THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LEARNING STYLES AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

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Abstract: This article is intended to give basic information about learning styles and language learning strategies in language acquisition. Also, this paper is based on analyses some features and categories of learning styles in language learning process. As we know, Learning strategies are steps taken by learners to enhance their learning. An active use of language learning strategies helps learners in control of their own learning by developing language skills, increasing confidence and motivation in learning process.

Key words: Learning styles, strategies, characteristics, knowledge, competence, learning processes, approaches.

Over time, students will develop their own learning strategies - which includes the ways in which they learn and remember information, how they study for tests and how they make the best use of their learning strengths. Many students may not even be aware that they are using these strategies as it may have become a natural and automatic process for them. There are some strategies, on the other hand, that

students may need to be taught, or at least brought to their attention. In this section we will discuss learning styles and strategies and how they apply to the language classroom. The strategies a student uses to learn a second language depend greatly on their individual learning style. Some students are outgoing and will experiment freely and frequently while learning a new language. Other students are more introverted, preferring a more individual, private approach to the way they learn and practice the language. The strategies used by an outgoing student may vary significantly when compared with the strategies of a more reserved student. The phrase 'learning style' refers to a person's general approach to learning and is dependent upon that person's cognitive, affective and behavioral characteristics(Oxford, "The Role of Styles and Strategies in Second Language Learning", 1989).

The phrase 'learning strategies' refers to the actions and behaviours a person uses to learn (Oxford, 1989.) All learners use strategies to help them succeed, but not all are aware of the strategies they use. As Rebecca Oxford states: "…the most successful learners tend to use learning strategies that are appropriate to the material, to the task, and to their own goals, needs, and stage of learning," (Oxford, 1989). For those students who make use of learning strategies without being aware of it, taking the SILL survey makes these strategies explicit to them and can therefore make these strategies more effective to their learning process. For teachers, having their students take the SILL survey at the start of a language course may help the teacher to understand what strategies are most effective for their students, and adjust their teaching to fit. As well, the results of such a survey can be useful for the teacher to see which strategies are being under-utilized by the students; with this information, the teacher can take the opportunity to teach these strategies to the students.

Language learning strategies are a term referring to the processes and actions that are consciously deployed by language learners to help them to learn or use a language more effectively. They have also been defined as 'thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalized by language learners, to assist them in carrying out a multiplicity of tasks from the very outset of learning to the most advanced levels

of target language performance he term language *learner* strategies, which incorporates strategies used for language learning and language use, is sometimes used, although the line between the two is ill-defined as moments of second language use can also provide opportunities for learning.

Language learning strategies were first introduced to the second language literature in 1975, with research on the good language learner.[4] At the time it was thought that a better understanding of strategies deployed by successful learners could help inform teachers and students alike of how to teach and learn languages more effectively. Initial studies aimed to document the strategies of good language learners. In the 80s the emphasis moved to classification of language learning strategies. Strategies were first classified according to whether they were direct or indirect, and later they were strategies divided into cognitive, metacognitive or affective/social categories. In 1990, Rebecca Oxford published her landmark book "Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know" which included the "Strategy Inventory for Language Learning" or "SILL", a questionnaire which was used in a great deal of research in the 1990s and early 2000s. Controversy over basic issues such as definition grew stronger in the late 1990s and early 2000s, however, with some researchers giving up trying to define the concept in favour of listing essential characteristics. Others[8] abandoned the strategy term in favour of "self regulation". First, although originally promoted as a means of helping students to achieve success in language learning, a synthesis of historical research on language learning strategies has produced conflicting results on the relationship between strategies and language learning success. In fact, much of the research that emerged in the 1990s included numerous conflicting studies based on use of the SILL as a research instrument, of which very few met rigorous research criteria.

A second problem associated with researching language learner strategies is the definitional fuzziness of major concepts in the field. Researchers in field, such as Ernesto Macaro argue there is a lack of consensus of:

- Whether strategies occur inside or outside of the brain;
- Whether learner strategies consist of knowledge, intention, action or all three;
- Whether to classify strategies in frameworks, hierarchies [or clusters];
- Whether strategies survive across all learning situations, tasks and contexts;
- Whether they are integral or additive to language processing.

Due to the definitional fuzziness of language learning strategies, critics have argued the whole field should be replaced with the psychological concept of self-regulation. However, language learning strategy researchers have argued that replacing the field would be a matter of 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater' in that it throws away 30 years of research because of definitional issues. It has also been argued that self-regulation and language learning strategies are measuring different parts of the learning process, and thus can be used in tandem to observe a more accurate picture of how learners learn a second language.

Interest in the potential of strategies to promote learning remains strong, however, as evidenced from recent books on the topic, and number of special issues of academic journals on the topic. A particularly important question for educators is whether learners can benefit from strategy instruction, both in terms of improved linguistic outcomes and improved self-efficacy for learning. For example, in a study within the context of England, Graham and Macaro (2008) found improved listening skills and improved self-efficacy for listening among learners of French who had received instruction in listening strategies. Another important question is also the extent to which teachers have knowledge and understanding of how to incorporate language learning strategies into their teaching, with research indicating that this is an area for development.

More recent research has examined language learner strategies in more context-specific situations, rather than catch-all categories. That is, when learners

study academic writing, for example, they are likely to deploy a different set of strategies than if they were to study daily conversation. The terms cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies remain common in strategy research, but others related to managing a learners' own affective state or social environment have been examined under the umbrella term self-regulation.

Learning styles. Learning styles are habitual patterns of perceiving, processing, or reacting to information.

Learning strategies. Learning strategies are the specific actions one takes and/or techniques one uses in order to learn.

inds of learning styles. This chapter divides learning styles into the following categories:

Sensory preferences. Sensory preferences refer to the channels through which we perceive information which consist of visual, auditory, and motor modalities, as a minimum.

Cognitive styles. Cognitive styles refer to individualized ways of processing of information. Many models of cognitive styles have been proposed. This chapter presents the E&L Construct in detail; this particular model organizes most of the work on cognitive styles into one system of cognitive profiles.

Personality types. These are another kind of learning style. Since they involve affective (emotional) factors, they are discussed in chapter 4, along with other affective variables.

In conclusion, Learning styles are the general approaches –for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual –that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. These styles are"theoverallpatternsthatgivegeneraldirectiontolearningbehavior"(Cornett,1983,p.9). Ofgreatestrelevancetothismethodologybookisthisstatement:"Learningstyleisthe biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same

teaching methodwonderfulforsomeandterribleforothers"(Dunn&Griggs,1988,p.3). Learning strategies are definedas"specificactions,behaviors,steps,ortechniques such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task -- used by students to enhance their own learning"(Scarcella&Oxford,1992,p.63). When the learner consciously chooses strategies that fit his or her learning style and the L2 task at hand, these strategies become a useful toolkit for active, conscious, and purposeful selfregulation of learning. Learning strategies can be classified into six groups: cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social.

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