Discipline Specific Language Learning Strategies and Distinct Learning Behaviour of Engineering and Humanities Students

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ABSTRACT

Language learning styles and strategies have never been discussed alone but with reference to each other. As such their relativity and impact on adult language learning has been a matter of discussion ever since Oxford shed light on them. As per her note when the target language is not the primary vehicle for daily interaction, and when the language itself or the learning situation is complex, the students intuitively and consciously use the language learning strategies. Working on this concept, an explorative study was made on the language learning strategies used by the students of two different disciplines – Engineering and Humanities of a deemed to be university in Chennai. Language Learning Strategy Inventory of Oxford was adapted for the purpose of finding which category of students were adept in using the Language Learning Strategy (LLS) for academic language learning. In depth interviews with the students could help in creating awareness about the strategy use among them and could identify the discipline specific strategies and the distinct learning behaviour of the Humanities and Engineering students of a deemed to be university.

Key words: Language learning strategies; explorative study; intuitively; consciously; Engineering; Humanities and Science

FULL TEXT

1. INTRODUCTION

The post method era has been struggling to find alternative methods to help the language teachers to be successful in their profession in many ways. Allwright, who declared the concept of method 'dead' in the teaching pedagogy, is also the one who has focused on the language classroom, and advocated 'exploratory teaching' – a new terminology he introduced for the purpose of learning "as much as possible from doing so" (1991: 196). In simpler terms it means "trying to find out what makes the tried and trusted ideas successful. Because, in the long run it is not enough to know that ideas do work; we need also to know why and how they work" (1991: 196). Further, his advice to teachers is to take global principles for general guidance, but their implications need to be worked out for local everyday practice. For him it is a 'crude loop diagram' wherein the teachers need to think globally, act locally, think locally to adapt global principles.

Taking a thread from Allwright (1991) Kumaravadivelu (2003), formulates his macro-strategies for teaching in the post method era. He propagates the necessity to maximise theory neutral learning opportunities for the learners to be autonomous learners. Helping learners to

be autonomous is informing them, "how to learn, equipping them with meta-cognitve, cognitive, social and affective strategies necessary to self-direct their own learning, raising the consciousness of good language learners about the learning strategies they seem to possess intuitively and making the strategies explicit and systematic so that they are available to improve the language learning abilities of other learners as well" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008: 206). Further, the learning strategies used by the learners to obtain, store, retrieve and use information should also be effectively monitored by teachers as facilitators of learning process, for carrying out the classroom activity, the outcome of which is successful learning. Because of the voluminous influence exerted by the above-mentioned authors' views on language teaching and learning and Oxford's explicit views on language learning strategies (LLS), the present explorative research analyses the incongruent learning behaviour of the two different sects of students i.e. students of Engineering and Humanities, their participation in the classroom activities with the adoption of technology to support their thirst for knowledge and language learning, and each group's perception on the use of language learning strategies and the benefits they have reaped from the use of such strategies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Using language learning strategies and learning styles are two different behaviours of an autonomous learner. Learning style is fundamental and closer to the characteristics of a learner whether he is an extrovert or an introvert and so on. "Learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others (Dunn & Griggs,1988:3). Learning strategies are defined as "specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques – such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task – used by students to enhance their learning (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992: 63). When a learner consciously chooses strategies appropriate to the execution of a L2 task at hand, and suitable for his own learning style, the strategies become a useful toolkit for active, conscious, and purposeful self-regulation of learning (Oxford, 2003).

Language Learning Strategies are classified into four different kinds according to their functions (Chamot, 2001; Oxford, 1990): Cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies. While cognitive strategies help the learners understand the material on hand by remembering, recollecting, and retrieving by making mental associations of the words and syntax, and guessing, meta cognitive strategies help learners to "control their language learning by planning what they will do, checking on progress, and then evaluating their performance on a given task" (Cohen, 2011:682). Social strategies on the other hand are "employed by learners for interacting with other learners and native speakers, such as through asking questions to clarify social roles and relationships, asking for an explanation or verification, and cooperating with others in order to complete tasks" (p. 682). Affective strategies are actions, the learners take to quell such emotions as fear, shyness, and lack of confidence when they learn a second or foreign language or try out communication in it.

