

نشریه دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی

دانشگاه شهید باهنر کرمان

دوره جدید، شماره ۲۱ (پیاپی ۱۸) بهار ۸۶

تاثیر عوامل برانگیختن آگاهی و روشهای تدریس بر استفاده از راهبردهای یادگیری توسط

فراگیران مذكر زبان انگلیسی* (علمی - پژوهشی)

دکتر فیروز صدیقی

استاد بخش زبانهای خارجی و زبانشناسی شیراز

سعید نظری

کارشناس ارشد آموزش زبان انگلیسی

چکیده

تحقیق حاضر به بررسی استفاده آگاهانه و ناآگاهانه از راهبردهای یادگیری توسط فراگیران مذكر زبان انگلیسی در دو روش تدریس مختلف پرداخته است. ۱۶۰ زبان آموز مذكر سطح متوسط در سنین مختلف در این تحقیق شرکت کرده اند که ۸۰ نفر از کانون زبان ایران با روش تدریس سمعی-زبانی و ۸۰ نفر از مرکز زبان دانشگاه با روش تدریس ارتباطی انتخاب شده اند. برای جمع آوری داده های مورد نیاز از دو نوع ابزار استفاده شد: آزمون بسندگی آکسفورد (Allan, 1985) برای بدست آوردن میزان بسندگی شرکت کنندگان و مجموعه راهبردهای یادگیری زبان (SILL, Oxford, 1986) برای ارزیابی میزان استفاده فراگیران از انواع راهبردهای یادگیری. همچنین برای برانگیختن آگاهی فراگیران

تاریخ پذیرش نهایی مقاله: ۸۲/۵/۲۰

* تاریخ دریافت مقاله: ۸۵/۸/۲۳

در مورد استفاده از راهبردهای یادگیری، هر گروه آزمایشی قبل از پرکردن پرسشنامه مربوط، آموزش دیدند. تجزیه و تحلیل نتایج بدست آمده از گروههای آموزش دیده نشان داد که فراگیران مرکز زبان دانشگاه شیراز از چهار نوع راهبردهای شناختی، جبرانی، عاطفی و اجتماعی بهره بیشتری برده اند. در دو نوع دیگر یعنی فراشناختی و حافظه، فراگیران کانون زبان ایران بیشتر سود جسته اند. همچنین در هر موسسه فراگیران آموزش دیده در استفاده از تمامی راهبردها بهتر از آنهاییکه آموزش ندیده بودند عمل کردند.

واژگان کلیدی: برانگیختن آگاهی ، روشهای تدریس، راهبردهای یادگیری

**The Impact of Consciousness Raising and Teaching
Methodology Factors on the Use of Learning Strategies by
Male EFL Learners**

F. Sadighi, Ph.D. S. Nazari, M.A.

Shiraz University Arsanjan Azad University

Abstract

The present study investigated the (un)conscious uses of learning strategies by male EFL learners taught in two different methods. 160 intermediate EFL male students in different age groups participated in this study, 80 from the Iran Language Institute (ILI), an audiolingually-based institute, and 80 from the Shiraz University Language Center (SULC), a communicatively-oriented institute. To gather the necessary data two types of instruments were used: An Oxford Placement test (Allan, 1985) to elicit the participants' level of proficiency and the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL, Oxford, 1986) to assess the frequency with which the students use the six types of learning strategies. Also to raise the subjects' consciousness regarding the use of strategies, each experimental group was instructed before completing the questionnaire. The results obtained from the trained groups revealed that in four types of strategies; that is, cognitive, compensation, affective, and social, the SULC students were better users. In the other two types; meta-cognitive and

memory, the ILI learners benefited more. Also the trained students in each institute outperformed the untrained in the use of all types of strategies.

Keywords:

Consciousness Raising, Teaching Methodology, Learning Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Language awareness (LA), as a concept combines the notions of consciousness-raising (Rutherford, 1987; Sharwood Smith 1981) and input enhancement (Sharwood Smith, 1991). It is generally defined as a person's sensitivity to and awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life (Hawkins, 1984; James and Garret, 1991). In the specific context of L2 learning and teaching, it refers to the deliberate attempt to draw learners' attention to the formal properties of their L2 in order to increase the degree of explicitness required to promote L2 learning (Kumaravadivelu, 1993b; Lee, 2004).

