

استخدامات استراتيجيات التعليم لدى الطلبة الدارسين للغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على استراتيجيات التعلم التي يستخدمها^٢ الطلاب العرب في المدارس الثانوية عندما يكتسبون مهام تعلم اللغة ولاسيما أثناء تعلم ألفاظ اللغة الإنجليزية والقواعد والسمع والتحدث والقراءة والكتابة. وتشتمل عينة الدراسة على ٢٢٨ طالباً من مختلف مستويات الأداء في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. وكان المتوسط العمري للطلاب هو ١٦:٨٧ والانحراف المعياري هو = ٠,٨٢٠. ولقد تم جمع معلومات الدراسة عن طريق استبانة التقرير الذاتي للتعرف على الاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمها الطلاب أثناء تعلمهم للغة الإنجليزية واستخدام الإحصاء الوصفي في تحليل المعلومات. ولقد أظهرت النتائج أنه يوجد تباين في استخدام استراتيجيات التعلم بين الطلاب أثناء اكتسابهم مهام تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. كما تشير الدراسة إلى الاستراتيجيات الأكثر تكراراً بين الطلاب في جميع مستويات الأداء في اللغة الإنجليزية هي التفصيل، والمصادر العلمية، والتمثيل السمعي. ولقد أوضحت النتائج أن الاستراتيجيات الوجدانية الاجتماعية تستخدم في اكتساب قليل من مهام تعلم اللغة. على أي حال فإن هذه الدراسة قد ارتكزت فقط حول التعرف على الاستراتيجيات المعرفية والاستراتيجيات الوجدانية الاجتماعية بيد أن التعرف على الاستراتيجيات المعرفية القبلية بقيت لكي تستكشف مستقبلاً.

THE LEARNING STRATEGY USES OF EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The study reported in this article examined the learning strategies used by secondary school Arab students in acquiring language tasks, especially, English vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Subjects included were 228 students of different levels of English proficiency with a mean age of 16.87 (SD. = 0.82). The data were collected through a self-reporting questionnaire to identify the strategy uses that students applied while learning the target language. Analysis of the data involved descriptive statistics. The results indicated that a wide variety of learning strategies were used in acquiring English language tasks. The study shows that overall, elaboration, resourcing and auditory representation were the most frequently used strategies by students at all levels of English proficiency. The results suggest that socioaffective strategies are applicable to few learning tasks. However, since the data reported in this study are centered around cognitive and socio-affective strategies, identification of metacognitive strategies remained to be explored.

INTRODUCTION

Recent research works in the field of second/foreign language acquisition have focused on learning strategies (Brown, 1991; Cohen, 1990; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto, 1989; Oxford, 1989; Chaudron, 1988; and Wenden and Rubin, 1987). Learning strategies are broadly defined as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge" (Rubin, 1975: 43). The significance of learning strategies include: facilitating learning and teaching of simple or complex tasks, gaining command over a foreign language skill, and making language learning more effective. Learning strategies are used by "good language learners" to assist in improving required language skills (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern and Todesco, 1978). The strategies are positively associated with language acquisition (Politizer and McGroarty, 1985). The goal of learning strategies according to Weinstein and Mayer (1986: 315), is to "affect the learner's motivation or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge."

A variety of classification schemes in learning strategy were developed (Rubin, 1975, 1981; Stern, 1975; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco, 1975; Anderson, 1983; Chesterfield and Chesterfield, 1985; Oxford, 1985; and O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, and Kupper, 1985 a,b). However, Stern (1983: 405) claims that "their lists (of strategies in their classification schemes) comprise more or less similar categories divided up in somewhat different way". These classification schemes in learning strategies are reviewed below.

Rubin (1975, 1981), a sociolinguist, proposed a classification scheme which contains two broad categories. (a) strategies that directly affect learning and (b) those which indirectly contribute to learning. Rubin's first broad category consists of: classification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, and practice. The second cate-

gory encompasses: creating practice opportunities and using production tricks. These learning strategies emerged from a variety of data collection procedures like observations and videotapes of classrooms, observations of tutorials, situations, diaries, strip-stories and self-reports.

