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Investigating grammar learning strategies of Grade 9 English learners at Trieu Long Lower Secondary School, Quang Tri Province

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the grammar learning strategies used by Grade 9 English learners at Trieu Long Lower Secondary School, their practical applications, and the differences in strategy use between male and female students. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative data from 83 students (41 male, 42 female) via questionnaires and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 10 students. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, while thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data. The findings revealed that students used diverse grammar learning strategies, with a preference for affective, metacognitive, and cognitive strategies. Digital tools like websites and apps were commonly used, and collaborative learning was favored. Few significant gender differences in strategy use were found, with female students favored social strategies, whereas male students leaned more toward cognitive strategies. This study offers practical implications for enhancing grammar learning through improved grammar instruction, educational practices, and curriculum design.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Vietnamese government has prioritized improving English proficiency through initiatives like "Project 2020," which has been extended to 2025. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, especially in secondary education, where students in regions like Quang Tri struggle with English grammar due to ineffective learning strategies. Research shows that Language Learning Strategies (LLS) are crucial for second language acquisition, but Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS), essential for mastering grammar, remain under-researched. Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) are crucial for students to internalize grammar rules, improving both explicit and implicit knowledge. According to Pawlak (2018a), GLS include cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies. Cognitive strategies focus on practicing grammar rules, metacognitive strategies help with reflection and planning, and social-affective strategies, like peer feedback, boost motivation and reduce anxiety. Despite studies in various contexts, there is limited research on GLS in Vietnam, especially among secondary school students and in relation to gender. More research is needed to explore the impact of GLS on English language learning in these settings. This study aims to address the gap in research on Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) by examining how Grade 9 students at Trieu Long Lower Secondary School use these strategies in English grammar learning. There are two main research questions:

(1) What specific grammar learning strategies are used by Grade 9 English learners at Trieu Long Lower Secondary School and how are they used?

(2) How do grammar learning strategies differ between male and female Grade 9 students at Trieu Long

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Lower Secondary School?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

Language learning strategies (LLS) have been defined variously over time, with early definitions emphasizing techniques and behaviors learners use to acquire knowledge. Rubin (1975) described LLS as tools for acquiring language, while Stern (1983) saw them as observable approaches. Oxford (1990) expanded this by focusing on actions to make learning easier and more transferable, while O'Malley & Chamot (1990) highlighted the role of thoughts and behaviors in comprehension. Later definitions, like Griffiths (2018), emphasize choice, purpose, and active engagement, reflecting LLS's goal-oriented nature in language acquisition. Researchers have organized language learning strategies (LLS) into various taxonomies. Noticeably, Oxford's (1990) SILL further refined LLS, categorizing them under direct and indirect strategies linked to four language skills. Later, Cohen and Dörnyei (2002) condensed Oxford's categories, while Griffiths (2018) simplified LLS into cognitive and metacognitive groups, merging affective and social strategies. LLS are crucial for enhancing the language learning experience, making it "easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990). LLS foster communicative competence and encourage learner independence, preparing students to learn without constant guidance. Active use of LLS allows students to take control of their progress, solve learning challenges, and sequencing strategies to suit their unique needs.

2.2. Grammar Learning

Grammar knowledge consists of form (structure), meaning (semantic intent), and use (contextual application) (Pawlak, 2021). Ur (2024) refines this to form (syntax and morphology) and meaning, where syntax is sentence structure and morphology is word formation. Grammar learning can be explicit, which is faster but may promote passive learning, or implicit, which fosters active engagement but is more time-consuming. Krashen (1999) suggests implicit learning is more effective. Brown and Lee (2015) outline nine principles for teaching grammar, including balancing form, meaning, and use, integrating implicit and explicit feedback, and tailoring activities to individual learner needs.

2.3. Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS)

Grammar learning strategies (GLS) are conscious actions and thoughts used by learners to make language learning easier and more effective (Oxford et al., 2007). They involve deliberate strategies for mastering grammar structures (Cohen & Pinilla-Herrera, 2009) and align with instructional approaches, supporting both implicit learning with a focus on form and explicit, inductive or deductive learning (Pawlak, 2009).