There are three types of strategy training in general, including awareness training, one-time strategy training, and long-term strategy training. One-time and long-time strategy trainings involve learning and practicing strategies with actual language tasks with a difference in the period of training. Awareness training, on the other hand, deals with consciousness raising or familiarization training. In this type, the participants become aware of and familiar with the general idea of language learning strategies and the way such strategies can help the learner accomplish various language tasks (Oxford, 1990a and 2004; Chengbin, 2004; and Sadighi, 2004).

The focus of this study is to investigate how consciousness raising can affect the subjects' use of language learning strategies, and how this awareness influences the subjects' performance in two different teaching methods. As a result, this study tries to investigate whether there is a significant difference between: (1) experimental audio-lingual and experimental communicative groups, (2) experimental and control audio-lingual groups, and (3) experimental and control communicative groups. The results of this study can help the teachers to get more information about their students' conscious state and its effect on the type of the strategies they use. There were a number of limitations to this study as only two types of methodology were considered. Also, the level of English proficiency for these subjects is restricted to intermediate, and the participants' sex is delimited to males.

BACKGROUND

Learning is a process of conscious intervention whereby performance initiated by the natural and unconscious process of acquisition is monitored. Two processes, in general are as: acquisition, which is natural, unconscious, primary, and causative; and learning, which is unnatural, conscious, auxiliary, and corrective (Widdowson, 1990). It follows by definition that learning can only be brought into operation when the occasion allows leisure for conscious thought about the language being used and its conformity to rule, when there is time to 'focus on form'. The belief that L2 learning can potentially make use of explanation underlies distinctions such as those made by Palmer (1926) between 'spontaneous capacities' for acquiring speech

and 'the studial capacity' through which people study language, and by Krashen (1981a) between 'acquisition' and 'learning' (the latter being conscious and available only to older learners). Justifying conscious understanding in L2 learning involves separating L2 learning from L1 learning with respect to whether the learners get explanations. After a period of absorption, this conscious rule would become part of the unconscious ability to use the language.

Riley (1985) has suggested '*sensitization*' of the students by using some features of the L1 to help them understand the L2.

"Certain structures are acquired only when learners are mentally ready for them" (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982) and this readiness can be facilitated by language awareness activities which alert learners to ways in which features of these structures are used to achieve communication.

Language awareness approaches do not in themselves cause language acquisition to take place but those approaches which focus on learner investment and learner discovery do help learners to pay informed attention to features of their input and can create the curiosity, alertness and positive valuation which are prerequisites for the development of communicative competence.

The concept of learning strategies is based in part on cognitive learning theory, in which learning is seen as an active, mental, learner-constructed process. It is necessary to mention that alternative terms are used (appropriately or not) in different texts. Some of these terms, which have been used for learning strategies include "tactics, techniques, potentially conscious plans, consciously employed operations, learning skills,

functional skills, cognitive abilities, processing strategies, problem-solving procedures, and basic skills”(Wenden,1987, p.5).

Oxford (2004) describes learning strategies as the highly specific thoughts or actions that learners consciously take to enhance their own learning. Cohen (1998) defines that the term strategy in the second language learning sense has come to be applied to the conscious moves made by second language speakers intended to be useful in either learning or using the second language. Tarone (1983) defined a language learning strategy (LLS) as an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language to incorporate these into someone’s inter-language competence. Oxford (1990a, p.9) states that LLSs:

- allow learners to become more self-directed
- expand the role of language teachers
- are problem-oriented
- involve many aspects, not just the cognitive
- can be taught
- are flexible
- are influenced by a variety of factors.

The most comprehensive language learning strategy scheme, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), developed by Oxford (1990a), separates six strategy groups: (a) memory, (b) cognitive, (c) linguistic deficiency compensation, (d) meta-cognitive, (e) affective, and (f) social.

In regard to the relationship between LLS and some individual factors, Sadighi (2004) also investigated the relationship between attitude and motivation on language

learning strategy use among Iranian EFL learners at two language institutes applying two different teaching methods, Audio-lingual and Communicative approach. The findings showed a strong and close relationship between motivation and attitude and language learning strategy use. The more highly motivated and the more positively oriented attitudinally, the more they utilized strategies resulting in the enhancement of language learning. Also, he concluded that integratively-motivated students employ more strategies than instrumentally-oriented ones. In addition, Lee (2004) has carried out an experiment on the power of awareness and strategy use among 1,110 Korean students. The results showed the powerful influence of strategy awareness on the use of all types of strategies was highly significant.

