Language Learning Strategies and Students' Performance in ESL Classrooms

Arshad Ali Khan[*] Sayyed Rashid Ali Shah[†] Hussain Ahmad[‡]

Introduction

Abstract: *This study investigates the relation of language learning strategies, memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social and affective strategy with the language performance of undergraduate students in ESL classroom. Data from the sample of 97 male and 63 female learners in a private university was collected through Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford (1990), which is based on 50 items on the pattern of five-point Likert scale. Students' GPA scores were collected for the relevant course in order to examine language performance. For descriptive and inferential statistics, the data have been analyzed through SPSS 15.0. The results showed a significant difference between used language strategy and performance. The cognitive and memory strategies were more significant while social and affective strategies were least significant. The study also revealed that female students used strategies more than male students, however gender did not play any significant role in language performance.*

Key Words:
Learning Strategies, Performance, Cognitive Strategy, Memory Strategy

In the field of education and science, most of the research is carried out in English. Being the primary and secondary language of many countries around the world, English is learned and taught all over the world. SLA researches mainly focus on understanding the acquisition process through establishing general learning principles which can be dealt pedagogically. As a result many learner related characteristics are discovered that can influence the language learning process. Many learner related variables have been studied by researchers including age, gender, motivation, personality, cognitive style and learning strategies etc.

Researchers have been investigating the traits of "good learners" and "bad learners" in order to record the actions which maximize language learning. According to Rubin (1975), a good learner uses

[*] Assistant Professor, Institute of Communication and Cultural Studies, UMT, Lahore, Pakistan. Email: aasmile2004@gmail.com
[†] Assistant Professor, Faculty for Language and Translation, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia.
[‡] Lecturer, English Language Institute, King Abdul-Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

solid strategies for taking help from the context, making guesses, using the linguistic knowledge of first language to learn second language. These strategies are known as 'language learning strategies' and are defined as dimensions that help learners to learn and practice a second or foreign language. Researchers have been investigating the role of language learning strategies in language learning. Another learner related variable which influences the learning in second or foreign language is "gender". SLA researches show that based on gender learners have difference in verbal abilities, use of language and use of language strategies. This study investigates the relation of learner approach usage as well as the advancement of expertise of students in English as second language classroom. Moreover gender as an independent variable is also investigated in relation to strategy use.

Significance of the study

The outcome of the research exhibits, the ESL teachers/instructors can easily comprehend the liaison of language strategies practiced and language proficiency. In their classroom instructions they can emphasize the most preferred strategies used by successful learners provided by this research. In addition to this they can develop suitable strategy instruction addressing the learning needs of gender groups.

Research Questions

1. What is the relation between language performance and language learning strategies of students in ESL classrooms?
2. What language learning strategy type is used more or less by any gender and how it affects their language performance?

Literature Review

Language Learning Strategies

Ellis (1994) defines strategy use as "a behavioral activity which is related to some specific stage in the process of learning language" .According to Ellis framework of strategy use (1994) both individual and social factors influence the choice of strategy use and learning outcomes are affected eventually. Individual factors are the factors related to the learner itself for example learner's motivation, while social factors are the factors related to the society in which learning process takes place for example gender, home environment of learner etc. Further, learners' choice of strategy use influences learning outcomes. For instance some strategies are helpful in performing a specific learning task while other strategies might be irrelevant in that situation.

Ellis (1994) Framework of Strategy Use
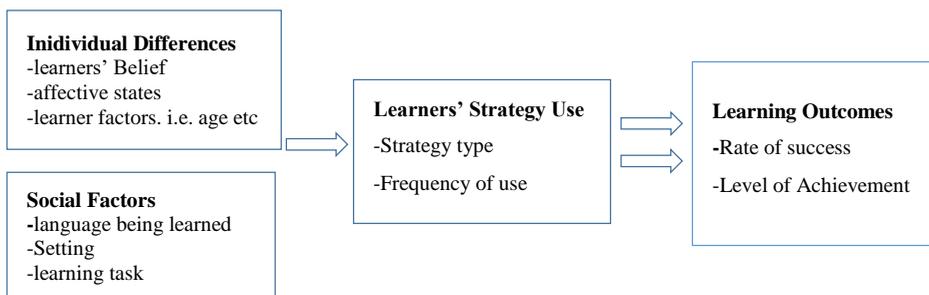
This study deals with the learners' language learning strategy use in relation with two learner related factors i.e. gender and language achievement.

Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Previous investigations on language strategies have been descriptive in nature. They have been based on the simplest description of strategies identified by educators and researchers. Language strategies have been classified by many researchers (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; O'Malley et al, 1985; Rubin, 1981; Bialystok, 1981; Stern, 1992).

Bialystok (1978) employed surveys to discover language learning strategies. According to her, learners use some optional means (techniques) to exploit available knowledge in order to improve second language competence.

Bialystok (1978) developed a model of learning behaviors which include four types of strategies.

1. Inference which involve guessing on the basis of context.
2. Monitoring is the strategy which involves noticing errors in classroom.
3. Functional practicing are strategies used for functional purposes.
4. Formal practicing involves using strategies for language practicing.

Learners use strategy type relevant to the knowledge required for a particular language task.

In order to define language strategies Stern (1975) provided a list of 10 characteristics which are used by successful learners. These traits or characteristics which serve as language learning strategies include willingness to practice and experiment, active approach for learning, appropriate learning style and many more. Besides these strategies Stern (1983) divided leaning strategies into main four groups:

- Active Planning strategies: Strategies involving setting goals and planning different levels of learning process.
- Explicit learning strategies: Strategies used for conscious learning i.e. memorization, repeating reading aloud etc.

- Social learning strategies: Strategies involving communication in target language in target language environment.
- Affective strategies: Strategies involving solving problems and overcoming anxiety in order to make learning easier.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classified strategies into three main categories 1.Metacognitive, 2.Cognitive and 3.Socio-effective strategies.

Meta-cognitive Strategies: Learners plan, observe and evaluate their own learning process using meta-cognitive strategies. Self-management, self-monitoring, self-evaluation etc. are types of meta-cognitive strategies.

Cognitive Strategies: Cognitive strategies are used to manipulate target language material while learning process take place. For example drilling, translation, note-taking etc. It is a conscious effort from learner to use cognitive strategies while carrying out specific language tasks.

Socio-effective Strategies: Socio-effective strategies help maintaining learners' attitude towards learning language while interacting with others. These strategies involve questions, discussion, cooperation etc.

Language Learning Strategies and Language Performance

Among second language learning strategy research, correlational studies are of particular interest in which learners' strategy use is examined with its relation to language proficiency or other factors. By reviewing the literature on second language learning strategy use, it can be witnessed that the use of suitable strategies results into good language performance (O'malley & Chamot 1990; Cohen 1990). According to the research most successful and good language apprentices practice language learning strategies more correctly and frequently. Language proficiency or language achievement depends upon the frequent use of appropriate strategies (Chamot & EL-Dinary ,1999; Chamot & Kipper ,1989; Green & Oxford ,1995; Kim ,2001; Ku, 1995 ; O'Malley et al. ,1985 ; Oxford ,2000) Moreover it is evident that successful learners combine strategies in order to use them according to the context. For instance, successful learners combine cognitive and metacognitive strategies in order to maximize learning (Chamot & Kipper, 1989).This part of the study is particularly dealing with correlational studies on language learning strategies in a bit more detail. Though these studies have employed different instruments for data collection and different strategy taxonomies, their findings have led to further research.

Bialystok (1981) explored the relation between learners' strategy use and language proficiency. The study involved 157 participants of Grades 10 and 12 studying French as second language in two high schools of Toronto. Students' frequency of strategy use was examined by using a questionnaire which recorded students' responses on close ended questions. Strategies were grouped into formal practice, functional practice, monitoring and inferencing. Formal practice was

defined as "exercise of language code for mastering the language rue system". Functional practice was defined as "seeking out opportunities to use target language for communication". (p.25) For example: watching movie in target language, talking to native speakers etc. while formal practice may involve memorizing vocabulary, repetition of sounds/words etc. Monitoring is keeping track of one's learning process and it may involve planning, avoiding errors etc. Inferencing is using cues and signs to arrive at the meaning. It involves using implicit information to derive explicit knowledge of language.