Grammar learning strategies (GLS) taxonomies, like those from Pawlak (2013), Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2008), and Chen (2016), organize methods to support grammar acquisition. Pawlak's taxonomy, based on Oxford's (1990) SILL, includes metacognitive, affective, social, and cognitive strategies, focusing on planning, emotion management, collaboration, and mental processes. Mystkowska-Wiertelak adapts Oxford's six-category LLS model, covering memory, compensation, and more. Chen's taxonomy includes four main categories for identifying, retaining, planning, managing emotions, and applying grammar knowledge communicatively. This study adopts Pawlak's (2013) GLS taxonomy due to its extensive use in research, validation, and rigorous development process. Pawlak's taxonomy has been applied across diverse studies—such as Jaruteerapan (2022) in Thailand and Alnufaie and Alzahrani (2024) in Saudi Arabia—demonstrating its adaptability. Critiqued by Pawlak himself (2018b), this taxonomy was proven valid and reliable, showing strong correlations with Oxford's (1990) SILL. Additionally, Pawlak's GLS taxonomy is rooted in established LLS classifications, incorporating research-based principles for effective grammar learning strategies, making it a reliable choice over other taxonomies.

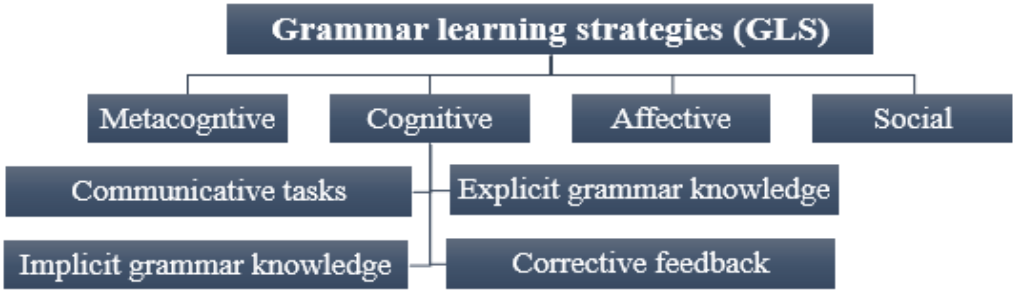

Figure 1. Grammar learning strategies inventory (Pawlak, 2013, p. 202).

Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) are crucial for developing both implicit and explicit grammar knowledge, supporting accurate grammar use and fluent communication. They involve cognitive strategies for understanding and social strategies for indirect learning through peer interaction. Strong grammar skills improve linguistic accuracy and communication. Research suggests gender influences GLS use, with females often using social and emotional strategies more than males, though some studies find no gender differences. Understanding these patterns helps teachers tailor support based on student preferences and cultural expectations.

2.4. Previous studies

Numerous studies have explored grammar learning strategies (GLS) using Pawlak's GLS Inventory (GLSI). Pawlak (2008) found advanced Polish students relied on cognitive strategies, while Pawlak (2012) showed higher GLS use in implicit contexts. Nguyen and Le (2021) reported affective strategies as most used among Vietnamese students. Studies by Jaruteerapan (2022) and Truong et al. (2022) observed high GLS use, especially social strategies, among students in Thailand and Vietnam. Cendoya (2022) and Hoang (2023) highlighted preferences for social and cognitive strategies, with gender differences observed by Fitri et al. (2023) and Mohamad et al. (2023) across different contexts. Overall, key findings highlight a strong link between strategy use and language proficiency, with social and cognitive strategies commonly favored. Gender differences often show females using metacognitive strategies more, enhancing grammar outcomes, while males lean toward cognitive strategies. Despite extensive research, gaps remain in grammar learning strategies (GLS) studies, particularly in Vietnam. Few studies examine GLS use among Vietnamese secondary students, though grammar mastery is vital for their communication. Additionally, little research has explored gender's impact on GLS in Vietnam. This study addresses these gaps by investigating GLS use and gender differences among Vietnamese secondary school students to enhance teaching practices.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research approach

This study adopts a mixed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Quantitative data identifies trends in strategy use, allowing for group comparisons, while qualitative interviews offer in-depth insights into students' experiences and motivations.

