English Through

Fun

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The Note

Let's begin with a question this time:

If you could choose a career other than teaching, what would your choice be and why?

For sure, many have already thought about this question. The sad truth is many teachers, including language teachers, are constantly looking for an alternative or second career. The reason for this is, in turn, the relatively low job satisfaction among our practicing teachers. However, job satisfaction is an index to which many variables contribute.

To dig deeper in this issue, we'd be glad to receive your answers to the question at (etfun@roshdmag.ir).

Quotable Quotes

A politician divides mankind into two classes: tools and enemies.

- Friedrich Nietzsche

Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies.

- Friedrich Nietzsche

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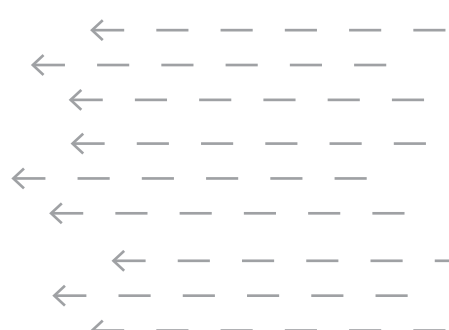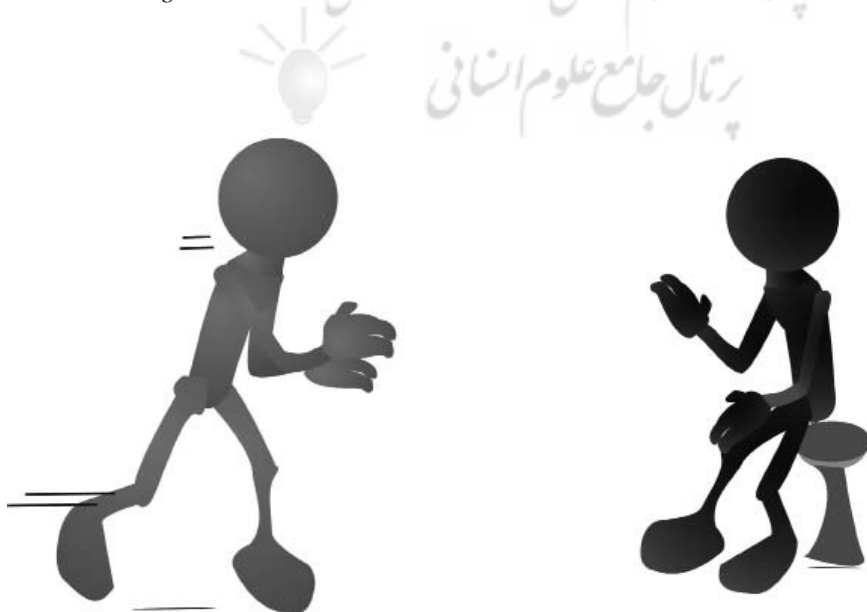
considerable promise for explaining the process of learning. Intervening in that process by selecting particular strategies or batteries of strategies for teaching is by contrast fraught with dangers, which are associated with the preparation of the teachers, the method of teaching, the cultural background of the students, and with many variables such as proficiency, learning style, and the language-learning task with which strategy use interacts.

Furthermore, we have seen that doing 'experiments' to evaluate the intervention has only been partially successful:

● Disrupting regular classes to assign students randomly to treatment group and control group adds artificiality which as a result reduces the genralizability of the result to ordinary classes with regular teachers.

● Improvements in language proficiency caused by strategy training are relatively weak and only show up on certain kinds of measures.

● Cultural preferences in learning behaviors may be stronger than any strategy teaching effect.

● Strategy training might be more

effective with lower-proficiency students.

