

Significance of Various Strategies for Teaching and Learning English

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Abstract: *This paper defines language learning related terminology like learning strategy, avoidance strategy in addition to strategies like skimming, scanning, rehearsal. Usage and appropriateness of each learning strategy are to be critically examined. It examines various learning and teaching strategies on the basis of their theoretical implications along with practical possibilities in order to make the students acquire the major language skills i.e. LSRW. Most importantly, all these learning strategies have been grouped into certain categories on the basis of their objectives, purpose and nature. To teach listening skill one can use 'multimedia strategy' and for reading skill 'skimming' and 'skipping' etc. One can use appropriate learning strategies to achieve language learning objectives. An effective use of learning strategies creates an active involvement of learners and supports in their language development. With an adept use of suitable strategies in language instruction, a teacher can accomplish his goal in content presentation through using traditional as well as modern technological strategies for best teaching objectives. Finally the conclusions are drawn by means of the review of literature indicated.*

Keywords: *Language Teaching and Learning Strategies, Scanning, Skipping, Rehearsal, Repetition.*

A 'strategy' is, "procedures used in learning, thinking, etc., which serve as a way of reaching a goal. In language learning, learning strategies and communication strategies are those conscious or unconscious processes which language learners make use of in learning and using a language" (Richards and John Talbot, 559). Through language learning strategies learners try to understand the meanings of words, grammatical rules, and other important aspects like syntactic structures, morphological constructions, and phonological features of the language they are learning. In L1 learning, the word "strategy" is sometimes used to refer to the ways that children process language, without implying either intentionality or awareness. For example, in trying to understand a sentence, a child may "use" the learning strategy that the first mentioned noun in a sentence refers to the person or thing performing an action. The child may then think that the sentence 'The people are supported by the king' means the same thing as 'The people supported the king'. In L2 learning, a strategy is usually a deliberate and conscious behaviour perform with the goal of learning. There are many categories of learning strategies have been identified, including 'cognitive strategies' in which the analysis of the target language, comparing what is newly encountered with what is already known in either the L1 or the L2, in addition to organize the information. 'Metacognitive strategies' in which the learners are aware of one's own learning by making an organized plan, and monitoring one's progress; seeking out friends from the native speakers of the target language or working with peers in a classroom setting. In addition, 'resource management strategies' such as setting aside a regular time and place for language study. Learning strategies have many advantages and they may be applied to simple tasks such as learning a list of new words, or more complex tasks involving language understanding and usage.

'Metacognitive strategy' is "a category of learning strategy which involves thinking about the mental processes used in the learning process, monitoring learning while it is taking place, and evaluating

learning after it has occurred”. For example, the use of ‘metacognitive strategies’ is beginning to learn a new language includes:

- Planning ways of remembering new words encountered in conversations with native speakers.
- Deciding which approaches to working out grammatical rules are more effective.
- Evaluating his or her own progress and making decisions about what to concentrate on in the future.

(Richards and John Talbot, p.361)

Most of the language learning and teaching strategies are intended to achieve necessary skills like Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. For listening comprehension, need to have a conscious plan to deal with incoming speech, particularly when the listener experiences problems due to incomplete understanding, such as by using a clarification strategy. To master the listening comprehension there are some important strategies, one of them is ‘selective listening’ in which teaching of listening comprehension as a strategy through which students are asked to attend to specific information that has been signalled prior to listening. To develop one’s memory, ‘rehearsal’ is an effective learning strategy that involves saying a new word or sentence to oneself to memorize it. In **levels of processing** models of memory, there are two kinds such as ‘maintenance rehearsal’ and ‘elaborative rehearsal’. ‘**Maintenance rehearsal**’ involves simple rote repetition where as ‘**elaborative rehearsal**’ involves deep semantic processing, resulting in more detailed associations and more durable memories, for instance, transforming the number sequence into something meaningful to remember a sequence of numbers for later recall.