3.2. Research instruments

This study utilizes a questionnaire and semi-structured as instruments.

The questionnaire, adapted from Pawlak's GLS Inventory, categorizes strategies into cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social groups, offering systematic, comparable data on strategy use. Divided into different sections, it includes 3 personal information questions, 42 items rating strategy frequency, supplemented by open-ended questions for qualitative insights.

Table 1. Sections of the questionnaire

Sections	Description	Items
Personal information	Asks students about their gender, experience learning English, and circumstances of learning English	3
Grammar learning strategies	Asks students about their use of various grammar learning strategies involving metacognitive, cognitive, affective, and social strategies	42
Open ended questions	Asks students about comments or suggestions related to their use of grammar learning strategies	2

The interviews consisted of seven open-ended questions designed to encourage students to discuss their grammar learning strategies, including methods, tools, motivations, and challenges.

3.3. Participants

This participants of this study included 83 Grade 9 students at Trieu Long Primary and Secondary School, selected via Census Sampling to ensure comprehensive representation across genders and proficiency levels. These students were from two classes, 9A and 9B, with 41 male and 42 female students.

3.4. Data collection tool and data analysis

The study's data collection was carefully planned for reliability and alignment with research goals. The questionnaire was piloted with 10 students from the target group, yielding 10 valid cases and a high reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.8$), indicating it was ready for official use. The interview questions were reviewed and refined based on feedback from the supervisor to ensure clarity and improve the quality of the interviews.

In terms of the actual data collection, the questionnaire was administered during class, providing a familiar

setting that encouraged honest responses and minimized distractions. Interviews with 10 purposefully selected students offered qualitative insights, conducted in a private, comfortable room post-class to reduce anxiety. A semi-structured format allowed for in-depth exploration, with recordings securely stored for analysis, enhancing the validity and robustness of findings. For data analysis, this study employed both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS and T-tests, identifying significant GLS usage variations between male and female students. Results were visually presented through tables and charts, enhancing clarity. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying key patterns and themes.

Table 2. The reliability of the questionnaire

Number of participants	Number of items	Reliability (α)
83	42	α = .75

Table 2 indicated that the questionnaire's reliability coefficient achieved statistical reliability (α = .75), confirming its suitability for data collection.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Grammar learning strategies used by Grade 9 English learners at Trieu Long Lower Secondary School and their applications

Table 3. Students' use of metacognitive strategies

Item	Strategy	M	SD	%D	%N	%A
A1	I preview the grammar structures to be covered in a lesson	4.29	0.708	2%	4%	94%
A2	I pay attention to grammar structures when reading and listening	4.36	0.708	2%	2%	95%
A3	I try to find more effective ways of learning and practicing grammar	4.41	0.645	2%	1%	96%
A4	I have specific goals and objectives in learning grammar	4.33	0.683	2%	5%	93%
A5	I schedule grammar reviews in advance	4.47	0.770	2%	2%	95%
A6	I pay attention to grammar structures in my own speaking and writing	4.29	0.708	2%	4%	94%
	Overall	**4.36**	**0.704**	**2%**	**3%**	**95%**

Table 3 shows that most students frequently used metacognitive grammar learning strategies, with a mean score of 4.36 and 95% agreement. Key strategies included scheduling grammar reviews (mean: 4.47), finding effective learning methods (mean: 4.41), and focusing on grammatical structures while reading and listening (mean: 4.36).