● Strategy use and motivation to learn are closely associated, so measures of attitudinal differences are also needed.
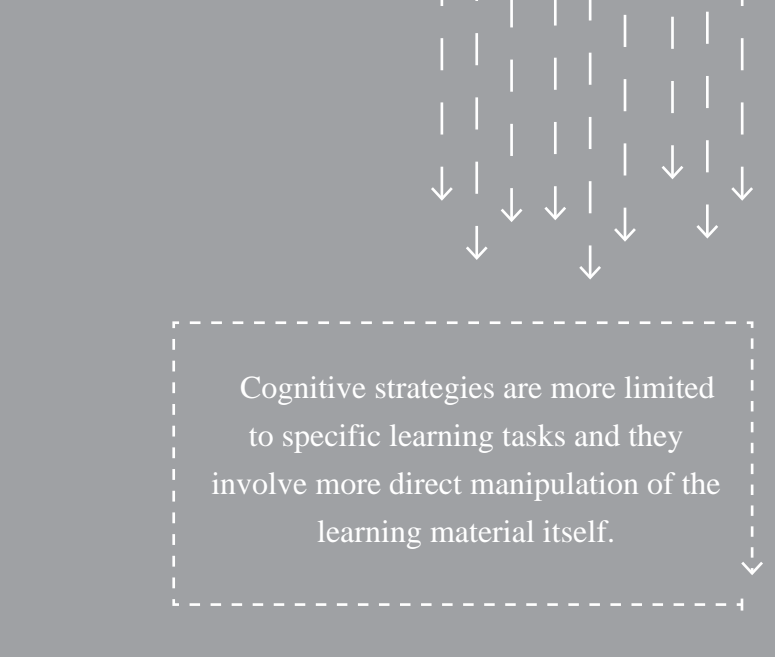
● None of the studies so far at hand have looked at the maintenance of strategy use over time.

● In general, the introduction of innovation by researchers rather than teachers may not lead to the desired results anyway.

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In recent years, there has also been a shift of emphasis from the identification and classification of learning strategies to their application in the language classroom

> Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself.

channel conversion into diagram form; while ETR requires a particular kind of non-directive teacher questioning, and there is no visual product.

Carrell and her co-workers found that students using either of these techniques improved compared to the control group, but that improvement occurred on different measures of reading. Thus, multiple-choice questions on the text revealed no differences between the two treatments and the control presumably the measurement itself was not sensitive enough. Open-ended questions favoured both treatment groups over the control group; a semantic map task with pre-set gaps like a cloze favoured the ETR group; and an open-ended semantic map favoured the Semantic Mapping group. Furthermore, improvements associated with these techniques were closely related to individual differences in preferred learning styles, as reported on a questionnaire. So, in sum, this study successfully demonstrated that metacognitive techniques work, but that the improvement is not universal, only noticeable on certain measures of comprehension, and that it is strongly

determined by students' individual preferences for learning style. Carrell et al. 's study was conducted with students at university following ESL courses, and was embedded in their normal instruction. However, the period of the study training only extended over a few days, and there was not a large number of students, so – as the authors fully recognize – the evidence cannot support sweeping generalizations.

A study by Kern (1989) used various think-aloud tasks and other measures to investigate strategy training in learning words in context among a group of university students of French. He found that strategies for learning discourse meaning were more effective than those for word or phrase level among these students, and that strategy training was more effective with the lower – ability students than with those of medium or high ability. Strategies were also more sueful when combined with other strategies.

Conclusion & Implications

It is clear that, although learing strategies, learners' beliefs and 'theories in action', and strategy training are very important elements in the teaching-learning process, great care has to be exercised in moving from a descriptive and taxonomic position to an interventionist one. That is to say, finding out what students are actually doing, and why, and in what circumstances and stage of learning, holds

from the students. This study illustrated the difficulty of taking a set of ideas from research and getting teachers to implement it: there is a training problem, because teachers usually need rather more than a couple of discussion sessions to change their ways of teaching, even for a limited period; and, more fundamentally, there is a professional problem, because the impetus for change so often comes from outside the teachers and their teaching program rather than from within it. One can only speculate what the results might have been if the impetus to adopt strategy training had come from the teachers instead of from a group of research associates. O'Malley et al. maintain that the locus of this experimentation has to be real classes with regular teachers, not imported 'experts' or researchers; but their execution of this policy left a problem which could well have biased their results seriously.

