



RESEARCH PAPER

Analyzing the Mechanism of Language Learning Process by the Use of Language Learning Strategies

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: July 18, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: October 17, 2021</p> <p>Online: October 22, 2021</p> <p>Keywords: Language Acquisition, Learning Strategies, Mechanism of Language Learning</p> <p>*Corresponding Author:</p> <p>shafiq.farooqi@gmail.com</p>	<p>This analytical research study involves the use of learning strategies to know the mechanism of learning a second language. People acquire their native language (L1) without any conscious effort and they have a complete knowledge of L1 and are competent in their native language even without going to school. It is believed that language learning is a process as well as an outcome and the focus of current study is to understand the process of learning a second language. The population in this study comprised of 182 boys and Girls Govt. Higher Secondary Schools studying at intermediate level in the 11 Districts of the Southern Punjab. The sample was selected through random probability sampling and consisted of 40 subject specialists teaching the subject of English in Govt. higher secondary schools with 400 students studying English at Intermediate level. A questionnaire comprising some common and easily accessible learning strategies was designed to determine the frequency of these strategies used in the classrooms by the language learners through the specialists of the subject. The data was collected from the selected sample through the subject specialists teaching in these schools. The data was collected quantitatively and was analyzed in the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20. The most common 27 language learning strategies (LLS) were applied to analyze the process of language learning. In the light of the results of the study, it was concluded that application of the learning strategies according to the nature of the text is helpful in understanding the language functions and its application.</p>

Introduction

Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of experience (Kendra Cherry, 2019). Learning manifests itself by the changed behavior of the learner but learning of second language is different from that of other subjects i.e. Mathematics and Science (John H.A.L de Jong, 2015). The process of learning can be best

explained by the help of learning theories which can be classified into two major types (O.H Morwer, Arti Sharma, 2002)

1. Connectionist theories
2. Cognitivist theories

Connectionist Theories

The connectionist theories basically believe in stimulus response (SR) approach (Thorndike, 1898. Pring L1 Xiaowei, Zhao, 2020). It represents the S-R framework of behavioral psychology. Learning is the result of association forming between stimuli and responses (Ivan Pavlov 1920, Dr. Saul Mcleod, 2018). They are linked with the laws of association i.e. assimilation, frequency, contiguity, intensity, duration, context, acquaintance, composition, individual differences and cause and effect. These explain that an action is repeated if it brings satisfaction to the doer and if it brings despair and shame then it will not be repeated by the doer (Dr. Saul Mcleod, 2018). This strategy can be applied by the teachers in the process of learning to increase the amount of learning by reinforcing the correct responses.

Cognitivist Theories

Cognitivism is a theoretical framework for understanding the mind. These theories state that all learning leads towards a goal (Fritz Heider, 1953). These help to latent learning that produces enduring attitudes, likes and dislikes, in addition to learning a particular skill. According to these theories, there are three elements of learning;

- (i) Stimulus – Response (ii) Reinforcement (iii) Motivation

Nature of Language Learning

People learn their L1 without any conscious effort and they have complete knowledge of L1 even without attending the school (Douglas Magrath, 2016). All children begin to learn their L1 at the same age and in the same way whether it is Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, English or any other language in the world. They use the language in all the situations in a novel way and even better than the adults. The process of L1 acquisition is not stopped at any phase during the whole life but it continues from conception to grave (Mojgan Rashtachi, 2021).

Learning a second language (L2) is a topic of psycholinguistic which is defined as the study of language and the mind (Wallace E. Lambert 2002). Therefore, it is a subject which relates the psychology and linguistics. Learning a second language is a difficult process and it requires a continuous facilitation and support. The aim of a linguist is to find out about the structures and processes which underlie a human's ability to speak and understand language. It is an admitted fact that speaking is more developed and advanced in human than all other animals. The process of language learning can be analyzed by considering the following steps;

The Language Acquisition

It is a pattern of behavior formation in which an increase in the strength of conditioned response in successive trials of conditioned and unconditioned stimuli are paired (Kendra Cherry, 2019). Behavior patterns are produced through the modifications of drives by conditioning and reinforcement (Miller and Dollard, 1941).

The link between the language knowledge and language usage

It is a fact that people acquire their L1 without any conscious effort and have a native ability to do that because they have programmed information in their minds but learning a second language is an arduous task. Children have definite language structure in their minds and compare the structure of second language with the pattern of already acquired language (Chomsky, Theory of Universal Grammar). If the principles of second language are similar to the principles of native language then learning of second language is facilitated (Chomsky, UG). It is the duty of a language teacher to assess the existing knowledge of the learners and find out the gaps in learning process.

Producing and comprehending speech

The language acquisition process is further divided into meditational processes and behavioristic approaches, the meditational process is concerned with mechanism and the behavioristic process is linked with analysis of stimulus and response (Albert E. Goss, 1961 and Arti Sharma 2002). To understand the process of stimulus response the overt speech production or writing is necessary. New words can be introduced to the learners by using the technique of synonymy that is similarity in meanings. Language acquisition is an instinct property and it cannot be learnt through instruction. Language learning is a conscious process of learning and is concerned with second language. It is facilitated by direct instructions and various rules are applied to learn a language.

