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A Study of the Use of Language Learning Strategies among Students in Iran

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Abstract

Many factors would influence the type and frequency of use of language learning strategies some of which are gender, year of study and father's level of education. This study encompassed Bachelor's degree students of English Literature studying at the School of Language Studies and Linguistics of Shiraz University in Iran who differed

with regard to gender, year and father's educational qualifications. One of the instruments used was the Strategy Inventory For Language Learning (SILL ESL/EFL version) for gauging the use of effective learning strategies used by students. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed to see if there were significant differences in the use of direct vs. indirect strategies and the 6 strategy categories among students of different groups. It came to light that year of study affects students' use of strategies in that students of first year made the greatest use of meta-cognitive strategies and indirect strategies; however, Iranian students' gender and father's educational qualifications did not have much impacts on the use of LLSs. Moreover, Iranian students of all groups were high users as far as meta-cognitive strategy was concerned.

KEYWORDS: Language learning strategies, Direct strategies, Indirect Strategies, Gender, Level of education

Background

The swing of pendulum has recently shifted towards learner and learning. Those learners who are endowed with the ability to make good use of Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) are more predisposed to succeed and to achieve their educational goals. As many researchers and scholars have confirmed, the use of Language Learning Strategies is one of the main characteristics of successful language learners.

Research into language learning strategies started in 1970s. Learning strategies are the intentional thoughts and techniques which learners deploy to facilitate and accelerate the

learning process. Researchers have not reached a consensus of opinion regarding the definition of language learning strategies. However, in this work, Oxford's (1990) definition is adopted. In Oxford's definition Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) are specific actions taken by learners to make learning easier, faster, more effective, more self-directed, more enjoyable and more transferable to new situations.

Knowing how to use language learning strategies would potentially guarantee successful language learning. Many factors influence the type and frequency of LLSs' use. Learners do not use similar strategies in the process of language learning and good learners would differ from poor learners both in type and frequency of strategies used. Language learning strategies can be divided into two types of direct learning strategies and indirect learning strategies. Direct learning strategies directly involve the target language, while indirect learning strategies pave the way for language learners without directly involving the target language. Different researchers have classified language learning strategies into different categories. The most general categories are 'cognitive', 'metacognitive', 'communicative' and socio-affective'.

Oxford (1990) actually classifies strategies into the following six categories:

1. Metacognitive strategies: these strategies are used for organizing, focusing, and evaluating one's own learning.

2. Affective strategies: they are used for handling emotions or attitudes.

3. Social strategies: these are strategies which learners use to cooperate with others in the learning process.

4. Cognitive strategies: they link new information with existing schemata and for analyzing and classifying it.

5. Memory strategies: these kinds of strategies are used for entering new information into memory storage and for retrieving it when needed.

6. Compensation strategies: they are used to overcome deficiencies and gaps in one's current language knowledge.

The most widely used and accepted of all these classification is that of Oxford. Oxford's classification of language learning strategy lit the way to many researchers and investigators. Many lines of research have made use of her classification and benefited from it. In the present study, Oxford classification will be adopted and used.

Statement of the Problem

Research into the use of language learning strategies started during 1970s and it still is in an embryonic stage. Though some works have been done in Malaysia by researchers such

as Mohamed Amin Embi from 1996 to the present time and in Iran by researchers such as Alavi and Kaivanpanah (2003), Eslami-Rasekh and Ranjbari (2003), Riazi and Rahimi (2005), this area warrants much more research.

There are a host of factors and variables which affect the use of effective strategies. Some of these factors are social or environmental factors such as gender, parental level of education, economic background of students, etc. In this study, Iranian students of Shiraz University, who are different in gender, father's level of education and year of study going to be compared regarding their use of the whole LLSs and the six strategy inventories of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

Objectives of the Study

This work aims at providing some evidence of the use of effective language learning strategy by university students, and determining the effects of gender, age, year of study and family background as represented by father's level of education, etc. This information can potentially boost educator's awareness of educational practices of specific cultures.

It is hoped that this study will give teachers and practitioners of language teaching valuable information on how their students process information, plan and choose the most appropriate strategies. In addition, teachers will be able to help their students become better language learners by training them in using the suitable strategies.