Oxford's 'Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know' (1990) elaborates on strategy instructions that the teachers need to know to help learners for easy language learning; they are direct language learning strategies (DLLS) and indirect language learning strategies (IDLLS); she arranges memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies under DLLS and meta cognitive, social, and affective strategies under IDLLS. As

such a strategy training session includes five steps in learning as direct strategy: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and expansion. These strategies are directly focused on target language use. Indirect strategies have a managerial and supportive role in language learning. They do not involve the target language use; but help the learners to organise and control the process of their learning by regulating their affective emotions and attitudes while motivating them to indulge in 'language socialization'(Vygotsky L.S,1978) 'Discourse Socialization' (Mortia, N, 2000), a very important requirement in a language classroom.

Both the teacher and the learners analyse the utility of a strategy in terms of its effectiveness in carrying out the task on hand. The strategic decision-making shifts gradually from teacher to learners effecting learner autonomy at the end of the learning process (Gu, 2012). Despite the strategy instructions, language learners differ from each other in factors such as aptitudes, demographic variables, learning styles and learning strategies when it comes to second language learning (Cook, 2001). Students' learning strategies are goal directed, intentionally invoked and effortful (Dornyei, 2005). This view explains why certain students are successful in their learning and why certain others are not. It is also evident that strategies are conscious efforts taken by the learners with different learning styles, as such they reflect the mental aptitude and attitude and the necessity of the diverse learners in different learning contexts. It is also true that if the language learners have awareness on their strategy use, they will know to learn better and can also be effective and skilful learners. Learning strategies enable learners to respond to the learning situations and to be able to take control of their own learning (Williams and Burden, 2000).

Inference from reports across the world on the Language Learning Strategy Use (LLSU) makes it clear that matured and proficient learners use the strategies to learn than the less proficient ones and the junior school students. Chang and Liu (2013) have investigated on these lines of age and proficiency and identified researches done by (age: Chang,2011; Ehrman&Oxford, 1989; Lan & Oxford 2003); (proficiency: Chamot, Barnhart, EI-Dinary & Robbins; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). A study on the Turkish students' use of LLS in learning vocabulary found LLS has a positive relation with the learners' proficiency level in the EFL (Celik &Toptas, 2010). Students with interest in reading and with good reading skills often fare better than poor readers, because of the self- motivation they have (Quirk, Schwanenflugel & Webb, 2009). Research on the 'Volitional strategies through metacognitive development in fostering reading motivation' by Damaianti (2017) proved that the volitional strategy (a motivational strategy to foster self-control for learning) through metacognitive development is effective in increasing students' motivation for reading. As Chamot (2004) says, the preponderance of research on LLS has been 'descriptive': researches report what is conveyed by the learners of different languages, as such learning strategies are identified through self-report and for most part unobservable, though some may be associated with an observable behaviour. It is this incongruent nature of the language learning strategies, and their visual impact like increased motivation and enhanced proficiency in certain students has primed the author to investigate the use of LLS among the students of different disciplines. Moreover, there are innumerable investigations on the various benefits of LLS as experienced by students of Turkey, Cambodia, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Japan and so on but none on our Indian students in the higher education context. And hence the present exploratory research on the known phenomenon of language learning strategy but on two different sets of students of an Indian university.

