

A Review on Writing Skills and Language Learning Strategies For The Purpose Of Communication

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ABSTRACT

This paper begins with the premise that Strategies are important if students are to learn effectively, and that this applies no less to language than to any other field of learning. Language proficiency contributes heavily to the success of specifically, graduate students. This is because graduate programs typically have a significant capstone writing requirement such as a thesis or a project with more intensive writing expectations. Therefore, the impact of any shortcomings in English language writing skills is exacerbated among international graduate students as the writing expectations are much higher compared to undergraduate coursework. The concept of strategy is central in the fields of learning and educational psychology. In these psychological realms a focus on strategies must be seen as an attempt to understand how people tackle different learning performance tasks as well as why, and how such behaviour can be modified through instruction in order to optimize performance.

Keywords: Strategies, Language, learning, writing, communication

1.1 Introduction

The term writing from conception, in true sense, till today has been defined and explained in various ways. If we consider the history of its development it will be observed that its definition and usage changes from time to time. According to the Mewness Popular Encyclopaedia, 'writing is the 'earliest means of conveying, information by recorded signs.

1.2 Literature Review

In college, students write about the materials read or presented in class to enhance their understanding (Bangert Drowns, Hurley, & Wilkinson, 2004; Graham & Hebert, 2011). At work, white and blue-collar workers commonly use writing to perform their jobs (Light, 2001). There were two basic overall findings from the studies that examined how writing is taught in contemporary classrooms. One, some teachers provide students with a solid writing program, and in some classrooms this instruction is exemplary (e.g., Wilcox, Jeffrey, & Gardner-Bixler, 2016). Two, this is not typically the case, as writing and writing instruction in most classrooms are inadequate. These findings were generally universal, applying across countries and grades. In terms of providing students with a solid writing program, it was consistently the case that in each study reviewed (e.g., Cutler & Graham, 2008; Dockrell, Marshall, & Wyse, 2016; Hsiang & Graham, 2016), there were teachers who committed a considerable amount of time to teaching writing.

In the World Book Encyclopaedia, writing has been defined as a system of human communication by means of visual symbols or signs. In the low Encyclopaedia Britannica, writing has been described as a "system of human inter-communication by means of visible marks used conventionally". In this definition writing has been considered as a means of communication demarcating it from language of gesture, oral language etc. But this definition encompasses two important chronological states s firstly, the earlier stage when simple pictures or combination of pictures, without any correspondence to any linguistic elements, fulfil the needs of writing, and secondly, the later stage when signs whether pictorial or linear, become, the visual substitutes for the sounds of the oral language.

1.3 Definition

According to Oxford (1990) LLS are divided into direct strategies such as memory, cognitive and compensation; and indirect strategies which are metacognitive, social and affective. Memory strategies are characterized by the memory storage of information consciously in the short and long term, and its subsequent use when necessary. Cognitive strategies are also a conscious way of approaching learning, writing and taking notes, elaboration of concepts. Compensation strategies focus on reducing or overcoming gaps in the use of the new language, such as the use of the mother tongue, the use of gestures in order to express ideas. Metacognitive strategies contribute to the planning and organization of the language learning process. A system of signs is an assemblage of originally related signs conventionally used for the purpose of communication as in spoken language, in writing or in gesture language. A symbol is similar in meaning to a sign, but it does not form any part of a system. In primitive days visual communication was achieved by means of gesture, and mimicry and auditory communication were achieved by means of whistling with the intention of calling someone or hissing or applauding as an expression of one's feeling. But those means of communications had some deficiencies.

Firstly, they were all of momentary value, and were therefore, restricted in time; as soon as the word was uttered or the gesture made, it was lost, and it could not be received except by repetition.

Secondly, they could be used only in communication between persons more or less in proximity to each other, and were, therefore, restricted in space.

1.4 Categories of Strategies

Five different categories of strategies have been identified in this connection. They are:

1. **Rote strategies:** Strategies that emphasized repetition.
2. **Physical strategies:** Any strategy that involved using the physical properties of the material to be learned, such as spelling pattern.
3. **Imaginal elaboration:** Any strategy that involved the formation of a mental picture in order to learn the material.
4. **Verbal elaboration:** Actively working with the material by asking and answering questions about it, determining implications of the content relating it to information already known, etc.
5. **Grouping:** Rearranging the material to be learned into smaller subsets according to some perceived characteristic that is commonly shared.

Rehearsal strategies emphasize repetition in various forms and are designed to facilitate verbatim recall, e.g. rote-learning which includes using some mnemonic devices. These strategies work well, if combined with all other strategies mentioned below.

Elaboration strategies involve adding some sort of symbolic construction to what the student is trying to learn in an attempt to make it more meaningful. These constructions can be either imaginal or verbal.

