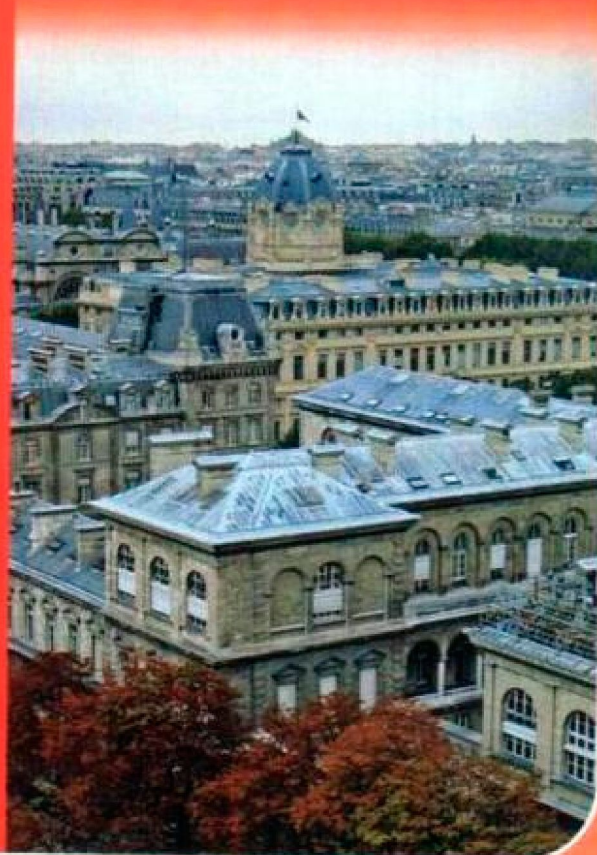**16**

МАТЕРИАЛИ
ЗА VIII МЕЖДУНАРОДНА
НАУЧНА ПРАКТИЧНА
КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ

НАЙНОВИТЕ НАУЧНИ
ПОСТИЖЕНИЯ - 2012
17-25 март , 2012

Том 16
Педагогически
науки

МАТЕРИАЛИ

ЗА VIII МЕЖДУНАРОДНА НАУЧНА ПРАКТИЧНА КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ

«НАЙНОВИТЕ НАУЧНИ ПОСТИЖЕНИЯ - 2012»

17-25 март 2012 година

Том 16
Педагогически науки

Kohan O., Mykhailova N.
National University of Food Technologies (Kiev, Ukraine)

HOW TO LEARN:
FROM DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

The students learning strategies, as has been reported by some research undertaken, have powerful impact on the students learning outcome. The study reported here tries to focus on how the learners from different cultural background learn a foreign language using their language learning strategies. The research was designed to investigate the learners' Language Learning Strategy differences from the perspective of their cultural backgrounds. This research reveals some evidence of the differences in the degree of strategies used by both groups. Memory, meta-cognitive, and affective strategies were more frequently used by EFL. On the other hand, the use of cognitive, compensation, and social strategies is higher in Australia than in Indonesia. The data gathered from the interview shows differences in language learning strategies due to differences of their learning culture.

The global development towards the 21st century which is characterized by the advancement in science and technology with all their impacts on every aspect of life has made us aware of the importance of language as a tool for global communication. The advancement in information technology has caused almost all existing phenomena on the globe to become transparent and interrelated so that interaction among nations have become stronger. The closeness of interaction among nations has prompted the function of a foreign language to become very significant. As a result, the teaching and learning of a foreign language has been placed in a very important position.

English as an international language has been taught in almost all countries in the world. English is a foreign language which is a compulsory subject to be taught in all schools from lower secondary to upper secondary schools. Even in some elementary schools, English is offered as an elective subject. However, we have seen that the proficiency in English of secondary school graduates still creates disappointment

among teachers themselves as well as parents. The unsatisfying quality of English in Indonesia of course is related to various different variables.

In line with the teaching and learning of a foreign language, different nations in the some part of the world have paid their attention to the teaching of Ukraine as a foreign language since in political, social, and economic domains Indonesia has played a very important role and this reality is in fact has placed Indonesian as a foreign language as a significant subject although due to recent development in the country especially from the security point of view the teaching of Indonesian has a little bit been therefore curtailed.

To date, there has been some research mostly both in L2 and outside L2 that has supported the effectiveness of using learning strategies. Brown (2001) confirms that successful mastery of the second language will be due to a learner's own personal «investment» of time, efforts, and attention to the target language in the form of battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language. He, further explains that the learning skill of any skill involves the investment of one's time and efforts in learning. So, what is actually the battery of language learning strategies?

