



## Social Learning Strategies of Indonesian University Learners of English as L2: A Mixed-Method Study

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**Abstract:** The present study was conducted to find the extent of the use of social learning strategies (SLS) by Indonesian learners of English as a second/foreign language (L2) from non-English departments. This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-method design. 125 learners participated in the survey and six participants in the interviews. From descriptive statistics, the study found that generally, learners' use of SLS was at a high level. The majority reported they practised English with their peers, asked their teachers for help and corrections, and ask people to slow their speech down or repeat it if they did not get what was said. From the Thematic Analysis of the interview data, the study found that watching videos and quizzes in L2 classes encouraged learners to ask questions and do relevant discussions with peers. Also, learners mostly asked their peers questions when facing difficulties in L2 vocabulary and pronunciation. Implications included designing activities promoting psychologically safe environments in L2 classes where learners can use their SLS more optimally. Limitations are acknowledged and possible relevant future studies are suggested.



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## INTRODUCTION

Learning a language as a second/foreign language (L2) is challenging for learners. To cope with the possible challenges of L2 learning, learners employ various learning strategies (Božinović & Sindik, 2017). Those strategies will act as tools to help them and affect the efficiency of their L2 learning (Božinović & Sindik, 2017). Learning strategy is defined as techniques or approaches used by learners to increase their progress in advancing L2 skills (Gerami & Baighlou, 2011; Green & Oxford, 1995). Among several types of strategies, social learning strategies (SLS) may be one of the strategies most frequently used in the L2 context. SLS are strategies learners employ when they become active participants in class through asking questions, cooperating with others, and emphasising with others (Oxford, 1990).

A quantitative study involving 61 Japanese university learners on learning strategies was conducted by (Gagne & Oda, 2022). The study was intended to investigate why some Japanese learners succeeded whilst others failed to achieve the goal of communicative

competence in English. They investigated several types of learning strategies. In terms of SLS, the study reported that learners rarely asked their teachers or friends to slow down their speech even if they did not understand it. They also rarely asked their English teachers to correct them when they were talking in English and rarely practised English with their friends. These findings suggested the generally low use of SLS among Japanese learner participants.

Studies on SLS have also been conducted in Indonesia (Ajeng, 2017; Budiarti, 2022; Daflizar et al., 2022; Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020). A case study by Ajeng (2017) reported that male learners used SLS more than their female counterparts. A recent quantitative study by Budiarti (2022) involved 99 high school learners of English and investigated the use of several learning strategies by learners. Regarding SLS, the study reported that it was the second most frequently used strategy by learners after metacognitive. The study found that participants quite frequently asked their English teacher to correct them when they were talking in English and asked their English teachers to help them when they had difficulties. Nevertheless, the study also reported that most of the participants did not ask questions in English. Another recent quantitative study was conducted by Daflizar et al. (2022) at the university level. The study intended to contemplate language learning strategies and the autonomy of 76 university learner participants. Regarding SLS, the study reported that the participants were generally medium users of SLS. The participants often asked their friends to slow down or repeat certain sentences when they did not understand and rarely asked English teachers to help them in learning English. These findings were in line with an earlier quantitative study involving 76 university learners (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020). Additionally, Lestari and Wahyudin (2020) also reported that the participants frequently practised their English with their friends. A slightly similar finding was later reported in the subsequent study by Budiarti (2022).

The use of SLS is not constrained to language skills, but also language systems such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. A quantitative study was conducted by Božinović and Sindik (2017) involving 201 L2 learners of German, Spanish, French and Italian in Croatia. The study found that most of the participants did not practice with their friends to memorise new grammar forms, indicating generally low SLS. In comparison, a study by Al Haq (2020) in Saudi Arabia reported that 60% of the high school learner participants preferred to study grammar rules without the help of others, suggesting that they rarely interacted with their friends while studying grammar rules. Pronunciation also seems to be a spectre for some L2 learners. Studies in Saudi Arabia (Ahmed, 2017) and Ukraine (Kuzmytska, 2021) suggested that learners had pronunciation difficulties. 119 of 186 participants in the study reported that they considered group work during the lesson as the most preferable activity to improve their English pronunciation. A recent study in Indonesia also reported that L2 learners at a tourism faculty lacked not only English pronunciation but also vocabulary (Antara & Anggreni, 2022). The participants improved their vocabulary and pronunciation by practising with their family and people smarter than them, suggesting the uses of SLS. Interestingly, a quantitative study by Al Zahrani (2022) in Saudi Arabia reported that 52.40% of the participants chose to ask their friends, whilst only 33.30 % of participants chose to ask their teachers when they faced difficulties concerning English vocabulary. This finding may indicate that learners had a certain degree of preference as to whom they liked