Teaching Particular Strategies

A small number of studies have attempted to obtain evaluative data on proposals for training students in strategies for particular skill areas, or indeed in particular strategies. Also in reading, Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto (1989) reported a study in which two 'metacognitive' strategies for reading were compared with each other. The two metacognitive strategies were a technique called (1) Semantic Mapping and another called (2) the Experience-Text

Relationship method (ETR). In Semantic Mapping, the expected central category of the argument and their inter-relations are sketched out graphically before reading the text, and again after the actual text has been read through; the two are then compared. In this sense it is a 'technical aid': students are taught to organize their thoughts and then their interpretation of the text in a kind of labeled diagram. Several advantages are claimed for this technique: students are able to anticipate what might be coming, prepare likely vocabulary, and then compare their expectation with the actual text. It is essentially a way of organizing background knowledge and comparing expectations with textual reality. In ETR, a dialogue is established between the teacher and the student first about the studetn's own background knowledge relevant to the topic, second about the text, usually read in sections, and third about the relationship between student experience and information contained in the new text.

Needless to say, both these techniques may be viewed both as student strategies and as teaching techniques; as the latter, they are quite familiar from many modern reading textbooks under the heading of 'per-text exercises'. The two are similar, in that they both emphasize pre-reading review and post-reading comparison; they are different in so far as Semantic Mapping demands a visual product_a translation or
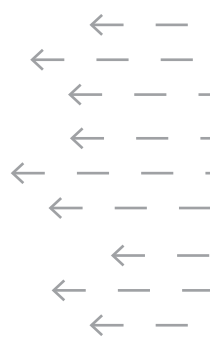
training was integrated with instruction in three language tasks.

O'Malley et al. (1990) compared the improvement on the language tasks in three groups, and related these to the strategy training. On the speaking task, the group given training in all three kinds of strategy improved significantly more than the control group, with the group given training only on cognitive and social-affective strategies somewhere in between the two. To obtain such a result in such a short trial (eight days of training presumably ten or eleven calendar days only, separating the pretest from the post test) is remarkable. It is possible that the gains achieved might have reflected the unfamiliarity of the task on pre test, and not the students' general oral proficiency, but this could not explain the differences in improvement in the three groups.

On the listening task, no overall improvement could be attested, perhaps because the tasks were too difficult, or perhaps because the reminders to use the taught strategies for listening were omitted early in the training. There were some improvements in particular tasks.

On the vocabulary task no overall improvement by group were found–but there was, so to speak, a cultural difference. The Asian students in the control group used rote repetition, and the Asian students in the strategy training groups resisted the training, preferring to use what was

natural to them: the control group was more successful. By contrast, the Hispanic students in the strategy training groups improved more than the Hispanic in the control group, apparently preferring to learn alternative strategies. This result strongly underlines the warning sounded by Politzer and McGroarty concerning the cultural bounds of learning strategies and the risks of interfering with them.

The second study, by Chamot, Kupper, and Impink-Hernandez (1988, quoted and described in detail by O'Malley and Chamot, 1990: 175-84), attempted to evaluate the effects of persuading regular teachers of Russian and Spanish to add into their regular classes a component of learning strategy instruction. The method of evaluation used in this study was not improvement in the students' actual language proficiency, as in the previous study, but observation by the researchers of particular language classes. The researchers discussed the typical learning strategies of the students with the teachers beforehand. Learning strategies to be focused on in the classes on listening and reading comprehension and oral skills were selected, and the teachers devised lessons integrating this learning strategy component in the normal teaching. Observations showed that the teachers were able to incorporate the learning strategy training, but did so in a number of different ways and with rather varied acceptance

While some of the class time was being used for the strategy training and awareness-raising activities in this way, they comment that the activities were not intergated as fully with the language training as the interventionist program. Wenden's method of evaluation was by questionnaire, and by noting attrition rates: in fact a majority of the students did not want to continue the strategy training, and the questionnaire responses indicated that they saw it as irrelevant. They describe the participants as 'resistant'. One group that did persist did so mainly for the extra language practice it afforded. Subsequent modification of the course to integrate it more fully into the language training was apparently more successful in retaining the students' interest, but there was no attempt to evaluate its effectiveness either in raising the students' awareness of the issues or in improving their handling of the language material.