For a variety of reasons language learning strategies are of great importance to language learning. Appropriate use of LLSs can lead to higher achievement, more self-confidence on the part of learner and greater autonomy. Oxford (1990) mentions the reasons why LLSs are important. First, appropriate learning strategies are strongly related to successful language performance. Second, students who use appropriate learning strategies take responsibility for their own learning, and last but not least, learning strategies are teachable. When effective strategies are identified, strategy training can be undertaken by instructors which will surely open a new horizon.

This study can contribute to the current knowledge on the variables that influence strategy choice in the EFL context. Awareness of the factors affecting LLSs use and strength of each factor will enable the teachers to help learners use the LLSs in a more effective way. The results of this study may lead teachers to improve their teaching methods and to develop appropriate teaching methodologies which accommodate students' variables including motivation and metacognitive awareness.

Research Questions

The following are to be answered in this study:

1. Are Shiraz University male and female English Literature majors different in their use of the 6 strategy category and direct vs. indirect language learning strategies?
2. Are English Literature majors whose fathers have university qualifications (at least a Bachelor's degree) different from those whose fathers do not have these qualifications in the use of the 6 strategy category and direct vs. indirect language learning strategies?
3. Are Shiraz University B.A students of different years different in their use of the 6 strategy category and direct versus indirect language learning strategies?

Theories and classifications of LLSs

Language learning strategies are the intentional thoughts and actions which students utilize in order to achieve a learning goal. Wenden (1987, cited in Gregersen, et al., 2001)

defined learning strategies as techniques, approaches and deliberate actions that students adopt to facilitate learning.

In her study, Oxford (1994) stated that L2 learning strategies are specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques students use to apprehend, internalize and use the L2. Rigney (1978, cited in Oxford, 1989) also defined LLSs as the often conscious steps or behaviors used by language learners to enhance the acquisition, storage, retention, recall, and use of new information.

Learning strategies are correlated to the way learners use their brains consciously and purposefully to handle their learning and make it more effective (Fox and Mattews, 1991, cited in Bull and Ma, 2001). Cook (1991) asserted that learning strategies are choices that the learners make while learning or using the second language that affects learning, and Taron (1981, cited in Rahimi, 2004) defined LLSs as attempts to develop linguistic and sociolingistic competence in the target language. According to Oxford and Crookall (1989) language learning strategies are the steps taken by learners to aid the acquisition and retrieval of information and learning strategies are referred to by many names the most omnipresent of all are 'learning techniques', 'behaviors', 'actions', 'learning-to-learn' or 'study skills'.

Definitions of language learning strategies given by different investigators such as have been summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Definitions of language learning strategies offered by different researchers

Author	**Definition of language learning strategies**
Wenden (1987)	Approaches and deliberate actions that students adopt to facilitate learning.
Oxford (1994)	Specific actions and behaviors which students use to apprehend, internalize and use the L2
Rigney (1978)	Conscious steps or behaviors used by language learners to enhance the acquisition, storage and retention of new information
Fox & Mattews (1991)	The way learners use their brains consciously and purposefully to handle their learning
Cook (1991)	Choices that the learners make while learning or using the L2 that affects learning
Taron (1991)	Attempts to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the TL
Oxford & Crookall (1989)	Steps taken by learners to aid the acquisition and retrieval of information

Mayer (1988)	Techniques which are used for selecting information and building internal and external connections
Mohamed Amin Embi (2000)	Necessary competencies for effective learning and retention of information

Different classifications of language learning strategies have been provided by different researchers. Some of these classifications are more popular while some seem to enjoy less popularity. Oxford classified language learning strategies into the six categories of 'memory strategies', 'cognitive strategies', 'compensation strategies', 'metacognitive strategies', 'affective strategies' and 'social strategies'. The first three are considered by her as 'direct learning strategies', and the rest are regarded as 'indirect learning strategies'.

Hismanoglu (2000) presents O'Malley's classification of language learning strategies in which the strategies are divided into three categories of metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies. Rubin (1981, cited in Mohamed Amin Embi, 2000) proposed a classification scheme that subsumes learning strategies under two primary groupings and a number of subgroups. Her two major categories were i) strategies that contribute indirectly to learning such as using production tricks and creating opportunities for practice and ii) cognitive learning strategies which directly pave the way for learning and that includes verification, guessing, deductive reasoning, memorization, and monitoring of errors.

Oxford (1993, p. 22) refers to the usefulness of strategies and states that "metacognitive strategies can help students keep themselves on track; cognitive, memory and compensation strategies provide the necessary intellectual tools; and affective and social strategies offer continuous emotional and interpersonal support".