to communicate with when they encountered difficulties in learning. In this case, peers were more favoured than teachers.

Furthermore, several studies suggested environments that may be supportive of more interactions in L2 classes. A classroom action research in an Indonesian high school context by Al Karim et al. (2022) concluded that teachers should make an enjoyable atmosphere during instructional activities to motivate learners to be brave in expressing their ideas. In a Saudi Arabian university context, Al Haq (2020) found that learners' L2 interaction with each other in English was unsatisfactory. The study attributed this finding to the highly teacher-centred technique in L2 classes and the overwhelming uses of Arabic, learners' first language (L1), in L2 classes. Furthermore, in a general education context, a qualitative study by Li and Campbell (2008) involving 22 Asian learners studying at universities in New Zealand found that the participants highly valued group discussions where they could interact with peers and improve their English-language skills, among others. In line with that, a qualitative study by Agustina (2022) in Indonesia also reported that using collaborative learning when working on a task could enhance learners' interaction and facilitate them to help each other to finish language tasks.

Despite the possible contributions of the aforementioned studies in the field of learning strategies, L2 interactions, and other relevant fields, there seems to be a need to conduct another study on SLS in an Indonesian context. Previous studies on learning strategies, including SLS, in Indonesia involved university learners from English departments (Ajeng, 2017; Daflizar et al., 2022; Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020; Nurliana, 2020), at least a study involved Senior High School learners (Budiarti, 2022). To the best of our knowledge, a study investigating the SLS of Indonesian L2 learners from non-English departments may be scarce, if not non-existent. Several studies suggested that teaching English to learners from non-English departments posed challenges (Shah et al., 2013; Subekti, 2020; Sulistiyo, 2016), for example, lack of motivation and passiveness in class, thus the lack of L2 interactions initiated by learners. Besides, conducting a study which could involve many participants potentially produce data that can be used as an eagle-eyed picture of the phenomenon which can be further investigated in connection with other relevant fields in L2 learning. Furthermore, an exploration of possible factors to SLS can also be worthwhile considering that non-English department learners were relatively under-researched concerning the SLS field.

With the aforementioned rationales, the present study intends to answer the following research questions. First, to what extent do the learners use social learning strategies in the classroom? Second, what are the possible factors that cause the learners' use of social learning strategies?

## **METHODS**

## Research Design

The present study employed a sequential mixed-methods design where a quantitative method was conducted and was followed with a qualitative method (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The use of mixed-methods design in the field in the Indonesian context is, to the best of our knowledge, quite limited. Several studies were conducted solely quantitatively (Budiarti, 2022; Daflizar et al., 2022) and qualitatively (Ajeng, 2017). The use of mixed methods offers several benefits. For example, the study would not depend on a single method or approach (Migiro & Magangi, 2011) and could utilize the results of the quantitative analysis to better inform researchers before collecting qualitative data, for instance through interviews (Pardede, 2019). To answer the first research question on the extent of the use of SLS, a survey method was employed. Then, to answer the second research question on factors contributing to learners' use of SLS, in-depth semi-structured interviews were employed.