Data for any research can be collected through different modes like one to one or group interview or through Questionnaires. The latter seems by far better than any other instrument because, as Oxford (1996) herself finds, "questionnaires are among the most efficient and comprehensive ways to assess frequency of language learning strategy use. One of the most prevalent ways to assess the use of language learning strategies is to use a questionnaire (otherwise known as an inventory or a summative rating scale). The strategy questionnaire most often used around the world is the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, Oxford, 1986-1990). Interestingly, the present research has adapted the SILL with certain modifications to suit the level of students in the Indian context.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Questions

1. Do the Engineering students use LLS for better academic performance?
2. Do the Humanities students use LLS for better academic performance?
3. Do the teachers teach the students the use of LLS for language learning?
4. What is the perception of teachers and students about LLS?
5. Who are better in using LLS? – Engineering or Humanities students?

3.2 Research Participants

Research participants were I year Engineering students of two sections comprising sixty students each who learn English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and sixty I B.A. English students and sixty I B. Com students who learn English as a Second Language (ESL). The students' proficiency level in English was assessed through their written performance in formative (in-class tests) and summative (end semester exams) assessments evaluating for content, language and organization of the knowledge in the answer scripts.

3.3 Research Design:

This study was exploratory in nature, for it aimed to find out why students of professional discipline are good in studies and follow classroom etiquette to the satisfaction of teachers while the students of arts and commerce lack everything that makes good learners. The study is the result of classroom observations and the overall general perceptions shared by teachers of different disciplines about the disturbing behavioural aspect of arts and commerce students and the studious engineering students who have been displaying a dedicated approach to learning in general by participating in classroom instructional conversations and submitting assignments in time, in particular. The study used Questionnaires, also called 'Strategy Inventory for Language Learning' in language learning parlance to assess the type of LLS the professional students use and the ones used by the English major and Commerce students; how far the language learning strategies have been conscious efforts for the professional students or whether the humanities students are aware of language learning strategies; informal interviews with teachers to assess whether they take any efforts to inform the students about the various language learning strategies and the overall perception of both the learners and teachers about LLS as a language learning tool. The questionnaire adapted Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, Oxford, 1986-1990) with certain modifications for the present purpose.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The SILL Questionnaire as a google form was circulated among the Humanities undergraduate students (B.A. and B.Com.) and Engineering undergraduate students (B.Tech.); it was down loaded and printed for verification. Emerging, common or different characteristics, opinions, and beliefs of the learners were checked for analysis. The responses to the questionnaire items were quantified to find the frequency of the strategy usage in each category of students. The data from the questionnaire was interpreted for a broader picture of the strategies used by the two sects of students who were completely different from each other in view of their behaviour, aptitude, attitude towards learning and teachers in general and proficiency in English, in particular. The teacher researcher wanted to find out the difference in the pattern of language learning strategies used by the paired participants in their desire to learn and acquire language skills to enhance their proficiency in English.

5. RESULT

Analysis of the recordings and the results from the questionnaire show that the two groups of learners have employed a wide variety of strategies for learning language skills. After filling the questionnaire, a few of the students came and informed that they did not follow certain strategies given in the form but certain other strategies which they follow were not found in the form. At the best, such comments were welcome because it showed that the researcher has created some awareness about the existence of language learning strategies and their utility in English as Second Language and English for Specific Purposes learning. Formative tests and summative exam (end semester exam) provided the researcher the proof for the overall handling of English for academic writing by students from two different disciplines. Since the curriculum and syllabus of the disciplines were completely different, comparison was done on the basis of their presenting the content of their learning in English.

The ultimate result of this study (Frequency Analysis) has informed the engineering students use the LLS more than their university counterparts, the humanities students, whose easy going nature contrasts with the engineering students' dedicated approach to learning. The interactions with the teachers exposed their least interest in teaching LLS skills to the students and that the engineering students' LLS use was more of intuitive and instinctive behaviour than an informed behaviour. The result is further deeply discussed in the following sections.

