

## Preface

Rubin (1975: 43) provided a very broad definition of learning strategies as “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge”. In 1981 (pp.124-126) she identified two kinds of learning strategies: those which contribute directly to learning, and those which contribute indirectly to learning. She divided the direct learning strategies into six types (clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice), and the indirect learning strategies she divided into two types (creating opportunities for practice, production tricks). Under production tricks, Rubin included communication strategies.

A central research project on learning strategies is the comprehensive work of O'Malley and Chamot (1990). They defined learning strategies as the “special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information” (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 1). Oxford (1990) defined learning strategies as “operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information” (p. 8). She classified learning strategies into six groups: *memory strategies* (which relate to how students remember language), *cognitive strategies* (which relate to how students think about their learning), *compensation strategies* (which enable students to make up for limited knowledge), *metacognitive strategies* (relating to how students manage their own learning), *affective strategies* (relating to students' feelings) and *social strategies* (which involve learning by interaction with others).

Selinker (1972) suggested the term “strategies of second language acquisition”, which has been referred to in research as communication strategies (CSs). The majority of L2 research has limited this term to refer to the various strategies second or foreign language learners resort to when they encounter a difficulty while using the target language to compensate for their limited linguistic resources. Canale and Swain (1980) included strategic competence, which they defined as the ability to use verbal and non-verbal strategies in order to avoid communication breakdowns that might be caused by a learner's lack of appropriate knowledge of the target language. In 1983, Faerch and Kasper published the first edited volume, *Strategies in Interlanguage*

*Communication*, which put together the most important papers in one collection. Kasper and Kellerman (1997) published the most recent edited volume on CSs, *Communication Strategies: Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspective*, which put together all the research papers that investigated CSs from psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives.

This special issue of *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics (IJOAL)* brings together the most recent work on Learning Strategies and Communication Strategies. Research proved that such strategies help in both foreign language learning and second language acquisition. *Strategies in Learning and Using English as a Foreign/Second Language* consists of a series of separate articles or studies written by a number of authors representing a number of countries in the globe.

The article 'Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Idiomaticity' by J. Liontas dealt with current notions of idiomaticity. It argues that lack of adequate empirical study and scholarship has prompted some authors to apply research findings from first language (L1) to second language (L2) contexts without scrutinizing more closely the factors affecting L2 idiom understanding. As a result, certain propositions regarding (1) the frequency of idiom use; (2) the difficulties that L1 learners have comprehending and processing idioms; (3) the processing and production challenges that L2 learners face when encountering figurative language; and (4) the classification of idioms by phrase, clause, or sentence pattern, grammatical category, or thematic category require critical examination. The validity of these propositions in recent research is investigated, their weaknesses acknowledged, and new suggestions for teaching and learning idioms in the context of authentic second and foreign language use are offered. It is suggested that a critical pedagogy of idiomaticity can aid the development of idiomatic competence, and should be incorporated into educational programs for second language learners as early in their education as possible. Potential curricula applications for idiom learning are discussed.

The article by M. Lessard-Clouston 'Strategies and Success in Technical Vocabulary Learning: Students' Approaches in One Academic Context' presented a descriptive case study of technical vocabulary learning in English over one academic term in an intact, required first year course in a graduate school of theology in Canada. After outlining background information and describing the research methods, the article discussed the vocabulary learning strategies and success of five non-native (NNES) and six native English speaker (NES) participants. Data were collected using pre- and post- Tests of

Theological Language (TTL), through mid- and end-of-term interviews, and at the end of the course using an Approach to Vocabulary Learning Questionnaire. Analyses addressed the VLS that NNES and NES students use in learning the technical vocabulary of their discipline, how these VLS may be classified in relation to previous research, what types of words participants report learning, and whether a particular approach to or strategy in technical vocabulary learning predicts success in acquisition, as reflected in scores on the TTL. Results indicate that participants used a variety of VLS, though no one strategy appeared to dominate. Detailed portraits of participants' approaches to technical vocabulary learning are included. While there were no consistent trends in approaches to or strategies in success on the TTL, overall participants who approached their technical vocabulary learning in an unstructured manner tended to obtain higher scores on the TTL. In terms of growth in depth of vocabulary knowledge, however, TTL results suggest that a structured approach may be helpful for NNESs.

In K. McBride's study titled 'Adaptive and Maladaptive Strategy Use in Computer-assisted Language Learning Activities for Listening Comprehension', a sample of college students of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Chile participated in an online mini-course designed to improve their listening comprehension. There were four experimental conditions: A) one in which participants listened to fast dialogues; B) one in which participants listened to slow dialogues; C) one in which participants were given an option as to which speed to listen to; and D) one in which participants could pause playback. Participants took a pretest and a posttest in both listening comprehension and written sentence comprehension. The listening comprehension test measured participants' comprehension on slow and fast dialogues. The participants trained on fast dialogues showed a drop in their listening comprehension scores. Participants given a choice of speed also showed a drop, but only with slow dialogues. Differences in participants' pretest to posttest gain scores on both listening and written tasks are explained in terms of the participants' use of learning strategies and working memory. The findings have implications for classroom instruction, CALL design, and listening comprehension assessment.