## Research Instruments

For the survey method, six Likert-scale questionnaire items on SLS were used. Items 1 up to 5 were adapted from the work of Oxford (1990), whilst item 6 was adapted from that of Božinović and Sindik (2017). For each item, four possible responses were available, "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Disagree", and "Strongly disagree". An example of the statement is "I ask for help from my English teachers." The distributed version was in Indonesian, with which language the participants were proficient to ensure they understood the contents and increase the participation rate. Before the distribution, the original English version of the questionnaire items was translated into Indonesian and the results were back-translated into English. That was to ensure that the Indonesian translation did not differ in meaning from the original statements. Furthermore, for a better presentation of results and more thorough analyses, in this report, these six questionnaire items were divided into two categories: "collaborating with friends to improve English mastery" (items 3 and 6) and "getting help from English teachers or friends when facing difficulty in learning" (items 1, 2, 4, and 5). Furthermore, for the semi-structured interviews, an interview checklist was used. The checklist consisted of several main questions on factors possibly contributing to learners' SLS, for example, "What is your view on interactions in English class? There are lots of activities in class, what kind of activities do you think are beneficial for your learning?"

## Research Participants

The participants of this study were 125 learners taking General English (GE) classes at a private university in Java, Indonesia. This study employed a convenience sampling method where it collected data from readily available groups of potential participants (Gray, 2014). Of 125 learners participating in this study, 51 (41.8%) were males and 74 (59.2%) were females. The minimum age was 16 and the maximum was 24 ( $SD=1.12$ ). 80 learner participants (64%) indicated their willingness to be invited for possible follow-up interviews, indicating fairly high enthusiasm of the participants in participating in this study. Of these 80 participants, based on the level of the SLS obtained from the survey, six participants were

invited for semi-structured interviews. Two were from High SLS, two from medium SLS, and the other two from Low SLS.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The study adhered to the ethical principles of autonomy, and confidentiality. Autonomy is the participants' power to make rational decisions about whether to participate in a study (Gray, 2014). In this study, a consent form for the quantitative phase was provided in the online survey before the participants filled out the main questionnaire. It detailed the purposes of the study, the researchers, as well as the rights and responsibilities of the participants. In the interview phase, such information was disclosed informally through a chat platform before interviews were conducted. Those who agreed to participate would proceed to be interviewed. Furthermore, the second principle was confidentiality. Researchers must not report the participants' real names (Israel & Hay, 2006). In this study, pseudonyms were used throughout the report to replace the interview participants' real names.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The quantitative data collection phase started on 2 February 2022 until 3 March 2022. The survey was conducted online by distributing a Google Form questionnaire. The link was shared with the target participants by the teachers of the GE classes. The questionnaire set consisted of the consent form, demographic questionnaire, and questionnaire on SLS. The results of the survey were then recorded in SPSS 25 in numerical forms. The participants' responses to the Likert-scale items were recorded as follows. "Strongly Agree" were recorded as five points, "Agree" as four points, "Disagree" as two points, and "Strongly Disagree" as one point. To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics were employed. The results are presented in the form of mean scores, standard deviations, and percentages.

From the descriptive data of variable computation on the participants' SLS, the participants could be categorised into Low SLS, Medium SLS, and High SLS. The SLS questionnaire had six items, each of which had a value is 1 up to 5. Hence, the maximum possible SLS was 30 points. 1 up to 12 points indicated Low SLS (suggesting "Strongly disagree" and "Disagree" tendencies). 13 up to 21 points indicated Medium SLS (suggesting "Disagree" and "Agree" tendencies). 22 up to 30 points indicated high SLS (suggesting "Agree" and "Strongly agree" tendencies). Based on these data, six participants who previously indicated a willingness to be interviewed were invited for semi-structured interviews. Of these six, two had high SLS, two had Medium SLS, and the other two had Low SLS.

The interviews were conducted in Indonesian from 29 March 2022, until 31 March 2022 via the *Zoom* and *Google Meet* platform. The interviews were recorded and the data were fully transcribed, translated into English and analysed using Thematic Analysis. First, the transcripts were annotated per the research question. Different annotations with similar ideas were merged into the same themes. After that, the themes were reviewed to ensure that they were not too diverse and that sufficient data were available to support them (Braun & Clarke, 2017). The next step was to define the themes and make the report (Braun &

Clarke, 2017). Verbatim excerpts best representing the themes were used in this report to better capture learners' dynamics and experiences concerning the themes. The sequence of data collection and analysis can be seen in Figure 1.