Concerning method and methodology, Anthony (1963), Richards and Rodgers (1986), Richards, Platt & Platt (1992) Brown (1994), and Richard and Rodgers (2001) presented a number of definitions. A more or less classical formulation was suggested by Richard and Rodgers (2001) that considers methodology as the link between theory and practice and includes a number of instructional design features. These design features in turn might encompass stated objectives, syllabus specifications, types of activities, roles of teachers, learners, materials, and so forth.

Regarding schools of language teaching methodology, there have always been rises and falls of various methods. The period from the 1950s to the 1980s has often been referred to as "The Age of Methods," during which a number of quite detailed prescriptions for language teaching were proposed. Audio lingual method (ALM) developed as a result of the influence of

behaviorism, along with contrastive linguistics and structuralism. Brown (1994) presents the characteristics of the ALM in a list including these:

There is dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases, and over learning.

Structures are sequenced by means of descriptions presented by contrastive analysis and taught one at a time.

Successful responses are immediately reinforced.

There is a tendency to manipulate language and disregard content, and so forth.

Because Communicative Approach (CA) and the term communicative has been invested with so many meanings as Widdowson (1978b) explains, there are various versions of it, but one is so wide-spread as to be regarded as the 'standard' model whose theoretical framework is associated with American sociolinguists like Hymes, and British linguists like Halliday. Five characteristics of standard CA are as follows:

(1) teaching of appropriateness, (2) the centrality of message-focus, (3) simulating psycholinguistic processes, (4) the importance of risk taking skills, (5) and the development of free practice techniques.

METHOD

Participants

The participants in this study were 160 intermediate EFL male students of the Iran Language Institute (ILI) and the Shiraz University Language Center (SULC) in different age groups. Eighty students were from the ILI which is an audio-lingually-oriented institute and the other eighty were from the Shiraz

University Language Center, a communicatively-oriented institute. Four classes in each institute were selected at random, that is, four numbers in each list were extracted. They were chosen out of 10 intermediate classes in each institute. Two classes were considered as the control group and the other two were regarded as the experimental group. Since the questionnaire is in English, the students of lower levels did not take part in this study. Also, in order to delimit the scope of the study, advanced students were not considered.

Instrument

To gather the necessary data, two types of instruments were used along with a short instructional period for experimental groups beforehand. The first one is Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 1985), which is a standard proficiency test. This instrument is a highly reliable and valid test to place the subjects into different language proficiency groups. The results of a one way ANOVA presented in Table 3.1 show that there is no significant difference between four groups of proficiency.

Table 3.1 The difference between the means in four groups of proficiency

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.719	3	4.573	.579	.630
Within Groups	1231.875	156	7.897		
Total	1245.594	159			

The other one is the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL, Oxford, 1986), which is the most frequently used strategy questionnaire all over the world. This questionnaire is made of cognitive, compensation, memory, meta-cognitive, social, and affective strategies. Nyikos and Oxford (1993) reported Cronbach alpha of 0.96 for SILL. Table 3.2 summarizes the number of items related to each strategy type and the obtained Cronbach alpha.

Table 3.2 The number of items related to each strategy type and the obtained Cronbach alpha.

Strategy Types	Items	Total	Coronbach alpha
Memory	1-9	9	0.63
Cognitive	10-23	14	0.84
Compensation	24-29	6	0.70
Metacognitive	30-38	9	0.84
Affective	39-44	6	0.74
Social	45-50	6	0.83
Total		50	

RESULTS

First, for the four groups, that is, experimental and control groups in the ILI, and experimental and control groups in the SULC, the means and standard deviations were calculated to investigate the likely significant difference between the groups in strategies. When some differences were found, to see if such a difference is significant in the four groups of the study, a one way ANOVA was used. Subsequently a Scheffe test was used in order to see if there is any significant difference between: (1) experimental

group in the ILI and experimental group in the SULC, (2) experimental and control groups in the SULC, and (3) experimental and control groups in the ILI.

Question (1): *Are there any differences in the use of learning strategies between trained EFL learners being taught English using the audio-lingual method and those being taught English using a communicative-oriented method?*

The answer to this question is positive; that is, there are meaningful differences between two trained groups. These differences can be seen in the use of all types of strategies as follows. In four types of strategies; that is, cognitive, compensation, affective, and social, the SULC students were better users. In the other two types; that is, meta-cognitive and memory the ILI learners benefited more.

