

become more independent, autonomous, lifelong learners. Yet students are not always aware of the power of consciously using L2 learning strategies for making learning quicker and more effective (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). Skilled teachers help their students develop an awareness of learning strategies and enable them to use a wider range of appropriate strategies. When left to their own devices and if not encouraged by the teacher or forced by the lesson to use a certain set of strategies, students typically use learning strategies that reflect their basic learning styles (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford, 1996a, 1996b). However, teachers can actively help students "stretch" their learning styles by trying out some strategies that are outside of their primary style preferences and this can happen through instruction. Furthermore, the teacher can encourage and assist students in applying the strategies to an expanded range of language activities and materials so that the strategies are transferred to new activities and are used by students independently of the teacher's support.

To sum up, the findings of this study have pedagogical implications for material development and testing instruction. As a matter of fact, learners of English as a foreign language should learn to recognize the strategies they are using and to select the most appropriate techniques for different tasks. Moreover, teachers should become more aware of the learning strategies and styles that their students are (and are not) using so that teachers can develop teaching styles and strategies that are compatible with their students' way of learning.

It can be argued that students need more explicitly training and enough practice in using Memory, Metacognitive and Affective strategies. Preferably, the teachers could integrate the instruction and/or teaching of these less frequently used strategies into daily teaching so that they could provide learners a systematic opportunity to be exposed to strategy

instruction unconsciously since strategy use has been frequently documented contributing to the success of second language learning.

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Conclusion

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study. The first point deserving attention is related to the use of strategies as reported by the learners. Students differ as language learners in part because of differences in ability, motivation, or effort; but a major difference lies in their knowledge about and skill in using "how to learn" techniques, that is, learning strategies. Learning strategies instruction shows students that their success or lack of it in the language classroom is due to the way they go about learning rather than to forces beyond their control. Most students can learn how to use strategies more effectively; when they do so, they become more self-reliant.

As for the relationship between levels of strategy use and proficiency, the study indicates significant levels of association for all categories of strategies except for social strategies. The low reported use of social strategies by high proficiency level students can be attributed to this fact that either they were possibly unaware of how to apply these strategies or they prefer competition rather than cooperation.

However the study does raise questions about the effectiveness of this method of investigating the relationship between strategy use and proficiency level: firstly, there is the problem of attempting to establish a direction of causality within the relationship; analyzing this relationship using the SILL and proficiency scores alone does not provide enough information in this respect, because it does not measure the effect of one factor on the other over a period of time. Secondly, strategy use as reported by the SILL alone does not give a full picture of what these strategies represent for the students.

Finally, from the results it can be concluded that there is acceptable association between teachers' explicit advice for employing strategies in an

appropriate context and students' use of these strategies. Therefore, it seems that skilled teachers in the area of strategy instruction can help their students develop an awareness of learning strategies and enable them to use a wider range of appropriate strategies.

Suggestions for Further Research

The present project was an attempt to answer some questions related to the strategy use among Iranian pre-university students. The following variables were involved in the present project affecting the use of language learning strategies: proficiency level (Upper intermediate vs. Lower intermediate) and teachers' advice or awareness on language learning strategies. Any change in one of the variables influencing strategy use like different in sex, style, motivation, aptitude or proficiency in all language skills is likely to lead to different results. To consider as many variables as possible will enable language teachers and researchers to draw a more accurate, and global picture of what is happening to an individual when he/she learns a foreign language. In fact, the effect of personally factors on the use of L2 learning strategies is a topic referred to by Ellis (1994).

In this study the SILL questionnaire was used as an instrument for measuring language learning strategy. Other types of data collection tools, (e.g., diaries, interviews, think aloud,) or a combination of them can be used in further research.

Finally, using the new instrument revised by Rae Lan, Kay Moon and Oxford (2004, -TBISI) Teachers Beliefs Inventory for strategy Instruction, a new field will be opened in the study strategy instruction. In other words the results of such a study can give a picture of teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward language learning strategies.