Language learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that the students employ-often consciously-to improve their own progress in internalizing, storing, retrieving, and using L2 (Oxford 1990). The most common finding is that the use of appropriate language learning strategies leads to improved proficiency or achievement overall or in specific skill areas (see O'Malley and Chamot 1990, Oxford and Crookall 1989, Wenden and Rubin 1987). Some findings of relevant strategy research outside of the L2 field have also shown the powerful role of learning strategies in improving students' learning outcome.

Investigations dealing with the use of learning strategies applied outside the L2 field have also shown the power of learning strategies in the process of gaining knowledge. Almost all learning strategies categorized by Oxford (1990) either direct strategies-memory, cognitive, and compensation or indirect strategies-metacognitive, affective, and social strategies are employed by successful learners. For example, Oxford (1993) says that effective learners actively associate new information with existing information (Oxford, 1993).

According to the investigations concerning LLS, it is possible to distinguish among different types of strategies which assist learning at a more specific analysis. Successful learners often use metacognitive strategies such as organizing, evaluating, and planning their learning along with cognitive strategies like analyzing, reasoning, transferring information, taking notes, and summarizing. Those behaviors might be considered as truly effective learning (Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, and Campion 1983 in Oxford 1993). The findings have also revealed that competent learners often use compensation strategies such as guessing or inferencing. Memory strategy indicators which are often used by competent learners are grouping and structured reviewing.

The investigations mentioned above have also come up with the results which show that some of the best learners use affective and social strategies to control their

emotional state, to keep themselves motivated and on-task, and to get help when they need it (Dansereau 1985 in Oxford 1993). Many students are largely unaware of the potential of affective and social strategies.

Investigations dealing with the use of learning strategies applied outside the L2 field have also shown the power of learning strategies in the process of gaining knowledge. Almost all learning strategies such as metacognitive, cognitive, compensation, memory, affective, and social strategies are employed by successful learners. For example, Oxford (1993) says that effective learners actively associate new information with existing information (Oxford, 1993).

The use of language learning strategies by the students, however, is influenced by many factors-motivation, gender, cultural background, type of task, age and L2 stage, and learning style. For example, some Asian students use strategies that are different from those used by students from other cultural backgrounds, such as students from a Hispanic background (Politzer n.d., Politzer and Mc Groarty 1985, Reid 1987, Russo and Stewner-Manzanares 1985 in Oxford 1993).

In relation to the importance of the students'Harmer (2002) has the opinion that different culture value different learning behavior. Most of the time teachers insist upon one kind of good learner profile. Moreover, this situation lead to the teachers' demand that students should act in class in a certain way, whatever their learning background. Knowing this differences, the teachers should not risk imposing a methodology on the students that is inimical to their culture.

The use of language learning strategies will also be influenced by the class room culture. The social life of the classroom is central to the issue of an individual strategy use. From this perspective, language learning strategies are believed to be generated from the primary social practice of the classroom culture. Furthermore, it is said that the culture of the classroom plays an important role in fostering strategic learning. The social life of the classroom is central to the issue of an individual strategy use. For this reason, the classroom can be thought of as an alternate way. It can be understood like all cultures-a social arena in which learning is constructed as gradually increasing participation in the values, beliefs, and behaviors of a «community of practice»

Related to some views concerning classroom culture mentioned above, Donato and Mccormick (1994:462) reconceptualize the classroom as an emerging and dynamic culture which plays an important role in fostering strategic learning. In relation to the relationship between culture and the choice of language learning strategies, Ramsay has reported that multilingual subjects demonstrate greater flexibility in «restructuring mental frameworks» than do monolingual subjects (Ramsay 1980 in Nayak, et.al. 1990).

In line with the above observations, in her research, Lengkanawati (1997) has found that there are some differences in strategy choices by the students. The use of memory, metacognitive, and affective strategies by the Indonesian students in learning EFL is more frequent than the use of those by the students learning IFL (Indone-

sian as a foreign language). On the contrary, the use of cognitive, compensation, and social strategies by the students is higher. It is quite possible that these differences have something to do with their cultural background.

Investigations dealing with the use of learning strategies applied outside the L2 field have also shown the power of learning strategies in the process of gaining knowledge. Almost all learning strategies such as metacognitive, cognitive, compensation, memory, affective, and social strategies are employed by successful learners. For example, Oxford (1993) says that effective learners actively associate new information with existing information (Oxford, 1993).

This research is part of a larger study in which the contribution of the use of language learning strategies by EFL students and that of IFL students in their level of proficiency is investigated.

The study tries to explore three variables: (1) identification of the intensity of the use of language learning strategies by EFL and IFL students (2) the difference in language learning strategies used by the sample groups, and (3) identification of language learning strategies employed by good learners. This article reviewed only the differences in language learning strategies used by both sample groups and relate those differences to the students' cultural background that may lead to those differences.

To find out the significant differences between the intensity of the use of language learning strategies by the sample groups, the data were statistically calculated using analysis of variance.

