Language Learning Strategy Use by Turkish International School Students in Yemen

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Abstract: This study intended to investigate the Language Learning Strategies(LLSs) of Yemeni secondary school students studying at the Turkish international school in Sana'a, where English is a medium of instruction. Eighty-three (83) students (males= 40 and females= 43) were the participants of the study, 78 responded to the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) of ESL or EFL version of 50 statements. The responses were calculated through statistical analysis in terms of mean, standard deviation, correlation and the t' test. It was found that: a) all participants found to be high users (Means above 3.5) of meta cognitive strategies, and medium users of the left five strategies. Memory & affective. strategies the most infrequently used. The learners' use of cognitive strategies highly correlated with their scores in speaking and reading skills. Affective strategies and gender correlated significantly with learners' level. However, there was no significant difference between male and female students regarding their use of the six categories of LLSs

Keywords: Language learning strategies, learners, secondary school

1. INTRODUCTION

A gradual but a significant shift has taken place, leading to less emphasis on teachers and language pedagogy and instead student-centeredness has become the focus since the late 60's (see Littlewood, 1996). That it is the learner, not the teacher, who exercises control over the operations of certain activities. In other words, second and foreign language learning educators seek to achieve learners' autonomy which requires them to be more independent and active in the language learning process.

Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) play a very significant role in facilitating language learning processes. As a result, LLSs have received great attention by a considerable number of research conducted on second language (Oxford 1990; Cohen, 1990, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Brown, 1991; Rubin & Thompson, 1994; Mendelsohn, 1994; McDonough, 1995; Dreyer and Oxford, 1996; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Oxford, Cho, Leung & Kim, 2004; Al-Otaibi, 2004; Hong-Nam and Leavell, 2006; Al-Sohbani, 2009; Lee, 2010; Paredes, 2010; Magno, 2010; Leung & Hui, 2011; Al-Natour, 2011 Nikoopour, Farsani, and Neishabouri, 2011; Alhaisoni, 2012). Chamot (2004) states that "An area of basic research in second language acquisition is the identification and description of learning strategies used by language learners and the correlation of these strategies with other learner variables such as proficiency level, age, gender" (p. 14)

The use of different LLSs in foreign language learning is viewed by theorists as one vehicle for promoting greater success (see Macaro, 2006). They believe that these strategies are teachable skills. That is, teachers can help in the language-learning process by making students aware of strategies and encourage their use and those students who are less successful language learners can learn these skills (Griffiths and Parr, 2001).

The focus on LLSs has been increased and internationally emphasized, as indicated above, however, this area has not been studied adequately in the Arab world in general and there have been few, if not any studies conducted on the use of LLSs namely at Yemeni schools. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill such a gap. It mainly aims to investigate the LLSs use of secondary school students who study at the Turkish International School where English is the medium of instruction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definitions of Language Learning Strategies

The word strategy comes from the ancient Greek term strategia which has the meaning of generalship of the art of the war (Oxford,1990) and implies planning, competition, conscious manipulation, and movement towards a goal. LLSs have been defined by many educators (e.g. Wenden and Rubin,1987; Cohen,1990; O'Malley and Chamot,1990; Cook,1991; Vandergrift,1995; Green and Oxford 1995) and ended to various topics and similar and contradicting definitions due to the taxonomies which could be the reason which led Ellis (1994) to describe LLSs as "fuzzy" (p. 529). Oxford (1990, p.8) argued that the definition commonly used by educators does not fully convey the excitement or richness of language learning strategies and expands the definition by saying that "learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations". That is, according to Wahyuni (2013), LLSs "still have no exact definition. Researchers… define language learning strategies in slightly different ways, causing a debate about whether they are physical or mental, conscious or subconscious, and problem- or goal-triggered" (p.4).