Table 4. Students' use of cognitive strategies in communicative activities

Item	Strategy	M	SD	%D	%N	%A
B1.1	I try to use specific grammar structures in communication (e.g., telling a story).	3.49	1.119	16%	35%	49%
B1.2	I read for pleasure and watch films or/and television to improve my knowledge of grammar.	3.95	0.882	6%	19%	75%
B1.3	I notice (or remember) structures that cause me problems with meaning or communication.	3.37	1.021	17%	37%	46%
B1.4	I notice (or remember) structures that are repeated often in the text.	3.83	1.069	11%	23%	66%
B1.5	I notice (or remember) structures that are highlighted in a text by italics, bold-face, underlining, etc.	3.67	1.106	11%	31%	58%
B1.6	I pay attention to how more proficient people say and write things and then imitate to improve my English grammar.	3.83	1.057	8%	29%	63%
B1.7	I use Google or other search engines to see how a specific grammar structure is used in meaningful contexts.	3.99	1.018	7%	19%	73%
	Overall	**3.73**	**1.039**	**11%**	**28%**	**61%**

Table 4 reveals that Grade 9 students commonly use cognitive strategies for grammar learning, particularly via search engines (mean: 3.99) and media resources (mean: 3.95), with 73% and 75% usage respectively. Recognizing repeated structures (mean: 3.83) and observing grammar in proficient users (mean: 3.83) were also frequent. Over half noted they recognize highlighted structures (mean: 3.67).

Interviews supported these findings, with students citing books, YouTube, and movies as preferred tools for contextualized learning, enhancing understanding through diverse media and real-life examples.

"I usually learn grammar by reading books" (S2)

"I watch grammar videos on YouTube to better understand usage" (S5)

"I also self-study at home by watching instructional videos on YouTube" (S6)

"I also often read grammar books" (S8)

Table 5. Students' use of cognitive strategies to build explicit knowledge of grammar

Item	Strategy	M	SD	%D	%N	%A
B2.1	I pay attention to rules provided by the teacher or course book.	3.98	0.950	8%	17%	75%
B2.2	I try to understand every grammar rule.	3.81	0.993	8%	24%	68%
B2.3	I memorize rules about frequently used linguistic forms/structures (e.g., formation and use of the passive).	3.83	0.973	7%	21%	72%
B2.4	I memorize rules about how structures change their form (e.g., from an adjective to an adverb).	3.70	1.033	11%	29%	60%
B2.5	I mark new grammar structures visually (e.g., colors, underlining).	3.60	0.923	11%	37%	52%
B2.6	I remember grammar information by location on a page in a book.	3.51	1.130	17%	31%	52%
B2.7	I use a notebook/note cards for new rules and examples.	3.76	0.970	8%	25%	66%
B2.8	I review grammar lessons to remember the rules better.	4.14	0.885	6%	11%	83%
B2.9	I use grammar reference books, grammar sections of course books, or grammatical information in other references (e.g., grammar practice materials, dictionaries).	3.93	1.045	11%	18%	71%
B2.10	I use Vietnamese to understand and remember English grammar rules.	3.78	0.976	10%	28%	63%
B2.11	I try to discover grammar rules by analyzing examples.	3.69	0.974	10%	28%	63%
B2.12	I use electronic resources (e.g., English websites, corpora) to figure out rules.	3.73	1.138	12%	23%	65%
B2.13	I work with classmates to discover grammar rules.	3.67	0.989	11%	30%	59%
B2.14	I memorize whole phrases containing specific language forms.	3.72	0.915	8%	30%	62%
	Overall	**3.78**	**0.992**	**10%**	**25%**	**65%**

Table 5 shows that students varied in their use of cognitive strategies to build explicit grammar knowledge, with an overall mean score of 3.78 and 65% agreement. Common strategies included reviewing grammar lessons (mean: 4.14), using reference materials (mean: 3.93), and memorizing rules. Additionally, students frequently utilized notebooks, electronic resources, and Vietnamese translations for understanding rules, while some relied on visual aids.

Interviews highlighted students' use of digital tools like Duolingo, Grammarly, and websites, as well as traditional resources like dictionaries and forums for independent grammar practice.