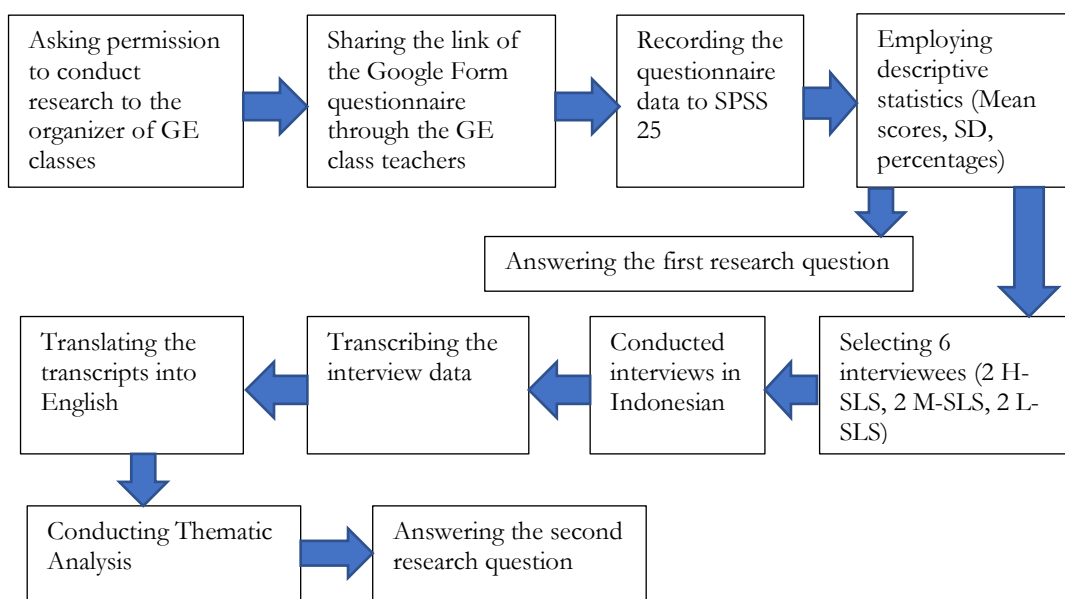


Figure 1. Order of Data Collection and Analysis

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Learner participants' use of social learning strategies

The six items of the questionnaire on SLS produced .73 Cronbach's alpha coefficient and .74 McDonald's omega coefficient, indicating high reliability. With each item having four possible responses equal to one point up to five points, the composite SLS scores of the participants would range from six points up to 30 points. In this respect, the study found that the mean score of the total SLS was 23.44, with the highest SLS being 30 and the minimum being 11 ( $SD = 3.60$ ). The mean score of 23.44 suggested that the average mean score of each item was 3.91 from the range of 1 up to 5, suggesting that generally, learners' use of SLS was quite high, as measured with the six items in the questionnaire.

As explained in Method, to facilitate easier data presentation, the questionnaire on SLS was categorised into two categories, "collaborating with friends to improve English mastery" and "getting help from English teachers or friends when facing difficulty in learning." The detailed results in the first category can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Collaborating with friends to improve English mastery

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Means Score	Std. Deviation
3. I practice English with other students.					
25.6%	62.4%	10.4%	1.6%	4.00	.91
6. I practice with my friends to memorise new grammar forms.					
15.2%	58.4%	24.8%	1.6%	3.61	1.07

As seen in Table 1, item 3 “I practice English with other students” produced a mean score of 4.00 where 110 participants (88%) expressed their agreement. This result was in line with the result of several quantitative studies employing the same item (Budiarti, 2022; Gagne & Oda, 2022). Budiarti (2022) in Indonesia found a mean score of 3.28 whilst Gagne and Oda (2022) in Japan found a mean score of 3.11, indicating a relatively high social strategy. These slightly similar results may indicate similarity among Japanese and Indonesian learners where they practised English with their friends. This may suggest the importance of activities in groups in L2 classes where learners can practice the language with their friends. A previous qualitative study by Li and Campbell (2008) found that activities in groups played an essential role in learning because in such activities learners could ask questions to their more able peers and could learn from them.