B. LLSs' Classifications

Most studies conducted on LLSs and good language learners concluded in general that good language learners use more and better LLSs than do poor learners (Oxford; 1989,1993). Similarly, a relationship between proficient language learners and their use of a greater number of LLSs was found (Anderson, 2002; Bruen, 2001; Wharton, 2000). Such findings have appeared consistently in L2 learning strategy studies (Rubin 1975; Stern, 1975; Hosenfeld, 1977; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978). Rubin (1981, 1987), who pioneered much of her work in the field of strategies, identified two main kinds of strategies contributing to language learning success. Direct strategies which are divided into six types: clarification/verification, monitoring, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice, and memorization, and the indirect strategies which she divided into two types: creating opportunities for practice, and using production tricks.

Based on their research carried out on language learner strategies, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) stated that foreign language learners use three types of strategies: metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies involve thinking about and planning one's learning, evaluating how well one has done, monitoring one's own speech or writing. Cognitive strategies involve conscious actions such as using dictionaries and other resources. Social strategies mean interacting with others like classmates or native speakers. Research, as cited in Al-Sohbani (2009), has revealed that cognitive strategies reported by foreign language learners account for 53 %, metacognitive strategies accounted for 30 %, and social strategies made up the remaining 17 %. The type of strategy used varies according to the task the students are engaged in. A general assumption is that good learners will make a better use of these strategies.

Oxford system of LLSs (1990), which was based on earlier work on good language learning strategies in general and in relation to the four language skills, in particular, was divided into two major classes: direct and indirect. This classification differed from Rubin's (1981) in that it introduces categorical groups under which separate strategies could be listed. Direct strategies "require mental processing of the language" and, thereby, "directly involve the target language" (Oxford, 1990, p. 37). They direct strategies, which "involve direct learning and use of the subject matter, in this case a new language" are subdivided into three groups: memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies; Indirect strategies, which "contribute indirectly but powerfully to learning" (Oxford 1990, pp.1-12). They are called indirect " because they support and manage language learning without (in many instances) directly involving the target language" (p. 135). They are also subdivided into three groups: metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. According to Oxford (1990), memory strategies, such as creating mental linkages and employing actions, aid in entering information into long-term memory and retrieving information when needed for communication. Cognitive strategies, such as analyzing and reasoning, are used for forming and revising internal mental modes and receiving and producing messages in the target language. Compensation strategies, such as guessing unknown words while listening and reading or using circumlocution in speaking and writing, are needed to overcome any gaps in knowledge of the language. Metacognitive strategies help learners exercise executive control through planning, arranging, focusing, and evaluating their own learning process. Affective strategies enable learners to control feelings, motivations, and attitudes related to language learning. Social strategies, such as asking questions and cooperating with others, facilitate interaction with others, often in a discourse situation. Logically, individuals will apply different strategies depending on their personality, cognitive style, and the task at hand. But although cultural and ethnic background, sex, language learning purpose, and other factors influence the degree to which and the way in which learners use the LLSs.

Oxford (1990) acknowledged that the conflicts of classifications is possible, and gives as, an example, the compensation strategy such as using synonyms when the exact word is unknown is a learning strategy or a communication strategy for some experts. She indicates that some specialists of LLSs are confused whether a certain strategy "like self-monitoring, should be called direct or indirect" (p.22). She (1990) points out that "there is no complete agreement on exactly what strategies are; how many strategies exist; how they should be defined, demarcated, and categorized; and whether it is - or ever will be - possible to create a real, scientifically validated hierarchy of strategies" (p.17). Hsiao & Oxford, (2002) similarly state that "exactly how many strategies are available to learners to assist them in L2 learning and how these strategies should be classified is open to debate" (p. 368).

Jones (1998) and (Ellis, 1994) admit Oxford's claim that her strategies 'system is more comprehensive and detailed than earlier classification models of LLSs. Griffiths (2004) also argues that Oxford's classification system together with Rigney's (1978) definition can provide a useful base to understand or investigate LLSs. Chamot (2004), however, implies that such classifications in general still need to be reconsidered:

> Language learning strategy classification schemes have generally been developed for research purposes. However, in the discussions surrounding the various ways of naming, describing, and classifying language learning strategies, little attention has been paid to students' learning goals or teachers' instructional goals. These goals can be expected to vary by general purpose in learning or teaching a new language, such as the need for survival communication skills, a foreign language requirement in school, academic study in a second language at different educational levels, passing examinations, traveling to a country where the target language is spoken, advanced translation/interpretation, and the like. (p.17)