For learning of each and every language skill, we need to have specific and apt learning strategy. For instance, ‘problem –solving strategy’ is to choose an appropriate article (a, an, or the) before a noun involved with problem-solving strategy in second and foreign language learning. In this strategy selection from several alternatives is to be done to reach a desired goal. ‘Avoidance strategy’ is used in speaking or writing a second or a foreign language. In this strategy, the speaker will often try to avoid use of a difficult word or structure to use a simpler word or structure. For example, a student who is not sure of the use of the relative clause in English may avoid using it and uses two simpler sentences like ‘*That’s my house*’, ‘*I live there*’ in place of ‘That’s the house where I live’.

Scanning and Skimming are two important strategies reading process. ‘Scanning’ is used when the reader wants to read any text with the objectives of locating a particular piece of information without necessarily understanding the rest of the text where as ‘Skimming’ is used when a reader wants to achieve a general understanding of a sample or selected segments of a text. Skimming involves the use of strategies for guessing where important information might be in a text. It involved with using basic reading comprehension skills on the selected parts of the text until a general idea of its meaning is obtained. In ‘Scanning’ strategy reader always has an intension to locate a particular piece of information. For instance, the reader may read through a chapter of a book as rapidly as possible in order to find out information about a particular date, such as when someone got married. There is another useful strategy called ‘SQ3R technique’ for students and for their study purpose. ‘SQ3R technique’ is an acronym for Survey – Question – Read – Recite – Review. This strategy makes use of the following necessary procedures:

- *Survey*: the student looks through the chapter or text, looks at headings, pictures, summaries, etc., to get an overall idea of what the chapter might contain.
- *Question*: the student turns headings and subheadings into questions.
- *Read*: the student reads to find answers to the questions, and marks any sections which are unclear.
- *Recite*: the student covers the chapter and tries to remember the main ideas, saying them to him or herself.
- *Review*: the student reviews the chapter and looks at the sections marked to see if they can now be understood.

(Richards and John Talbot, p.549 and p.550)

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The learning strategies can be grouped into five categories on the basis of their objectives, purpose and nature. Herrell and Jordan grouped the strategies for teaching and learning English language into the following:

- Strategies to encourage active involvement.
- Strategies for language development.
- Strategies for literacy development.
- Strategies for content instruction.
- Technology strategies for English learners.

There are several strategies to enhance active involvement in learning of English language for achieving adequate linguistic competence and performance such as 'preview/review' is "a teaching strategy usually associated with bilingual classrooms where as 'predictable routines and signals' according to Krashen, are very important in reducing the anxiety of English language learners. There is a need of set patterns, routines and signals help the students to get relaxed to be able to follow many events and activities during the day. 'Visual Scaffolding', 'Group Interactions', 'Cooperative learning', 'Learning Centres' and 'Cultural Studies' play a very important role in enhancing active involvement in language learning activities. 'Visual Scaffolding' is a multimedia related strategy in which the language used in instruction is become more understandable by using various media like drawings, photographs along with providing audio to hear English words. This strategy is useful in teaching vocabulary. For the implementation of 'Visual Scaffolding', there are few steps to be followed, i.e. identification of vocabulary, collecting visuals, reproduction and organization of visuals', engaging the students and building the for future use.

In addition to the strategies which promote active involvement in learning of English language, there are some other strategies like 'Total Physical Response', 'Realia', 'Model Talk', 'Role Play', 'Story Enactment' and 'Communication Games' help in language development in multiple ways. According to Asher, 'Total Physical Response' is an approach to second language acquisition. It is generally used with young children who have very little English knowledge. This strategy is most useful to introduce new vocabulary at any level. It creates a low anxiety atmosphere for an active and effective learning. Teachers introduce vocabulary and students respond by various acts like drawing, pointing, putting pictures in order that encourages active involvement and verifies understanding about the topic is being taught. In order to connect language acquisition to the real world, use of 'realia' strategies are most useful. 'Realia' is a terms for 'real things' or 'concrete objects' that are used in the language classroom to build vocabulary and background knowledge of various subjects. Realia provides the students to see, feel, hear and even smell the object being explored. 'Vocabulary Role Play' is a strategy to build vocabulary through dramatization. It is used to "encourage learners to make connections among their past experiences, the content currently being studied, and vocabulary that is new or being used in an unfamiliar way". (Herrell and Michael Jordan p.98)