Following this rather disappointing study, O'Malley and his associates; (1990) performed two important studies, one with learners of English and one with learners of other modern languages. These studies were more complicated and better controlled. The intention was to discover what effect limited training about strategy use might have on students learning in a relatively normal classroom environment. In the first study, they used 75 students enrolled in suburban high schools, mainly from Spanish-speaking and Asian countries, with about a third from other language backgrounds. They divided the group into three subgroups, preserving the mixture of language, background and age (a 'nested random sample'). One subgroup received training in metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective strategies; one in cognitive and social-affective; and one acted as a control group, directed to do whatever they normally would with the material. Students were taught in groups of eight to ten. This procedure, while necessary for the experimental method, effectively destroyed the students' normal class membership, so the relevance of the results for 'normal classes' can be questioned. The strategy training continued for a class hour per day for eight days. The

Interventionist Studies

We now turn to the available evidence concerning teaching language students to adopt some kinds of strategy or approach to learning, so that they might improve their language-learning performance. The descriptive studies have raised profound concerns about whether we know enough about learning strategies to warrant their incorporation in explicit teaching programs. However, some studies of individual strategy use have taken an explicitly interventionist approach, reporting considerable success.

It is convenient to divide the studies into the effect of teaching strategies on a general group and on specific group. In the general group we shall look at studies which have aimed at teaching strategies for overcoming a number of learning problems encountered in several aspects of language learning; in the specific group we shall review what has been learned from attempting to teach particular strategies for, say, reading comprehension or vocabulary learning. In both groups the central questions remain the same:

■ Can strategies be taught?

■ Do students use the taught strategies?

■ Do students who use the taught strategies perform better (than previously or than other students not so taught)?

Teaching strategies involves a number of decisions. Not all the research on strategy training has taken the same approach. In general, seven kinds of decision have to be considered:

1. Discover the students' strategies first or present the new strategies first.

2. Teach strategies and language together or not.

3. Be explicit about the purpose of strategies or not.

4. Develop a course of training or a one-off lesson.

5. Choose the appropriate teaching techniques.

6. Choose a method of evaluation: improvement on learning task, maintenance of strategy use after training, transfer of strategy to new situations.

7. For an investigation of the strategy teaching, design an appropriate form of study: random assignment of students to tasks, control group and control activities, product measures and affective measures, etc.

General Training

Wenden and Rubin (1987) report a study involving students on an intensive seven-week American language course, on which two of the twenty hours per week were devoted to discussion of language learning. These discussion hours were in fact planned as strategy training, through comprehension exercises and discussions based on texts for reading and listening passages, with homework consisting of practice tasks and focused diary writing.

pronunciation, less again for listening comprehension, social communication, and following instructions. This is consonant with the popularity of the simple, non-manipulative strategies of repetition and note-taking. O'Malley comments that one reason for the prevalence of vocabulary, pronunciation, and oral drills in provoking strategy use could have been the preponderance of these kinds of activities in the teaching they were receiving. One might add that task requirements are very influential in the choice of strategy: O'Malley's methods of investigation appear to have precluded the study of this variable. It has to remain open if these students would, for example, have used a sophisticated elaborative strategy on the new vocabulary if the teaching method had required a more analytical approach, or whether they could not have responded in kind, at these low stages of proficiency.

