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Language Learner Strategies for Building EFL Learners' Autonomy

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ABSTRACT

The critical discussions and matters in enhancing students' learning performance, knowledge, and language proficiency have received a remarkable degree of attention in educational contexts. This study was undertaken to encourage learners to build the required competence in the foreign language by utilizing learning strategies so that they could become autonomous learners. Language learners' learning difficulties while learning a foreign language were identified in this study. With regard to problems which language learners faced in learning a foreign language, the teachers are able to recognize and to utilize appropriate language learning strategies in order to develop autonomy in learners who conceptualize and use those strategies in the foreign language. The research design adopted for the present study was survey method. The data for the study were collected with the use of a questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered to a total of 60 EFL learners who were selected from a university in Iran. It was used to assess learners' awareness and perceived use of strategies and to provide data on their best utilized strategies. Results have been driven through statistical analysis. The analyzed data reveal the students' styles and assist teachers to take part in shifting the strategies and heighten language learners' autonomy. The findings support the claim that knowing and making language learners aware of the most appropriate strategy would assist learners to improve their autonomy and to enhance their learning.

Keywords: language teaching and learning, language learner strategies, EFL learners, foreign language learning, learners' autonomy

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1. Introduction

Various claims have been made regarding numerous aspects of language

teaching and learning. Among all of these aspects, language learner and Language Learner Strategies (LLS) have received a

remarkable degree of pro and con discussions among language experts, researchers, teachers, and language learners during last decades. The introduction of LLS constituted part of a basic shift of particular attitudes and viewpoints in thinking about different language learning process. This led to the emergence of a new version of pedagogy which persistently concentrates on the decisive role of language learners. Macaro (2007) remarked human agency and psychological aspects of learning a foreign language should be taking into account. According to Cohen and Macaro (2007) language learning was primarily seen as a psychological phenomenon. At that time, grammar was learnt as an individual habit without a social context. With the advent of Chomskyan revolution, Universal Grammar (UG) got popularity. UG deals with an ideal speaker and a perfect competence. Later in 1980's Hymes concentrated on the rules of use and the social context of language teaching and learning. He took account of socially conditioned aspects of language which were regarded as the acceptable patterns of language learning.

The learner-centered approaches resulted from Chomskyan revolution in which learners rather than the teachers were the dominant characters of the language classrooms. Teachers act as the facilitators and counselors of the learner-centered approaches. Therefore, learners should be instructed to determine their own learning strategies to enhance their academic gains without the assistance of their teachers. Based on what Cohen and Macaro (2007) declared it is in this context that the word strategy gained increasing prominence as a concept. This resulted into the systematic popularity of LLS and training proficient language learners. There is a general consensus among language scholars that focus on LLS assists students become more

effective learners and facilitates the activation of a learner-centered philosophy (Nunan, 1988; Nunan, 1997). Furthermore, it is argued that learners who have developed skills in learning-how-to-learn would be better able to effectively use classroom learning opportunities and would be more appropriately equipped to continue with language learning outside of the classroom (Lillian & Nunan, 2011).

In this respect learning a new language means to be able to properly and effectively use LLS for the purpose of being independent learners. LLS and training autonomous learners have recently become the core issues of different conferences and the most well-known journals of the world. Students have encountered a series of challenges in learning a new language, in particular, a foreign language. These challenges might occur within discourse, within the social context, within the academic context, or inside the head of the learner. The utilization of appropriate LLS would be of great help for learners to overcome their dilemmas, to improve their achievements, and become more successful learners. Moreover, language teachers should take the full responsibility to assist their students in language learning in order to develop LLS and finally become proficient language learners. They should also stimulate a sense of responsibility on the part of the learners for their learning through independent study and to apply well-designed activities to develop autonomy and independency in learners. On the other hand, learners should be able to take control of their own learning, to find solutions to problems in their learning, to act and learn autonomously without ignoring the teacher's influence on their promotion towards autonomy. Effective second language learning acts as one of the factors which guide the learner uses his language in his daily life with respect to his needs and



goals. Research into learning strategies has concentrated on a wide range of questions and issues.