5.1. Findings

I Strategies for Listening Skills Enhancement

Engg.	Hum.
100%	65%

When it comes to learning a second language, listening comprehension is to be promoted as an essential skill. Listening process is also considered very important in view of Richards' taxonomy (1983) separating thirty-three micro-skills for conversational listening and eighteen for academic listening. A specific emphasis is also given on explicit listening instruction (Krashen & Terrell, 1983); the videos played in an ESP/ESL classroom stand as models for both explicit and implicit understanding of the performance on screen as observed by the learners. They stimulate the learners for extensive cognitive processing if they make internal and external cognitive rehearsal of observed behaviour (Bandura,1986); Murphy (1991) considers them valid in the classroom as a basis for connections between listening and speaking activities. Engineering (B.Tech.) students, with their interest in global placement, have informed that the strategies mentioned under listening skills enhancement are dedicatedly practiced by them. Many researches confirm that effective L2 learners use listening strategies

like inferencing, self-monitoring, repeated listening etc., while the less effective L2 learners mostly do not.

Humanities students have also informed that they practice the listening strategies of finding opportunities to listen and speak English. Both students accepted that they use transcriptions to understand, when pronunciation is fast and decoding the sound system is difficult. Though captions are found to promote word-recognition, recalling, comprehension and target language proficiency, students do not develop their listening skills without written support (Vander plank 2010). The Humanities students did not consider listening process important to be proficient in the target language use. Though they said they listened to classroom lectures attentively it was not true. This showed the weaker side of the questionnaires as a tool to collect data.

II Strategies to become familiar with English sounds

Engg.	Hum.
100%	100%

Strategies to become familiar with English sounds seem to be the main pattern of thinking among the humanities; this proves the general perception that generally advanced learners are aware of the approaches and techniques they use, though some may not be aware of subconscious-activities they regularly do. Good Language Learners intuitively practice techniques and strategies which depend on the complexity and individuality of each learning situation (Naiman, et al., 1978). The students from both the disciplines accepted that all the conscious strategies mentioned were part of their practice, but could not explain how long they were practicing them.

III Strategies to listen to classroom lectures in English

Engg.	Hum.
100%	40%

The LLS that the engineering students use are significantly cognitive strategies which help in their resourcing, summarising, analysing, reasoning and so on. The learners' submission that they listen for key words, use teacher's tone of voice as a clue, find cues in teacher's gestures and body language and make educated guesses about topic imply their subconscious use of LLS; we can interpret that they have become automated and remain as part of their behaviour. This attitude of the engineering students is in line with Oxford's (1989) observation, that some are relatively unaware of what they use. The humanities students, on the other hand neither showed much interest in the cognitive strategies nor in the social strategies that are used for obtaining clarification. In fact, it could be a reason for their inappropriate and indifferent classroom behaviour.

IV Strategies to enhance vocabulary in English

Engg.	Hum.
100%	100%

Vocabulary learning strategies are conscious efforts that the learners adopt for enhancing their existing repertoire of vocabulary. Both engineering and humanities students said yes to all the statements under strategies to enhance vocabulary in English. The statements refer to self-initiation, selective attention, contextual guessing, paying attention to prefixes and suffixes that lead to word formation, intentional usage of words in speaking and writing, all of which in fact, support Gu and Johnson's analysis (1996) of the positive correlation between vocabulary size and general language proficiency. However, the teacher researcher could find discrepancy in

the academic behaviour of the humanities students, whose depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge and proficiency in English are considerably less than that of the engineering students.

V Strategies to improve speaking skills

Engg.	Hum.
100%	76%

The questions starting from 22 to 31 focused on the strategies learners use to enhance their oral proficiency. Both engineering and humanities students were enthusiastic to attest certain statements positively. The reasons may be their acceptance of parameters like English proficiency for placements through academic achievements. As Ting Liang (2009) opines not only learner differences lead to some variance in strategy use but some situational factors may also be causes. The major finding, that the learners try to be proficient in oral communication, obviously leads to concur with the findings of Oxbrow and Juarez (2010) that the learners choose strategies which relate to their short-term and long-term goals as well as variables such as the learning context or individual learner differences. Though the engineering and humanities students cannot be termed as efficient LLS users, students across all levels of proficiency tend to use strategies related to interaction and communication (Hou 2008).

