 12 items were revised or removed, and it became a 23-item questionnaire.
- Translation and Back-Translation: The English final version was translated into Persian. A second independent translator conducted a back-translation into English, and discrepancies were resolved for the sake of semantic equivalence.
- Pilot Testing: The Persian version was piloted in January 2024 with 150 EFL students from the Iran Language Institute at Bandarabbas. Pilot results were analyzed by Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to ascertain construct validity. The final version comprised satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.722).

After validation, the main study applied the same Persian version of the questionnaire, distributed online between the dates February 5 and February 20, 2024. To introduce the research and obtain informed consent, an introductory briefing session was conducted online on Google Meet on February 4, 2024, where the purposes of the study, voluntary participation in the study, and confidentiality pledge were thoroughly described.

The online questionnaire had a short cover letter outlining these points and confirming ethical compliance, as per university research guidelines. The time expected to complete the questionnaire was 20–25 minutes. Directions were explicitly set at the top of the form to maintain responses concise and uniform. Data collection was conducted in regular class periods with the help of institute instructors to ensure optimum responses. All responses that were collected were anonymous and stored securely. The researcher emphasized that the data would be used only for study purposes and research. By the use of this systematic and ethically grounded procedure, the research ensured both methodological rigor and participant trust.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data collected from the main study were analyzed with the assistance of SPSS version 26. To examine the construct validity of the questionnaire on grammar learning strategies, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. The factors with eigenvalues of greater than 1 were retained, and factor loadings of 0.40 and above were considered to be significant. By doing this, the underlying structure of the tool was determined, and it was confirmed that the items were appropriately reflecting the intended subconstructs.

To determine the reliability of internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for the whole questionnaire and also for each of the subscales derived. The overall scale reliability coefficient was found to be good ($\alpha = 0.722$), with sufficient internal consistency of the instrument.

In addition to factor analysis, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions) were used to summarize participants' responses and identify the most and least frequently used grammar learning strategies among Iranian EFL learners. These statistical procedures provided both psychometric support for the instrument and

substantive interpretation of learner behavior with regard to grammar strategy use.

All the data were collected and analyzed with respect to ethical principles, upholding participant confidentiality and informed consent throughout.

4. Results

To ensure the reliability and validity of the Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) questionnaire, both internal consistency and construct validity were assessed. Internal consistency was examined through Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.722$), which is above the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Additionally, corrected item-total correlations and 'alpha if item deleted' indices were inspected. Construct validity was supported by content validation through expert review and item alignment with theoretical dimensions of grammar learning strategies (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Reliability Estimates*

Subscale	N of Items	Reliability
personal characteristics	6	.79
personal perceptions	23	.72
missing factors	1	.73

The questionnaire and its scales achieved the necessary reliability values (Cronbach's alpha) (greater than 0.60). It is important to note that the final questionnaire only included 23 items because one of the items on the seventh scale had to be eliminated. After all, it did not meet the necessary criteria. The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for each of the seven subscales of the Grammar Learning Strategies questionnaire were acceptable. The metacognitive strategies subscale showed the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.79$), followed by the communicative strategies subscale ($\alpha = 0.78$), social strategies ($\alpha = 0.70$), memory strategies ($\alpha = 0.69$), cognitive strategies ($\alpha = 0.69$), affective strategies ($\alpha = 0.68$), and resource-based strategies ($\alpha = 0.68$). The overall reliability of the 23-item scale was also satisfactory, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.72, indicating a good level of internal consistency for the instrument as a whole.