Questionnaire item 6 "I practice with my friends to memorise new grammar forms" produced a mean score of 3.61 where 92 participants (73.6%) expressed their agreement. This result was different from the result of a previous quantitative study by Božinović and Sindik (2017) in Croatia. Božinović and Sindik (2017) found a mean score of 1.98 for the exact item, indicating lower SLS. The difference may perhaps be caused by two factors, learners' different degrees of willingness to help each other and individual learners' learning styles. First, classes promoting collaboration may also stimulate learners to have more willingness to help each other in their learning process. However, when it comes to memorising grammar rules, learners may have different preferences. Some may like to do it individually whilst others may like to have their friends test their grammar knowledge.

Next, the detailed results in the second category, “getting help from English teachers or friends when facing difficulty in learning”, can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. Getting help from English teachers or friends when facing difficulty in learning**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Means Score	Std. Deviation
1. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.					
48.0%	47.2%	4.8%	0%	4.38	.73
2. I ask my English teachers to correct me when I talk					
36.0%	58.4%	4.8%	8%	4.24	.76
4. I ask for help from my English teachers.					
20.8%	63.2%	14.4%	1.6%	3.87	.96
5. I ask questions in English.					
7.2%	56.0%	36.8%	0%	3.34	1.06

As seen in Table 2, item 1 “If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again” produced a mean score of 4.38 ( $SD=.73$ ), where 119 learners (95.2%) expressed their agreement. This result was in line with the result of several previous quantitative studies involving Indonesian high school learners (Budiarti, 2022) and university learners (Daflizar et al., 2022) using the same item. Budiarti (2022) reported a mean score of 3.63 whilst Daflizar et al. (2022) reported a mean score of 3.87, indicating a relatively high SLS. The similarity may indicate that Indonesian L2 learners of English, at high school and university levels, had a quite high initiative of asking the other person to slow down or repeat what has been said if they have not got the message. These findings can be very promising in the way that learners were willing to put more effort into interacting with others to optimise their understanding rather than just keeping silent despite their confusion.

Furthermore, item 2 “I ask English teachers to correct me when I talk” produced a mean score of 4.24 ( $SD=.76$ ), with 118 participants (94.45%) expressing their agreement. This finding was different from those of previous quantitative studies in Indonesia (Daflizar et al., 2022) and Japan (Gagne & Oda, 2022) using the exact item. Daflizar et al. (2022) found a mean score of 2.55 whilst Gagne and Oda (2022) found a mean score of 2.52, indicating lower SLS. The differences may be attributed to several factors. First, participants in the present studies might have a more advanced level of proficiency. Gerami and Baighlou (2011) found that successful L2 learners preferred to use social strategy more than less successful L2 learners. Second, the participants in the previous studies (Daflizar et al., 2022; Gagne & Oda, 2022) might be reluctant to ask their English teachers because of certain teachers' attributes such as perceived strictness or because of them being passive learners. Daflizar et al. (2022) found that the majority of the learner participants in their study rarely or never made suggestions to the teachers. This may give some kind of support that learners' passiveness could be attributed to lower SLS. In comparison, learners' courage to ask their teachers to correct them in the present study may be attributed to an enjoyable class atmosphere. Al Karim et al. (2022) stated that an enjoyable atmosphere during class instruction can motivate learners to be brave in expressing their ideas.

Item 4 “I ask for help from my English teachers” produced a mean score of 3.87 ( $SD=.96$ ), where 105 participants (84%) expressed their agreement. This was in line with the findings of studies by Budiarti (2022) in Indonesia as well as Gagne and Oda (2022) in Japan. They also reported relatively high SLS related to learners' willingness to ask other people for help in their learning. Interestingly, this finding was different from those reported in other previous studies in Indonesian university contexts (Daflizar et al., 2022; Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020). They reported learners' low SLS regarding their willingness to ask English speakers, including their teachers, for help. Regarding this, a good relationship between the teachers and learners could make learners less anxious and make them more courageous to ask for help when they face difficulty in learning (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020). However, considering studies involving university learners in Indonesia seemed to produce inconclusive findings, further studies contemplating this specific issue may be necessary.