C. LLSs and Learning Styles

It is worth pointing that LLSs are distinct from learning styles, which refer more broadly to a learner's "natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills" (Reid, 1995, p. viii), though links between learning styles and the type of strategies learners choose were found. Sensory preferences, personality types, desired degree of generality, and biological differences are learning styles that are likely to be among those most strongly associated with L2 learning (Ehrman and Oxford,1990, cited in Oxford, 2003). The LLSs can be positive and helpful if they fit the particular student's learning style preferences to one degree or another (Oxford, 2003)

Rossi-Le (1989) studied a group of learners from a variety of linguistic backgrounds (Chinese, Laotian, Vietnamese, Spanish and others) using both the Perceptual **Learning Style Preference** (PLSP) and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaires. The results demonstrated that an individual's learning-style preference influences the types of learning strategies that he or she will employ in acquiring a second language. For example, students who favored group study utilized social and interactive strategies such as working with peers, requesting clarification, and asking for correction. Students who preferred tactile and kinesthetic learning styles sought out native speakers and engaged others in conversation. Further, Oxford & Ehrman (1988) suggest that learning style has a significant influence on students' choice of learning strategies, and that both styles and strategies affect learning outcomes.

D. LLSs and Skills

LLSs enable language learners to gain a large measure of responsibility and to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. Research shows that the use of appropriate LLSs often results in improved proficiency or overall achievement or in specific skill areas (Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, and Sumrall, 1993). According to Chamot and Kupper (1989) and Oxford (1990), certain strategies or clusters of strategies are linked to particular language skills or tasks. For example, listening comprehension gains from strategies of elaboration, inferencing, selective attention, and self-monitoring. Similarly, reading comprehension uses strategies like guessing, summarizing, reading aloud, and deduction. Speaking requires strategies such as risk-taking, paraphrasing, circumlocution, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Writing benefits from the learning strategies of planning, self-monitoring, deduction, and substitution. Figure1, suggested by Al-Sohbani (2009).
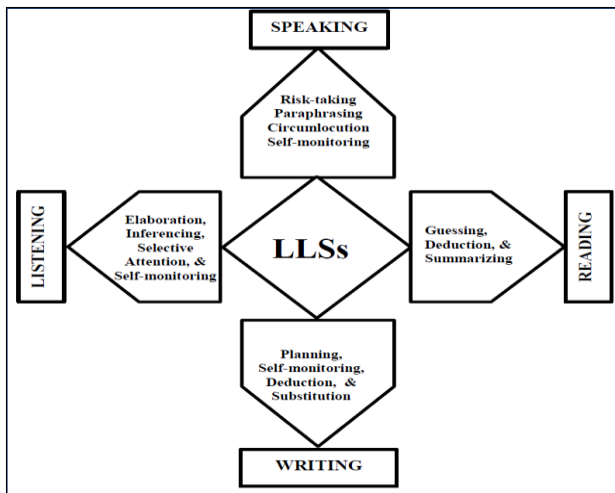
Figure 1. The relationship between strategies and language skills

Therefore, a considerable amount of research has been conducted to evaluate the benefits of explicitly training learners how to apply LLSs for the skills of reading and writing (see McDonough 1995; McMullen, 2009). Further, some research has also been conducted on listening comprehension (see Mendelsohn,1994; Fujiware's, 1990; Ozeki's, 2000).

With regard to writing, Sabria (2016) investigated Strategy Based Instruction (SBI) implementation in the writing skill for learners of English at the Intensive Language Teaching Center of Mostaganem University in Algeria, in order to help them find out strategies that best suit them to employ cooperative learning strategies as well as the strategies of planning, organizing, editing and revising during writing their paragraphs aiming to enhance their writing. The results revealed that there was a significant difference in all students' writings after integrating SBI.

Concerning speaking, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) compared the improvement on certain language tasks for three groups of learners, and related their performance to the strategy training they had received. On the speaking task, the group given explicit training in metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective strategies improved significantly more than the control group.