Politzer and McGroarty (1985) examined the relation between learning approach usage and learning achievement of learners in ESL classroom. The study was conducted on 37 participants from different ethnic backgrounds (Asian, Hispanic) studying English as second language in United States. The frequency of strategy use was examined using a self-reporting questionnaire and it was measured in relation to students' achievement. Listening comprehension, grammatical competence and communicative ability of students were pre-tested and post-tested in order to measure students' achievement. The Pilaster Aural Comprehension Test (PACT) was used to measure listening comprehension. To measure the grammatical competence, the Compressive English Language Test (CELT) was used for the speakers who speak English as second language. While communicative ability was measured by using the Competence Test designed by Politzer (1983). Data was collected on a self-reported questionnaire which consisted on 51 items divided into three groups' individual behavior, classroom behavior and social interaction. The results of the study showed some interesting patterns about the relation of strategy use and students achievement. Some strategies were significantly co-related with gains on grammatical test but no significant co-relation was found on other measures. Moreover this study revealed that cultural background can be an important factor in choice of strategy use. Cultural background can play its role in defining a good language learner too.

Language Learning Strategies & Gender

In this regard many studies have demonstrated that the practice of language strategies are more frequently in use by females than male (Ehram & Oxford, 1989;Oxford & Nyikos 1989; Green and Oxford 1995).

Research where gender emerge as a variable affecting the strategy choice finds that females outscored men and used more strategies. Politzer (1983) conducted an investigation for the variables that can have an impact on the choice of language learning strategies of French, German, Spanish and ESL students. It was also found that among other factors, language strategy choice was influenced by gender differences and inclination of females towards the frequent use of strategies were witnessed as compared to males.

Ehram & Oxford (1989) explored the relation between learning strategies and learners' psychological types. These psychological types involved cognitive style

and personality aspects of learners including gender and career choice. Total number of seventy eight participants including 30 Foreign Service Institute (FSI) students learning foreign languages Japanese, Thai and Turkish, 26 language instructors and 22 language trainers were exposed to SILL to measure the frequency of their strategy use. Results supported the notion that females use more strategies more frequently.

Wang (2001) explored the listening comprehension strategy use in Taiwanese setting and found the same results. Participants were senior high school EFL learners. It was found that strategies i.e. note taking, asking for help, task planning etc. were used more frequently by female participants than male participants.

Many studies support this notion that gender difference influences the choice of language strategy use in such a way that female inclined to practice more strategies than male. Yet this is not necessarily universal. Not all researches show significant gender differences in favor of females. Peng (2001) found that gender differences do not affect choice for strategy use. While another study carried out on Vietnamese immigrants in United States by Tran (1988) showed that men use language strategies more frequently than women. Moreover Tran (1988) suggested that gender differences are caused by cultural background. Women in Vietnamese culture are not much independent and free outside home. They have less individual freedom which can cause them difficulty in communicating and socializing outside home and even in new environment (Tran, 1988).

Gender

Generally sex and gender both terms are considered synonymous. But these two terms are quite distinctive. "Sex" of a person is his/her characteristics to be male or female. Sex is a biological factor and it differentiates men and women on the basis of their biology or nature. On the other hand "gender" is not prescribed by nature rather it is the result of nurture. Gender is defined by socially constructed roles, behaviors, attitudes and attributes of men and women. Gender aspects vary from society to society and they do not remain constant like sex for both men and women. Gender identity of a person is constructed by his/her culture. Gender identity may vary for each society and a person may or may not comply with it. Researches in the field of language, over the decades have shown that gender is a powerful factor in language learning. This study has used the word gender for both biological and sociological differences between men and women.

Gender and language use:

Idea of gender influence over language use/learning grew with passage of time as philosophies underlying gender research evolved. Real world political, economic and social movements shape and change the theories and perspectives regarding

gender and language. Since 1973 there has been a lot of research on gender & language use and most important feminist linguistics approaches are known as deficit model, cultural differences and dominance model (Cameron, 1995).