Material and Methods

The current study is descriptive in nature. The data was collected by using questionnaire quantitatively through the teachers teaching English in Government higher secondary schools of the three administrative divisions Bahawalpur, Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan of the Southern Punjab. It provides a sound basis that the right use of learning strategies by the language learners is beneficial for knowing the actual process of language learning and enhances the performance of the language learners at intermediate level.

Population

Population consisted of 182 subject specialists of English, teaching English in Government Higher Secondary Schools (Boys and Girls) learning English at Intermediate level in Southern Punjab. Presently, it has been investigated that in Southern Punjab which is comprised of 03 administrative divisions Multan, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan has 11 districts Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran, Vehari, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffar Garh, Layyah, Rajanpur, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawal Nagar, where 86 Boys Higher Secondary schools and 96 Girls Higher Secondary schools are working for the spread of quality education. In each higher secondary school a single subject specialist English has

been appointed by the Government for the teaching of English language. Through the process of random probability sampling a sample of 400 students was taken and the data was collected through the language teachers out of this sample.

Adaptation/ Development of Tool

Some common language learning strategies were selected from the Language Learning Strategy Inventory (LLSI) developed by the Rebecca Oxford for the purpose of language analysis. These strategies were arranged in a list according to their frequency of use in the learning process. The tool was pilot tested and was sent to experts for their expert opinion. According to the suggestion of the experts the language learning strategies were arranged in three groups i.e. strategy of use, strategy of advice and the strategy of suggest. There were 27 items in this tool and each category consisted of 09 items. This tool was easy to understand and respond for the language learners at Intermediate level.

Factors

The purpose of this study was to improve the performance of the English language learners at Inter-mediate level by using language learning strategies. The tool was deduced from the Language Learning Strategy Inventory (LLSI) which is the most popular tool in the world for the analysis of English language functions. The data was collected through the subject specialists of the English from different higher secondary schools as they are the highly qualified in their fields. This data was processed in the SPSS version 20 and results were drawn.

Validity and Reliability

The tool used in this study was adapted from the (LLSI) Language Learning Strategy Inventory which is the most frequently used tool in the world for the analysis of English language. Moreover, this tool has been translated in many other languages due to its high order validity and reliability. The effectiveness of the tool is the guarantee of the validity and reliability of the results. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (LLSI) has been developed and modified by the expert linguists in the world and it has been considered the best tool by the linguists in all over the world. The results obtained by the use of Language Learning Strategy Inventory show great validity and high reliability in the researches of language analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected from the selected sample through the subject specialists teaching English at intermediate level in these Higher Secondary Schools (GHSS) by using some common strategies from the Language Learning Strategy Inventory. They considered that the performance of the language learners increased when they became strategic learners by using these strategies consciously in their learning. They became active learners and their participation in the classroom activities increased.

Sampling

The Province of Punjab is the largest province of Pakistan regarding the population, so it is divided into three administrative divisions i.e. i) The Central Punjab ii) The Southern

Punjab and iii) The Northern Punjab. The random probability sampling technique was used to select the sample from the Southern Punjab due to extraordinary circumstances of COVID-19.

Sample

The sample of the current study consisted of 400 students learning English at intermediate level and the 40 subject specialists teaching English in Govt. Girls and Boys Higher Secondary Schools. The data was collected from these students through twenty subject specialists teaching English at Boys Higher Secondary Schools and twenty female subject specialists teaching English at Girls Higher Secondary Schools. Thus the sample comprised of 400 students and 40 subject specialists in English out of 182 subject specialists from the eleven districts of Southern Punjab. After processing the data in (SPSS) Statistical Package for Social Sciences the following results were taken out.

Results and Discussion

The factor analysis of the strategies used in the learning process of English as Second language (ESL) indicated the role of these strategies significantly. All the strategies were so crucial that their calculated values differed in factors (not in whole numbers) and were frequently used in the learning of English by all the language learners. The highest mean value (2.95) and std. deviation .224 was measured by the strategy "I use conversation in learning SL" explained the practical advantage of this strategy which is linked with the Direct Method of teaching English throughout the world. The lowest mean value (.255) was measured by various strategies that are significant. The mean and std. Deviation values for different strategies have been shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
I use LLS in teaching SL.	2.75	.444	40
I use general instructions in English.	2.90	.308	40
I use error correction technique in learning SL.	2.80	.410	40
I use real life material in learning SL.	2.85	.366	40
I use group discussions in language class.	2.70	.470	40
I use translation exercises in learning SL.	2.60	.503	40
I use vocabulary list in learning SL.	2.65	.489	40
I use conversations in learning SL.	2.95	.224	40
I use grammar to learn the SL principles.	2.75	.444	40
I suggest the learners to use dictionary for SL learning.	2.55	.605	40
I suggest the learners reading newspaper in English.	2.55	.605	40
I suggest them not worrying about mistakes in SL learning.	2.65	.489	40
I suggest them to learn from mistakes.	2.70	.470	40
I suggest them for writing diary in English.	2.55	.510	40
I suggest them to make friendship with native speakers.	2.60	.598	40