Furthermore, item 5 “I ask questions in English” produced a mean score of 3.34 ( $SD=1.06$ ). 79 participants (63.2%) expressed their agreement. A previous study using the same item reported a mean score of 3.05, suggesting moderate-high SLS (Lestari &



Wahyudin, 2020), slightly similar to the finding of this study. However, the relatively high standard deviation in the present study may suggest that the participants' responses may be quite diverse and dispersed across four possible responses in the questionnaire item. 46 participants (36.8%) did not ask questions in English. This was in line with the finding of a previous study by Al Haq (2020) in Saudi Arabia. Al Haq (2020) found that learners' interaction with each other in English was unsatisfactory. The similarity suggested that Indonesian and Saudi Arabia participants did not use English to communicate with each other as often as they should have. This may be because participants in both studies did not use English in daily communication. An earlier study by Abu-ghararah (2014) reported that 80% of the participants expressed their agreement on teachers' or learners' use of Arabic (learners' first language) in English classes, suggesting the minimum use of English even in classroom contexts.

### **The possible contributing factors of learners' use of social learning strategies**

The pseudonyms of the six interview participants were Bima (Male/M), Rudi (M), Ardi (M), Rika (Female/F), Ema (F), and Aldo (M). The study found two themes and these can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3. The Factors of Learners' Uses of Social Learning Strategies**

<b>Theme 1</b>	Quizzes and teachers' instructions to watch videos encouraged students to ask questions and do relevant discussions.
<b>Theme 2</b>	Unfamiliar vocabulary and difficulty in pronouncing certain words stimulated learners to ask questions to their friends.

#### ***Theme 1. Quizzes and teachers' instructions to watch videos encouraged learners to ask questions and do relevant discussions.***

Four participants admitted that they asked questions related to the instructions and even discussed the materials in the videos or quizzes. Regarding this, Bima reported:

*If we are given materials by the teacher, you will continue to watch them. If I do not understand, (you) just ask and if the teacher asks a question, I always answer (it) even if the answer is wrong. (Bima/M)*

Similar to Bima, Rudi admitted that he asked questions about the materials and instructions and tried his best to ask questions in English. He reported:

*...when I am confused about the materials and the instructions... since the instruction is in English, I ask in Indonesian. Sometimes I try my best to ask questions in English even though I am not good at English. (Rudi/M)*

Furthermore, Ardi also reported that group collaborations helped them with their work on quizzes. Ardi stated:

*...with group collaboration, the quiz is easier to do so we can share the tasks of each group member. ...So, it's easier for the task to be done since we can exchange thoughts and ideas. (Ardi/M)*

Rika also admitted that she discussed tasks with her friends. She reported:

*When we discuss (a task), for example, we make one paragraph in English. Then, we will discuss that with friends. In English, (for example) it is like (identifying) the subject or predicate of a sentence. Now, that is what we will discuss. (Rika/Female)*

This finding suggested that teachers' instructions to watch videos and do quizzes encouraged learners to ask questions related to the materials or instructions. A quantitative study by Kurniawati (2022) in Indonesia also found that the 23 participants in the study tended to ask questions since they were confirming their understanding. Furthermore, 22 participants tended to ask questions since they were asking the teacher to repeat their explanations. These findings can be approached in two different ways. First, the slightly similar findings of both studies may indicate that Indonesian learners exerted themselves to comprehend materials in their L2 classes and generally perform well in class. However, what should be taken with caution is whether learners did so for the sake of L2 learning or merely to pass the class. Several studies suggested that L2 learners from the non-English department were not very motivated (Subekti, 2020; Sulistiyo, 2016) and were concerned more with passing English classes than actually levelling up their proficiency (Shah et al., 2013). Teachers could design class instruction in such a way that learners' SLS was directed more on levelling up their proficiency rather than merely completing a specific task. For example, instead of asking learners to work on a big project where they heavily discuss the project in their first language, it could be better to design small group activities where each of them could use their L2 as long and intensively as possible in a psychologically safe environment.