Deficit model:

The deficit model describes how women are disadvantaged speakers in society. Women are brought up in a comparatively conservative environment and they socialize less so as compared to men so their language is deficient. While the language men speak is a norm and quite natural. This model is well reflected in the study of Lakoff (1975) which states that women speech lack certainty and proper deliverance. The study claims that women speech is characterized by following features:

- Instead of being assertive women use hedges for instance "sort of", "kind of", "seems like" etc.
- Women use tag questions; "You reached yesterday, haven't you?
- Women apologize more as compare to men.
- Women overuse qualifiers. For example "I think that…"
- Women lack a sense of humor
- Women use more intensifiers
- Often use Wh-imperatives such as why don't to eat it? , Why don't you lock it?
- So called empty adjectives are used by women as divine and charming etc.

Dominance Model

The dominance model describes how women's language is influenced by their status in society and their speech style and form is defined by their marginalized social status and social roles (Bergvall, 1999). Men gain and maintain power and authority over women and it is clearly seen in their communication for instance speaking more often, loud, long and interrupting more than women (Davis & Skilton Sylvester, 2004). Men show and maintain power through language, while women are socially dominated by men so they are less assertive and active in conversation. Fishman (1983) conducted a study to analyze natural speech of men & women and found out that men dominate in conversation as they speak freely while women ask more questions in an attempt to make their place in conversation. However in comparison to deficit model dominance theory is less conservative as it does not blame the victim for language deficiencies rather it sees women in a weaker position in society where they negotiate their position of relative powerlessness vis-á-vis men.

Cultural Difference model:

The cultural difference model is an alternative approach to dominance and deficit models. Language is a cultural phenomenon and conversation between men and women is a product of cross cultural communication. This model welcomes

the differences between men and women speech and appreciates the positive aspects of women unique speech style. The difference model states that men and women belong to two different but equal cultures (Block, 2002) .Men and women talk differently as they belong to different sub cultures so they possess different communication styles (Davis & Sylvester, 2004). Tannen (1990) is the biggest advocate of this theory. She believes that men and women belong to different subcultures and perform accordingly. There are some obvious differences between men and women speech according to Tannen (1990):

- Men use language to maintain status while women use language to communicate ideas.
- Men show independence via language while women show intimacy.
- Men use language for problem solving and getting facts whereas women use it for expressing feelings and understanding.
- Men use language to show conflict and to make orders while women make proposals.

Postmodern Model

The postern modern theory states sex and gender both as constructs. It advocates Simon de Beauvoirs' idea that gender is acquired by what you do. Gender according to postmodern approach is identified by our actions. There can be possibly an array of gender identities attached to every individual according to its performance in society. In relation to social arrangements under specific contexts or community of practice masculinity and femininity are produced.

Gender and Second Language Learning

Gender has become an important issue in the domain of second language acquisition. There are many researches dealing with the issue of gender in relation with second language acquisition. Most of the researches show that females have more positive attitude towards learning second language than male (Powell & Batters, 1985; Kobayashi, 2002; Rosen, 2001; Wagemaker, 1996).

For language learning, there are many factors that can be influential on any of the genders whether male or female. One reason can be different hormonal configuration which according to Halpen (2002) and Kimura (1999) provide a basis for differences in language learning. Ullman's (2005) view of declarative and procedural knowledge also strengthen the idea that female have a genetic advantage when it comes to learning a second language.

Declarative memory and Procedural memory: Lexicon distinction in mind can be related to these two types of memory systems (Cohen, 2001).Declarative memory is used for learning, representation and use of factual knowledge. It deals with the

knowledge that is available to conscious awareness. It helps storing new information. Medial temporal lobe regions of brain deal with declarative memory. It is believed that declarative memory affected by estrogen which is a female sexual hormone. Estrogen helps to improve declarative memory (Kimura, 1999).

On the other hand procedural memory helps to control the long established motor and cognitive skills. It deals with the knowledge which is not available to conscious awareness. Premotor area of brain and Broca's area mainly deal with it. Both types of memory systems are used for co-operative learning. Ullman (2004) found that these two memory systems work with "see-saw effect". Declarative memory is used for verbal and memory tasks. As it is affected by estrogen, it is observed that women are better at memorizing and verbal tasks. While procedural memory enhances cognitive and motor skills and men are better at that for example: aimed throwing.

Second language learning mainly relies on declarative memory and so we can say that there are chances that women are better second language learners (Ullman, 2004).