Oxford (1989) has suggested that the use of learning strategies in language classroom viewed as a significant cause of EFL learners' learning success and achievement. Therefore, the significance of LLS on EFL learners' learning achievement is not deniable. It is known that LLS is of high significance for teachers and learners and researchers. As a result, LLS and its effect on learners' autonomy have become the main concern of many studies. For the abovementioned reasons, the current paper focused on the importance of LLS and the contribution of these strategies to the training of autonomous language learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language Learner Strategies

The article of Joan Rubin in 1975 has announced the birth of LLS research. Rubin in her article entitled 'What the "Good Language Learner" Can Teach Us' sat out techniques and approaches used by successful language learners in order to develop effective learning. Her answers contributed to the evolution of a new trend in language teaching and learning which is now into its fourth decade. Strategies are some forms of activities and plans of actions that are employed in response to problems when and where they occur. They are used to achieve a long-term goal. Thus, as it is obvious, strategies are goal-driven activities. Macaro (2001) stated the fact that awareness and use of strategies will result into more effective language acquisition is among the hypothesis which tested by learning strategy researchers.

The concept of LLS, which is of great help for many learners, is described as a general term. Various claims have been made regarding this concept. For example, Oxford

(1990) defined LLS as "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information." She also described LLS as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). According to this definition LLS are the actions which are related to learners. Therefore, the role of a learner is of great prominence in learning process. A learner has an ultimate goal in his/her learning. This is the most popular definition of LLS proposed by Oxford. In order to achieve this defined goal, the learner should take responsibility of and take control of his/her learning and of the utilized strategies. Moreover, the goal of learning strategies is to "affect the learner's motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge" (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986, p. 315).

There is a general agreement among scholars that learners who are highly motivated tend to use a wide range of strategies and to use them more frequently than the less motivated learners. The application of learning strategies is one of the best solutions to overcome the learners' learning difficulties. LLS guide learners to continue to learn when they do not have the required knowledge. Learners continue to learn to become more interested in learning, to develop their awareness of LLS, and to create a sense of autonomy. On the other hand, teachers should help learners practice strategies, when they run into difficulty doing an activity, by reminding them of the strategies which have already learned. They should act as counselors and direct learners to build strategy knowledge of different strategies including cognitive and

metacognitive strategies till they become autonomous learners.

2.2 Classifications of Language Learner Strategies

The development of cognitive psychology paved the way for the conduction of many studies in the realm of LLS (Williams & Burden, 1997). There are many researchers introduced diverse taxonomies of LLS. Rubin (1989), Oxford (1990), and O' Malley and Chamot (1990) among others, Stern (1975) and Naiman *et al.* (1987), proposed three most comprehensive categorizations for LLS. Their classifications can be seen to be weighted in terms of academic or study skills. Cohen and Macaro (2007) stated such skills take into account the repertoire of what a learner might go through in order to deal with numerous demands with which they are encountered in learning a second language. The comparison of these taxonomies suggested that the basic foundation and nature of all these classifications are not much different from each other.

Rubin (1989) classified LLS into three prime categories which may contribute directly or indirectly to learning. This taxonomy includes a) learning strategies; b) communication strategies; and c) social strategies. Classification and verification, monitoring, and memorization, guessing/ inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, and practice are all the strategies which directly contribute to learning and are under the first category of Rubin's classification. These processes are considered as cognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies are one type of learning strategy that learners use in order to learn more successfully. These include repetition, organizing new language, summarizing meaning, guessing meaning from context, and using imagery for memorization. On the other hand, metacognitive learning strategies are used to

control or self-direct the language learning. They include planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Metacognitive learning strategies indirectly lead to learning. Creating opportunities for practice and production tasks related to communication contribute to indirect learning. Other researchers, for example, Stern (1975, p. 31) identified strategies of the Good Language Learner (GLL): a) a personal learning style or positive learning strategies; b) an active approach to the task; c) a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and empathy with its speakers; d) technical know-how about to tackle a language; e) strategies of experimentation and planning with the object of developing the new language into an ordered system and/or revising this system progressively; f) constantly searching for meaning; g) willingness to practice; h) willingness to use language in real communication i) self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use; and j) developing the target language more and more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it. The weakness of this classification is that it is not based on empirical investigations. This conceptual classification formed based on Stern's experience as a teacher and furthermore, the review of the related literature. Later in 1978, in order to compensate Stern's classification shortages, scholars sorted his classifications into five major strategies. They suggested the following categories: the first category is the "active task approach in which GLLs were active in their response to learning situations; they intensify efforts where necessary; they practiced regularly; they identified problems; they turned everyday life experiences into learning opportunities. The second one is the realization of language as system in which GLLs referred to their own native language 'judiciously' and made comparisons; made guesses and inferences about language;