The obtained means for each strategy type in the experimental groups can be seen in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 The obtained means for each strategy type in experimental groups

	Mem	Cog.	Comp	Metacog.	Affec	Soci.
Exp. ILI	26.9	46.4	19.4	33.7	19.6	20.9
Exp. SULC	19.7	56.1	23.8	25.5	24.5	25.2

Question (2): *Are there any differences in the use of learning strategies between trained and untrained EFL learners being taught English using a communicative-oriented approach?*

The answer to this question is positive; that is, there are

significant differences between the two trained and untrained groups in the SULC. These differences can be seen in the use of all types of strategies. The obtained means for each strategy type in the experimental and control groups in the SULC can be seen in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 The obtained means for each strategy type in experimental and control groups in the SULC

	Mem.	Cog.	Comp.	Metacog.	Affec.	Soci.
Exp. SULC	19.7	56.1	23.8	25.5	24.5	25.2
Contr. ULC	15.8	40.8	17	18.2	17.3	19.1

Question (3): *Are there any differences in the use of learning strategies between trained and untrained EFL learners being taught English using the audio-lingual method?*

The answer to this question is also positive; that is, there are significant differences between the two trained and untrained groups in the ILI. These differences can be seen in the use of all types of strategies. The obtained means for each strategy type in the experimental and control groups in the ILI can be seen in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 The obtained means for each strategy type in experimental and control groups in the ILI

	Mem.	Cog.	Comp.	Metacog.	Affec.	Soci.
Exp. ILI	26.9	46.4	19.4	33.7	19.6	20.9
Cont. ILI	21.3	36.7	15.4	26	15.8	16.3

CONCLUSION

The results of this study came to this conclusion that there are some relations between consciousness raising, the methodology of teaching, and the learning strategies used by the EFL learners.

1. In the use of learning strategies between trained EFL learners being taught English using audio-lingual and communicative methods, meaningful differences were seen.

In four types of strategies; that is, cognitive, compensation, affective, and social, the SULC students were better users. In the two other types; that is, meta-cognitive and memory the ILI learners benefited more.

The reason behind the use of cognitive strategy may lie on the students' reason-based activities in the SULC classes, which help them improve their logical thinking. Also, the activities in the book which need students' deductive reasoning, especially in the intermediate and advanced levels may make them use this strategy more. This may not be seen in the ILI, due to the fact that the activities are pre-planned and dictated by the teachers or the system and no room for further deduction is provided.

Concerning compensation strategy, because in the SULC teachers provide more opportunity than the ILI for the students to interact, this may help the learners with a better chance to use intelligent guesses widely by taking advantage of linguistic and nonlinguistic clues. Also, because the focus is on meaning, learners may resort to mime and gesture to make sense. This may be more controlled in the ILI, where the emphasis is on form than meaning.

With regard to the higher use of affective strategy, it should be mentioned that in the SULC, students are less anxious in the

classroom. This is due to the fact that there is less stressful and friendlier atmosphere, usually established by the teachers in the SULC classes. Also, students are encouraged to participate in class activities. This can help them take risks more than the ILI learners.

With respect to social strategy use, because learners in the SULC have more chance to cooperate with peers when they are assigned pair and group work, they use this strategy more than the ILI learners. Also, in the SULC, cultural understanding is developed by learners because culture transmission is considered important in such classes. On the contrary, in the ILI there is no emphasis on learning about the culture.

As for the use of memory strategy among the ILI learners, it should be mentioned that the ILI students can store and retrieve new information better than the SULC students. The main reason may be interpreted as the role of memory in the ILI system. Because of the importance that audio-lingual method gives to drill practices, it is concluded that this may grow the capacity of memory. The second reason may be the evaluation system and its effect on students. Because it is mostly based on memorization, students are forced to memorize and improve their memory. For example, to get a good grade it is necessary for students to learn vocabulary and grammar structures by heart.

In relation to the use of meta-cognitive strategy, it can be said that the ILI learners have a more planned and organized schedule, which may help them set their objectives and goals better. Also in the ILI, learners are expected to follow their teachers exactly and this can only be achieved by the conscious use of meta-cognitive strategies such as paying attention and over

viewing with already familiar materials.

2. In the use of learning strategies between trained and untrained EFL learners being taught English using communicative approach some differences were seen.

The findings show that there are significant differences between the two trained and untrained groups in the SULC. These differences can be seen significantly in the use of all types of strategies; that is, memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective, and social. This can support the idea that consciousness raising makes the learners aware of all the types of strategies that they use in their approach to language learning.

3. Also in the use of learning strategies between trained and untrained EFL learners being taught English using audio-lingual method some differences were seen.