To develop language literacy some kind of strategies are most useful such as 'Read Loud', 'Guided Reading', 'Imaging', 'Cohesion Links', 'Bilingual Books', 'Repetition', 'Cloze', 'Sorting Activity' etc. Each of these strategies focuses on a particular skill achievement. For instance 'Read Loud' strategy can be used to learn fluent, expressive reading of English text with techniques for clarifying vocabulary, timely check for understanding where as 'Guided Reading' is to teach reading skill in a small group setting by providing individual training. For this strategy, teachers can record students reading activities to determine the students reading level and their use of various cueing system such attention to phonics, meaning, word order, sentence structure and so on. 'Sorting Activities' can be used to organize information into meaning categories. 'Cohesion Links' are another useful strategy that can be used in written as well as spoken skill. Cohesion links often appear in the form of pronouns that refer back to a person, place or thing in a previous sentence. This strategy supports students in making sense of the English language both spoken and written. It can be used to explain the meaning of pronouns, ellipses, conjunctions, substitutions, and other abstract references in written and spoken language by giving appropriate examples.

Some content instruction strategies are very advantages in English language classroom such as 'Learning Strategy Instruction' for acquiring self-help skills, 'Integrated Curriculum Projects', 'Attribute Charting', 'Dictogloss', 'Gist', 'Tutorials' and 'Micro Selection'. Learning Strategy

Instruction is based on supporting students in understanding their own learning and in monitoring the methods, results of strategies they use in acquiring language skills. These are three kinds of strategies i.e. Metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social or affective strategies. This strategy is useful based on the theory (Kohn, 2004, p. 184) that 'learning by doing, common shorthand for the idea that active participation helps students to understand ideas or acquire skills is an established principle of progressive education'. 'Dictogloss' is a useful strategy for content instruction which is developed by Ruth Wajnryb for effective learning of English language focusing on fluent academic language. It supports learners in listening and recalling useful language learning models. In this strategy repetition of fluent reading of a text is involved. 'Generating interaction between schemata and text (GIST) by Cunningham, is used for backing up comprehension of informational text where as 'Tutorials' are being used as the 'continuous improvement model' on a daily basis.

In addition to many useful modern language learning strategies, we have technology based strategies for English learners to build background knowledge for language learning, especially to support Reading, Writing and Vocabulary development round the clock. Use of 'multimedia presentations' involved with various media such as audio and video equipments like VCRs, videodisc players, video cameras, computers, internet, related softwares support language learning activities. It provides flexibility in teaching and learning English. Multimedia presentations in the language classroom support students in conveying information to their peers. The use of combination of visuals helps students and teachers to connect vocabulary and meaning, particularly for English learners. A 'wiki' is a web technology that allows learners to create and edit easily even without knowledge of internet programming protocols, languages such as HTML. Students can take up language projects without a great deal of computer background. Using 'wiki' strategy, teacher can monitor the progress of individual group members to determine each student's involvement in the language project. As the new and advanced technologies available, it is very important to get awareness about the use computers, smart phones and technological applications in and out of language classroom. The technological language learning strategies are supported with the theory that 'language curriculum should be varied and present information in many formats, as authentically and interactively as possible'.

CONCLUSION

Every learning strategy has its own limitations and no one is complete within itself but the merits of each of these language learning strategies can be effectively used in order to teach a particular skill out of the four major language skills i.e. LSRW. From this paper, we can say that there are different English learning strategies in making a learner as well as an instructor proficient in various important language learning strategies. In order to teach listening skill one can use 'multimedia strategy' and for reading skill 'skimming' and 'skipping' etc. One can use appropriate learning strategies to achieve language learning objectives. An effective use of learning strategies creates an active involvement of learners and supports in their language development. With an adept use of suitable strategies in language instruction, a teacher can accomplish his goal in content presentation through using traditional as well as modern technological strategies for best teaching objectives.

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