"I use grammar learning applications on my phone" (S2)

"I use grammar learning apps like Duolingo and Grammarly…These tools help improve grammar skills effectively and easily…I search for learning materials online" (S3)

"I use Cambridge books and dictionaries, English learning applications such as Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary" (S5)

"I also often visit websites like British Council and Cambridge English to do exercises and test my knowledge…I search for lectures and examples online to solve my own problems" (S10)

Table 6. Students' use of cognitive strategies to develop subconscious knowledge of grammar

Item	Strategy	M	SD	%D	%N	%A
B3.1	I repeat the rules and examples to myself or rewrite them many times.	4.24	0.726	2%	10%	88%
B3.2	I do many exercises to practice grammar (e.g., paraphrasing, translation, multiple-choice).	4.39	0.794	2%	5%	93%
B3.3	I use newly learnt rules to create new sentences (e.g., to write about my plans).	4.30	0.711	2%	4%	94%
B3.4	I notice (or remember) a structure which, when I encounter it, causes me to do something like check a box, choose a drawing, or underline a structure.	4.39	0.713	2%	2%	95%
B3.5	I listen to and read texts containing many examples of a grammar structure.	4.33	0.751	2%	6%	92%
	Overall	**4.33**	**0.739**	**2%**	**5%**	**92%**

Table 6 shows that most students use cognitive strategies to develop subconscious grammar knowledge, with a high mean score of 4.33 and 92% agreement. Popular strategies include recalling structures (mean: 4.39), doing exercises (mean: 4.39), creating new sentences with learned rules (mean: 4.30), and engaging with grammar in texts (mean: 4.33).

Interviews with students highlighted exercises and writing activities—like diaries and paragraphs—as effective practices for reinforcing grammar rules in personal contexts.

Table 7. Students' use of cognitive strategies in handling corrective feedback

Item	Strategy	M	SD	%D	%N	%A
B4.1	I listen carefully for any feedback the teacher gives me about the structures I use.	4.35	0.706	1%	6%	93%
B4.2	I pay attention to teacher correction when I do grammar exercises and try to repeat the correct version.	4.42	0.646	1%	5%	94%
B4.3	I try to notice and self-correct my mistakes when practicing grammar.	4.31	0.748	1%	10%	89%
Overall		**4.36**	**0.700**	**1%**	**7%**	**92%**

Table 7 shows that most students frequently use cognitive strategies to handle corrective feedback, with a mean of 4.36 and 92% agreement. The top strategies included paying attention to teacher corrections and repeating correct usage (mean: 4.42), listening carefully to feedback (mean: 4.35), and recognizing and correcting their own mistakes (mean: 4.31).

Table 8. Students' use of affective strategies

Item	Strategy	M	SD	%D	%N	%A
C1	I try to relax and not worry when I have problems understanding or using grammar structures.	4.30	0.761	2%	7%	90%
C2	I encourage myself to practice grammar when I know I have problems with a structure	4.35	0.772	2%	4%	94%
C3	I try to use grammar structures even when I am not sure they are correct.	4.45	0.720	2%	2%	95%
Overall		**4.37**	**0.751**	**2%**	**4%**	**93%**

Table 8 shows that affective strategies were widely used, with an overall mean of 4.37 and 93% agreement. Most students employed strategies like using structures despite uncertainty (mean: 4.45), self-motivating for challenging grammar (mean: 4.35), and relaxing when struggling (mean: 4.30).

Table 9. Students' use of social strategies

Item	Strategy	M	SD	%D	%N	%A
D1	I ask the teacher to repeat or explain a grammar point if I do not understand.	4.18	0.939	6%	11%	83%
D2	I ask the teacher or more proficient learners to help me with grammar structures.	4.13	0.880	5%	11%	84%
D3	I like to be corrected when I make mistakes using grammar structures.	4.13	1.057	10%	6%	84%
D4	I practice grammar structures with other students.	4.10	0.932	6%	13%	81%
Overall		**4.14**	**0.952**	**7%**	**10%**	**83%**

Table 9 shows that social strategies are widely used, with an overall mean of 4.14 and 83% agreement among students. Key strategies include asking teachers or peers for help (mean: 4.13), seeking corrections (mean: 4.13), and requesting grammar explanations (mean: 4.18).