In their book, Rubin and Thompson (1982), classified 14 learning strategies which included the learner's desire to: find his own way, organize, be creative, make use of his own opportunities, learn to live with uncertainty, use economics, make errors work, use his linguistic knowledge, avail of contextual clues, learn to make intelligent guesses, learn some lines as whole, learn formalized routines, learn production techniques, and use different styles of speech.

Stern (1975) also developed a strategy inventory for learning. In her work, Stern identified ten learning strategies. They include: planning strategy, active strategy, emphatic strategy, form strategy, experimental strategy, semantic strategy, practice strategy, communication strategy, monitoring strategy, and internalization strategy.

Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todescs (1978) proposed an alternative scheme consisting of five primary strategy classifications: an active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring second language performance. These results emerged from interviews with 72 students of L2 French and 12 classroom observations. However, O'Mallery and Chamot (1990:101), have observed that "Naiman et als' list of general strategies used by good language learners sound a bit less like mental process and more like admonitions for general learning success."

Chesterfield and Chesterfield (1985), in their attempt to propose a classification scheme, identified 12 learning strategies comprising repetition, memorization, formulaic expression verbal attention getter, answer in unison, talk to self, elaboration,

anticipating answer, monitoring, appeal for assistance, request for clarification and role play. The result of this study emerged from four observations of fourteen L1 Spanish children.

In her taxonomy for second language learning strategies, Oxford (1985) compiled some sixty-four strategies identified in the literature review. These strategies are grouped under two broad categories: primary strategies and support strategies. Primary strategies include nine subcategories such as inferencing, summarizing, and practice, while support strategies contain eight sub-categories, e.g. attention, planning and cooperation. The problem of this taxonomy, according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 103), is that "this extended listing is far removed from any underlying cognitive theory, fails to prioritize which strategies are".

The most recent classification scheme of learning strategies was developed by O'Malley and his colleagues (1985 a,b). They group learning strategies into three major types: Metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective. O'Malley and Chamot (1990:118), pointed out that "the basic classification scheme proposed by Brown and Pabinesar (1982) consisting of metacognitive and cognitive strategies was used in the initial definition of strategies." However, the third classification of strategy type (i.e., socio-affective), was added and proposed by O'Malley and his colleagues (1985 a).

In their work, O'Malley and his colleagues identified a total of 27 independent learning strategies. There were nine metacognitive strategies, sixteen cognitive strategies and two socioaffective strategies. Metacognitive strategies refer to advance order and regulation of cognition which includes, planning, monitoring and evaluation of a learning task or problem-solving activity. These subgroup strategies are differentiated in terms of Brown's categories (1982). Among the metacognitive classification these learning strategies are identified as advance organizers, directed

attention, functional planning, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

Cognitive strategies were based on a theoretical foundation which viewed second language acquisition as a complex cognitive skill (Anderson, 1983). The cognitive strategies concentrate on describing how second language learning can be motivated and enhanced. Anderson (1980) identifies the cognitive skill as the ability to perform a number of mental procedures such as understanding or generating a language. According to O'Malley and his colleagues, cognitive strategies encompass: repetition, resourcing, grouping, deduction, imagery, auditory representation, keyword method, elaboration, transfer, inferencing, note taking, summarizing, recombination and translation.

Socioaffective strategies are operations of social cooperation and interaction with other peers. They may include group learning and individual learning.

Given the concern over the classification schemes in strategy uses, research on identification of learning strategies in acquiring a foreign language becomes an important starting point for explorations into the cognitive and socioaffective dimensions of foreign language learning. The current research is needed to elicit information about the strategies used by beginning, intermediate - and advance - level foreign language students. This research is descriptive in nature including the classification of strategies into cognitive and socioaffective domains as identified by O'Malley and his colleagues, (1985). The strategies explored were the ones used with specific English language tasks including vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing. To date, no research of this type has been specifically carried out in English language classrooms in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The purpose of this research is to (a) determine the learning strategies used by secondary school Arab students in acquiring language tasks, specifically, english vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing; (b) describe the range and

frequency of strategy uses in the six learning tasks; and (c) identify differences in strategies used by students at low, medium and high levels of English proficiency. The following research questions were posed: (1) What strategies are used by secondary school students while learning English vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking reading and writing? (2) What are the range and frequency of learning strategies used for individual learning tasks? (3) What are the differences in learning strategies used by students at different levels of English proficiency?