VI Cognitive strategies to understand spoken English

Engg.	Hum.
100%	42%

Skim listening and focused listening were the two strategies the engineering students used to gather information. However, the interview with them informed the researcher that this type of listening strategy was not useful to listen to classroom lectures. The distinction they made in understanding the strategy use in language learning needs some mention. The repeated listening as a strategy for understanding the sound components of the language's phonetics system gives some insight into their perception of learning English phonetics and restoring it in their cognitive memory. Again, writing for knowing the words and saying them for rhymes shows their conscious effort for learning the language. However, the cognitive strategies do not seem to have much impact on the learning behaviour of the Humanities students. Except for announcements in public places, they did not have the tendency to listen attentively; such habit endorses their irresponsible and disinterested classroom behaviour.

VII Strategies for Reading

Engg.	Hum.
98%	60%

Reading is an interactive process that gives access to the writer's mind and a constructive process that constitutes the reader's cognitive understanding by way of inference and interpretation stimulated by the prior knowledge, concurrent experience and other sources that are familiar to the latter. As such, the personal knowledge retrieved from long-term and short-term memory gets assimilated with the knowledge obtained from the text. The engineering students' focus on their reading with a determined use of procedural and situational knowledge to activate their declarative knowledge is quite evident from their declaring that they monitor their reading and self-check to see how much they have understood. As Ferguson-Hessler and de Jong (1990) found in their research, irrespective of their level of knowledge and language proficiency, engineering students were equally active while studying text, and exhibited interest in utilising LLS. Reading the materials nearer to their level of learning again shows

their ability to recognise their capacity to learn and the difficulty, a material can pose in terms of understanding

Most of the engineering students are prolific readers that they have a habit of reading reviews, reports, and articles that they accept that they usually notice the organization of ideas in whatever they read. As they are advised to learn to define and describe objects and instruments they focus on the organization of ideas in the instructional manuals. The situational impact of the content-based education is surely found in their use of LLS. The two percentage difference in the LLS use informs the less proficient students were wasting their time in rote memory. On knowing the advantages of LLS, the latter wished to use LLS, for only understanding could help them store and retrieve knowledge from memory.

As good and efficient learners many of them make notes for future reference as they read. As for the statement of making mental summary and translation in mother tongue while reading, many said that was their regular practice. The researcher interpreted that it was an unconscious strategy that every second language learner adopted in the course of his or her learning.

As expected, the B.A. and B.Com. students were not adept in using the reding strategies. They did not engage themselves in extensive reading. Moreover, they did not practice note making as a strategy like the engineering students. They said no to 'Reading different genres several times' which of course was also the reply given by the engineering students. Both engineering and humanities students agreed that they enjoyed making predictions as to sustain their interest in reading; this of course, was only for the prescribed texts, not for any extra reading.

VIII Strategies for writing

Engg.	Hum.
100%	30%

The very little evidence available in the writing skills enhancement researches point out the direct relationship between writing and scientific materials reading as the latter has the capacity to impact the readers on the metacognitive strategies of organising, planning, drafting, editing, and revising. The engineering students unanimously accepted that when a new sentence construction is introduced, they rewrite and practice and that they like to build a paragraph from the hints given. Furthermore, when an assignment is given, they take care to organize the ideas, when the elements are difficult to follow, they take help from their more knowledgeable peers and siblings. But they did not know till they had read the questionnaire (LLS Use Questionnaire) it is a language learning strategy (LLS). Writing and rewriting surprised them as a strategy; it is again evidence to Oxford's views that many learners practice LLS without knowing they are strategies. The Humanities students did not have any idea about the writing skills enhancement strategies and their ignorance was not considered as a problem by them either.