However, this evidence are not enough to say that a gender gap persists everywhere around the world. There are some cultures where females do not get a chance to go to school. Lack of schooling opportunities and limited socialization for female in those cultures can be a reason for women to not be able to learn a second language. Meanwhile there are some countries where the ratio of women in tertiary level schools or higher education level is more than men. Women also tend to show more interest in learning a second language. Ludwig (1983) found that boys learn language for practical reasons while girls mostly learn language for their interest. Schroder (1996) found that females had a more positive approach regarding learning a second language.

Gender and Achievement:

Gardener & Lambert (1972) investigated learners who were in process of learning French as second language in Canada, consequently it was found that females exhibit more positive attitude and motivation for learning. Gass and Varonis (1986) conducted a study on adult second language learners to measure their abilities in communication, conversation and picture- description test. Male and female participants showed differences on the basis of participating in conversation and taking control over it. Girls outperformed in almost every age group in Lynn & Wilsons' (1993) study which was conducted on second language learners of different age groups to test their language abilities, i.e. reading , vocabulary , spelling etc. Shahedeh (1994) conducted a study on second language learners with different L1 backgrounds in order to measure students' abilities in picture-description , decision making and opinion exchange tasks and found that men take control in mix sex conversations while in same sex conversation women

produce more comprehensible output than men do. Girls are better at writing and boys perform comparatively better in reading and verbal skills while learning a second language (Cole , 1997 ; Willingham & Cole, 1997).Rosen (2001) found that females had a more positive attitude towards learning second language than male. Brantmeier (2003) conducted a study on second language learners in a Spanish learning class in order to test their comprehension skills. The results showed no significance difference between boys and girls performances. Lietz (2006) found that women are better language learners than men.. Payne & Lynn (2011) conducted a study on college students to test their comprehension skills. Though girls and boys had same L2 experience but results show that girls outperformed boys.

Methodology

Participants

This study included a sample of 160 ESL learners, enrolled in undergraduate programs in different schools at University of Management and Technology, Lahore. University of management and technology is located in heart of Pakistan "Lahore" so students come here from all over Pakistan. The medium of instruction here is English for undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Every program includes few English language courses as English is necessary for their education. This study includes students' enrolled "English 1" course which is offered as a compulsory course in undergraduate programs. "English I" is an English language course which is designed to enhance English language proficiency at undergraduate level. Basic language skills (listening, speaking reading and writing,) are focused in teaching this course

Instruments

First data collection instrument is document analysis which was based on English 1 scores of the participants taken from the examination section.

The Strategy Inventory for Language learning (SILL) was used as second instrument to measure the frequency of participants' strategy use. In 1985 Oxford introduced SILL and later, the revised version was presented in 1990. SILL is a self-scoring questionnaire survey which includes statements which are answered by students on 5-point Likert scale. These items on the questionnaire are based on Oxford' (1990) system of classification of strategies which are mentioned above as memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy and social strategy.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data was collected during the sessions of relevant course. The questionnaires were distributed among the respondents in the presence of their instructors .They were also asked to provide their university enrollment number which they provided voluntarily. After that their enrollment numbers were used to collect their respective scores in English I course. In order to collect students' scores in the subject, prior permission was taken from their respective instructors and dean. Students' GPA for the relevant subject was computed in SPSS (15.0).The division of students' GPA was according to the university rules.

The data was analyzed quantitatively. Pearson Product-moment co-relations were computed for all participants and for both genders separately in order to scrutinize the connection of language learning strategy use and language performance. A simple linear regression was employed further to see the prediction of language performance on the basis of language strategy preferences of students. Regression analysis was applied twice first for all participants, then for both genders separately. An independent-samples t-test was applied to see the difference between strategy use of male and female students.

Data analysis and Discussion

What is the relation between language performance and language learning strategies of students in ESL classrooms?

To find out the relationship between language strategy use and students' grades a Pearson product moment correlation was computed.