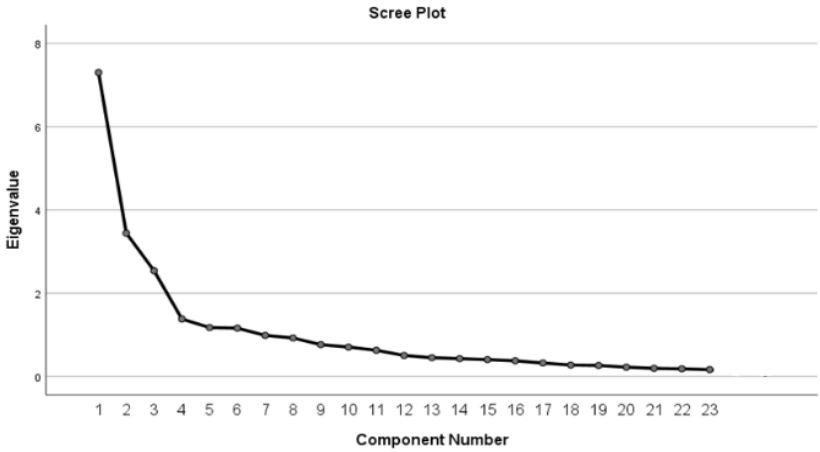
Construct validity refers to the extent to which a test accurately measures a psychological construct. The suitability of data for factor analysis depends on the sample size and correlation strength. A 5 to 1 ratio is acceptable. The research instrument showed good coefficients above

0.3, and Bartlett's sphericity test and KMO measure of sample size were used to assess factorability and groupings. The results showed a statistically significant relationship, indicating the matrix will be factorable according to the correlation matrix.

The study used KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test to check data normality and identify factors. The researcher then conducted principal component analysis on 23 items, identifying six factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, accounting for 65.72 percent of the variance. The total variance results showed confidence in the elicited responses, reflecting common perceptions among respondents about the GLS questionnaire. The perception of the questionnaire shifted from a top limit of 6.2 to a bottom limit of 0.079.

Figure 1 displays the results of factor loading. It reflects participants' high interest and positive perceptions of the GLS questionnaire at the high end of the plot compared to their perceptions of the GLS questionnaire at the low end.

Figure 1. *The Scree Plot of the Factors of the Study*



The researcher used Horn's parallel analysis and Monte Carlo method to compare the eigenvalues of retained factors with those of a randomly generated data set, confirming the outcomes of the two methods.

Table 2. *Actual Eigenvalues and their Corresponding Values from Parallel Analysis*

Component Number	Eigenvalue from PCA	Criterion Value from Parallel Analysis	Decision
1	6.2	1.3261	Accept
2	2.98	1.2002	Accept
3	2.01	1.290	Accept
4	1.331	1.1044	Accept
5	1.201	1.0837	Accept
6	1.012	1.0055	Accept

As shown in Table 2, the actual eigenvalues of the six factors exceeded the criterion values derived from the parallel analysis, indicating that the initial stage decision to retain these six factors was appropriate.

Table 3. *Rotated Component Matrix*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q13	.873					
Q14	.857					
Q12	.812					
Q15	.814					
Q11	.785					
Q16	.769					
Q10	.732					
Q17	.587				-.512	
Q18	.575				-.501	
Q7		.820				
Q1		.774				
Q5		.742				
Q4		.724				
Q6		.739				
Q21			.814			
Q22			.741			
Q20			.636			
Q23			.564			
Q2				.674		
Q3				.665		
Q8					.671	
Q9	.522				.547	
Q19						.801

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Factor rotation involves methods of arranging data in a way that each item would be weighted equally among the various components. This is the last and third step involved in data analysis. Table 3 summarizes the factor rotation results and item loadings.

Table 3 demonstrates that all items in the questionnaire possessed nearly equal weight, signifying the accuracy of the researcher's questioning method, measurement, and item design. The findings from this pilot study generally affirmed the reliability and validity of the researchers' self-designed questionnaire.

In order to check the normality of the data gathered by the researcher, the questionnaire, skewness, and kurtosis were used, and the results obtained are given below.

As seen in Appendix A, the researcher found there were no normal distributions by checking the skewness and kurtosis of the variables, and non-parametric analysis could be used for them.

In Table 4, the descriptive statistics of the questionnaire that the researcher gave to the main group are measured, and the results of the variables are presented.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for the Variables of the Study*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cognitive Strategies	270	1	5	3.8	1.1
Metacognitive Strategies	270	2	5	4.2	0.9
Memory Strategies	270	1	4	3.0	1.0
Social Strategies	270	2	5	3.5	0.8
Affective Strategies	270	1	5	3.2	1.2
Communicative Strategies	270	3	5	4.5	0.7
Resource-Based Strategies	270	2	5	3.9	0.9

In examining the efficacy of GLS among 270 subjects, the researcher has assessed seven distinct approaches: cognitive, metacognitive, memory, social, affective, communicative, and resource-based.