Interview feedback supports this, highlighting students' trust in teachers and the use of extra classes for additional grammar practice. Moreover, many students also engage in study groups and English clubs for peer support, with most preferring collaborative learning. Family and friends provide crucial encouragement, enhancing motivation and resilience in grammar studies.

Table 10 shows that affective strategies were the most commonly used by students, with a mean of 3.37. Metacognitive and cognitive (corrective feedback) strategies were equally popular, both scoring a mean of 4.36. Cognitive strategies for communication activities, though used by fewer students, maintained a fairly high mean of 3.73.

Table 10. Overview of students' use of grammar learning strategies

Category	N	Items	M	SD
Metacognitive strategies	83	6	4.36	0.704
Cognitive strategies (Communicative activities)	83	7	3.73	1.039
Cognitive strategies (Explicit knowledge)	83	14	3.78	0.992
Cognitive strategies (Subconscious knowledge)	83	5	4.33	0.739
Cognitive strategies (Corrective feedback)	83	3	4.36	0.700
Affective strategies	83	3	4.37	0.751
Social strategies	83	4	4.14	0.952

4.2. The differences between grammar learning strategies used by male and female Grade 9 students at Trieu Long Lower Secondary School

Table 11. Independent samples t-test (gender grouping) of the use of metacognitive strategies

Item	Female mean	Male mean	Mean difference	p-value
A1	4.26	4.32	-0.06	0.725
A2	4.45	4.27	0.18	0.239
A3	4.40	4.41	-0.01	0.945
A4	4.24	4.41	-0.17	0.241
A5	4.48	4.46	0.02	0.940
A6	4.31	4.27	0.04	0.793

The independent samples t-test with gender as the grouping variable revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the use of metacognitive strategies between male and female students. The mean differences ranged from 0.01 to 0.18 with none of the strategies having p-values lower than 0.05.

Table 12. Independent samples t-test (gender grouping) of the use of cognitive strategies in communicative activities

Item	Female mean	Male mean	Mean difference	p-value
B1.1	3.67	3.32	0.35	0.156
B1.2	4.00	3.90	0.10	0.617
B1.3	3.5	3.24	0.26	0.256
B1.4	3.95	3.71	0.24	0.299
B1.5	3.74	3.61	0.13	0.600
B1.6	3.88	3.78	0.10	0.668
B1.7	4.02	3.95	0.07	0.748

Table 12 shows no statistically significant gender differences in using cognitive strategies for communicative activities, with p-values above 0.05. However, slightly more female students employed these strategies than male students.

Table 13. Independent samples t-test of the use of cognitive strategies to build explicit knowledge of grammar

Item	Female mean	Male mean	Mean difference	p-value
B2.1	4.10	3.85	0.25	0.249
B2.2	3.93	3.68	0.25	0.263
B2.3	3.95	3.71	0.24	0.254
B2.4	3.83	3.56	0.27	0.232
B2.5	3.79	3.41	0.38	0.067
B2.6	3.60	3.41	0.19	0.470
B2.7	3.83	3.68	0.15	0.483
B2.8	4.26	4.02	0.24	0.224
B2.9	4.14	3.71	0.43	0.057
B2.10	3.83	3.73	0.10	0.638
B2.11	3.74	3.63	0.11	0.630
B2.12	3.98	3.49	0.49	0.050
B2.13	3.83	3.51	0.32	0.140
B2.14	3.81	3.63	0.18	0.386

Table 13 indicates minor gender differences in using cognitive strategies for explicit grammar knowledge. However, item B2.12 shows significantly more female students using electronic resources (p = 0.050). Items B2.9 and B2.5 were nearly significant, with more females using grammar reference materials and visually highlighting structures.