Implications and Suggestions

Learning strategies can enable students to

The more interesting fact about the results was that some items of the least and the most frequently reported strategies by the students were among those which were advised, as the most or the least strategies, by the teachers. To give some examples, it can be referred to some strategies like writing notes, messages, letters or report in English and learning about the culture of English speakers which are used by the learners as well as the teachers less frequently. Perhaps it is due to the lack of encourage or training, or because they are not advised by their teachers as much as needed. On the other hand repeating or asking for clarification is the most frequently strategies advised by the teachers and, perhaps consequently, employed by the learners. The justification for this similarity can be those which were mentioned earlier as the foreign language situation, the content of the textbooks and the evaluation system which can affect the choice of strategies.

However the overall mean scores of the strategies advised by the teachers are higher than the mean scores used by the students. And there are some items which are advised by the teachers but they are not considered by the students. The researchers' experience as an English teacher and teachers' expressions subjected to the present study show that most of the Iranian EFL teachers are not aware of language learning strategies, and they did not have any training to implement strategy instruction in their teaching. In fact, they claimed that they have advised those strategies that they themselves had used as an EFL learners. The researcher could not find any study on the teachers' awareness on language learning strategies in Iran. However, contacting some researchers in this field through internet, Rae Lan, Kay Moon and Oxford (2004) reported that they had carried out a research with 145 in- service language male and female teachers in distant regions in Lithuania. A semi-structured interview and TBISI (Teachers Beliefs

Inventory for Strategy Instruction) used as the main instrument to identify the categories and sets of the strategies applied by the research participants in their own language learning. The analysis of the questionnaire revealed that 69% of the respondents were unaware about language strategies, 19% knew the term but never or seldom referred to learning strategy concept during their language teaching. Only 12% admitted the conscious use of strategies.

The difference between teachers' advice and students' using of language learning strategies is significant for three out of the six categories of strategies proposed by Oxford (1990). In other words, although the teachers reported that they have advised the students to use the aforementioned strategies, it seems that the students have not considered them efficiently.

Strategies	Teachers		Students		t	P
	Mean	St.dev	Mean	St.dev		
Memory	2.90	.453	2.70	.488	1.98	.050
Cognitive	3.13	.371	2.65	.509	4.71	.000
Compensation	3.12	.638	2.64	.695	3.4	.001
Metacognitive	3.44	.927	3.19	.647	1.38	.175
Affective	2.58	.799	2.67	.698	.610	.543
Social	3.02	.818	2.43	.538	3.87	.000

Table 3, The comparison of the strategies advised by the teachers and strategies used

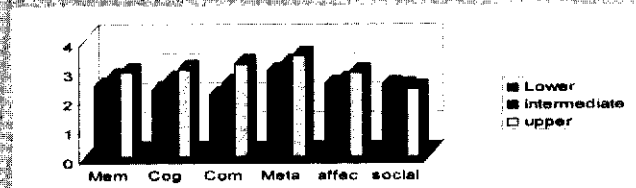
According to the findings, the value of observed t for cognitive, compensation and social strategies is significant at $P < .05$. Therefore, there is a difference in using the mentioned strategies between the teachers and the students who participated in the study. In other words, student's use of language learning strategies for memory, metacognitive and affective strategies is not significantly different from their teachers' advice for using the mentioned strategies as they reported.

A comparison of the mean scores of the strategies used by three groups of students is reported in table 1.

effective language learners. She noted that both groups use learning strategies, but effective language learners use appropriate strategies and meet their goal, whereas less effective students use strategies less frequently and are less expert in their choice and use.