5.2 Discussion

The interpretation of every statement reflects the positive or negative attitude of the participants towards strategy inventory for language learning (SILL). The results of the study show that majority of the Humanities undergraduates do not use learning strategies for English as Second Language learning; if they were using any strategies, they did not have any awareness about them. The study which was conducted to know the current practices of ESL learners and ESP

learners could find the individual differences like aptitude, attitude and motivation had an impact on their use of language learning strategies and hence the visible difference in the classroom behaviour of the two different discipline students. This is in concurrence with the observation made by (Richards and Theodore, 2010). The questionnaire did not consider it important to make gender differences in the use of LLS as the researcher firmly believed with Al-Otabi (2004) – (cited in Nahavandhi and Mukundan (2014) and Hafsa Ruba et al., (2014) who found there was no difference between male and female in using language learning strategies. Generally, many language teachers say that genetic predispositions are the causes for such behaviours as indulging in reflective thinking, attitudes towards socializing and interactions and culture specific behaviours. However, learning styles, which decide the use of language learning strategies cannot be termed as gender specific.

Unlike Hafsa Ruba et al., (2014) who differentiated students into English, Information Technology, education and psychology, the present research made distinction between Engineering and Humanities students. As Hafsa Ruba et al., have found the use of LLS by English discipline students as poor when compared to other three categories (Information Technology, education and psychology) of students, the present research also sadly found the B.A. English students who come under Humanities miserably lacked language learning strategy use competence in comparison with engineering undergraduates.

The questionnaire had the advantage of students answering either yes or no to the questions since there was no option for neither. And hence, it was clear that a kind of mental awareness regarding language learning strategies was created among the students. They also could realise the correlation between language learning strategies and acquiring proficiency in the target language.

It is quite evident from the behaviour of the English undergraduates that they are neither passionate about learning in general nor learning English language use for communication in particular. The overall perception of the teachers who take classes for English undergraduates is that the latter are lazy, indifferent and have an attitude which does not budge to any kind of motivational practices the teachers may try. When the same was discussed among the English faculty, all of them unanimously agreed that many students opt for B.A. English as a last choice to get into an undergraduate course, which demands less semester fees and that many are not positive about pursuing higher studies or finding jobs. The B.Com. students' indifferent attitude may be due to their focus on passing exams rather than attaining proficiency in English.

The research found the ultimate superiority of Engineering (B.Tech.) students over the Humanities students in the use of LLS. The frequency of strategy use is higher among the engineering undergraduates than among the B.A. English and B.Com. students. This finding is contrary to the result of the research done by Peacock and Ho who checked the strategy use among students of eight disciplines under engineering and Humanities in 2003. Their contention is that "frequency of strategy use is often higher among humanities students than among science and engineering students". Further, Peacock and Ho observe that high proficiency learners always or often use no less than 13 of the 27 'good' strategies they have identified for the purpose of the research, whereas mid- and low-proficiency learners always

or often only used two or three of them – a sharp difference, of course exists in the present research too.

Broad categories of strategies do not exactly underscore the use of individual strategies used by individuals. It is true that proficiency varies with the use of certain strategies not all strategies (Larsen Freeman, 2001). Further, not all the strategies can be used by all; the learners' style of learning and need decide their learning strategies (Richards & Theodore, 2010). So, it can be said that the cognitive demand of the course instigates the learners' choice of learning strategy. That may be the reason for the engineering students' use of the cognitive strategies.

One cannot deny the importance of cognitive strategies in familiarising students with meaning and understanding; teachers must develop them in their learners' everyday use to negotiate meaning in oral and written communication. This constructivist perspective revolves around the notion that social interaction is foundational in cognitive development. As such, it underpins interactive discourse, and cooperative group learning which only a teacher can initiate in a classroom. Such an approach would help students become autonomous learners fully fortified with language learning strategies.

This topic has given scope to many researches in the English for Academic Purposes programs, it may also be a valid topic for researches in English for Specific Purposes classrooms because Peacock and Ho say discipline affects strategy choice the learners make. The engineering course participants of this study also engage various LLS; their practice validates the research finding of Peacock and Ho.