The Study Subjects:

The subjects of this study included all EFL Arab students at the twelfth grade level in three randomly selected public secondary schools, in Madinah, Saudi Arabia. The twelfth grade level was selected because students of this level had better understanding about strategies they use while learning English. The subjects represent different levels of English proficiency. The total population ($n=1215$) consisted of EFL students at the twelfth grade level in all Madinah secondary schools. The sample for this study of 228 students represent 18.8 percent of the total population of twelfth grade EFL students in Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

English teachers were asked to rank students in their classes as low, medium and high levels of proficiency. The designation of students at different levels of English proficiency is based on a common set of criteria on which they had formerly reached agreement. The criteria encompassed monthly grades or marks; class participation and attentiveness; ability to comprehend the general idea of a listening passage, ability to express one's self orally and in writing; and ability to read clearly at normal pace.

After designation, the subjects were earmarked as follows: 90 low, 75 medium and 63 high level. They ranged in age from 16-19, with a mean age of 16.87 ($SD = 0.82$). None had lived in any English speaking country.

Research Instrument

A self-reporting questionnaire was developed to elicit information from EFL students about the learning strategies used with language tasks. These foreign language tasks included: English vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The O'Malley and his colleagues' (1985: a,B), classification in this survey because: (a) it has been based on theories of second and foreign language acquisition and cognition; (b) "it includes the full range of strategies identified in the literature" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990: 44).

The questionnaire contained two sections, each section, reflecting a strategy type: cognitive and socioaffective. There are 14 items in the first section and 2 in the second one. Each item is intended to give a description of a learning strategy as proposed in the O'Malley and his colleague classification scheme. The questionnaire is written in the Arabic language, the native language of participating students, to elicit information and influence data collection. An English version was supplied in the appendix. The questionnaire in both versions was validated for EFL students and it was developed with modifications suggested in the pilot study by consultants and teachers in the field of linguistics and education. The students' reliability was also established ($K-R\ 20 = .88$).

Procedure

Students' questionnaires were administered in Fall 1994 by the researcher. The administration of the questionnaire lasted approximately 25 minutes. Before its administration, an initial discussion about the survey objective and learning strategies was carried out in the students' native language to ensure their understanding of its content and procedures.

A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed randomly to EFL students of different levels of English at three public secondary schools in Madinah, Saudi Arabia. In each of the three

schools, three language classrooms were selected randomly. Participating students were asked to circle one or more language tasks reflecting the strategies they were using while learning the English language. However, incomplete questionnaires were eliminated. Leaving 228 questionnaires forms from participating students as the data base for descriptive statistical analysis.

Results

Table 1 indicates that students at all levels of proficiency tended to use more cognitive strategies (86.6 percent) than socioaffective strategies (13.4 percent) in acquiring English as a foreign language. Low level students tended to use more cognitive strategies (41.6 percent) than students of medium (33.5 percent) and high (22.9 percent) level students. In general, low level students also applied more socioaffective strategies (42 percent) than medium (32.8) and high (25.2) level students.

TABLE 1
Number of Cognitive and Socioaffective Strategies used by EFL Learners

Types of Learning Strategies	Level of Proficiency							
	Low		Medium		High		Total	
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
Cognitive	1218	86.5	1039	87.2	672	85.5	2929	86.6
Socioaffective	190	13.5	148	12.5	114	14.5	452	13.4
Total	1408	100.0	1187	100.0	786	100.0	3381	100.0

Overall, elaboration resourcing and auditory representation were the most frequently used strategies by students at all levels of proficiency. Results in Table 2 show that 23.4 percent of the cognitive strategies were used primarily in these strategies. Translation, transfer, and imagery were the next higher group of

strategies used by students at all levels of proficiency. Interestingly, each of these strategies shared the same percentage i.e. (7.3 percent). These strategies accounted for 22 percent of all cognitive strategies applied by the students. However, inferencing, note taking, and key word method were the least frequently used by students at all levels of proficiency. Translation was reported as the most frequently used strategy (104), and summarizing was reported for the least instances of cognitive strategy use (44).