P	F	Upper intermediate		Intermediate		Lower intermediate		STRATEGIES
		St.dv	Mean	St.dv	Mean	St.dv	Mean	
.000	8.5	.346	2.91	.368	2.74	.625	2.44	Memory
.000	19.4	.47	3.0	.391	2.66	.501	2.30	Cognitive
.00	20.59	.78	3.18	.499	2.53	.566	2.23	Compensation
.002	6.42	.628	3.48	.609	3.18	.572	2.92	Metacognitive
.064	2.85	.796	2.89	.628	2.6	.638	2.47	Affective
.626	.471	.430	2.33	.577	2.4	.589	2.46	Social

Table 1. (ANOVA) A comparison of the mean scores of the strategies used by three groups of students



The teachers advise learner to employ language learning strategies at a medium level rather than a high level. Metacognitive strategies with the highest mean are in top followed by cognitive and compensation strategies, memory strategies stand in third place followed by affective and social strategies. Interestingly, except for cognitive and compensation strategies all the other categories are ranked in the same order as upper intermediate students' reports for employing strategies. This similarity can be a support for this fact that students behave differently in similar language learning situation. In other words, learners with lower proficiency need much more repetition and explicit training than high proficient learners.

An important issue was to investigate whether language learning strategy use was related to language proficiency. Although high proficiency level students has significantly higher mean scores for most of the six strategies categories than low level students. Only, the use of social strategies ($p < .325$) did not approach a significant level which may be argued that the content of the textbooks and the lack of a sense of empathy and cooperation between the pre-university students put no place for using the social strategies. It is interesting that the highest mean score for both groups belongs to metacognitive strategies. While compensation strategies are the least frequently reported strategies used by lower intermediate, it has the highest scores after metacognitive strategies for upper intermediate. It is plausible (if we see proficiency affecting strategy use) that the learners with lower levels of proficiency may not have the confidence or base of language knowledge to make informed guesses or make up new words.

To sum up, comparing the mean scores of language learning strategies employed by upper intermediate and lower intermediate may support Chamot (2005) who compared effective and less

Strategies	Mean	St.Dv	T	N
Metacognitive	3.49	.927	2.64	30
Cognitive	3.13	.371	1.93	30
Compensation	3.13	.638	1.90	30
Memory	2.90	.451	-1.16	30
Affective	2.58	.769	-2.86	30
Social	2.48	.818	.186	30

Table 2. The mean of the strategies for each category advised by the teachers

EFL learning which is consistent with the other strategy studies in Iran employing Oxford's SILL (version 7.0), such as the study of 192 university students with different majors by Akbari (2001), Zareie's (2004) study on college EFL learners and the study of 150 third year students university English majors by Chavoshi (2004). In all three cases, the overall strategy use reported on the medium range. In this study Iranian pre university students reported metacognitive strategies with the greatest frequency, as indicated by the mean score ($M=3.19$ on the 1-5 scale). Metacognitive strategies involve exercising "executive control" over one's language learning through planning, monitoring, and evaluating. They are techniques that are used for organizing, planning, focusing and evaluating one's learning. In general, these strategies help learners to gain control over their emotions and motivations related to language learning through self-monitoring. The high use of Metacognitive strategies among Iranian pre university students is similar to that observed among students from Asian countries like Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan as reported in some of the studies on Asian students (e.g., Sheorey, 1998; Oxford et al., 1990).

In this study, the lowest mean belongs to the social strategies ($M=2.43$). Politzer and McGroarty (1985) and Oxford and Chamot (2001) discovered that students from Asian background preferred rote learning and language rules as opposed to more communicative strategies. Perhaps the findings of this study will support this claim that Asian students generally resist using participation in social interaction as a means to learn their second or foreign language. It can be argued that apart of learners' personal characteristics, EFL learning situation, textbooks and the system of education and evaluation does not foster in the students a sense of independence,

discovery and cooperation. In addition, they do not have a sense of empathy in language learning. As Oxford(1990) suggests: empathy is essential to successful communication in any language and social strategies can help all learners increase their ability to empathize by developing cultural understanding and becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings and trying to understand the other person's relation to that culture. Social strategies and compensation strategies are the least strategies reported by the students perhaps because they have not had training in using these strategies. As a matter of fact, they are not active in learning a language since they do not know about compensation strategies that is usually termed as communication or production strategies by (Bialystok., 1990; Tarone, 1981) which are activated to cover gaps in the learners' L2 competence and keep the flow of communication going. They should be trained for strategies such as coining words, switching to mother tongue, or using mime or gestures. Besides, they are not aware of cooperative learning, instead they prefer to learn their foreign language individually and through transferring, writing or repeating the words several times.