responded to clues; systematized language. The third category is the realization of language as means of communication in which GLLs often concentrated on fluency rather than accuracy (especially in early stages of learning); looked for communicative opportunities; looked for sociocultural meanings. The fourth category related to the management of effective demands stating GLLs realized that learning a language involves emotional responses which they must take on broad as part of their learning. And the last category is the monitoring of L2 performance in which GLLs reviewed their L2 and made adjustments” (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1996, pp. 30-33). The above classification is not a comprehensive list; it is not possible to expect a learner to do all these activities at the same time. Besides, doubts have arisen over the teachability of these strategies. The next classification has been developed to improve the previous categories. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) conducted LLS research within a cognitive theoretical framework which was derived from Anderson’s study. This seminal work provided a theoretical background to the majority of LLS research in the 1980s. Metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies are the three chief categories of LLS suggested by O’Malley and Chamot in 1990. They clarified LLS in the following descriptions: 1) metacognitive strategies deal with planning, monitoring, and evaluating the cognitive processes; 2) cognitive strategies are the actual processing of the language in the brain of the individuals and finally; 3) social strategies refer to all those means of dealing with affective and social aspects in language learning conditions. Oxford (1990) generated the most famous taxonomy. It consisted of six categories including memory strategies which consider storing and

retrieving of new information; cognitive strategies which regard manipulation or transformation of the target language; compensation strategies which imply the use of the new language for comprehension and production purposes; metacognitive strategies which go beyond cognitive devices and provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process; affective strategies which consider learners' emotional, attitudes, motivation and values and social strategies which concentrated on learner’s communication with those who utilize target language.

Based on the above taxonomies, it can be said that there are two fundamental taxonomies of LLS: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Each of these strategies has certain characteristics. For example, learners use mental abilities to understand their learning while using the cognitive strategies. In order to store the new information, the learners use the available memory strategies. On the other hand, the strategies, which enable learners to ignore knowledge gaps and use the language, are compensation strategies. Indirect strategies provide indirect support for language learning. Metacognitive strategies provide opportunities for learners to control and reflect their own learning. Research indicates that learners, who are taught the learning strategies underlying their learning, are more adequately motivated than those who are not taught. In addition, some studies have indicated that all of the learners are not automatically aware that which strategies work best for them. As a result, explicit strategy training, combined with thinking about how learners go about learning various strategies, can result into more effective learning (Nunan, 1999). Cohen (1998) and Wenden (2002) pointed out it is possible to combine learning strategy training with

learning programs. For example, Cohen and Apeh (1980) studied the impact of strategy training on vocabulary acquisition. They reported that particular strategies including the paired-associated technique led to successful acquisition. Another study further investigated the effect of various kinds of strategy training such as metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective on different language skills. The findings of the study showed that training had a significant impact on speaking skill but not on listening skill (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Kupper, 1985). Nunan (1997) examined the impacts of strategy training on four major aspects of the learning process which is consisted of student motivation, student knowledge of strategies, the perceived utility of strategies, and actual strategy use. The results showed that subjects of the experimental group which was systematically trained in a range of strategies outperformed the subjects of the control group on measures of motivation, knowledge and perceived utility. The study, however, indicated that the relationship between strategy training and acquisition remains indirect. Researchers have also shown that the learners who are more proficient tend to employ metacognitive strategies than the less proficient learners (Schraw, 1994; King, 1991). Affective strategies help learners to manage their emotions, confidence, and attitude towards learning while social strategies accelerate interaction with other individuals including the users and speakers of the target language in order to learn that language. The last point is that these strategies lead proficient learners to use more of these strategies than less proficient learners.

2.3 Learner Autonomy

The word autonomy was initially derived from politics and philosophy. It has a Greek origin which dates back to seventeenth

century. It is from Greek *autonomia* 'having its own laws', from *autos* 'self'+ *nomos* 'law'. The dictionary definition of autonomy is as follows: a region or an organization to govern itself independently. It is the ability to act and make decisions without being controlled by anyone else. Autonomy takes into accounts different fields including language learning and is related to different perspectives, for example, technical, psychological, sociocultural, or political-critical perspectives. The first one who introduced learner autonomy was Holec (1981). He defined autonomy as: "... the ability to take charge of one's own learning, to have, and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3). Holec (1981) stated that determining the objectives, personality of the learners, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition, and evaluating what has been acquired are the concepts which give autonomy to learners. As it is obvious autonomy is not an absolute concept.