Aliweh (1990) conducted an experimental study to investigate the effect of communication strategy instruction on the speaking proficiency of 30 Egyptian College students and found that spoken performance and strategy use of the experimental group improved. Dörnyei (1995) in his study suggested the feasibility of training learners in the use of communication strategies. He trained Hungarian EFL high school students in using three compensatory communication strategies (topic avoidance and replacement, circumlocution, and using fillers and hesitation devices) and found that students' strategy usage improved qualitatively and quantitatively, but this was not the case for their speaking competence.

3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The present study mainly attempts at:

1. identifying type and frequency of language learning strategies used by EFL Turkish International School students
2. investigating the relationship of learners' use of the LLSs, their level, AGPA, and their scores in speaking and reading skills.
3. investigating if there is any significant difference regarding students' LLSs' use according to their gender.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study attempts to find answers to the following questions:
1. What types of LLSs are most/ least frequently used by Turkish Secondary School students in Yemen?
2. Are there any significant relationships of learners' use of the LLSs and their level, AGPA in all courses and their scores in speaking and reading skills?
3. Is there any significant difference between male and female students in using language learning strategies?

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on LLSs which, as indicated earlier, have not been thoroughly investigated in the Arab world in general. This study can be one of the few studies, if not the first one in Yemen that addresses strategy use of an English medium of instruction secondary school students. This study may give more insights into LLSs research which, according to Oxford (1990, p.16) 'is necessarily in its infancy' hoping positive effect on language teaching and learning. Findings of the study may help educators mainly instructors and supervisors to focus, during teaching, on language learning strategies which have not been used by the participants and at the same time encourage and enhance the strategies already appropriately used.

6. METHODOLOGY

A. *Participants*

Participants in this study were 83 students (males =40 and females = 43) from grades 10, 11 and 12, secondary stage studying at the Turkish International School in Sana'a, where English is a medium of instruction. The population of the three grades were 120 students. Their ages ranged from 16 to 18 years. The students were informed that their responses to the

questionnaires would be kept confidential and would have no effect on their course grades. The completed questionnaires were collected right after the participants completed them. Of the 83 completed questionnaires, five were discarded as they were incomplete. As a result, 78 questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis.

B. Instrument

The instrument used in the present study was a questionnaire. It consisted of two parts. In part I, the participants were requested to write their names (optional), their AGPA, levels, gender and their scores of reading and speaking skills. In part II, the Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), version 7.0 (Oxford,1990) was used in the data collection. The SILL, a self-reporting questionnaire is for students of English as a second or foreign language by requiring students to answer 50-item questions on their language-strategy use on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "never or almost never true" to "always, or almost always true.". It covers the six Oxford's (1990) LLS categories:

1. Memory strategies for storing and retrieving new information;
2. cognitive strategies for manipulating and transforming learning materials;
3. compensation strategies for overcoming deficiencies of knowledge in language;
4. metacognitive strategies for directing the learning process;
5. affective strategies for regulating emotions; and finally,
6. social strategies for increasing learning experience with other people.

The instrument was translated into Arabic by the researcher and checked by two colleagues in the English department, who have experience in translation and TEFL. Items 46 and 48 were slightly modified because they were not more compatible with the English learning situation of the present study.

This questionnaire had been widely used in more than 40-50 major studies including dissertations and theses (Green and Oxford, 1995) and it had high reliability and validity (see also Nykos and Oxford, 1993).

Though the English version of this questionnaire was given to the participants with its translation (Appendix A), it was taken into consideration that the items of the questionnaire retained their essential meaning. The questionnaire was administered in the students' classrooms where it was voluntarily filled out.

C. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using the SPSS statistical program for windows. Descriptive statistics; means and standard deviations were utilized. Inferential statistics; Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine if there was any relationship between the learners' LLSs use and their level, AGPA, gender and their scores in speaking and reading skills. The independent samples test (t' test) was used to determine if there is any significant difference between male and female students regarding their LLSs' use.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As indicated above, the current study sought to explore Yemeni EFL students' use of LLSs. The results and discussion are reported on the bases of the key questions that were formulated earlier. Further, it is worthy pointing out that in interpreting the mean for each individual strategy as well as overall mean scores of the six categories of LLSs were principally guided by Oxford (1990) who had pointed out that a score mean less than 2.4 is considered low usage, mean scores fell between 2.5 and 3.4 as medium usage, and a mean score more than 3.5 as high usage.