For discussing the six least or most frequent strategies reported by the subjects, the researchers believe that the use of some individual strategies could be attributed to culture and educational system in Iran where the students have very limited opportunities to use functional practice strategies, watching English language TV shows or going to movies spoken in English, and even insufficient sources to learn about their foreign language culture and so on. Moreover, students are more concerned with passing exams and responding to their teachers' expectations or questions that are directly related to the content in their prescribed textbooks.

authentic passages selected from the internet or other original English texts. In fact, in Iran, the focus and the emphasis in pre-university level is on reading comprehension and all the other selected activities and tasks are in the service of reading. So it seems that the students are put in the same context for reporting their use of the strategies indicated in the questionnaire.

In order to investigate the extent that the teachers advise their students to use language learning strategies, 30 female teachers took part in the study. All of them had university degrees (BA and MA) in language teaching and almost all of them were teaching English in pre-university level. Moreover, they had more than five years experience in teaching.

Instrument and Procedures

In order to divide the students into three level of proficiency, a chosen revised version standard NELSON test was administered to the one hundred subjects assigned for the study. It included 60 multiple choice tests for measuring the general knowledge of the participants in an intermediate level.

To collect data on both teachers' and students' awareness of language learning strategies, the Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, version 7.0 for EFL/ESL) was used. The SILL questionnaire is a reliable and valid questionnaire and appears to be one of the language learning strategy questionnaires that has been extensively checked for its reliability. It consists of fifty items and, according to Oxford (1990) it is designed to collect data on the following six categories of learning strategy:

1. Memory strategies: used for better storage and retrieval of information (items 1-9),
2. Cognitive strategies: used for manipulating and transforming the target language (items 10-23),

3. Compensation strategies: used to make up for limitations in language knowledge necessary for communication (items 24-29),
4. Metacognitive strategies: used to control the learners' own cognition (items 30-38),
5. Affective strategies: related to the learner's attitudes and feelings (items 39-44),
6. Social strategies: employed in communication with other people (items 45-50),

For the sake of ease of understanding and accuracy of data, the questionnaire was translated into Persian learners' mother tongue, and to avoid any ambiguity, it was checked by a number of English and literature expertise and teachers.

There were five options for the answers, ranging from "never true about me" to "always true about me". The minimum score for each item was one and the maximum score was five. The questionnaire administration took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

In order to investigate the extent to which the English teachers advise their students to use the strategies, the same questionnaire was used and the form of items was a little modified so as to be appropriate for the study (e.g. instead of "I use rhymes to remember new English words", teachers questionnaires contained items with "I advise students to use rhymes to remember new English words"). The teachers completed the questionnaire within twenty minutes. For the content validity, the modified questionnaire was studied and checked by the supervisor and two language specialists.

Discussion

With regard to the first research question, to what extent do pre-university students use learning strategies as reported by themselves, the statistical analysis of the results revealed that although the subjects of this study reportedly used all strategy categories, they were medium strategy users in

investigated. NELSON test for intermediate proficiency level was administered among 100 pre-university students. According to the results, the students with more or less than half standard deviation above the mean were regarded as upper and lower intermediate groups. Using Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, 1990 Version 7.0), the researchers investigated EFL learning strategy use among the subjects of the study. To investigate the extent of teachers' perception of language learning strategies 30 teachers participated in the study. The results of the statistical analysis indicated that the subjects of the study reportedly used all strategy categories in the medium range; it was found that there is categories (Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective) out of six, teachers advise all direct and indirect strategies, and there is much similarity in mean scores between teachers and high proficient students and finally there was difference between teachers' advice and students' reported use of three categories of Memory, Metacognitive and Affective strategies.

Key Words: learning strategies (Memory, Metacognitive, Compensation, Affective, Cognitive), proficiency.