According to Oxford (1989), a number of studies reported that although language learners with different levels of language proficiency use different strategies, most of them are not really aware of the strategies they deploy or the strategies that appears to be beneficial to use. Learner autonomy and teacher autonomy are two main types of independency in language teaching and learning. The relationship between teacher and learner, which Widdowson (1990) called sociology of the classroom, is the critical component of language contexts. According to him, teachers and learners have dual functions: teacher authority and learner autonomy. In order to build up autonomy, learners naturally develop their own norms and expectations and are able to participate more fully and freely in the development of



their own learning. It does not mean that they learn language without the presence of the teacher. The teachers' role is to develop conditions which guide their students to become more autonomous and independent in their own learning. Little (1991, p. 86) signified some facts in terms of learner's autonomy. He said that: a) in teacher-student interaction, autonomy does not mean that the teacher does not have any responsibility in the classroom environment; b) autonomy is not something that teachers do to the learners, it is not implied the existence of another teaching method; c) autonomy is not a single, easily described behavior; and d) autonomy is not a steady state achieved by learners. In order to build up learners' autonomy, they need to be encouraged to bring their own materials, and to design their own tasks.

Cohen and Macaro (2007, p.40) defined the value of 'autonomy' at three various levels: 1) "autonomy of language competence: the threshold level at which learners can say or write what they want to say or write, 2) autonomy of language learning competence: the level at which learners can deploy cognitive and metacognitive strategies consistent with or in place of the teacher's teaching approaches, and also without the immediate presence of a teacher, and 3) autonomy of choice: the learners' role in determining personal language goals, the designated purposes for learning the language and proficiency goals, and the extent to which the learner has input into the content and modality of the language curriculum". Teachers should support their students to properly use the effective language learning strategies which guide them toward autonomous and active learning. Learners should be able to both take charge of their own learning and follow guidance from their teachers. Learner autonomy entails learners to be aware of their own methods of

learning so that they could be able to promote their strengths and overcome their weaknesses (Lier & Liam, 1996). In the literature there are many studies showing the relation between LLS use, learners' autonomy, and language achievement. Jones (1987) attempted to investigate the differences in the strategy awareness between effective and ineffective learners. The results showed effective learners were aware of the processes underlying their own learning and try to match strategies to learning goals. Nunan (1991) reported that effective language learners developed a high degree of autonomy and were able to reflect on the processes underlying their own learning. Furthermore, Benson (2001) and Benson and Nunan (2005) revealed that proficient learners not only demonstrated a high degree of autonomy but also the development of autonomy appeared to be associated with a view of language as a tool for communication rather than as a subject to be studied in the same way as other school subjects.

3. Methodology

There are a number of methods to conduct a study. Nevertheless, it is the researcher who decides to select a method which is most applicable. The selection of a method is determined by the nature of the research problem, its objectives, the type of information researchers are going to have and the nature of the sample. Therefore, to test our hypothesis, the researchers have chosen the survey design. The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between language learning strategies and learners' autonomy. To accomplish the assigned goal, two instruments were used for the conduction of this research. The first utilized instrument of the present study was a demographic questionnaire. It included the following questions:

Year of study

Use of English grade
 Number of hour per week that English is practiced/used off campus
 Percentage of lectures/tutorials/workshops conducted in English
 Rating of importance of English
 Self-rating of language proficiency on a three-point scale
 Extent to which the student enjoys English

Strategy use and effectiveness will depend on the particular learners, the learning task, and the environment. To consider the mentioned factors in effective leaning of LLS, some methods and techniques have been developed. Surveys are usually deployed in exploring learning strategies and they are useful for collecting data from large groups of subjects (for example Oxford (1993), and the second-year population from Chabahar Maritime University in this study). Methods to investigate LLS include oral interviews, questionnaires, observation, verbal reports, diaries and journals, and recollection strategies (Gass, 1990; Macaro, 2001). The current research deployed a questionnaire as the research instruments to consider learning strategies which more affect learners' autonomy. The advantage of using such method was that the software can easily analyze and classify the data as subjects completed the questionnaire. This is commonly useful in the case of the learning strategies inventory in that manually calculating any subject's overall learning based on his strategy preferences is highly time-consuming.