TABLE 2
Cognitive strategies used by Low, Medium and High Level EFL Learners

Types of Learning Strategies	Level of Proficiency							
	Low		Meidum		High		Total n.	
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
Repetition	83	6.8	80	7.7	49	7.3	212	7.2
Resourcing	96	7.9	78	7.5	50	7.4	224	7.6
Grouping	102	8.4	59	5.7	45	6.7	206	7.9
Deduction	82	6.7	77	7.4	48	7.1	207	7.1
Imagery	86	7.1	81	7.8	46	6.8	213	7.3
Auditory Repr.	98	8.0	78	7.5	45	6.7	221	7.5
Key Word Meth.	71	5.8	61	5.9	49	7.3	181	6.2
Elaboration	82	6.7	85	8.2	44	6.5	211	7.2
Transfer	81	6.7	84	8.1	49	7.3	214	7.3
Inferencing	86	7.1	57	5.5	47	7.0	190	6.5
Note taking	70	5.7	63	6.1	50	7.4	183	6.2
Summarizing	96	7.9	92	8.8	53	7.9	241	8.2
Recombination	81	6.7	83	8.0	47	7.0	211	7.2
Translation	104	8.5	61	5.9	50	7.4	215	7.3
Total	1218	100.0	1039	100.0	672	100.0	2929	100.0

Socioaffective strategies were reported for 13.4 percent of strategy uses. Results in Table 3 reveal that cooperation with others (61.3) was used more frequently than question for clarification (38.7%) by students of all levels of English proficiency. Low level students used cooperation and questions for clarification more than medium and high level students. Medium and high level students appeared to be reluctant to ask questions and participate orally in the English classroom because of peer influence and being shy (Habereeh, 1992).

TABLE 3
Socioaffective Strategies used by Low, Medium and High Level EFL Learners

Types of learning Strategies	Proficiency level							
	Low		Medium		High		Total	
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
Cooperation	122	64.2	95	64.2	60	52.6	277	61.3
Question for clarification	68	35.8	53	35.8	54	47.4	175	38.7
Total	190	100	148	100	114	100	452	100

Table 4 illustrates that the most strategies were reported for vocabulary learning. There were 694 instances of learning strategy uses in vocabulary. The number of strategy uses in vocabulary was considerably more than listening. Speaking included almost similar instances of strategy uses as grammar. The least instances of strategies were reported for listening (314).

TABLE 4
Number and percentage of learning strategies used by EFL learners for different language tasks.

Language Tasks	Low		Medium		High		Total	
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%
Vocabulary	294	20.9	241	20.3	159	20.3	694	20.5
Grammar	242	17.2	180	15.2	178	22.6	600	17.7
Listening	138	9.8	153	12.9	75	9.5	366	10.8
Speaking	222	15.8	226	19.0	141	17.9	589	10.4
Reading	299	21.2	180	15.2	129	16.4	608	18.0
Writing	213	15.1	207	17.4	104	13.2	524	15.5
*Total	1408	100	1187	100	786	100	3381	100

* Due to rounding, the total percentages do not equal 100.

The results reported in Table 5 indicate that EFL learners used a wide variety of cognitive strategies in learning English vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The average uses of cognitive strategies for each language task was about six. Students at low and medium levels of proficiency tended to use more socioaffective strategies than high level students. Socioaffective strategies were not used in writing by students at all levels of proficiency.