Table 14. Independent samples t-test of the use of cognitive strategies to develop subconscious knowledge of grammar

Item	Female mean	Male mean	Mean difference	p-value
B3.1	4.33	4.15	0.18	0.243
B3.2	4.60	4.17	0.43	0.014
B3.3	4.33	4.27	0.06	0.680
B3.4	4.45	4.32	0.13	0.391
B3.5	4.43	4.22	0.21	0.207

Table 14 shows minor differences in cognitive strategies for explicit knowledge, with item B3.2 being statistically significant, indicating that female students practiced grammar exercises more than males. Overall, females used cognitive strategies slightly more than males, as reflected in higher mean values.

Table 15. Independent samples t-test of the use of cognitive strategies in handling corrective feedback

Item	Female mean	Male mean	Mean difference	p-value
B4.1	4.45	4.24	0.21	0.180
B4.2	4.60	4.24	0.36	0.012
B4.3	4.40	4.22	0.18	0.262
B4.4	4.45	4.24	0.21	0.180

Table 15 shows similar use of cognitive strategies for corrective feedback between genders, with only item B4.2 (p = 0.012) indicating that female students more frequently repeated corrected grammar. Overall, females had slightly higher mean values, reflecting marginally greater strategy use.

Table 16. Independent samples t-test (gender grouping) of the use of affective strategies

Item	Female mean	Male mean	Mean difference	p-value
C1	4.21	4.39	0.18	0.295
C2	4.38	4.32	0.06	0.709
C3	4.55	4.34	0.21	0.194

The t-test showed no significant gender differences in affective strategy use. However, males were slightly more likely to stay calm with challenging grammar, while females more often encouraged themselves to practice and used grammar structures despite uncertainty.

Table 17. Independent samples t-test (gender grouping) of the use of social strategies

Item	Female mean	Male mean	Mean difference	p-value
D1	4.24	4.12	0.12	0.576
D2	4.26	4.00	0.26	0.177
D3	4.05	4.22	0.17	0.462
D4	4.17	4.02	0.15	0.490

Table 17 shows no significant gender differences in social strategy use, though males preferred correction for grammar mistakes, while females favored other social strategies.

5. DISCUSSION

In term of the grammar learning strategies used by Grade 9 English learners and their applications, the findings showed that Grade 9 students used various grammar learning strategies, similar to previous studies by Jaruteerapan (2022), Pawlak (2012), and Syafryadin et al. (2022). The most common strategies were affective, metacognitive, and cognitive (corrective feedback). Many students employed affective strategies, showing resilience and confidence, which was also found in Nguyen and Le's (2021) study on Vietnamese students, though Hoang (2023) and Cendoya (2022) observed limited affective strategy use among their participants. Metacognitive strategies were widely used, with students focusing on goal setting, planning, and reflecting on their grammar learning. This trend aligns with Syafryadin et al. (2022), Hoang (2023), and Alnufaie and Alzahrani (2024), though other studies, including Jaruteerapan (2022) and Pawlak (2008),