These learning strategies are notable for one quality: they are decontextualized. O'Malley and Chamot's method of data collection attempted to avoid this by asking questions in the student interviews according to a strict sequence organized in terms of the nine learning activities selected. But the interviews took place after normal school hours, not in any juxtaposition to actual language-learning sessions, and the nine learning activities chosen for questioning do not seem to have borne any systematic relationship to the kinds of language-learning tasks employed by the teachers.

Oxford (1990) describes a rather all-embracing scheme for learning strategy use, based on virtually all the previous work which she used in developing the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning including almost all decisions taken in the process of language learning. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) criticize this work as well for its attempt at comprehensiveness and for the consequent removal of the various strategies so grouped from their original theoretical and empirical justifications. Oxford and her co-workers used this wide-ranging inventory in a large-scale factor analytic study with military personnel, discovering a consistent difference in the use of strategies by males and females. This issue had not been explored before because none of the previous pieces of research used sufficiently large numbers of subjects to be able to compare any sex-related variability with general variability. However, general caveats voiced earlier in the present text about the reliability of questionnaire data apply to this as to other large-scale studies.

Oxford (1990) present six case studies of classrooms in which various kinds of strategy-teaching took place. Many of these are informal and not integrated in the normal teaching; common criteria for evaluating the outcomes are not applied; unfortunately, therefore, the value of these reports is limited.

strategies, a quarter were combinations of metacognitive strategies, and 7 per cent were combinations of metacognitive and cognitive strategies. The majority of the time, of course, was consumed by single-strategy use.

Strategy Use and Proficiency

The beginners reported rather greater use of strategies than the intermediates. It is very likely that this reflects the fact that the beginners were interviewed in their own language, and were therefore much more forthcoming.

Both groups reported overwhelmingly more cognitive than metacognitive strategies; twice as many in the case of the intermediates and three times as many for the beginners. However, the metacognitive strategy use was substantial, and here the intermediates used more (34 per cent) than the beginners (27 per cent). Unfortunately, the researchers do not indicate the probability of obtaining this difference in proportions simply by chance, given this size of the sample; oddly, in such large-scale study, the numerical analyses remained crude, and no statistical tests were performed. We therefore have to regard this difference between the groups as unreliable. It would, of course, be interesting to claim that one thing that changes as one's proficiency in a laguage increases is one's use of meta cognitive strategies _ planning, monitoring, evaluating

– but this study did not establish that as a fact.

By far the majority of the metacognitive strategies are concerned with planning the learning activities, particularly self-management, advance preparation, and selective attention. This was comparable in both groups. Student use of cognitive strategies also did not differ between the two groups. In order of frequency, they fell roughly into four groups (percentages in brackets):

Repetition, note-taking ($\pm$ 14)

Cooperation, clarification questions($\pm$12)

Imagery, translation, transfer, inferencing ($\pm$ 7)

Elaboration, key word, deduction, grouping, recombination($\geq$ 4)

This order of frequency of use appears to mean that there is a cline of popularity from the rather mechanical kind of activity, through the engagement of somebody else's help, down to strategies involving a more active transformation of the material in a manipulative way. Students, therefore, used many strategies for coping with the language material, but the kind of work they were doing was not of a particularly efficient or sophisticated nature.

Strategy Use and Different Learning Activities

These students reported that they used strategies of various kinds for vocabulary learning most, then slightly less for

What happens is that sometimes I cut short a word because I've said it wrong. Then I say it again, but correctly'.

Delayed production: 'I can more or less understand whatever is said to me now, but the problem is in talking. I need study more so that I can talk better. I talk when I have to, but I keep it short and hope I'll be understood' (Chamot, 2004).

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, inferencing are among the most important cognitive strategies that some of them are elab or ated for further explanation.

Imagery: 'Pretend you are doing something indicated in the sentences you make up about the new work. Actually do it in your head.'

Auditory representation: 'When you are trying to learn how to say something, speak it in your mind first. Then say it aloud. If it is correct, you can keep it in your mind forever.'

Transfer: 'For instance, in a geography class, if they're talking about something I have already learned all I have to do is to remember the information and then try to put it into English.'