***Theme 2. Unfamiliar vocabulary and difficulty in pronouncing certain words stimulated learners to ask questions to their friends.***

It was found that participants asked their friends questions when they were having difficulty pronouncing certain words. Ema reported:

*When we are active (in asking or answering), it means that we understand the materials that the teacher conveys ... Sometimes when there is a quiz from the teacher, I have difficulty responding or asking questions since my speaking skill is not very good. Even though I have difficulty (speaking) I keep answering and asking questions by asking friends for help. It is like before I ask or answer, I ask my friends for help on how certain words are pronounced. (Ema/F)*

Similarly, Ardi admitted that when he did not know the meaning of some new words he asked his friends or teacher to correct his pronunciation. He reported:

*... I say the words to my friends or teacher ... Later, the teacher or friends will comment on what I say, whether it is correct or not, and then (if there is a mistake) it will be corrected by them. (Ardi/M)*

Aldo also admitted that he experienced the same situation where his friends helped him by informing him of the meaning of certain words and asked him to explain the meaning of those words. He reported:

*...most of my friends sometimes remind me what these words are and what their meanings are. Then, we have to write those difficult or new words. They ask me to explain the meaning (to check if my understanding is correct). (Aldo/M)*

As seen from the excerpts, when learners faced difficulty in pronunciation and vocabulary, they asked their friends and teachers for help. A study involving tourism faculty learners in Indonesia also reported that learners tried to improve their pronunciation by practising with family or more able people around them (Antara & Anggreni, 2022). A previous study by Kuzmytska (2021) in Ukraine also found that 79% of participants were having poor English pronunciation. The study also reported that 119 participants out of 186 in total considered group work the most preferred form of activity to improve English pronunciation. A recent quantitative study by Al Zahrani (2022) in Saudi Arabia found that 52.40% of participants asked their classmates whilst only 33.30% of participants chose to ask their teachers when they had difficulty in L2 classes. The previous studies (Al Zahrani, 2022; Kuzmytska, 2021) and the present study suggested that learners generally preferred asking questions to friends rather than to their teachers if they have difficulties in learning. They may feel afraid to ask teachers questions because there were too many people in the classroom that would likely listen to their questions. A strategy worthwhile implementing could be for teachers to move around whilst learners do small group activities. In such situations, learners may likely be braver to ask questions which may not otherwise be done (Agustina, 2022; Subekti, 2019).

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study has several implications. A conducive class atmosphere encourages interaction of both learners to learners and learners to teachers. This can be achieved in numerous ways, for example, through being friendly and supportive teachers, designing activities promoting more learners' talk, and avoiding too much whole-class interaction, which could hinder learners from asking questions out of possible embarrassment. Furthermore, learners' mastery of L2 vocabulary and pronunciation should be improved. Hence teachers could provide activities allowing learners to learn new words and practice

pronunciations in less tense environments where they can freely use their SLS at their disposal.

At least two possible limitations can be identified. Because this study was conducted in a single and limited setting, a private university, the results of the survey may not be generalised. However, with a careful comparison of participants sharing approximately the same characteristics, a certain degree of replication could be expected. Next, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the GE classes were conducted online at the time of the data collection. This, to a certain extent, may influence the participants' responses on the survey and in the interviews. The online mode may intuitively influence learners' interactions with fellow learners and their teachers either positively or negatively. This factor was not accounted for in the present study, hence becoming a limitation.

Furthermore, possible relevant future studies can be suggested. First, conducting a qualitative study in an on-site L2 instruction where the uses of SLS are directly observed can be strategic. From the observation data, follow-up interviews can be conducted to see the explanations of the observable behaviours from learners' viewpoints. Secondly, conducting a quantitative study comparing the SLS of university and high school learners of English may also be important. Finally, the qualitative findings of this study regarding factors which stimulated learners to use SLS may become a topic for future researchers to investigate further.

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