As it has been previously stated, Oxford divided language learning strategies into the two types of direct learning strategies and indirect learning strategies. Direct learning strategies were involved in conscious mental processes, while indirect learning strategies support learning without involving target language. She further subdivided direct learning strategies into memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies and indirect strategies into metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. She further classifies these strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies) into the following categories which have been presented here. Her classification paved the way for many researchers and practitioners of language teaching and has been frequently used by different researchers and investigators.

Strategy training

With due regards to some variables such as learners, learning environment and the context and situation in which the learning process is taking plane, effective LLSs can be

identified. The next step is the demanding task of strategy training of learners. Language teachers have some tasks to fulfill. As Weinstein and Mayer (1986, p. 315) have confirmed, "[t]he good language teacher is the one who teaches learners 'how to learn, 'how to remember', 'how to think', and 'how to motivate themselves'."

In order to help students become more autonomous and improve learning outcomes, there has been much interest in training in the use of LLSs (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Oxford et al., 1990, Weaver & Cohen, 1994; Wenden, 1986, cited in Bull & Ma, 2001). Griffiths and Parr (2001, p. 10) have referred to the teachability of language learning strategies and maintained that "this teachability component of language-learning strategy theory means that contemporary educators and researchers are increasingly keen to harness the potential which LLSs would seem to have for enhancing an individual's ability to learn language.

Anderson (2002) states that teaching of strategies, especially metacognitive strategies would be a valuable use of instructional time for a second language teacher. When learners ponder over their learning strategies, they become more prepared to make conscious decisions about what they do for improving their learning and strong metacognitive skills would empower second language learners.

Once students are taught different language learning strategies by their teachers and instructors, they can use the strategies automatically and independently. In a corresponding way, Wafa Abu Schmais (2003) says that the main objective of attempts to teach students to use learning strategies is to have a deeper awareness of their preferred strategies and to help them become more responsible for satisfying their objectives. Such objectives can be achieved only when students are trained in strategy use so that they become more effective and independent.

It is clear that one of the tasks which teachers should carry out is that of strategy training. A question is left at this point; how should strategy training be carried out? Should it be included in regular classroom activities or should it be presented as a separate strategy trend? Many experts such as Chamot and Kupper (1989), Oxford et al. (1990) and Tyacke (1991), all cited in Bull and Ma (2001) have maintained that it should be integrated into the normal language curriculum.

Teachers are not completely aware of the strategies used by students. In a study of the learning strategies used by beginning and intermediate students in an American high school, teachers and students were interviewed. It was found that both beginning and intermediate students identified and reported using 'an extensive variety of learning strategies but that teachers were unaware of their students' strategies (O'Malley et al, 1985, cited in Griffiths & Parr, 2001).

Learners can be trained to identify which strategies or combinations of strategies suits them best and yields the most fruitful upshots. Oxford (1989) acknowledged that students should be taught to use better strategies and better strategies improve language performance. Regarding role of teachers in strategy training, Oxford (1989) has claimed that teachers can help their students by designing instruction which satisfies the needs of individuals who have different stylistic preferences and by instructing students the ways of improving their learning strategies. The language teacher should provide a wide range of learning strategies in order to meet the needs and expectations of his students possessing different leaning styles, motivations, strategy preferences, etc. That's why the most important teacher role is the provision of a range of tasks to match varied learning styles (Hall 1997, cited in Hismanoglu, 2000).

If strategies are used repeatedly on a daily basis, they become automatised; that is, students apply them without consciously thinking about it and without diverting their attention from the learning task at hand. By the same token, Kohonen (1992, cited in Bull & Ma, 2001) states that strategies may become automatised, and used without conscious application. As far as the use of more effective strategies can lead to more efficient learning, teachers and practitioners of language teaching should pay sufficient attention to the teaching of the strategies. Griffiths (2001, p. 249) has also asserted that "this teachability component of language learning strategy theory means that contemporary

educators and researchers are increasingly keen to harness the potential which LLSs would seem to harness for enhancing an individual's ability to learn language.

Griffiths also recommends that teachers increase their awareness of their students' strategy usage and needs, in order to be able to facilitate the language learning process more effectively in line with contemporary eclectic developments in the theory and practice of English language teaching. By and large, the use and instruction of LLSs should be included in the teaching curriculum, for they can be both useful and effective.