Inferencing: 'Sometimes all the words of the sentences make the meaning of the new word. I think of the whole meaning of the sentence, and then I can get the meaning of the new word.'

They analyzed their results in three different ways, which go some way to answering some of the questions posed, at least for this group of students (Chamot, 2004).

Single Strategies or Multiple Ones?

Most interestingly—and consonant with, for example, Sarig's work with students of much higher language-level reading in English as an L2, one-fifth of all the strategy uses reported by the students had to be categorized as 'multiple use'. In other words, these fairly low-level students were using combinations of strategies for a significant proportion of the time. Two thirds of these instances were combinations of two cognitive
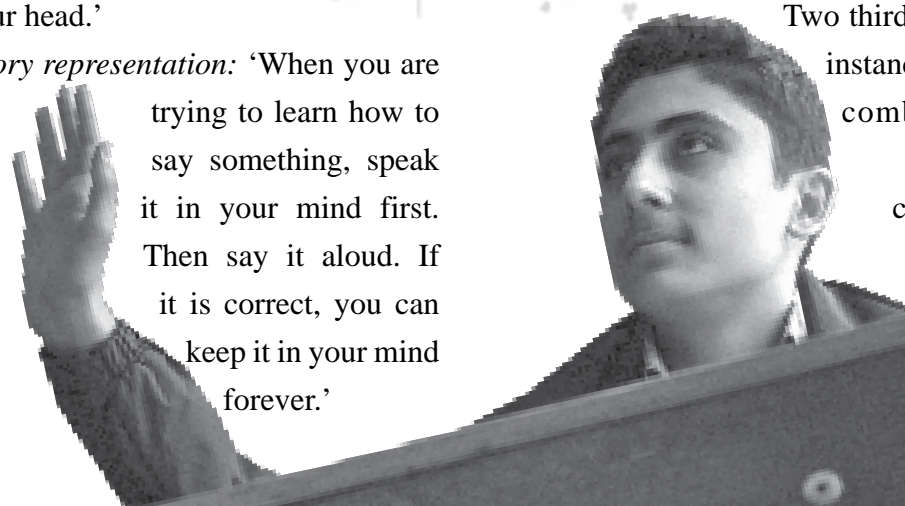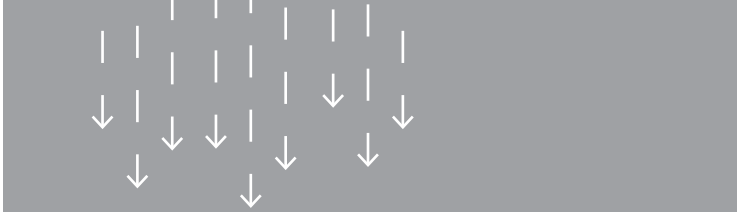
research; what the interviewees said was stimulated by the interviewer's questions and required retrospection, with all of the attendant uncertainties and difficulties.

Another large-scale project was initiated and conducted by O'Malley and his associates in the mid-1980s, largely with English as a Foreign Language and also with students of other foreign languages. Their work had two main components:

1. a development of cognitive learning theory to encompass second language learning in order to provide the theoretical content which they considered was missing, for example, the Canadian Good Language Learner work reviewed above,

2. descriptive studies of learning strategies used by ESL and other leanguage students. O'Malley et al. published a study (1982) of learning strategy use by beginning and intermediate ESL students, which is also reported as Study 1 in O'Malley and Chamot's book (1990), and also written up in a rather briefer form by Chamot (1987) as her contribution to Wenden and Rubin's seminal collection of papers on 'Learner Strategies in Language Learning'.

Using a preliminary list called from the previous literature, and inspection of the student interview data, O'Malley drew up a final list of strategies in three categories: metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective. The full definitions of the list are given in Chamot (1987: 77), Rubin's book;

on p.33 of the original article by the entire group; and O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 119-20), so there is no need to reproduce it in full here. In addition, Chamot (1987: 76-7) quotes some comments made by the students in interview, translated from Spanish (so presumably they were beginners), which illustrate the strategy categories.