Research Question 1

What types of LLSs are most/ least frequently used by secondary school students studying in Turkish International School in Yemen?

The mean scores of the six categories of LLSs used by the Turkish International School secondary students, reported in Table 1, as it can be seen, all means fell between 2.6948 and 3.6823 on a scale of 1 to 5, a range which Oxford (1990) defined as a medium use and the low end of high use range. The frequencies of use revealed in the current study appeared to be similar to those found among a small sample of Foreign Service Institute (FSI) learners, teachers, and supervisors (Ehrman and Oxford, 1989), which could be due to the similarity of experience in language learning. The participants of the present study compared to their participants were relatively experienced language learners who already knew a great deal about how to learn. The participants of this study reported using metacognitive strategies more frequently (M=3.6823, 73.65%) than the five other types of English learning strategies, which help, according to Oxford (1990), language learners exercise executive control via planning, arranging, focusing, and evaluating their own learning process. Cognitive strategies came in the second place (M =3.4313, 68.63%), supporting to some extent the claim of Oxford' (1990) that "cognitive strategies are typically found to be the most popular strategies among language learners". (p. 43).

Table 1. LLSs, means and standard deviations

Strategies	N	Mean	SD	%
Memory strategies	78	3.0342	.7305	60.68
Cognitive strategies	78	3.4313	.5895	68.63
Comp strategies	78	3.2727	.7305	65.45
Metacognitive strategies	78	3.6823	.7950	73.65
Affective. strategies	78	2.6948	.8788	53.90
Social strategies	78	3.2675	1.2389	65.35
Overall		3.2305	.8272	

The learning environment of the Turkish International School where English is the medium of instruction can be a main contributor to the high frequency use of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. These learners are intrinsically motivated to improve their English due to the fact that their primary purpose of enrolling at such a school is to be competent in English and to be able to pursue their study without facing difficulties in dealing with other school courses which are, as indicated earlier, taught in English. The high-frequency use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies are consistent with Arab studies (Alhaisoni, 2012; Al-Buainain, 2010; Riazi, 2007; Khalil, 2005; Abu Shamis, 2003; Al-Sohbani, 2009). This result is also in line with studies conducted on non-Arab learners (e.g. Liu, 2004; Chang, 2011; Nisbet, 2002; Han and Lin, 2000).

As shown in Table 1, given above, compensation and social strategies came in the second place (Means =3.2727, 65.45% and 3.2675, 65.35%), followed by memory strategies (M=3.0342, 60.68%) and affective strategies which scored the lowest mean (M=2.6948), though is still a moderate strategy use (Oxford, 1990). Such a result is similar to Grainger's study (1997) which found that the most preferred groups of strategies for English background students were social and metacognitive strategies, contradicting the premise usually held that Arab learners tend to use mostly memorization (rote learning).

Also, the result of this study is partly consistent with Hong-Nam and Leavll's' study (2006) which revealed that the least used strategies by students in an intensive English learning context was affective strategies and memory strategies. Further, as Arab learners are concerned, the result of the present study, related to the use of affective and memory strategies, is similar to the study of Riazi (2007) and Khalil (2005) who studied LLSs use of Arab-speaking learners, contradicting the hypothesis usually held that Arab learners tend to use mostly rote learning (memorization). However, these results did not match those of Politzer and McGroarty (1985) nor of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) who reported that students from Asian backgrounds preferred rote learning and language rules as opposed to more

communicative strategies. The means of the six LLSs categories listed in Table 1, given above, are graphically presented in Figure 2.
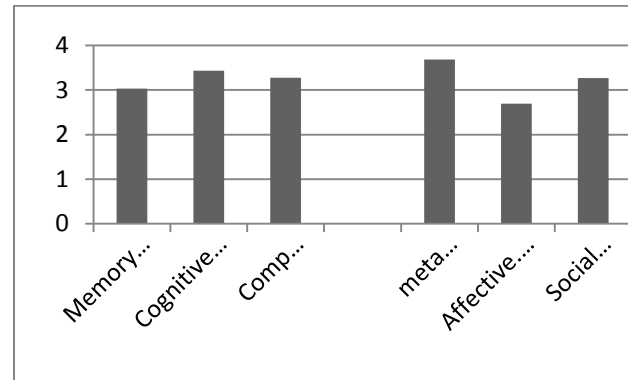