Participants with the highest mean score (M=4.5) follow the most successful communicative techniques. The low standard deviation data indicates that these techniques are rated fairly highly across respondents, implying a robust trend of preferences for and the efficacy of these approaches in improving language acquisition.

With a great mean score indicating its efficacy (M=4.2), the metacognitive approach is the second most successful. It welcomes self-control and planning—fundamental learning prerequisites. Its standard deviation is somewhat higher than that of communicative techniques. It suggests, then, that students view this technique as more varied in their perceived efficacy.

Strategies based on resources. These methods also rated rather well (M=3.9). Learning a new language helps one see resource use in several

ways through these items. The learners found access to a variety of tools and materials valuable.

Cognitive strategies are the application and change of learning materials aimed at generating a competent performance (M=3.8). The greater standard deviation, though, points to more variability in answers, suggesting that while successful, their influence may be quite different among students.

Social approaches pertaining to interaction with peers and instructors are assessed as fairly effective (M = 3.5). The relatively low standard deviation shows that the subjects have assessed their efficacy in rather constant views.

Concerning such techniques, these are less effective since they entail managing emotions and attitudes (M = 3.2). Greater variability results from a higher standard deviation. That would suggest that although some students greatly gain from these techniques, others do not at all.

Memory aids—techniques for recalling information—rated as least effective (M = 3.0). These approaches have a lower average score, which suggests that in the setting of language learning, candidates may not stand to gain as much. Though some students might find them helpful, the standard deviation suggests that they usually do not perform as well as other approaches.

These results emphasize the absolute need for participants to use communicative techniques, stressing how essential active communication is in language acquisition. Emphasizing the need for self-regulation and resource use, metacognitive and resource-based approaches have shown great success as well. On the other hand, memory techniques were viewed as the least successful, implying that straightforward rote memorizing is less helpful than interactive and self-regulated approaches. These revelations ought to help language teachers and curriculum designers prioritize better techniques and improve teaching approaches to maximize learning outcomes for their pupils.

5. Discussion

The present study tested the performance of seven various grammar learning strategies (GLS) on Iranian EFL learners: Communicative, Metacognitive, Resource-Based, Cognitive, Social, Affective, and Memory Strategies. The results demonstrate an evident preference and belief of effectiveness in favor of some of these strategies over others, which is in agreement with and differs from the findings of earlier research in several ways.

Communicative strategies were the highest rated of the strategies by the participants, with the highest mean score (M=4.5) and lowest standard deviation (SD=0.7), which reflected highly consistent ratings for learners. This confirms the imperative role played by active communication in language acquisition, affirming evidence by Oxford (1990) and Lightbown and Spada (2013), who highlighted that practice and use of language in interaction are instrumental to acquiring proficiency. The highly consistent high ratings confirm the largely accepted role played by communicative activities in enhancing language learning outcomes.

Metacognitive strategies, with their high mean score (M=4.2), were the second most useful, underscoring the importance of reflective thought, planning, and self-management in learning. This is in agreement with Wenden (1991), Schraw et al. (2006), and Jahanbakhsh Javid and Amini (2023), who argued that metacognitive strategies enable students to manage their learning processes effectively, thereby guaranteeing enhanced academic performance. The slightly higher standard deviation (SD=0.9) compared to communicative strategies is evidence that there exists some diversity regarding how students perceive and utilize these strategies.

Resource-based methods also showed excellent scores (M=3.9), highlighting the employment of a variety of materials and aids when learning about grammar. This coincides with studies by Nation and Nation (2001), Schmitt and Schmitt (2020), and Nguyen et al. (2021), which established that familiarity with numerous sources can significantly aid in vocabulary and grammar learning. The relatively low deviation (SD=0.9) indicates a highly positive response among learners.