Table 1. Co-Relation between Strategy Subscale Use and Language Performance

S.		1 Memory Strategy	2 Cog. Strategy	3 Comp. Strategy	4 Meta-cog. Strategy	5 Affectv. strategy	6 Social Strategy	7 Grades
1	Pearson Correlation	-	.734**	.356**	.444**	.317**	.460**	.418**
2	Pearson Correlation	.734**	-	.444**	.582**	.445**	.580**	.323**
3	Pearson Correlation	.356**	.444**	-	.358**	.211**	.280**	.203*
4	Pearson Correlation	.444**	.582**	.358**	-	.494**	.530**	.337**

5	Pearson Correlation	.317**	.445**	.211**	.494**	-	.574**	-.095
6	Pearson Correlation	.460**	.580**	.280**	.530**	.574**	-	.082
7	Pearson Correlation	.418**	.323**	.203**	.337**	-.095	.082	-

A significantly positive co-relation was found between grades and memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies and meta-cognitive strategies. However the relation between affective and social strategies did not show any significant relation with grades.

Table 2. Regression Analysis to Predict Grades on the Basis of LLS Use

		Grade		
S. No	**Predictors**	**B**	**SE**	**B**
1	Memory Strategy	.044***	.011	.377
2	Cognitive strategy	.004	.011	.045
3	Compensation strategy	.005	.015	.023
4	Meta-cognitive strategy	.047***	.011	.372
5	Affective strategy	-.062***	.015	-.356
6	Social Strategy	-.018	.014	-.117
R^2		.326		
F		12.344		

*p< .05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Regression was employed to see the prediction of language learning strategy use on the basis of students' grades. Memory, meta-cognitive and affective strategies were found to be highly significant predictors of grade for all participants.
Is any specific language learning strategy type used more or less by any gender and does it affects their language performance?

Table 3. Co-relation between Grades and SILL Subscales Across Gender

Gender	Sr. No		1 Mem.S	2 Cog.S	3 Comp.S	4 Meta.S	5 Affec.S	6 Social.S	Grade
Male	1	Pearson Correlation	-	.808**	.367**	.537**	.401**	.582**	.425**
	2	Pearson Correlation	.808**	-	.511**	.619**	.440**	.617**	.345**
	3	Pearson Correlation	.367**	.511**	-	.373**	.258*	.316**	.086
	4	Pearson Correlation	.537**	.619**	.373**	-	.510**	.531**	.279**
	5	Pearson Correlation	.401**	.440**	.258*	.510**	-	.612**	-.051
	6	Pearson Correlation	.582**	.617**	.316**	.531**	612**	-	.073
	Grade	Pearson Correlation	.425**	.345**	.086	.279**	-0.51	.073	-
Female	1	Pearson Correlation	-	.536**	.309*	.151	.019	.170	.443**
	2	Pearson Correlation	.536**	-	.273*	.467**	.410**	.483**	.297*
	3	Pearson Correlation	.309*	.273*	-	.308*	.071	.192	.394**
	4	Pearson Correlation	.151	.467**	.308*	-	.412	.483**	.297*
	5	Pearson Correlation	.019	.410**	.071	.412**	-	.475**	-.192
	6	Pearson Correlation	.170	.483**	.192	.483**	.475**	-	.091
	Grade	Pearson Correlation	.443**	.297*	.394**	.439**	-.192	.091	-

Pearson product moment co-relation was computed to observe the co-relation between grades as well as strategy use of male and female participants separately. For male participants it was found that memory strategies, cognitive strategies and meta-cognitive strategies were positively significant in relation to grades.

For female participants memory strategies, cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies and compensation strategies were found statistically significant in relation to grades.

Table 4. Independent-samples t-test Comparing Participants' Use of Language Learning Strategies on the Basis of Gender

	Male (n=97)		Female (n=63)		t ( )p	95%CI		Cohens'd
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
Memory strategy	28.0722	6.59742	31.6032	5.52280	t(-3.656) .000	-5.4396	-1.6223	-0.6009
Cognitive strategy	45.9794	8.72733	48.5238	6.66928	t(-2.084) .039	-4.9568	-.13201	-0.3361
Compensation strategy	19.4742	3.90537	20.0794	3.41865	t(-1.034) .303	-1.7622	.55200	-0.1719
Meta-cognitive strategy	31.4433	5.81838	34.3333	5.51245	t(-3.170) .002	-4.6929	-1.08713	-0.5404
Affective strategy	17.5773	4.65885	18.9206	3.53463	t(-1.952) .053	-2.7026	.01598	-0.3144
Social strategy	18.8969	4.94445	20.5397	4.85873	t(-2.075) .040	-3.2085	-.07700	-0.3581

Independent-samples t-test showed that there was major dissimilarity between learning strategy used by both of the genders of the language learners for affective strategies. Other strategy subscales showed no noteworthy difference for male and female students.