Figure 2. Language Learning Strategies Use

To gain more insights, responses of the participants were examined for all individual items that constitute each type of Oxford strategies (1990). As shown in Table 2 (Appendix A), all individual items of the six strategies are generally used with high and medium frequency by the learners who participated in the present study. Only two items of these strategies in this study were used with low frequency (i.e. mean values below 2.4). Both items deal with participants' use of flash cards and writing their feelings down in a diary. Among the 50 strategies, 22 (44%) strategies fell under high frequency, above 3.5; 8 of these strategies are cognitive strategies, 7 meta-cognitive strategies, 4 memory strategies, 1 Social Strategies, 1 affective strategy, and 1 compensation strategies.

The individual strategies which scored means above 4.00 were mostly related to, as indicated above, metacognitive and cognitive strategies 'I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to the movies spoken in English.', (Mean= 4.32). 'I try to talk like native English speakers.' (Mean= 4.15). Item 33, 'I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.' (Mean= 4.23). 'I pay attention when someone is speaking English.' Item, 32 & item, 38 ' I think about my progress in learning English.' (Got the same mean score = 4.17), followed by one of the individual compensation strategies 'If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.' (Mean= 4.12).

The preferences of the students clearly indicate that they utilize appropriate attention to the use of English in contexts which help them to benefit and develop their oral skills. They watch TV programs in English, they try to talk like native speakers, they keep endeavoring to find ways to be active and successful learners of English by making use of opportunities they encounter like listening

to any one speaking English and they compensate their limitation of vocabulary by using synonyms or alternatives of words or phrases they do not know. That is, these learners employ pertinent strategies that help them keep progressing in learning English. This result implies that these learners have characteristics of good learners reported in the LLSs' literature. This can be due to the encouraging environment of the school and the teachers who are professional and semi native speakers, though they are Yemeni and Turkish.

Regarding the individual strategies, ranged between 3.50 and 3.95, which also as mentioned above, represent high frequency use of LLSs. They are related to cognitive, metacognitive, memory and social strategies. With regard to cognitive strategies, the participants have shown that they practice speaking, writing and English sounds. They converse in English and use English words in different ways, they read English for pleasure and they use reading strategies to read quickly. They do so because they are usually involved in practicing English by using communicative activities such as problem-solving and group works. Concerning the use of metacognitive strategies, the participants make efforts to find several ways to use English, they notice their mistakes, they search for people to talk with and have clear goals in order to improve their English.

The answers for the items dealing with memory strategies show that participants use new English words in a sentence, connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help them remember such new English words or phrases. The participants also think of relationships between what they already know and new things they learn in English.

As far as the use of social strategies is concerned, the questions are designed to measure the ability of using strategies to learn from others. The analysis of the data reveals that the participants' mostly preferred strategy is item 49, *I ask questions in English*., followed by item 45, *If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other persons to slow down or say it again*. That is asking, which is supposed one of the best strategies, is the most strategy used by the secondary school learners.

Finally, the individual strategies, ranged between 2.50 and 3.49, which represent medium frequency use of LLSs are 24 (48%) strategies. Six (6) of these strategies are cognitive strategies, 5 compensation strategies,4 memory strategies, 4 social strategies, 3 affective strategies, and 2 meta cognitive strategies. They all concentrate on using various strategies that enhance development and improvement of English language skills and vocabulary through using appropriate strategies such as writing notes, messages, letters, or reports, summarizing, cooperating with others, understanding,

guessing, practicing, planning, asking, noticing, paying attention, and reducing their anxiety.