Introduction

The benefits of language learning strategies awareness and ability to use them in learning and communication activities have been pointed out by a great number of researchers in the field of ESL and EFL acquisition. According to Oxford (1990), learning strategies are "steps taken by the students to enhance their own learning". Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active and self-directed involvement which is essential for developing communicative competence. Therefore, appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence.

According to Oxford (1990), language learning strategies will make the language learning easier, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations and allow learners to become more independent. Moreover, it seems that at least some of the teachers in Iran are not quite familiar with the strategies which could lead to the learners' use of strategies either.

Therefore, considering the importance of the use of strategies in language learning and the teacher's new function as "helper, consultant, adviser and coordinator" (Oxford, 1990), this

study attempts to investigate the following points:

1. To what extent do pre-university students use learning strategies as reported by the students?
2. Is there any relationship between students' proficiency level and their reported use of language learning strategies?
3. To what extent do English teachers advise their students to use language learning strategies?
4. Is there any relationship between teachers' advice and students' reported use of language learning strategies?

Methodology

The subjects are of two groups: students and teachers. In order to investigate the extent of language learning strategy use, among a pool of more than 600 pre-university students, one hundred students who were taking their English course, participated in the present study. They were all girls with the age range of 17-18. To control the effect of major on using language learning strategies, among Humanities, Math and Science the three main orientations in the Iranian high school education system, all the subjects assigned to the study were from the Science group. The emphasis of the pre-university English textbook is on reading comprehension which includes

چکیده

راهبردهای مؤثر در یادگیری، برای بیشتر متخصصان آموزش انگلیسی به عنوان یک زبان خارجی، مفهومی کاملاً آشناست. تحقیق حاضر به منظور بررسی میزان استفاده‌ی دانش‌آموزان ایرانی دوره‌ی پیش دانشگاهی از راهبردهای یادگیری زبان و ارتباط آن با میزان سطح مهارت دانش‌آموزان انجام شده است. علاوه بر این، میزان توصیه و تأکید معلمان در به کارگیری این راهبردها و تفاوت بین توصیه معلمان و استفاده دانش‌آموزان از این راهبردهای مؤثر در یادگیری، از اهداف تحقیق بوده است.

برای تعیین سطح مهارت دانش‌آموزان پیش دانشگاهی، «آزمون استاندارد نلسون» برای سطح متوسط، بین ۱۰۰ تن از آنان اجرا شد و دانش‌آموزان به سه گروه متوسط، بالاتر از متوسط و پایین‌تر از متوسط تقسیم شدند. سپس با استفاده از یک پرسش‌نامه‌ی استاندارد، میزان استفاده‌ی دانش‌آموزان از راهبردهای مؤثر تعیین شد و به منظور بررسی میزان تأکید معلمان در مورد استفاده از راهبردها و ارتباط آن با استفاده‌ی دانش‌آموزان از این راهبردها، پرسش‌نامه‌ای براساس مقیاس لیکرت تنظیم شد و مورد استفاده قرار گرفت.

طبی نتایج حاصل، دانش‌آموزان مورد مطالعه در حد متوسط از این راهبردها استفاده می‌کردند. هم‌چنین، ارتباط معناداری بین سطح معلومات دانش‌آموزان و استفاده از راهبردهای یادگیری زبان مشاهده شد. معلمان حاضر در این تحقیق، اکثر این راهبردها را توصیه می‌کردند و البته تفاوت معناداری بین میزان تأکید معلمان و استفاده‌ی دانش‌آموزان در به کارگیری راهبردهای

دستی، فرآیندآیی و تأثیری با احساسی مشاهده شد.

کلیدواژه‌ها: یادگیری راهبردهای یادگیری، مهارت‌های زبانی

Language Learning Strategies among Pre-University Students

between their students,

Abstract

The concept of learning strategies has become quite familiar to most professionals in teaching English as a foreign language. The present study was carried out with the intention of investigating the extent that Iranian pre university students use strategies as they self report through the SILL questionnaire, the relationship between their proficiency and the use of language learning strategies. Besides, the extent that pre-university teachers advise their students to use language learning strategies and finally the difference between teachers' advice and students' use of language learning strategies were

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