Metacognitive Strategies

The term metacognitive is a term used to describe arange of strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Among the main metacognitive strategies, it is possible to include advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-manggement, functional, planning, self monitoring, delayed production and self-evaluation.

Self-management: 'I sit in front of the class so I can see the teacher's face clearly'. It's a good idea to mix with non-Hispanics, because you're forced to practice your English. If you talk with a Chinese who is also studying English you have to practice the language because it's the only way to communicate.'

Advance organization: 'You review before you go into class. You at least look through each lesson. I don't try to totally understand it; I look over it.'

Self-monitoring: '... I just start talking.

6. involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive,

7. support learning both directly and indirectly,

8. are not always observable,

9. are often conscious,

10. can be taught,

11. are flexible,

12. are influenced by a variety of factors.

Of these features, numbers 9 and 10 are particularly emphasized here. Second/ Foreign language learning strategies are often conscious. This implies that good language learners can tell us what they do to learn language. In other words, if language learning strategies are conscious, then language learners can report the strategies which caused their success. They are also teachable. It follows from this feature that one way of overcoming language learning problems would be the teaching of language learning strategies.

Descriptive Studies

The earliest large-scale study to look at learning strategies in a foreign or second language was that of Naiman et al. (1978) referred to as the 'Good Language Learner' (GLL) study. The aim of this study was to investigate the foreign language learning processes of secondary–(high) school pupils learning French in nominally English–speaking Canada. Part of the aim was to validate Sterns' (1983) list of strategies for foreign language learning

by enquiring to what extent learners' success was associated with them. The study was interesting partly, also, for its multi-method research design, using individual difference questionnaires and other instruments, notably the Embedded Figures Test for Field-Independence or Dependence, interviews with adults and school learners, class observation, and language proficiency measures.

The interest in this important study lies in the attempt to validate the general learning strategies proposed by Stern (1975) derived in part from Rubin (1981), and referred to as 'wholesome attitudes' rather than problem-solving strategies. In order to do this, these researchers collapesed the original list of ten to six to be more reliably identifiable. They looked for evidence for them in the interviews which they held with learners, and also in the observations of the learners in the classes. As others have found out, the attempt to observe strategies in action was not successful_indeed, the class observation did not show up much in common with the other individual difference measures either_a persistent difficulty with that kind of research. However, the kinds of things the interviewees disclosed about themselves did give a lot of information bearing on the use of these strategies. In reading the interviews, done by Naiman et al. (1978: 50, table 6), one should bear in mind that this was not a 'think-aloud'

a position to make informed choices, they need to learn how to make such choices. Informed choice presupposes knowledge, and knowledge presupposes instruction (Macaro, 2006).

An examination of the literature helps us better understand what is meant by learning strategies. Not all researchers believe that the study of learning strategies holds considerable promise, both for language pedagogy and for explaining individual differences in L2/ FL learning. Oxford (1990, 2003), Griffiths (2003, 2007) and Cohen (1998, 2003, 2005), among many others, have extensively argued in favor of strategy training and have offered evidence of its success. On the other hand, Gass and Selinker (1994) and Ellis (1994) have expressed doubts in this respect. They believe that if a successful student reports having used strategy 'x', one cannot be sure that an unsuccessful student will also prosper if he or she uses that strategy.

In recent years, there has also been a shift of emphasis from the identification and classification of learning strategies to their application in the language classroom. According to Cohen (2003), explicit training in the use of a broad array of strategies for learning foreign language vocabulary and for grammar, reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills has become a prominent issue in SLA research. And training learners to be better at learning and use of language has been growing.

Second language learning strategies are, therefore, significant at least for two reasons. The first reason is that they can provide some explanations for the variability of language learning outcomes and can reveal a lot about the processes involved in second language learning. The second reason is that these strategies can be used to help language learners learn better and to provide language teachers with new ways of helping their unsuccessful learners (Graham, 2006).