The study has made it important to recognise learner skills and learner preference in the use of language learning strategies. The engineering students seem to be better poised in the use of LLS (frequency percentage – 99.7%) than their humanities counterparts and their intuitive use of LLS is evident from their answers to the LLS questionnaire.

In the post pandemic context of the university education, it is sad to note the students' disrespect for the attendance in classrooms and disinterest in reading related activities. As said again and again by applied linguists, teachers' creativity, and the learners' willingness to learn is the key to the success of any language teaching learning strategy. Teaching students to read may be tiring and monotonous. But, as Juhee Lee, et al., (2020) study suggests that both extensive reading and translation-focused activities - a kind of project-based activity to help the learners do it and learn can be an effective instructional option for improving our university students' reading and writing skills while their grammatical knowledge will also widen and deepen their linguistic ability for academic and professional success. The project-based-learning with Language Learning Strategies as scaffolding in language classes may be considered by the Higher Education Curriculum Designers for the attainment of instructional outcome in English as Second Language classes under Humanities and Sciences, especially for English major students. The project-based-learning and explicit LLS instructions need a teacher's interest and dedicated service.

As for the validation to teachers' teaching LLS, the research through informal interviews and staffroom-discussions has found the teachers' lack of interest in the explicit teaching of LLS. It is for the teachers to dedicate themselves to the knowledge development of the students, by way of informing them the advantages of LLS that the students consciously use them for better

learning outcome. Teachers should also know the potential of language learning strategies in enhancing their students' language skills that could accelerate their acquisition of English language. "The more the teachers know about the learners' personal approaches and personal concepts, the better and more productive their teaching will be" (Kumaravadivelu, 1991).

The secondary and higher secondary school teachers may be held responsible for not developing the young learners' use of language learning strategies, and in fact the teachers in the universities may also be held responsible as they have not taken any conscious steps to teach the LLS explicitly to the students for their use in language learning. "Generally, learners do not use the strategies because they do not get the opportunity to learn them. The weakness basically lies on the part of the teachers that they do not expose learners towards such practices from early stages of their Second Language learning**" (Ruba, et al., 2014).

The wide range of responses to the questionnaire has undoubtedly substantiated the view that learners use learning strategies in accordance to their needs and beliefs; those who believe in learning language opt for cognitive strategies like memorization, rote learning and intensive reading to familiarise with vocabulary and structural aspects of the target language; but those whose priority is using the language pay more attention to communicative strategies (Brown et al.,1983). A self-directed adult learner, adjusts his learning pace to his acquisition needs as he monitors the process of his learning which is aimed at certain specific outcome. Ultimately, he evaluates at the end of a learning project to check whether the selected means of learning contributed to the desired objective (Holec,1981).

6. CONCLUSION

Language learning is happening at all levels of students' learning. In the younger years, the students are led by the teaching strategies that the teachers adopt for the classroom teaching. While the young learners benefit from the teaching strategies and techniques the teachers adopt in class-room teaching, as the learners mature with age, tend to be successful regardless of methods or teaching techniques (Brown, 2007). The successful and good language learners have their own ability to control their learning despite how successful the teachers' teaching strategies were. The identification of strategy use is made aware only when the students are questioned about their strategy use for various skills enhancement. From the researcher's experience one thing is clear that the students do not use the language learning strategies consciously as linguists assume. "This implies that language learning, as much as, and more than almost any other discipline, is an adventure of the whole learner, not just a mental exercise" (Oxford, 1996:30).

Limitations and Scope

The research was carried out as an interdisciplinary project, in a deemed to be university in Chennai with student participation from two different disciplines, namely Engineering and Humanities, each comprising of one hundred and twenty students only; hence, the present research cannot be considered to represent the whole lot of student community in Tamil Nadu and India.

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APPENDIX – I

QUESTIONNAIRE/ STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

(Adapted with certain modification from Language Strategy Use Inventory, (Cohen, Oxford & Chi,2009).