Procedure

All male and female B.A. students majoring in English Literature at the Department of Language and Linguistics of Shiraz University were involved in the present study. On the whole, 91 Iranian students participated in the main phase of this study (74 of them were females and the rest of them were males) and 32 other students took part in the pilot phase. They differed with regard to their gender, occupational status, father's level of education and year of study.

The necessary data would be collected via several instruments. Structured interviews were also done with the students of different years but as here quantitative data is dealt with, quantitative results would be reported. Another instrument is the Strategy Inventory For Language Learning (SILL), which is one of the most frequently used strategy inventory throughout the world and shows the effective use of strategies among students. It has been devised by Oxford (1990) and consists of 50 items. As Green and Oxford (1995) have maintained, studies using SILL have involved around 8000 students in various parts of the world. Many researchers have found this questionnaire useful made use of this questionnaire in their studies. In Malaysia, researchers such as Mohamed Amin Embi (1996) applied this questionnaire and in Iran it has been used by researchers such as Alavi and Kaivanpanah (2003), Eslami-Rasekh and Ranjbari (2003), Marefat and Ahmadi-Shirazi (2003), Riazi and Rahimi (2005), and Yamini and Dehghan (2005).

This paper-and-pencil survey consists of 50 questions to which students are supposed to respond on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'always'. The 50 items of the ESL/EFL version of the SILL are divided into the following groups:

1. Cognitive strategies (9 items) which relate to how students think about their learning and are mostly used for connecting New information with existing schemata.
2. Memory strategies (9 items) which relate to how students remember language and are mostly used for entering new information into memory storage and retrieving it when needed.

3. Compensation strategies (6 items) which help students to make up for limited knowledge and fill the gaps in communication.
4. Metacognitive strategies (9 items) which relate to how students manage their own learning and are mainly used for organizing, planning, focusing and evaluating learning.
5. Affective strategies (6 items) which relate to students' feeling and are mostly applied for handling emotions and attitudes.
6. Social strategies (6 items) which helps students learn through interaction. They are mainly used for cooperating with others and facilitating interactions.

According to Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995, p. 4) around 40-50 comprehensive studies have used the SILL, "these studies have involved an estimated 8000-8500 language learners … the SILL appears to be the only language learning strategy instrument that has been positively checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways." Nyikos and Oxford (1993, cited in Kowkabi, 2003) also reported a Cronbach alpha of 0.96 for SILL which is an extremely high coefficient.

Oxford has given examples of each of her SILL categories which can be classified as follows:

● Memory strategies such as imagery, using physical responses and grouping

● Cognitive strategies such as reasoning and analyzing, repeating and taking notes

● Compensation strategies such as guessing from context and using gestures

● Metacognitive strategies such as linking new information with already known information, planning and monitoring

● Affective strategies such as anxiety reduction and discussing feelings with other people.

● Social strategies such as asking questions, cooperating with other people and developing cultural understanding

This questionnaire consists of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. The researcher of the present study will calculate Cronbach alpha for each of these strategies and for the second questionnaire, which is a motivation questionnaire in the form of a five-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and SDs will be used. A t-test for independent samples is used for checking the differences of the use of effective learning

strategies among students of different gender, mother's level of education, father's level of education and occupational status. Analysis of variance would also be used for comparing the means of students from the different year and age groups for finding out whether or not significant differences existed between groups. The reliability of the questionnaire was established via Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha for the whole questionnaire was found to be .92 both for the pilot phase of the main phase of the study. Cronbach alpha provides a measure of the extent to which all the items are positively intercorrelated and measure one characteristic.

Results

MANOVA results for gender

Leven's test and Box's *M* test were not significant for the dependent variables of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies suggesting equal-error variance and co-variance matrices. Table 2 shows the findings of Box's M test to see the homogeneity of co-variance matrices of the dependent variables. It is shown by the ($F = 1.219$, $p = .223 > .05$). These results allowed the MANOVA to be used to analyze the level differences between males and females regarding the six strategy categories.

Table 2. Box's test of equality of covariance matrices

Box's M	F	DF1	DF2	Sig
29.930	1.219	21	3066.242	.233

In order to analyze the differences between males and females in all the strategies of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies, their means were computed. Table 3 presents means, and standard deviation of different groups. Then a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) mixed design (group × measures) was conducted to determine the effect of the gender on the six strategy categories.