Language learning strategies can be really effective in the above-mentioned significant areas because of the properties they are believed to have. Oxford (1990) offers a good summary of the characteristics of language learning strategies. She believes that language learning strategies:
1. contribute to the main goal [of developing] communicative competence,
2. allow learners to become more self-directed,
3. expand the role of teachers,
4. are problem-oriented,
5. are specific actions taken by the learner,

The term that metacognitive is a term used to describe arange of strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed.

چکیده

با وجود این که تعداد زیادی از محققان، راهکارهای یادگیری زبان را در ۲۰ سال گذشته مورد بررسی قرار داده‌اند، اما تعداد معدودی از مدرسان زبان این راهکارها را در فرایند زبان‌آموزی لحاظ کرده‌اند. عواملی چون پیچیدگی مفاهیم و طبقه‌بندی‌های گوناگون و گاه متناقض و عدم تشخیص زبان آن‌ها در بافت را می‌توان جزو این دشواری محسوب کرد. با توجه به تعداد طبقه‌بندی راهکارهای یادگیری، این مقاله طبقه‌بندی اُمالی (O'Malley: 1990) را مورد توجه قرار داده است. وی این راهکارها را به سه دسته‌ی فراشناختی، شناختی و اجتماعی- عاطفی تقسیم می‌کند.

مقاله‌ی حاضر با ارائه‌ی دو نوع مطالعات توصیفی و مداخله‌گر، به بررسی راهکارهای یادگیری زبان می‌پردازد. مطالعات توصیفی بیش‌تر به جنبه‌های عملی آن را برای استفاده‌ی معلمان زبان مطرح کند.

مسائلی چون تشخیص فرایندهای یادگیری راهکارها، طبقه‌بندی، تأثیر خصوصیات زبان‌آموز بر به‌کارگیری آن‌ها و تأثیر فرهنگ زبان‌آموز بر نوبه‌ی خود توانسته‌اند به نحو شایانی به فهم راهکارهای یادگیری کمک کنند که می‌توان انتقال راهکارها، مدل‌های آموزشی و نقش آموزش صریح آن‌ها اشاره کرد. در انتها، این مقاله به کاربردهای عملی و نحوه‌ی آموزش راهکارهای یادگیری در کلاس می‌پردازد و می‌کوشد معطوف هستند. با توجه به فزونی مطالعات توصیفی انجام‌شده نسبت‌به مطالعات نوع دوم، مطالعات مداخله‌گر نیز به

کلیدواژه‌ها: راهکار، طبقه‌بندی، مفهوم، بافت، توصیفی، مداخله‌گرا

Abstract

Although a large number of researchers have investigated the field of language learning strategies over the last twenty years, not enough language instructors have incorporated strategy-training into their teaching. The complexity of the whole notion, a multiplicity of taxonomies, and the difficulty of pinpointing the strategies most appropriate in a particular context might have hindered its progress. This article will investigate learning strategies in a more general sense, looking at the beliefs about the learning task that student's report, the ways they organize themselves and evaluate their learning performance, the ways they differ, and the manner in which they respond to being taught learning strategies. The article will be presenting both descriptive and interventionist studies, looking at what learners tell us about the learning task and at what studies tell us about the success of attempts to get learners to adopt particular options.

Key Words: strategy, taxonomy, notion, context, descriptive, interventionist

Introduction

Work on learning strategies is part of a more general movement within educational theory and practice which takes a learner-centered view of pedagogy. A learner-centered approach is based on a belief that learners will bring to the learning situation different beliefs and attitudes about the nature of language and language learning and that these beliefs and attitudes need to be taken into consideration in the selection of content and learning experiences. The approach contrasts with the 'doctor-knows-best' approach which, while it might acknowledge that learners have different perferences and beliefs, discounts these on the grounds that the teacher is the expert and that the learners' views are irrelevant. However, if learners are to be in