Table 5. Regression Analysis to Predict Grade on the Basis of LLS Use between Gender

	Predictors	Grade					
		Male			Female		
		B	*SE*	B	*B*	*SE*	B
1	Memory strategy	.051**	.017	.456	.044*	.017	.309
2	Cognitive strategy	.009	.015	.112	.005	.016	.044
3	Compensation strategy	-.018	.019	-.099	.039	.023	.169
4	Meta-cognitive strategy	.029	.015	.237	.074***	.016	.525
5	Affective strategy	-.040*	.018	-.258	-.090**	.025	-.409
6	Social strategy	-.030	.019	-.203	-.012	.019	.074
	R^2		.292			.519	
	F		6.191***			10.077***	

*p< .05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

A multiple linear regression was employed to predict the grade of participants based on their use of strategy subscales and gender. For male students' memory and affective strategies showed significant relation with grades.

For female memory strategies were found a significant predictor. Meta-cognitive strategies were also highly significant while affective strategies were negatively significant for both male and female.

Table 6. Distribution of Grades of Male and Female Participants

	Gender	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*SE M*
Grade	Male	97	2.6464	.72472	.07358
	Female	63	2.6746	.78143	.09845

It was found that grades for male students and female students did not show any significant difference. Male and female students performed same.

The findings of the study are compatible with past researches on many levels. The findings indicated that most of the strategy types (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and compensation strategies) were positively correlated with language achievement. Regression analysis showed that memory and affective strategies were found as the predictors of the participants' language performance.

Analyzing the strategy subscales use for all participants it was found that cognitive strategies were found as highly and most frequently used among all strategy types. These strategies include practicing words and sounds, repeating sounds or words, translation, summarizing etc. Memory strategies were second highest in this aspect which includes memorization through creating mental linkages, using imagery, using actions or using rhymes. These findings resemble with the findings of many previous studies (Oxford; 1990, Nisbet; 2002, Han & Lin; 2000, O'Malley et al.; 1985, Chamot & Kupper ; 1989). Politzer &McGraorty (1985) found that Asian ESL learners prefer to use strategies incorporating language rules and memorization rather than communication based strategies. In Pakistan the grammar translation method is used on a large scale for teaching English. It can be reason why students prefer using memorization for learning. Social and affective strategies were least used strategy type and this finding is also compatible with many previous studies (Chamot & Kipper, 1989; Oxford, 1993; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007).

Analyzing the frequency of strategy use it was indicated that for all strategy subscales females used language learning strategies more usually as compared to male participants. These results were interesting as previous researches which supported female superiority in language learning strategy use indicated female superiority in specific subscales (Ehram & Oxford ;1989, Nyikos & Ehram;1988). One of the reasons women use social strategies frequently is because they always tend to seek social approval. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) refer to "strategy model "which explains the difference between men and women's' speech because of equal distribution of power and work. These findings were contradictory with some previous researches in which male participants were found to be superior in language learning strategy use.

Oxford & Green (1995) found that men and women have different attitudes towards language learning strategy use. For them difference in men and women's strategy use does not necessarily correspond with the success of one gender over other. This idea was supported by current study. The study showed that though the differences between the strategy use and language achievement of both gender was not much significant.

Conclusion

The results showed that language strategy use made a significant difference on language performance. Highest used strategy types were cognitive and memory strategies while social and effective strategies were least used strategy types. Though female used strategies more frequently than male students, however gender did not play any role in language performance. Every learning situation requires a specific strategy. Students must know about their needs. Teacher must be aware of different learner related factors for instance age, gender, students' motivation, learning style etc. It is evident from the results that students are less aware of the benefits of using socio-affective strategies. They learn mostly through memorization and rule based instructions. Teachers must use a communicative approach in classroom so that students learn to use and benefit from every type of strategy.

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