Cognitive strategies involving manipulation and transformation of learning material scored an average of 3.8. While good, their effectiveness is very variable, as shown by the larger standard deviation (SD=1.1), indicating their effectiveness is very heterogeneous among learners. This variability may be due to individual differences in cognitive processing and learning styles, as noted by Anderson (2005), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and Gilakjani and Sabouri (2019).

Social strategies, which include working with teachers and classmates, were moderately effective (M=3.5), with limited variability (SD=0.8). This indicates consistent ratings of their efficacy, consistent with the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky and Cole (1978) and the claim of Lim and Arcilla (2021), emphasizing the role of social interaction in the acquisition of knowledge. However, the moderate rating suggests that

while useful, such strategies are perhaps not as crucial as communicative or metacognitive ones for grammar learning.

Affective strategies that were meant to manage emotions and attitudes were not as useful (M=3.2), with a higher standard deviation (SD=1.2) as a measure of extreme variation in their perceived usefulness. It is consistent with research by Horwitz (2001) and Dewaele (2005), Narimani et al. (2024), and Nasimi and Ghaemi (2022), who stated that while the management of anxiety and motivation is most important, usefulness in affective strategies can vary greatly among individuals.

Memorization strategies were the lowest rated (M=3.0) as to their effectiveness, with a standard deviation of 1.0. This indicates that memorization is not as useful for learning grammar as more interactive and self-regulated processes. Ellis (1994), Thornbury (1997), and Fitzpatrick and McKeown (2020) have argued in favor of this, that deep processing and meaningful use of language are retained and understood more effectively than simple memorization.

These findings complement and build on earlier language learning strategy studies. For instance, Oxford's (1990) large-scale typology of language learning strategies highlighted the effectiveness of communicative and metacognitive strategies through high ratings in this research. Similarly, social strategy's mid-level effectiveness aligns with Vygotsky and Cole's (1978) concern with social interaction.

However, the lower efficacy of affective and memory strategies contradicts other such studies that found these strategies effective in particular conditions (Dewaele, 2005; Dąbrowska et al., 2020; Horwitz, 2001). This can be attributed to differences in cultural learning styles and also to the specific Iranian EFL context, as suggested by Brown and Lee (1994) and Littlewood (2000).

These findings highlight the greatest priority of metacognitive and communicative strategies for learning grammar among Iranian EFL learners. Resource-based strategies are also significant, while affective and memory strategies are less efficient. These findings can guide language instructors and curriculum planners to prioritize those more efficient strategies and simplify teaching approaches in order to optimize learning accomplishments for their students.

6. Conclusion

This quantitative study aimed to investigate the extent to which Iranian learners of English as a Foreign Language utilize various grammar learning strategies in seven broad categories: Cognitive, Metacognitive, Memory, Social, Affective, Communicative, and Resource-Based

strategies. The results proved to show strong patterns of use, where communicative and metacognitive strategies were utilized most, and memory strategies were utilized the least.

Rather than evaluating the effectiveness of these approaches, the study focused on their self-reported frequency of use by students. As a result, any interpretation of effect is to be handled with care and considered exploratory. This analysis provides insightful information about students' habits and choices in learning grammar, which can be used to guide the planning of instruction.

Teachers and curriculum developers are, on the basis of these results, urged to pay more attention to communicative and metacognitive strategies while teaching grammar, match their teaching methodologies with the preferences of learners, and increase motivation. In the future, more studies might examine in more detail how the real effectiveness of strategy use influences performance in grammar across different contexts.

The findings of this study have significant implications for language education practitioners and curriculum planners, particularly for Iranian EFL learners. The established effectiveness of communicative and metacognitive approaches shows that incorporating more interactive and self-managed learning activities into the teaching of grammar can markedly enhance student achievement. Teachers should place more emphasis on procedures that support active communication, including group discussion and role-playing, and metacognitive training, such as self-assessment and goal-setting. In addition, the efficacy of resource-based methods demonstrates the value of providing diverse learning materials and equipment to accommodate a variety of learning needs and preferences. The partial success of memory aids, in contrast, indicates that rote memorization must be minimized through strategies that enhance higher levels of cognitive investment and comprehension. By aligning teaching procedures with these results, instructors can plan more effective and accommodating learning settings that better suit the demands of EFL learners.