reported lower metacognitive use. The students' proactive approach to corrective feedback also demonstrated high engagement, as they actively listened to teacher feedback and self-corrected. Cognitive strategies, frequently used across studies (Alnufaie & Alzahrani, 2024; Cendoya, 2022; Truong et al., 2022), were common in this sample, particularly for developing subconscious grammar knowledge. Students practiced grammar through exercises, writing, and exposure to new structures, indicating their active learning approach. In communicative activities, they preferred watching videos and using digital tools like Duolingo, which supported grammar in context, though fewer students employed these communicative strategies. Social strategies were widely used, with students seeking support from teachers and peers and preferring collaborative learning environments, similar to findings in Cendoya (2022) and Mohamad et al. (2023). Many students joined English clubs and study groups, highlighting a preference for interactive learning that encourages shared knowledge and motivation. While the study primarily involved secondary students, similar trends in cognitive and social strategies were observed across university contexts. However, the use of affective and metacognitive strategies varied by context, emphasizing the need for educators to adapt strategies to specific learning environments. Regarding the differences between grammar learning strategies used by male and female Grade 9 students, the findings showed minor gender differences. Female students more frequently used electronic resources, practiced various exercises, paid attention to teacher corrections, and repeated correct answers, while male students stayed calmer when struggling with grammar. Overall, strategy use was similar across genders, aligning with Mulugeta and Bayou (2019) but contrasting with other studies, supporting the idea that gender impacts GLS differently across settings.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings from this study provide insight into the grammar learning strategies used by Grade 9 English learners at Trieu Long Lower Secondary School, their practical applications, and the differences in strategy use between male and female students. Specifically, it was found that the students generally used a variety of grammar learning strategies. Affective, metacognitive, and cognitive strategies (subconscious knowledge) were most prominent, while cognitive strategies (communicative activities) were used least – yet still by the majority of the students. The interview results revealed the students' use of digital technology, including websites, language learning applications, and online videos. Moreover, a clear preference for collaborative learning was discovered. In addition, there were very few significant differences between grammar learning strategies used by male and female students. Of all the strategies explored in this study, female students used only three strategies more than male students, while male students used one strategy more than female students.

This study provides practical implications to enhance grammar learning at Trieu Long Lower Secondary School, focusing on educational practice, curriculum design, and teacher training. Teachers can boost grammar learning by integrating technology, promoting self-management, increasing social interactions, and creating a supportive environment. Curriculum adjustments should emphasize technology, student interaction, diverse materials, and flexible learning plans. For teacher training, programs should cover digital tools, classroom management, and the latest grammar strategies, with opportunities for teachers to exchange ideas and refine their practices.

Due to the limited context at a single school, the findings may not be generalizable to other schools, particularly in varied educational contexts. Moreover, the use of questionnaires and interviews might introduce biases due to time constraints, as students could respond in socially acceptable ways or misremember strategies. Limited access to resources also influenced students' strategy choices. Future research should expand to multiple schools, use diverse data methods (e.g., observations), compare different regions, and explore links between strategies and learning outcomes for broader insights.

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Nghiên cứu chiến lược học ngữ pháp của học sinh học tiếng Anh lớp 9 tại Trường Trung học cơ sở Triệu Long, tỉnh Quảng Trị

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TÓM TẮT

Nghiên cứu này khảo sát các chiến lược học ngữ pháp được học sinh học tiếng Anh lớp 9 tại Trường Trung học cơ sở Triệu Long sử dụng, các ứng dụng thực tế của chúng, và những khác biệt trong việc sử dụng chiến lược giữa học sinh nam và học sinh nữ. Nghiên cứu áp dụng phương pháp hỗn hợp, kết hợp dữ liệu định lượng thu thập từ 83 học sinh (41 nam, 42 nữ) qua bảng câu hỏi và dữ liệu định tính từ các cuộc phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc với 10 học sinh. Dữ liệu định lượng được phân tích bằng phần mềm SPSS, trong khi dữ liệu định tính được xử lý bằng phương pháp phân tích theo chủ đề. Kết quả cho thấy học sinh sử dụng đa dạng các chiến lược học ngữ pháp, trong đó có sự ưu tiên dành cho các chiến lược tình cảm, siêu nhận thức, và nhận thức. Các công cụ kỹ thuật số như trang web và ứng dụng được sử dụng phổ biến, và việc học hợp tác cũng được ưa chuộng. Nghiên cứu tìm thấy ít sự khác biệt đáng kể về giới tính trong việc sử dụng chiến lược, khi học sinh nữ ưu tiên các chiến lược xã hội, trong khi học sinh nam nghiêng nhiều hơn về các chiến lược nhận thức. Nghiên cứu này đưa ra những hàm ý thực tiễn nhằm nâng cao việc học ngữ pháp thông qua việc cải thiện phương pháp giảng dạy ngữ pháp, các hoạt động giáo dục, và thiết kế chương trình học.