Research Question 2
Are there any significant relationships of learners' use of the LLSs and their level, AGPA in all courses and their scores in speaking and reading skills?

As far as the relationship between the learners' use of the LLSs and their gender, level, AGPA and their scores in language skills concerned, there is no significant correlation between LLSs use and gender, however, the learners' use of cognitive strategies highly correlated with their scores in speaking and reading skills, significant at 0.01 and 0.05 levels, respectively (See Table 3), indicating learners' use, for example, practicing, analyzing and reasoning. Similarly, compensation strategies correlated with learners' scores in speaking and reading skills, significant at 0.05 level, which is a good indication of the awareness of the participants of this study regarding the speaking and reading strategies such as using: mime or gesture, circumlocution and synonym during speaking and guessing by using linguistic clues during reading to guess the meaning of unknown vocabulary. Only affective strategies and gender correlated significantly with learners' level at 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively. However, no significant correlation found between the three types of strategies (i.e. memory, metacognitive and social strategies) and learners' AGPA, level, gender and their scores in speaking and reading skills.

With regard to the correlation of LLSs' use and gender, the result of this study coincides with the study conducted by Abu Shmais (2003) and Peng (2001) who found no significant relationship between LLSs' use and gender, however, this present study is inconsistent with Zhou' study (2010) which reported a significant correlation between the two variables, i.e., LLSs' use and gender, in senior high schools.

Table 3. Correlations between learners ' use of the LLSs and their gender, level, AGPA, and their scores in speaking and reading skills

Strategies	Gender	Level	AGPA	Scores in Speaking	Scores in Reading
Memory strategies	-.007-	-.133-	.127	-.012-	.054
Cog. strategies	.147	.118	.224	.302**	.279*
Comp. strategies	.064	.087	-.154-	.273*	.281*
Metacognitive strategies	.038	-.145-	.141	-.046-	.051
Affective strategies	-.056-	-.245-*	-.059-	-.206-	-.148-
Social strategies	-.170-	-.155-	.171	.140	.038
Gender		.316**			

** Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 3

Is there any significant difference between male and female students in using language learning strategies?

The third research question tries to find if there are significant differences between male and female students regarding their use of LLSs. As shown in Table 4, independent samples test for memory and cognitive strategies are .861 & .436, more than 0.05. That is, the variances were equal and the result of the *t'* test has failed to reveal a statistically reliable difference between the means of males and females. As it can be seen in the results given (t = .203 and -1.493- , *df* = 75 and 67.729, α = 0.05, p = .840 & .142), p value (Sig. 2-Tailed value) is greater than the probability level of 0.05. Because of this, it can be concluded that there is no statistical difference between females and males' participants in using memory strategies. Similarly, Levene's test for the rest of the strategies (i.e., comp. strategies, meta strategies, affective strategies & social strategies) are .689, .224, .971& .407 greater than the probability level of = 0.05. As provided in Table 3, given below, the results (t = -.022, -.353-, .119 and 1.477, *df* ranges between 75 & 56, α = 0.05, p = .982, .724, .906 and .143), each p value is greater than 0.05. Because of this, it can be concluded that there are no statistical significant differences between female and male students in using all the six categories of LLSs. Here, it can be included that both male and female students participated in the present study use such LLSs similarly. This result can be due to the environment of such a school where boys and girls experience equal treatment with regard to the use of English as a medium of instruction which requires them, irrespective of gender, to be involved in practicing English language skills most of the time. This result is inconsistent with the findings of Khalil' study (2005) which reported that female students significantly use LLSs more than male students.