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample was limited to Iranian EFL learners from a single province, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Third, only quantitative methods were used; the inclusion of qualitative data could have offered deeper insights into learners' strategic behaviors.

Future studies could explore the long-term effects of grammar learning strategies on language performance and examine the combined use of multiple strategies. It is also recommended that researchers conduct comparative studies across different cultural and educational contexts to validate the applicability of the current model.

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Appendix 1. Skewness and Kurtosis Results

Questions	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
یادگیری صریح قواعد گرامری و تمرین آنها از طریق تمرینات برای من مفید است.	-.737	.125	1.394	.248
من ترجیح می دهم قواعد دستور زبان را با شناسایی الگوهای استفاده از زبان کشف کنم.	-.614	.125	.236	.248
برای درک بهتر قواعد گرامری جملات را از انگلیسی به زبان مادری خود ترجمه می کنم.	-.683	.125	.253	.248
قواعد گرامری را از طریق تمرین ها و تمرین های تکراری تمرین می کنم.	-1.139	.125	1.518	.248
در طول درس از قواعد گرامری و مثال های دقیق یادداشت می کنم.	-.639	.125	-.036	.248
من اهداف مشخصی را تعیین می کنم و برای نحوه مطالعه و تمرین دستور زبان برنامه ریزی می کنم.	-.827	.125	.497	.248
من به طور منظم درک و استفاده از ساختارهای دستور زبان را در طول کارها بررسی می کنم.	-.863	.125	1.464	.248
پیشرفت خود را در یادگیری و استفاده از گرامر به صورت دوره ای ارزیابی می کنم.	-.597	.125	-.172	.248
برای به خاطر سپردن قواعد دستور زبان از کلمات اختصاری یا قافیه استفاده می کنم.	-.533	.125	-.177	.248
برای کمک به درک و به خاطر سپردن مفاهیم گرامری، تصاویر ذهنی یا نمودارهایی ایجاد می کنم.	-.809	.125	-.098	.248
من قواعد دستور زبان را به گروه هایی مانند زمان ها یا قسمت های گفتار دسته بندی می کنم.	-.769	.125	-.216	.248
از طریق فعالیت های گروهی با همسالان گرامر را مطالعه و تمرین می کنم.	-.592	.125	-.525	.248
قواعد دستور زبان را برای همکلاسی ها توضیح می دهم تا درک خود را تقویت کنم.	-.987	.125	.191	.248
از معلمان و همسالانم در مورد استفاده از دستور زبان بازخورد می خواهم.	-.884	.125	-.157	.248
من از تکنیک هایی مانند تنفس عمیق یا خودگویی مثبت برای کاهش اضطراب خود در مورد دستور زبان استفاده می کنم.	-.576	.125	-.694	.248
من اهداف شخصی تعیین می کنم و برای دستیابی به آنها به خودم پاداش می دهم تا در یادگیری گرامر با انگیزه بمانم.	-.718	.125	-.273	.248
با تشخیص پیشرفت خود در مهارت های گرامر، خود را تشویق می کنم.	-.328	.125	-1.124	.248
من از گرامر در زمینه های ارتباطی معنادار استفاده می کنم نه فقط تمرین های مجزا.	-.165	.125	-1.280	.248
در حین برقراری ارتباط خود را اصلاح می کنم یا اصلاحات دیگران را می پذیرم.	.126	.125	-.773	.248
من درگیر فعالیت های نقش آفرینی می شوم که نیاز به استفاده از ساختارهای دستور زبان خاصی دارد.	-.365	.125	-.597	.248
برای مطالعه گرامر از کتاب های درسی گرامر، کتاب های مرجع و منابع آنلاین استفاده می کنم.	-.705	.125	-.193	.248
من از مواد اضافی مانند برنامه های گرامر، فلش کارت ها و آزمون های آنلاین برای تمرین دستور زبان استفاده می کنم.	-.889	.125	.708	.248
من در کلاس های اضافی شرکت می کنم یا برای بهبود مهارت های دستور زبان از یک معلم کمک می خواهم.	-.417	.125	-.375	.248