N. Yousef Jallad and A. Bani abdelrahman conducted a study, which investigated the effect of multiple intelligences strategies comprising logical-mathematical intelligence, verbal-linguistic intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and interpersonal intelligence on ninth grade students' reading comprehension achievement in an EFL setting. To answer the questions of the study, the researchers used a

reading comprehension test which was applied on the sample of the study at the beginning of the second semester of the academic year (2005-2006). To analyze the collected data, means, standard deviations and two-way ANOVA analysis were used with multiple intelligences strategies and gender as variables. The results revealed that there was a significant difference in the students' reading comprehension ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the teaching strategies in favor of the experimental group. It was also found out that there was no significant difference in the students' reading comprehension ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the students' gender.

N. Shomoossi, M. Kooshan and S. Ketabi conducted a study titled 'Language Learning Strategies and Test Anxiety' to investigate the role of study strategies in successfully taking the final exam. To do so, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire was given to all 253 students, taking an ESP course, to identify their use of language learning strategies. A few moments prior to taking the final, they took Spielberger's (1980) anxiety test to get an estimate of their test anxiety. Findings revealed a negative linear relationship between SILL score (meta-cognitive strategies in particular) and anxiety. It is argued and concluded that among many other outcomes, test anxiety is attributable to inappropriate study habits in adult ESP learners. Therefore, it is recommended to teach effective strategies as part of the ESP courses so that learners feel less anxious on taking the test and develop more effective strategies for learning, to be considered by both instructors and textbook compilers.

In this issue, four papers have dealt with strategies in using English as a foreign/second language. In their study, H. Shokouhi and F. Angameh intended to investigate the interplay between proficiency and gender in the use of communication strategies. Sixty Iranian university male and female subjects studying English took part in the experiment and performed two tasks: word recognition and picture-story narration. The results indicate that proficiency had a more perceptible effect on the frequency and types of communication strategies. Tasks also had a strong effect on the number and type of strategies chosen. Gender did not yield any significant results except in the case of low proficiency level of female participants. The reason was attributed to the subject of study and formal educational system.

The study conducted by D. Bulut dealt with "approximation" in compliments of non-native speakers' production. In his study, D. Bulut presented the results of a longitudinal study, which examined the development of the Turkish EFL learners' pragmatic awareness in an EFL context in a four-year period. The data which were originally

collected from American native speakers and used by Bulut and Özkan (2005) were also used in this study as the baseline to compare Turkish EFL learners' pragmatic awareness longitudinally. A ten-item pragmatic judgment test, which was originally developed and used by Bulut and Özkan (2005), was also used for this study. Students who participated in this study were asked to rank the five complimenting expressions listed under each of the ten complimenting situations from the most to the least appropriate during their first year and fourth year at university. Each situation included a native speaker complimenting expression and four complimenting expressions from non-native speakers of English. The results showed that students' perceptions of native speaker complimenting expressions did not significantly change in four years' time. The results also showed that while there were no significant correlations between native speaker rankings and students' rankings during their first year at university, the students' rankings were significantly correlated with native speaker rankings only in two of the ten situations when they were in their fourth year, which means that length of study did not contribute significantly to the development of English-major Turkish EFL learners' pragmatic awareness.

M. Manasrah and Z. Al-Delaimi attempted to investigate politeness in the requests produced by a sample of Jordanian students. The study deals with how they request, the main and supportive strategies and the influence of status, degree of imposition and the difficulty of the task between the requester and the requestee on selecting request expressions and strategies whether it is that of equal/equal or lower/higher or higher/lower. Furthermore, the study sheds light on cultural implications related to request behaviors. The impact of gender on the choice of a certain strategy is also discussed. The researchers designed a questionnaire to collect the data from thirty undergraduate male and female students at Irbid National University (Irbid-Jordan). The findings of the study revealed that the majority of respondents resorted to the use of extra explanation while requesting.

M. Shuhua, Z. Jingpin and S. Guangqing investigated the acquisition of negation in English by a Chinese immigrant. This study is concerned with the sequence development in acquisition of negation by a Chinese immigrant. Frequency analysis is given to show the development of each negative device in each period, and comparison is made with negation in the speech of the second-language learner and with that of first-language learner. Both similarities and differences can be seen. However, one thing is for certain that there is a common grammar at particular stages of language development, more or less

regardless of L1 or L2. Implications to pedagogy reveal that teaching and learning should work with rather than against natural process, only by which can teaching and learning be effective.

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