Table 4. Independent samples t' test showing students' differences regarding their LLSs according to gender

LLSs	Gender	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Memory strategies	male	38	3.0480	.70979	.031	.861	.203	75	.840
	female	40	3.0139	.76534					
Cognitive strategies	male	38	3.33012	.661192	.615	.436	-1.493-	75	.142
	female	40	3.53036	.511482				68	
Comp. strategies	male	38	3.2546	.73408	.162	.689	-.022-	74	. .982
	female	40	3.2583	.71904				73	
Meta-cognitive. strategies	male	38	3.6486	.88716	1.500	.224	-.353-	75	.724
	female	40	3.7139	.72047				70	
Affective strategies	male	37	2.7207	.90101	.001	.971	.119	74	.906
	female	39	2.6966	.86423					
Social strategies	male	38	3.4865	1.53728	.695	.407	1.477	73	.143
	female	40	3.0614	.84756				56	

CONCLOSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explored the use of learning strategies of a group of Arab learners studying at the Turkish International School, Sana'a. The results showed that these students were high to medium users of strategies. They used metacognitive strategies most (Mean=3.6823, 75.3%), which helped the students in planning and organizing their language learning. More, the result revealed that such participants used affective strategies (Mean= 2.6948, 58.6%) the least, however, such a result is still medium use of LLSs.

The learners' use of cognitive strategies highly correlated with learners' scores in speaking and reading skills, whereas affective strategies and gender correlated significantly with their level. Nevertheless, there was no significant difference between male and female students regarding their use of the six categories of LLSs.

Based on the results of this study, it can be pointed out that concerned parties, mainly teachers and supervisors, should be aware of the role of LLSs in order to make use of the participants' preference of employing such strategies while teaching English language skills and vocabulary which really can lead to effective language learning process.

Further research

- As the participants of this study are only private school students, it is recommended to replicate future research by recruiting participants from basic-stage education and secondary education from both sectors (private and public schools) to examine and compare their LLSs' use in relation to various related variables.

- As the results of the present study is still limited due to the type of the sample, the instrument, used to find out the participants' achievement was their AGPA and their scores in reading and speaking skills, further research is recommended on condition that other means of evaluation like oral tests/ interviews and any standard proficiency exams are used.

- Study of the LLSs use by universities learners of different disciplines by adding other instruments mainly interviews and diaries can be recommended.

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Appendix A- Table 2. Learner' LLSs use

No.	Strategy	Mean	SD
	Memory Strategies		
1	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	3.50	1.075
2	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	3.86	1.078
3	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	3.67	1.255
4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	3.23	1.350
5	I use rhymes to remember new English words.	2.75	1.359
6	I use flashcards to remember new English words.	1.86	1.163
7	I physically act out new English words.	2.30	1.347
8	I review English often.	3.17	1.323
9	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page,	3.55	1.306
	Cognitive Strategies		
10	I say or write new English words several times. Practicing	3.82	1.200
11	I try to talk like native English speakers.	4.15	1.117
12	I practice the sounds of English.	3.68	1.233
13	I use the English words I know in different ways.	3.61	1.137
14	I start conversations in English.	3.65	1.178
15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to the movies spoken in English.	4.32	1.052
16	I read for pleasure in English.	3.64	1.213
17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports.	3.35	1.421
18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	3.60	1.115
19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	3.24	1.274
20	I try to find patterns in English.	2.86	1.217
21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing into parts that I understand.	3.16	1.255
22	I try not to translate word-for-word.	3.13	1.226
23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	2.86	1.264
	Compensation Strategies		
24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	3.47	1.285
25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	3.25	1.285
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	2.57	1.356
27	I read English without looking up every new word.	3.12	1.357
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	3.43	1.361
29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	4.12	1.076
	Meta cognitive Strategies		
30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	3.95	1.188
31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	3.87	1.128
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	4.17	1.005
33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	4.23	1.012
34	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	2.86	1.262
35	I look for people I can talk to in English.	3.56	1.211
36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	3.44	1.180
37	I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	3.57	1.292
38	I think about my progress in learning English.	4.17	1.185
	Affective Strategies		
39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	3.18	1.412
40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	3.82	1.295
41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	2.92	1.586
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	2.63	1.295
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	1.79	1.158
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	2.08	1.392
	Social Strategies		
45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	3.67	1.014
46	I ask the English speakers to correct me when I talk.	2.63	1.313
47	I practice English with other students.	3.16	1.516
48	I ask for help from the proficient users of English.	3.30	1.541
49	I ask questions in English.	3.71	1.231
50	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	3.26	1.509

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