Issued to Engineering & H&S UG I year students of Dr MGR Educational and Research Institute *(University with Graded Autonomy Status)*, Chennai, (TN) INDIA

Dear student,
Kindly answer the questionnaire with a tick either in the YES or NO column.

Sl. No.	Language Learning Strategies	YES	NO
	I. Strategies to increase my exposure to English language		
1.	I wish to attend English language events, even out of class hours.		
2.	Listen to talk shows on FM/TV/ Prime Videos in English		
3.	I listen to conversations in English among people anywhere.		
4.	I try to understand in total not by word by word.		
5.	I try to understand an Online Cinema not by English transcription		
	II. Strategies to become familiar with English sounds		
6.	I listen to You tube programmes on English sounds		
7.	I listen to English pronunciation classes very attentively		
8.	I associate new sounds with sounds in my mother tongue		
9.	I practice the sound in a word and in a sentence as listened.		
10.	I listen carefully to understand the stress patterns in words as the speakers speak.		
11.	I listen carefully to understand the intonation in sentences as the speakers speak		
	III. Strategies to listen to classroom lectures in English		
12.	Listen for key words that seem to carry the bulk of the meaning.		
13.	Use teacher's tone of voice as a clue to the meaning of his/her speech.		
14.	Find cues in the teacher's gestures and body language to understand the gist.		
15.	Make educated guesses about topic based on what has already been said.		
16.	Apply my background knowledge of the topic to get the main idea.		
17.	I ask for clarification at the end of a lecture		
18.	When a feedback is asked for, I request the teacher to be slow while speaking		
	IV. Strategies to enhance vocabulary in English		
19.	Associate the sound of the new word with words of similar sound		
20.	Use rhyming to remember the new word		
21.	Make mental association of the new word in relation to known words		
22.	Break the words into parts like prefix and suffix to remember		
23.	Practice new words while speaking with others		
24.	Practice new words in writing to make them part of my active vocabulary		
25.	Make efforts to use idioms and collocations in writing and speaking.		
26.	Use English to English dictionary to find meaning/synonym/pronunciation		

	V. Strategies to improve speaking skills		
27.	Practice saying new expressions to myself.		
28.	Practice saying new expressions with my friends.		
29.	Initiate conversations in English as often as possible with teachers and friends		
30.	Direct the conversations to familiar topics.		
31.	Direct the conversations to unfamiliar topics also		
32.	I look for opportunities to speak in English		
33.	I use words from my mother tongue when I don't know one in English		
34.	I ask my teacher or knowledgeable friend to check the English equivalent.		
35.	Use gestures and body language to get my meaning across.		
36.	When communicating in English is a problem, momentarily switch on to mother tongue, if the conversation partner can understand my mother tongue		
	VI. Cognitive strategies to understand spoken English		
37.	Practice 'skim listening' by paying attention to only important aspects.		
38.	Focus on the context to understand what people say.		
39.	I listen to TV advertisements and announcements to find the gist.		
40.	Listen to news in my mother tongue and then listen to English news.		
41.	I engage myself in focused listening to understand Railway, Police, or any announcements		
42.	I listen to English songs again and again till I can get the words and sentences		
43.	I write the songs to realise the beauty of words and rhymes used in it.		
	VII. Strategies for Reading		
44.	Find reading material preferably nearer to my level of learning in English.		
45.	Read different genres several times until I understand.		
46.	I plan, monitor my reading and self-check to see how much I understand.		
47.	While reading reviews, reports and articles, I notice the organization of ideas		
48.	Make ongoing mental summaries and translations in my mother tongue as I read.		
49.	I make notes as I read for future reference		
50.	I enjoy making predictions so as to sustain my interest in reading.		
	VIII. Strategies for writing		
51.	When a new sentence construction is introduced, I rewrite and practice.		
52.	I like to build a paragraph from the hints given.		
53.	When an assignment is given, I take care to organize the ideas		
54.	Write and rewrite to improve the content and language.		

55.	Try to get feedback from the more knowledgeable peers and siblings.		