I suggest them to write letters in English.	2.75	.444	40
I suggest the learners to think in English.	2.70	.470	40
I suggest them not to hesitate in learning from the teacher.	2.60	.598	40
I advise them to learn new vocabulary consciously.	2.75	.444	40
I advise them to keep language note-book.	2.65	.489	40
I advise them to build a habit of self- study.	2.95	.224	40
I advise them to use computers in SL learning.	2.90	.308	40
I advise them to take notes the language used in their environment.	2.70	.470	40
I advise them to revise their lessons regularly.	2.75	.444	40
I advise them to watch TV in English.	2.65	.489	40
I advise them to give more time in learning English.	2.70	.470	40
I advise them to give more time in learning English.	2.70	.470	40
I advise learners to have some additional lessons.	2.80	.410	40

Descriptive Statistics gave us the Mean, Std. Déviation and number of respondents (N) who were put under the analysis process. The mean value of ‘the strategy of use’ is 24.95 which is the highest of all the strategies and affects more the students’ learning second language however the nature of text is an important factor in the selection of suitable strategy to apply in the teaching learning of English language. The performance of the language learners to understand the language functions were improved by using these strategies in their learning process. The standard deviation value indicates the difference from the mean value and in this analysis the std. deviation value of the strategy of suggestion is greater than the other two sets of the strategies.

Table 2
Factor matrix for the strategies of use, suggest and advice

Items	Strategy of Use	Strategy of Suggest	Strategy of Advice	Remarks
Factor1	.731			
Factor2		.417		
Factor3			.335	
Eigenvalue	1.483	.986	.531	1.483
Total variance Explained %(49.428)	49.428	32.879	17.693	49.428
Sig.*	.226			

In the current study 27 items from the Language Learning Strategy Inventory (LLSI) were subjected under observation and out of these 27 items, the first 09 items were similar and they were placed under the title ‘the strategy of use’ and the items from 10 to 18 belonged to the same category and these were analyzed under the heading ‘the strategy of suggest’ and the items from 19 to 27 were grouped under the category ‘the strategy of advice’ and factor analysis was carried out. The highest Eigen value was found for the ‘strategy of use’ and it was recoded 1.483 whereas the factor analysis values for these factors are 49.428, 32.879 and 17.693 for the strategy of use, the strategy of suggest and

the strategy of advice respectively. It is evident from these values that the impact of learning strategies was positive in learning the L2 from the learners' perspective. Factor analysis depicts the correlation among the various strategies used by the subject specialists of English for effective learning. The data narrates correlation matrix value of .062 for strategies of suggestion and .087 for the strategies of advice which indicates that the correlation value for both the variables is positive and by using these strategies in the classroom the learning of students will be increased and a correlation value of 0.87 and 0.477 for the strategies of use and suggestion. Here is the highest value of the strategy of the suggestion (.477) indicates the greater correlation and is more significant. Applying the communalities extraction technique in SPSS the significant values for different factors was calculated. The extraction value for the strategy of use was observed .731 that is greater than .5 which indicates the importance of the strategy of use in the process of language learning.

Findings

The current study was focused on the correlation of the Language Learning Strategies (LLS) with the understanding of mechanism of language learning. Through the interpretation of data obtained from the respondents it was found that the comprehension of LLS enhances the performance of language learners by transforming them into a strategic learner. The language learners became active learners and their interest in the classroom activities was increased and so the performance was also improved. In the current scenario these strategies have been used by different researcher in different contexts (Charoento, 2016; Alhaysony, 2017; Dawadi, 2017) and found out the most frequently used language learning strategies.

Conclusion

This research study was conducted to assess the performance of language learners at intermediate level while using the Language Learning Strategies (LLS). It was concluded that those learners who use these strategies more frequently in their learning they perform well. The performance of the learners was measured by their participation in various classroom activities by the concerned subject specialists. As the major research question in the present research study was the use of learning strategies in the learning of English as Second Language (ESL) and to increase the frequency of these learning strategies in the classroom enhances the performance of the learners. It is concluded from the results of the current study that most of the young learners use these strategies in the learning of second language with conscious effort and their performance level is greater than the language learners who are non-strategic. The least used language learning strategy showed the mean value of 2.55 that is significant and the highest mean value measured in this study was 2.95 that showed the significant and frequent use of the learning strategy in the learning process. The results of the study showed the strength of the learning strategies in the process and provided a guideline for the language learners towards their understanding of actual mechanism.

Recommendations

On the basis of the current research study it is recommended that these Language Learning Strategies (LLS) should be the part of daily classroom instructions to enhance the performance of the language learners as active learners. The use of these strategies will not only increase the conceptual level of the learners but they also will be able to understand the actual mechanism of the language learning process that was the main objective of the current research study. It is recommended that the language learning strategies should be applied according to the nature of text and they should be based on the required skill to be learnt. The classroom activities should be arranged according to the of the language learners. Strong classroom management skills are necessary to use these learning strategies in the classroom to get the expected learning outcomes so the language teacher should be equipped with the effective managerial skills and should have a sound knowledge of all the communicative competencies.

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