Table 3. The means and standard errors of males and females considering the six strategies

Dependent Variable	Group	Mean	SD
Memory Strategies	Male	3.0523	.67371
	Female	3.1396	.60497
Cognitive Strategies	Male	3.1555	.55227
	Female	3.3668	.58453
Compensation Strategies	Male	3.0490	.75637
	Female	3.3063	.64108
Metacognitive Strategies	Male	3.6144	.93963
	Female	3.8378	.68868
Affective Strategies	Male	2.9706	.92089
	Female	3.1239	.78128
Social Strategies	Male	3.2549	1.05921
	Female	3.2568	.73206

The results of the MANOVA test are shown in Table 4. It yielded a Wilks' Λ = .948, F (1,89) = .765, p = .60. It can be said that gender did not influence any of the six strategy categories of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

Table 4. MANOVA conducted for the six strategy categories by gender

Effect		Value	F	Hypo. df	Error df	Sig	Power
Gender	Wilk's Lambada	.948	.765	6.000	84.000	.600	.287
	Roy's Largest Root	.055	.765	6.000	84.000	.600	.287

Results related to the univariate analysis of variance are shown in the next Table. The alpha was set at the .05 level and the univariate analysis revealed that the main effects of the dependent variables were not significant, F = .276, p = .600, η^2 = .003 for memory strategies. That was also the case with the five other strategy categories of cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies, for the differences did not turn to be significant.

Table 5. Univariate analysis (tests of between-subjects effects)

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Memory Strategies	.105	1	.105	.276	.600
Cognitive Strategies	.617	1	.617	1.843	.178
Compensation Strategies	.915	1	.915	2.080	.153
Metacognitive Strategies	.690	1	.690	1.260	.265
Affective Strategies	.325	1	.325	.497	.483
Social Strategies	.000	1	.000	.000	.993

As the first three categories of memory, cognitive and compensation strategies form the direct learning strategies, while metacognitive, affective and social strategies together form the indirect learning strategies, another MANOVA was run. The results of this MANOVA test also yielded no significant results with Wilks' $\Lambda = .98$, $F(1,89) = .895$, $p = .412$ and Box's M test of 5.035 with $F = 1.599$ and $P = .187 > .05$. It can be maintained that gender did not have any impacts on the six strategy categories.

Table 6. MANOVA conducted for direct and indirect strategies by gender

Effect		Value	F	Hypo. df	Error df	Sig	Partial Eta Squared	Power
Gender	Wilk's Lambada	.98	.895	2.000	88.000	.412	.20	.200

MANOVA results for year of study

Another independent variable of this study was the variable of year of study. Freshmen, sophomores and juniors studying at the Department of Language and Linguistics of Shiraz University were involved. Although Box's *M* test (F = 1.737, p = .002 < .05) turned to be significant, Leven's test was not significant for any of the factors except affective strategies. Leven's test of equality of error variances was not significant for any of the six strategy categories. As the results turned to be non-significant, it allowed the MANOVA to be used to analyze the level differences between students of different years regarding the six strategy categories.

Table 7. Levene's test of equality of error variances

Dependent Variables	F	DF1	DF2	Sig
Memory Strategies	.001	2	88	.999
Cognitive Strategies	2.616	2	88	.079
Compensation Strategies	.118	2	88	.889
Metacognitive Strategies	2.725	2	88	.071
Affective Strategies	8.626	2	88	.000
Social Strategies	.339	2	88	.714

In order to analyze the differences among freshmen, sophomores and juniors in all the strategies of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies, some descriptive statistics were calculated. Table 8 presents means, and standard deviation of different groups. Later a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) mixed design (group × measures) was conducted to specify the effect of the year on the six strategy categories.

Table 8. The means and standard errors of students of different years considering the six strategy categories

Dependent Variable	Group	Mean	SD
Memory Strategies	First Year	3.1304	.62285
	Second Year	3.1468	.63148
	Third Year	3.1028	.61499
Cognitive Strategies	First Year	3.5031	.56386
	Second Year	3.2985	.42771
	Third Year	3.2464	.67005

	Compensation Strategies	First Year	3.3406	.66568
		Second Year	3.1667	.62854
		Third Year	3.2750	.70261
	Metacognitive Strategies	First Year	4.1111	.44571
		Second Year	3.9167	.66641
		Third Year	3.5306	.84075
	Affective Strategies	First Year	3.3333	1.08595
		Second Year	3.0833	.77579
		Third Year	2.9667	.60529
	Social Strategies	First Year	3.4058	.71919
		Second Year	3.2917	.76796
		Third Year	3.1458	.85833

Inspection of multivariate tests, the following results were obtained at the point .05 level of significance, as is shown in Table 9. The results of the MANOVA test are shown in Table 8. Though findings from the multivariate test of Wilk's Lambada showed a non-significant year main effect (Wilks' $\Lambda = .807$, $F(2,88) = 1.561$, $p = .108$) and a significant

main effect was found from the Roy's Largest Root Test (Roy's Largest Root = .2, F (2,88) = 2.803, p = .016).