Again, the findings show meaningful differences between the two trained and untrained groups in the ILI. These differences can be seen in the use of all types of strategies. This may provide us with the fact that when consciousness of the learners is raised, they are mentally ready for what is going to happen in the next step and this mental awareness brings up significant results.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Awareness of the findings of this study leads the researchers to suggest that EFL teachers take some points into account.

1. Consciousness raising can definitely play an important role in teaching curriculum as the findings suggest. Teachers can implement this technique in the process of teaching each and every new lesson and help the learners make significant improvements.

2. In the ILI, to improve the learners' use of social strategy, the teacher should assign more pair and group work. The SULC students have more chance to interact with each other and improve their language ability by group work and peer correction. In the ILI the same opportunities should be provided. Also the ILI should implement cultural understanding in the teaching program by inserting new topics containing some information about the target language culture as the SULC does.
3. The ILI teachers can lower the learners stress and anxiety by providing friendlier and less authoritative classrooms. Also, students should be encouraged to participate in class activities. This can help them improve their risk-taking more than before.
4. The ILI can develop some activities in the textbooks, which demand students' deductive reasoning more. This may help the learners improve their logical thinking, which leads to the better use of cognitive strategy.
5. To improve memory strategy use, the SULC can help the students grow the capacity of memory by providing some supplementary materials, which are focused on memorization activities. Also, providing a planned and organized schedule can help students practice meta-cognitive strategy by making use of those programs to follow the teacher.

REFERENCES

- Allan, D. (1985). Oxford placement test 1B1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anthony, E. M. (1963). Approach, Method and Technique. *English Language Teaching*, 17, 63-67.
- Brown, H. D. (1994). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Chengbin, Y. (2004). University EFL Students' Strategy Use in the New Millenium: A Study in the Chinese Context. Paper presented at the 2nd Asia TEFL International Conference. Seoul, South Korea.
- Cohen, A. D. (1998). *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*. London: Longman
- Dulay, H., Burt, M., & Krashen, S. (1982). *Language Two*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hawkins, E. (1984). *Awareness of Language: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- James, C., & Garrett, P. (1991). *Language Awareness in the Classroom*. London: Longman.
- Krashen, S. (1981a). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford, Pergamon.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (1993b). *Interpretive Strategies for Self-Evaluating Teaching Acts*. Paper Presented at the 27th Annual TESOL Convention, Atlanta, GA.
- Lee, K. R. (2004). The Power of Awareness on Strategy Use. Paper presented at the 2nd Asia TEFL International Conference. Seoul, South Korea.
- Nyikos, M., & Oxford, R. L. (1993). A Factor Analytic

Study of Language-Learning Strategy Use: Interpretations from Information-Processing Theory and Social Psychology. *Modern Language Journal*, 77, 11-22.

Oxford, R. (1986). Development of the strategy inventory for language learning. Manuscript. Washington D. C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Oxford, R. (1990a). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. New York: Newbury House.

Oxford, R. (2004). *Transforming TEFL with Learning Styles and Strategies*. Paper presented at the 2nd Asia TEFL International Conference, Seoul, South Korea.

Plamer, H. E. (1926). *The Principles of Language Study*, London, Harrap.

Richards, J. C., Platt, J. & Platt, H. (1992). *Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics*. England: Longman Group UK Limited.

Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. (1986). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Riley, P. (1985). Mud and Stars: Personal Constructs, Sensitization, and Learning. In Riley, P. (Ed.) (1985), *Discourse and Learning*, Longman, London.

Rutherford, W. E. (1987). *Second Language Grammar: Learning and Teaching*, Harlow, Longman.

Sadighi, F. (2004). Effects of Attitude and Motivation on the Use of Language Learning Strategies by Iranian EFL

University Students. Paper presented at the 2nd Asia TEFL International Conference, Seoul, South Korea.

Sharwood Smith, M. (1981). Consciousness-Raising and the Second Language Learner. *Applied Linguistics*, 2, 159-168.

Sharwood Smith, M. (1991). Speaking to Many Minds: On the Relevance of Different Types of Language Information for the L2 Learner. *Second Language Research*, 7(2), 118-132.

Tarone, E. (1983). Some Thoughts on the Notion of "Communication Strategy." In C. Faerch & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication* (Pp. 61-74). London: Longman

Wenden, A. L. (1987). Conceptual Background and Utility. In A. Wenden, A & Rubin, J. (Eds.), *Learner Strategies in Language Learning* (Pp. 3-13). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Widdowson, H. G. (1978b). The Teaching of English as Communication. *English Language Teaching*, 27, 15-19.

Widdowson, H. G. (1990). *Aspects of Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.