TABLE 5

Language Tasks and Learning Strategies used by EFL Learners

Language Tasks	Strategy Type	Low	Medium	High
Vocabulary	Cognitive	Resourcing Grouping Imagery	Imagery Resourcing Elaboration	Resourcing Translation Auditory representation (Rep)
	Socio-affective	Cooperation	Cooperation	Question for clarification
Grammar	Cognitive	Grouping Summarizing Inferencing	Transfer D e d u c t i o n Transfer	Note taking Recombination Deduction
	Socio-affective	Question for clarification	Question for clarification	Cooperation Question for clarification
Listening	Cognitive	Auditory Rep. Inferencing Transfer	Auditory Rep. Summarizing Imagery	Auditory Rep. Imagery Inferencing
	Socio-affective	Cooperation	Cooperation	Cooperation
Speaking	Cognitive	Auditory Rep. Elaboration Repetition	Auditory Rep. Repetition Elaboration	Elaboration Transfer Translation
	Socio-affective	Cooperation	None	Question for clarification
Reading	Cognitive	Translation Transfer Auditory Rep.	Elaboration Inferencing Summarizing	Imagery Inferencing Summarizing
	Socio-affective	Cooperation	None	Question for clarification
Writing	Cognitive	Resourcing Grouping Translation	Recombination Note taking Summarizing	Recombination Elaboration Note taking
	Socio-affective	None	None	None

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A variety of cognitive strategies is found applicable to Arab students learning English as a foreign language. Among the commonly used cognitive strategies for vocabulary are resourcing and imagery whereas they are deduction and transfer for grammar. The strategies that are found applicable to listening are auditory representation and inferencing. Among the strategies that are found useful in speaking are auditory representation and elaboration. In learning, reading, students reported using inferencing and summarizing. Students often relied upon recombination and elaboration in the acquisition of writing.

Socioaffective strategies are applicable to few learning English tasks. Overall, cooperation is applicable to learning vocabulary, listening and speaking. Question for clarification is typically useful for learning vocabulary and grammar.

To sum up EFL learners differ in their learning strategies and teachers and curriculum developers need to adjust and adapt to these strategies. The outcomes of this study provide language teachers and specialists with identification of strategy uses for learning a variety of language tasks which can enlighten, inform and guide EFL teaching and learning across curriculum. Language teachers who grasped the cognitive and socioaffective strategies can help their students to gain control over the learning tasks and can become better EFL learners. Learning strategies should incorporate into EFL learners. Learning strategies should incorporate into EFL curriculum objectives and structures.

This study raises some questions for further research. For instance, will the same results be obtained by repeating this study at other institutions? What metacognitive strategies are used by EFL Arab students at different levels of proficiency? To what extent would EFL teachers motivate their students to use learning various strategies? To what extent would curriculum specialists contribute and incorporate results of learning strategies in English syllabus?

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APPENDIX

SELF-REPORT INVENTORY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Instruction: Circle one or more letters reflecting the strategies you use in learning the English language. Please keep in mind that:

A = Vocabulary D = Speaking
B = Grammar E = Reading
C = Listening F = Writing

A. Cognitive Strategies:

1. I prefer to repeat English words and sentence while learning. A B C D E F
2. I use dictionaries, reference materials and educational media while learning. A B C D E F
3. I prefer to group English words, sentences and concepts based on their semantic and syntactice features, while learning. A B C D E F
4. I formulate and use language rules to understand and learn. A B C D E F
5. I recall things that I had seen and read in the class while learning. A B C D E F
6. I recall things that I had listened to in the class while learning. A B C D E F
7. I relate English words and idioms to the Arabic ones when I learn. A B C D E F
8. I use prior knowledge and personal experience to understand and produce English. A B C D E F
9. I use what I know about the Arabic language to facilitate my

understanding and performance of English.

A B C D E F

10. I use contextual clues to guess the meaning and usage of the new text when I learn.

A B C D E F

11. I write down key words language rules and important ideas when I learn.

A B C D E F

12. I summarize new information orally or in writing while learning.

A B C D E F

13. I combine known words into sentences to form a meaningful message when I learn.

A B C D E F

14. I use the Arabic Translation to facilitate my understanding and using of the English language when I learn.

A B C D E F

B. Socioaffective Strategies:

1. I prefer to study and work with others while learning.

A B C D E F

2. I ask my language teacher and peers for additional explanation and examples while learning.