



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

Language Learning Strategies for Language Learners

KEY WORDS:

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ABSTRACT This paper aims at emphasizing the importance of language learning strategies in learning language. It summarized the background of language learning strategies concept, definitions and taxonomy of language learning strategies proposed by several researchers. It also reveals the factors affecting language learning strategies in learning a language.

Introduction

There has been a gradual but significant shift within the field of language learning and teaching over the last twenty years with greater emphasis being put on learner and learning rather than on teacher and teaching. This change has been reflected in various ways in long. One consequence of this shift was an increasing awareness and interest in resources for learning style and language, learning strategy in foreign and second language teaching and learning. Research into language learning strategies began in the 1960s. Particularly, development in cognitive psychology influenced much of the research done on language learning strategies. In most the research on language learning strategy, the primary concern has been on identifying what good language learning do to learn a second or foreign language like general learning Strategies English language learning strategies include those techniques that learners use to remember what they have learnt their storage and retrieval of new information. Language learning strategies also include receptive Strategies which deal with receiving the message and productive Strategies which relate to communication.

Researches investigations shown that all the language learners use language learning strategies of some kind; however the frequency and variety of use vary between different learners and depend on a number of variables. In general, it is agreed the use of language learning strategies is positively related to language proficiency or achievement. It appears that good language learners orchestrate and combine their use of particular types of Strategies in effective ways. Learning strategies are sensitive to the learning context and to the learner's internal processing preferences and there is relationship between the frequent use of language learning strategies and achievement in long. In such situation there is claim that use of language learning strategies help the learners to retrieve and store material and facilitate their learning. Investigations involving long. learners often showed that the most successful learners tended to use i.e. Strategies that are suitable to the task, material, self-objective, needs, motivation and stage of learning. Good learner, according to them, can find their own way by taking charge of their learning, organizing their language information and making their own opportunities for practicing using the language. In addition, they use linguistic knowledge and contextual used to help them in comprehension while learning a second foreign language.

Definition of Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies are optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language". According to Rubin, J. "Learning strategies are those which contribute to the development of the language system that the learner constructs and affects learning directly".

Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Learning strategies that language learners employ in the process of learning a new language have been identified and described by the researchers. Consequently, these strategies have been classified by many professional experts in the area of language learning. O'Malley et al. (1985) divided language learning strategies into

three main categories:

Metacognitive Strategies

O'Malley et al. (1985) state that metacognitive is an expression to indicate an executive function, strategies which involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, observing of one's production or comprehension, correcting your own mistakes, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed.

Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, and inference are among the most important cognitive strategies.

Socio-affective Strategies

Socio-affective strategies have close relationship with social-mediated activity and interacting with others. The main socio-affective strategies include cooperation and question for clarification .

Rubin's (1987) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Rubin, who allocated a great deal of effort in the field of language learning strategies, made a distinction between strategies contributing directly to learning and those contributing indirectly to learning. Direct strategies include meta cognitive and cognitive strategies and indirect strategies include communicative and social strategies. According to Rubin, there are three types of strategies used by learners that contribute either directly or indirectly to language learning.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies which are divided into two main types (Cognitive Learning Strategies and Meta cognitive Strategies) contribute directly to the development of the language system created by the language learner. Cognitive strategies refer to the steps or measures which are taken in learning or problem-solving that involves direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Six major cognitive learning strategies contributing directly to language learning are identified by Rubin as: Clarification / Verification, Guessing, Inductive Inferring. Deductive Reasoning, Practice, Memorization, Monitoring.

Communication Strategies

Communication strategies are not as much of directly related to language learning since their emphasis is on the process of communication through conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended. Communication strategies are exploited by speakers when they are faced with some troubles regarding their communication and conversation or when confronted with misunderstanding by a co-speaker.

Social Strategies

Social strategies are activities in which learners are exposed to the opportunities that can be a great help to practice their knowledge. Even though these strategies offer exposure to the target language, they contribute to learning indirectly since they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language. Oxford gathered a large number of LLS and, on the basis of factor analyses, she divided them into six groups.

1. Cognitive strategies are mental strategies the learner uses to make sense of learning. They enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways. When manipulating cognitive strategies, the learner is involved in practicing, receiving and sending messages, reasoning, analyzing, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structures), practicing in naturalistic settings, and practising structures and sounds formally.

2. Metacognitive strategies are essential for the learner to plan, monitor and evaluate learning. They are employed for managing the learning process. Learners are required to centre, arrange, plan and evaluate their learning.

3. Memory-related strategies are used for storage of information. They help learners link one second or foreign languages item or concept with another but do not necessarily involve deep understanding. Learners are to be given the chance for linking mental images, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action.

4. Compensatory strategies help the learner make up for missing knowledge. Examples of such strategies include guessing from the context in listening and reading, using synonyms and "talking around" the missing word to aid speaking and writing and strictly for speaking, and using gestures or pause words.

5. Affective strategies are concerned with the learner's emotional needs such as identifying one's mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, rewarding oneself for good performance, and using deep breathing or positive self-talk.

6. Social strategies help the learner work with others and understand the target culture. They lead to more interaction with the target language through cooperating with others, empathizing with others, asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task, talking with a native-speaking conversation partner, and exploring cultural and social norms.

Factors Affecting Language Learning Strategies

Although talking about factors influencing strategy choice may complicate the situation staged by variably defined and systematized learning strategies, it is still necessary to do this, since the learning we are discussing about does not take place in a vacuum or lab, where variables are minimized or in control. Even the strategies employed by classroom learners, whose learning setting does not allow too much operation of social functions and real life situations, are more or less influenced by a range of inner and outer factors.

Learner factors

What learners think about language learning may affect the way they go about doing it. Learners are found by to hold at least these two different beliefs about language learning: some believe 'learning' language is very important, as a result, they often resort to cognitive strategies, whereas others regarding 'using' language as significant pay more attention to communicative strategies.

Situational and Social Factors

While individual learner differences lead to some variance in strategy use, some situational factors may also be causes. Studies of classroom learners indicate that social strategies are rarely practiced, as opposed to cognitive and metacognitive strategies which have been aware of and focused on in the same setting to a larger degree.

Academic factor

Although not as potent a factor as those described above, academic major might be another source of variety in strategy use

for language learning. By means of questionnaires and tests, it was found that arts majors outperform sciences majors in overall proficiency of English, but have a slightly lower level of vocabulary size than the science majors do.

Cultural background

Cultural factor is too broad and complex a factor to be dealt with, within which quite a lot of aspects could lead to the variety of strategy use. In my teaching context, it is clearly felt that the strategies deployed by Chinese learners differ considerably from those widely advocated in western EFL literatures. In a classroom setting, for instance, Chinese learners rely more on note-taking strategy and ask teachers more frequently for repetition, paraphrasing, examples and explanation.

Conclusion

As it was mentioned before, early research studies on language learning strategies put more emphasis on identifying strategic behaviors and characteristics of "the good language learner", while more recent studies have tried to illuminate taxonomies of language learning strategies and classify strategies which are employed by language learners in the process of language learning. In this regard, language instructors need to incorporate language learning strategies into their teaching methods and approaches, train the students to apply the appropriate strategy for a specific purpose or a specific skill area, and encourage them to use the strategies as frequently as possible. Students can learn to use language learning strategies to improve their language skills.

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