Statistical calculation shows that among the six categories of language learning strategies, five categories are proved to have significant differences in the intensity of their being used. The data shows that there are significant differences in the intensity of using memory, cognitive, compensation, affective, and social strategies between EFL learners and IFL learners. There is no significant difference in the use of metacognitive strategies by EFL and IFL learners.

The intensity of using memory strategies and affective strategies by EFL students is higher than that by IFL students, while the intensity of using cognitive, compensation, and social strategies is higher by IFL students than that by the EFL students. What would make them different? The following part will try to analyze the possible factors which may have brought about those differences.

The intensity of using memory strategies by EFL students is higher than that of the IFL students.

The cultural behavior influences the classroom behavior in terms of the students' way of thinking. On the other hand, although now it is beginning to change especially probably after the reform era, some parents or teachers are very dominant.

If we take a look at the indicators in the compensation strategies, these strategies are used to overcome students' limitation in knowledge in the target language. Some research findings outside the L2 field show that competent learners use compensation strategies such as guessing and inferencing. Risk taking principle in learning a lan-

guage is very important. This kind of behavior will also strengthen the learners' strategic competence which will be very useful for learning a language.

There is a slight difference in the use of metacognitive strategies by EFL and IFL students but the difference is not significant. EFL students' intensity in the use of these strategies is bigger than that of the IFL students'. These differences, actually, have some relationship with the status of the subject matter in the university. The status of IFL in the universities where this research took place is not the main major while the status of EFL is the main major. Most of the students taking IFL in those universities have double majors covering such subject matters as economics and education.

The intensity of the use of affective strategies by EFL learners is also higher than that by IFL learners. Brown (1994) says that successful language learners are willing to take a risk in the game of language. This principle will help the students improve their speaking ability.

There has been much less research done on social and affective strategies in general. This limitation may help explain why social and affective strategies are far less frequently found. It is also possible that learners are not familiar with paying attention to their own feeling and social relationships as part of the L2 learning process (Oxford 1990).

The influence of the students' cultural background on the use of these strategies is very obvious.

If we take a look at the social strategy indicators, the lack of use of these strategies by the Indonesian students has also been influenced by their cultural background. Some of the social strategy indicators are asking for clarification or verification, asking for correction, cooperating with peers, and cooperating with proficient users of the target language. The first two social strategy indicators-asking for clarification or verification and asking for correction are rarely used by EFL students. Very few respondents involved in this research dared to put forward questions to the teachers. One of the competent respondents admitted that she would rather try to solve her problems in their learning by herself than asking her peer or her teacher. This behavior might be influenced by the educational system within the family where the parents are very dominant.

On the other hand, this kind of behavior is very common among people and it is reflected in classroom culture. IFL students were very active asking for clarification to the teachers or to their peer. During the observations many times the students were very active using these strategies. This also has something to do with their cultural background in which the students are used to asking questions or asking for clarification.

Other social strategy indicators like cooperating with peers and cooperating with proficient users of the target language are also rarely used by the Indonesian students. This is very contradictory with the Indonesian way of life principle-gotong royong. Culturally, this principle used to be the «fundamental» way of life of people but now it has changed. This principle might still exist in the rural areas or suburbs but not in urban areas where people tend to be more individualistic.

The intensity of using the strategies-cooperating with peers or with proficient user of the target language is low among the students possibly because most Indonesian students are shy to show that they don't know something. In the classroom, if they don't understand the teacher's explanation very few students are willing to admit that they need further explanation.

This research report has focused on tracing the differences in the intensity of the use of language learning strategies between EFL learners and IFL learners and tried to analyze the differences from the respondents' cultural background point of view. From the analysis we can conclude that the choice and the intensity of using language learning strategies is influenced by many factors, one of which is the students' cultural background. The research findings tell us that in some strategies EFL students are ahead of IFL students and in some others, they are left behind. I believe making them aware of these strategies through explicit or implicit training during classroom teaching would be beneficial.

References

1. Brown, H.D. 1994. Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy. Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

2. Donato and Mccormick 1994. A sociocltural perspective of language learning strategies: The Role of Mediation. The Modern Language Journal. 78,iv.

3. Nayak, N. et.al. 1990. Language learning strategies in monolingual and multilingual adults. Language Learning. Vol 40:2, pp221-244.

4. O'Malley & Chamot, A.U. 1990. Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. Oxford R.L. 1990. Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know. New York: Newbury House.

6. Oxford R.L. 1993. Research on Language Learning Strategies. Annual Review of Applied Lingusitics. Vol 13, 175-187.

7. Oxford, R.L. and Crookall, D. 1989. «Research on Language Learning Strategies: Methods, Findings, and Instructional Issues» The Modern Language Journal 73, iv 404-419.

8. Wenden, A. and Rubin, J. (Eds.) 1987. Learner Strategies for Language Learning. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.