A questionnaire with 45 questions was applied to 60 university students of second year majored in English. The researcher asked all subjects to answer the items which were related to the most common applied language learning strategies. Three main categories of strategies including cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies were chosen for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions

for metacognitive strategies, 15 for cognitive strategies and 15 for socio-affective ones. This questionnaire organized on a 3-point Likert scale which was used in the present study. The subjects were required to read the questionnaire items and demonstrate the frequency of using each category of strategies through choosing one of the three following adverbs of frequency: The target scale was applied in the following manner: (1: *seldom or never*, 2: *sometimes*, 3: *often or very often*). The data were analyzed and the following results were obtained.

4. Results and Discussion

All the statistical analysis is demonstrated in the following tables. Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 display the following results.

Table 1: Cognitive Strategies

Variable	Seldom or Never	Sometimes	Often/Very often
Results	6.18%	48.20%	45.62%

Table 1 shows the results of the students' (n=60) responses on the questionnaires items regarding each group of strategies. Based on the findings of Table 1, cognitive strategies are the strategies which students announce to use often or very often. The analysis of the questionnaire reveal that second year foreign language learners *often and very often* utilize cognitive (45.82%), metacognitive (42.72%), and socio-affective strategies (37.32%) respectively. The calculated percentages show that cognitive strategies are the most favored and socio-affective strategies are the least favored strategies which students preferred to use while learning the target language. Since the results of Table 1 illustrate that cognitive strategies are used more frequently than the other two strategies, it can be said that students favor cognitive strategies and pay particular attention to their own mental process in the subject to be learned.



Table 2: Metacognitive Strategies

Variable	Seldom or Never	Sometimes	Often/Very often
Results	11.10%	46.18%	42.72%

Table 2 displays that 46.18% of the subjects are *sometimes* interested in using metacognitive strategies while only 11.10% of the subjects *seldom or never* use this category of learning strategies. As shown in Table 1 and Table 2, a high percentage of (93.82%) of students efforts belong to their use of cognitive strategies *sometimes* and *very often* while 88.90 percent of metacognitive strategies are *sometimes* and *very often*. A precise look at these two percentages demonstrates not much difference between them. The literature emphasizes the significance of metacognition as being the one which makes the difference between more proficient and less proficient students. Learners who are more effective in using metacognitive strategies do have comprehensible aims and do have the ability to plan, monitor, analyze, and evaluate their learning achievements. Moreover, they would choose the best direction to their ultimate and future learning process. Although the highest percentage of strategy utilization devoted to cognitive strategies, the close percentage of metacognitive strategies with that of the cognitive strategies reveals the fact that students tend to use a mixture of both metacognitive and cognitive strategies.

Table 3: Socio-affective Strategies

Variable	Seldom or Never	Sometimes	Often/Very often
Results	18.56%	44.12%	37.32%

Accordingly, Table 3 depicts that students do not pay much attention to socio-affective strategies while learning the subjects under consideration. Students should interact with their peer so that they could better learn the foreign/second language. Based on the low percentage of socio-

affective strategy utilization, it can be concluded that EFL learners are not used to interact, communicate, and cooperate with other learners while working on the classroom activities. They prefer instead to rather be unsociable learners concentrating more on what they should study and less how they should study or who can help them and how they can receive the benefit of interactive and communicative learning. They focus more on their own mental operations while making sense of the ongoing instructional subjects.

The researcher attempted to pay significant attention to the answers which students given to the questions of the questionnaire. She also considered those questions which determined the highest and the lowest scores obtained from the answers given for each of the three types of learning strategies. At first, students' answers were analyzed in terms of their frequency. In the point of metacognitive strategies, "I myself pay close attention to the newly taught issues" got a percentage of (90.38%) which is the highest percentage among all the questions. On the other hand, the question of "I spend my time to study and revise the information at regular times" had the lowest percentage of 9.14%. The significance which is given to what is taught is also associated with the domain of the most frequently used strategies, i.e., cognitive strategies. Thus, while the main focus is on attention, self-management is with some sorts of deficit. On the other hand, in the case of cognitive strategies, the respondents expressed that they *often* or *very often* "answer silently to the questions which their teacher asked during the instruction". The obtained percentage equals to (78.42%) which stands at the top percentage regarding the questions related to cognitive strategies. Similarly, they *seldom* or *never* (12.51%) do the following strategy:

“I revise my lessons at regular times”. This is the lowest percentage which belongs to cognitive strategies. This percentage substantiates the lowest percentage of metacognitive strategies which relates to self-management. Language practice (got the highest score) and memorization (got the lowest score) are seen as the two principles by which students' performances are judged. Students said that they are *often* or *very often* eager to learn a foreign language (62.33%) which is one of the components of socio-affective strategies i.e., students demonstrated a high sense of interest and favor in the case of interactive language learning. They take control of their own emotions and lower their stress and tensions in learning process. This is the highest percentage in the socio-affective domain. On the other hand, students *seldom* ask for a native speaker's points of view about different aspects of target language (15.83%). It means that they are not interested in interacting and cooperating with others.

Cyr (1998, p.154) introduced three stages which teachers should follow to train their students to make potential use of learning strategies. These stages include:

- a. Observing students' learning strategies,
- b. Involving the issue of strategies in everyday teaching,
- c. Teachers' and students' commonly assessing the strategies used by students.

To the purpose of this study, the current researcher applied the mentioned questionnaire to observe students' learning strategies and to direct teachers to participate in changing these strategies and develop opportunities which increase students' autonomy in learning by taking well-designed stages while teaching and learning strategies. Students' awareness of learning strategies was used as an aid to develop communicative competence in learners. In order to this, the researcher took into account

the analysis of weaknesses and strengths of the foreign language learning strategies. As shown in the above results, foreign language learners implement a mixture of metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Besides, they also use socio-affective strategies less than the other two strategies. According to the obtained results, the most significance notion regarding learners' use of metacognitive strategies is that they pay significant attention to the planning of subjects which are taught newly (90.32%), they seek for opportunities which help them to learn the foreign language more effectively (79.42%), and they attempt to become aware of the mistakes which make hindrances their learning and try to avoid them (75.42%). Learners, who use metacognitive strategies are able to control their own learning, seek opportunities to practice, focus their attention on the task, and seek solutions to problems in their learning, ‘I myself determine how I learn best’ (69.32%). Moreover, some processes of cognitive strategies are more interesting for EFL learners than the others, thus, they seriously consider them to learn better. First, EFL learners seek for opportunities which help them speak in the foreign language (65.98%), second, EFL learners repeat words, phrases or sequences in the foreign language (64.66%), and third, they silently answer the asked question on the side of the teacher (73.80%). The above EFL learners' preferences indicate that they are interested in language practice. At last, regarding socio-affective strategies there are also some options which highly attracted learners' attention. EFL learners are eager to interact and cooperate with their peers (55.12%). They try to control their emotions and ignore their stress (69.24%) “I encourage myself to learn the foreign language”. There are also some other points which are related to the weakness of metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies. It means that



learners do not utilize LLS as much as they should. Therefore, much more emphasize should be devoted to improve learners' weaknesses in the target strategies. This fact is presented more in detail as follows:

First, in the case of metacognitive strategies, planning, self-management, and self-monitoring received low percentages of -15/45%, -9.34%, and -17.68% respectively.

1. Planning (-15/45%): "I predict linguistic elements helping me achieve a linguistic task".
2. Self-management (-9.34%): "I plan my time to study and revise regularly".
3. Self-monitoring (-17.68%): "I carefully listen to my pronunciation and try to correct myself".

Learners need to be able to take implicit or explicit personal decisions considering what to do to facilitate and improve their learning.

Second, in the point of cognitive strategies, grouping (-22.14%), summarizing (-27.43%), and memorizing (13.62%) strategies should be enhanced. They posited in the following order:

1. Grouping (-22.14%): "I classify the knowledge according to certain criteria".
2. Summarizing (-27.43%): "I summarize the information presented mentally or in writing".
3. Memorizing (13.62%): "I regularly revise my lessons".

Third, in the case of socio-affective strategies, opportunities should be provided to progress strategies of cooperation, control emotions, and declining stress.

1. Cooperation (15.3%): "I cooperate with my classmates when I am doing an activity".
2. Control emotions (-19.55%): "I reward myself when I get the best results".