Organization strategies are used to help transform information into another format that is easier to understand. Examples are the use of maps, diagrams and the techniques of note-making. In each case an existing or created scheme is used to impose organization so as to help effective and easy learning. Like elaboration strategies these strategies require a more active cognitive processing role on the part of the learner.

Comprehension monitoring strategies are derived from the general area of metacognition. This is the "human ability to be reflective, one of the many benefits of human language. This reflection on our own thinking process is called metacognition

1.5 Classifications of language learning strategies

Various classifications of language learning strategies have been proposed by different researchers, including Rubin's (1987) taxonomy, O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) taxonomy, Oxford's (1990) taxonomy and Stern's (1992) taxonomy. Rubin (1987) classified language learning strategies into three types, which contribute

directly or indirectly to second language learning. These three types classified by Rubin (1987) are learning strategies, social strategies and communication strategies. In addition, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) identified three main categories of strategies: socio-affective, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Stern's (1992) classification included five major categories: cognitive strategies, planning and management strategies, interpersonal strategies, communicative-experiential strategies and affective strategies.

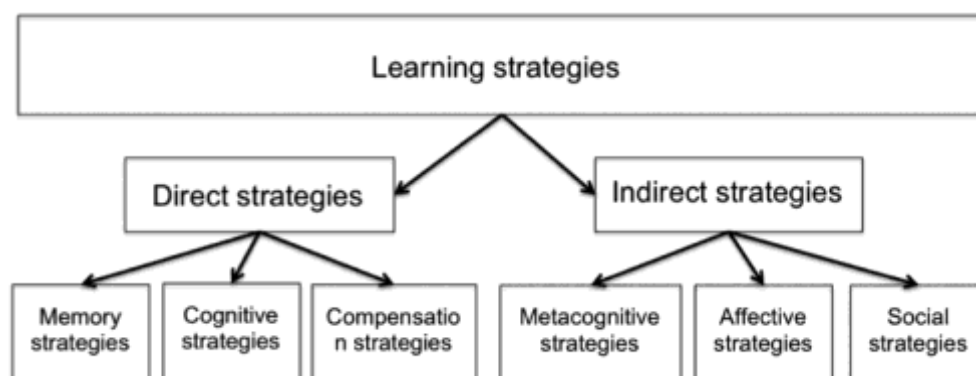


Figure 1 learning strategies

- Direct strategies consist of memory strategies, compensation strategies and cognitive strategies. Memory strategies are defined as techniques to assist a learner to enter information into memory and retrieve new information, such as imaginary, structured review and grouping. Compensation strategies are defined as techniques that assist a learner to overcome a limitation in his existing knowledge, such as using synonyms in writing, gestures in speaking and guessing wisely in listening and reading. Cognitive strategies are defined as techniques a learner uses to manipulate the reception of language and the production of meaning, such as summarising, scanning and analysing.
- Indirect strategies comprise metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies are techniques that assist a learner to organise and evaluate learning, such as organising and planning for learning tasks, evaluating learning and concentrating on learning. Affective strategies are defined as techniques that assist a learner to manage attitudes and emotions, such as engaging in anxiety reduction, discussing feelings with others and self-encouragement. Social strategies are defined as techniques and behaviours that involve other people, such as communicating with higher proficiency learners or native speakers, asking for clarification and increasing knowledge of the culture associated with the target language (Oxford, 1990)
- Many researchers have emphasised the taxonomy of Oxford (1990) as the most comprehensive taxonomy of language learning strategies (e.g., Alfian, 2018; Cohen & Macaro, 2007;). For example, Ellis (1994) contended that Oxford's classification is the most influential and is employed in research on these strategies. In general, Oxford's (1990) classification covers all the strategies included in previous theoretical models on language learning strategies (see, Hsiao & Oxford, 2002 for a more detailed comparison of these prominent classifications of language learning strategies).

1.6 Spoken Language and Written Language

Listening and reading are skills of reception, speaking and writing are skills of transmission. There are a few useful and popular ways of reproduction. Among those speaking and writing are important in the field of education. The students try to reproduce through spoken or written language that they have learned in the classroom and by reading books, 'From that point of view writing is no less important than speaking. Now, among these two means of expression, writing system has got some supremacy over spoken language' though written language has certain shortcomings too. A language is a complex system of habits. The three major components of language are; the structure of expression, the structure of content and the vocabulary.

1.7 Conclusion:

A language is a complex system of habits.

If we consider the history of its development it will be observed that students write about the materials read or presented in class to enhance their understanding. Speaking and writing are important in the field of education. The students try to reproduce through spoken or written language that they have learned in the classroom and by reading books. Various classifications of language learning strategies have been proposed by different researchers, it is found that strategies assist a learner to manage attitudes and emotions, such as engaging in anxiety reduction, discussing feelings with others and self-encouragement.

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