3. Declining stress (19.55%): "I am trying to reduce the stress caused by solving a learning task".

By 1998, in a work which has been done by Cyr, he introduced five stages for learners' practice of LLS. Cyr (1998, p. 149) described these stages in the following words:"

1. Determine which strategies they use.
2. Present and explain the strategies and the way they are use.
3. Adjust the strategy.
4. Practice the strategy.
5. Establish the relation between strategy and motivation".

This questionnaire produced a number of insights. While there was consensus that learners deploy multiples of strategies in different sequences, there was some disagreement as to the extent to which a behavior needs to have a mental component (involving planning, monitoring, and evaluating of the strategy), and a potential that its use will lead to learning in order to be considered a strategy. To develop a sense of autonomy in EFL learners and to develop a sense of responsibility for using the strategies independently, the following suggestions are stated based on the results of the study:

- Provide training sessions on the importance of LLS
- Raise students' awareness of their already learned strategies
- Raise students' awareness of their thinking and learning processes
- Raise students' awareness of their strengths and weakness in LLS
- Raise students' awareness of the strategies which help them achieve their learning goals
- Design learning activities which help students in using the LLS
- Highlight the strategies which direct students to develop autonomy more easily and faster

- Highlight the role of students' as the evaluator of their own use of LLS

Language learners in both second and foreign language contexts are able to take advantages of using LLS. In order to alleviate students' above weaknesses in using the three classes of strategies some practices and activities should be used by them. Students should

- get the knowledge of the factors which recommend solutions for their difficulties
- write a lesson plan for different varieties of lessons
- record samples of their speaking in order to check and improve their pronunciations
- participate in pair or group work and take advantages of the cooperative activities which accelerate their learning.
- participate in those tasks and activities which create a low state of stress
- design and set criteria for their strategy use
- summarize the written texts in order to get the main points and the gist of texts
- schedule their time to modify the learned lessons regularly.

The questionnaire data analysis shows that learners' inclination for achieving autonomy is high. These results are connected studies conducted in previous years throughout the world (Little D. , 1995; Cotterall, 1995; White, 1995). Their findings state that language learner strategies guide students to build autonomy and reflect on the processes underlying their own learning. Oxford and Ehrman (1995) showed that the greater the use of strategies and self-regulation, academic achievement in learning arena would also increase. The research findings are also consistent with findings in the literature (see, for example, Nunan 2005; Benson 2001; Cohen 2001; Schraw 1994; King 1991).

5. Conclusion

This study has attempted to provide an account of the claims made by researchers in

the case of LLS, by tracing the development of these claims from the early works of Rubin, Naiman, Stern, and Oxford through the present day. Based on what has been said so far, the current researchers draw the following conclusions. LLS are considered important because they are related to successful learning. Some learners prefer to use strategies or use them more frequently and successfully than other learners. In training successful and proficient language learners, both teachers and learners should interact with each other. Teachers and learners collaboration can advance students' understanding of language and how they can most effectively and usefully evaluate it. To build up the learners' autonomy the teachers should guide students to use different LLS. The teachers' responsibility is:

- to know and become familiar with LLS and with advantages and disadvantages of each category of LLS
- to discuss about the use and usages of LLS with their learners
- to create opportunities and activities which help learners become autonomous learners
- to consider activities as means of improving learners' language knowledge and knowledge of LLS
- to accelerate learners' learning and provide language materials which best learnt independently
- to provide opportunities in which learners best learn in an interactive social context
- to provide opportunities which accelerate students' learning
- to provide creative, interesting, and dynamic learning situations which consider learners needs, goals, abilities, skills, and talents
- to effectively train learners to use LLS and become aware of the learning processes

Based on what stated so far, there is a close relationship between LLS and learners' autonomy. Autonomy equals independency and it bestows conditions which imply the



freedom of learners. During the instruction, autonomous learners should achieve the ability to use the strategies outside the classroom, in the real world, without the presence of the teacher. EFL learners who are effective autonomous learners may be very effective learners in a supportive group setting. They require sufficient options to practice the foreign language in a free context. The final point is that one does not solve the complex problems of language pedagogy by simply invoking the concept of LLS on the one hand and the autonomy of learners on the other hand. The learners require more options to practice the new language in a free context. Much more research is needed to be done in the area of language learning strategies and developing autonomy in learners in that teachers should be aware of the appropriate LLS so that they could train language learners to use these strategies and enhance their learning style.

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