Table 9. MANOVA conducted for the six strategy categories by year

Effect		**Value**	**F**	**Hypo. df**	**Error df**	**Sig**	**Partial Eta Squared**	**Power**
Gender	Wilk's Lambada	.807	1.561	12	166.000	.108	.101	.808
	Roy's Largest Root	.200	2.803	6.000	84.000	.016	.167	.860

The univariate results showed a very significant main effect for metacognitive F = 5.519, p = .006, η^2 = .111 for memory strategy. However; the results pertinent to the other five strategy categories revealed a non-significant main effect. The results are depicted in the next table.

Table 10. Univariate analysis (tests of between-subjects effects)

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Memory Strategies	.034	2	1..017	.043	.958
Cognitive Strategies	.996	2	.498	1.488	.231
Compensation Strategies	.402	2	.201	.446	.642
Metacognitive Strategies	5.510	2	2.755	5.519	.006
Affective Strategies	1.969	2	.985	1.534	.221
Social Strategies	1.037	2	.519	.814	.446

Another multiple analysis of variance was performed for students of different years regarding direct vs. indirect strategies. Leven's test and Box's *M* test were not significant for the dependent variables of direct and indirect strategies suggesting equal-error variance and co-variance matrices with Box's M = 7.577, F = 1.219, p = .293 > .05 and Leven's Test with F = 1.089, and p = .341 for direct strategies and Leven's Test with F = .240 and p = .787 for indirect strategies. These results allowed the MANOVA to be used to analyze the level differences between students of different years regarding direct and indirect strategies.

Table 11. MANOVA conducted for direct and indirect strategies by year

Effect		Value	F	Hypo. df	Error df	Sig	Partial Eta Squared	Power
Gender	Wilk's Lambada	.907	2.188	4.000	174.000	.072	.048	.636
	Roy's Largest Root	.097	4.272	2.000	88.000	.017	.088	.732

MANOVA results for father's educational level

In order to analyze the differences between students with educated fathers (those whose fathers had a university qualifications) with those whose fathers were not very educated (their fathers had a Diploma degree or below) in all the strategies of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies, their means were calculated. Table 12 presents means, and standard deviation of different groups. Then a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) mixed design (group × measures) was conducted to determine the effect of the gender on the six strategy categories.

Table 13. The means and standard errors of students with different father's educational level considering the six strategy categories

Dependent Variable	University Qualification	Mean	SD
Memory St.	Without Univ.Qual.	3.07	.61
	With Univ. Qual.	3.19	.62
Cognitive St.	Without Univ.Qual.	3.31	.52
	With Univ. Qual.	3.34	.66
Compensation St.	Without Univ.Qual.	3.31	.71
	With Univ. Qual.	3.16	.58
Metacognitive St.	Without Univ.Qual.	3.81	.65
	With Univ. Qual.	3.77	.87
Affective St.	Without Univ.Qual.	3.19	.73
	With Univ. Qual.	2.94	.89

Social St.	Without Univ.Qual.	3.24	.71
	With Univ. Qual.	3.27	.92

The results of multivariate tests yielded a non-significant Wilks' Λ = .920, F (1,89) = 1.225, p = .302 for the six strategy inventory of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and affective. In addition, it yielded a non-significant Wilks' = .991, F (1,89) = .398, p = .673 for direct vs. indirect strategies. It can be maintained that father's educational level did not have any impact on the six strategy categories or on the direct vs. indirect strategy categories.

Table 14 MANOVA conducted for the six strategy categories by father's educational background

Effect		**Value**	**F**	**Hypo. df**	**Error df**	**Sig**	**Partial Eta Squared**	**Power**
Gender	Wilk's Lambada	.920	1.225	6.000	84	.302	.080	.557

Oxford who has performed a bulk of studies on language learning strategies maintains that the frequency of use of strategies can be grouped into three groups of high, medium and low. In her book, *Language Learning Strategies*, *What Every Teacher should know,* Oxford (1990) gave the following popular classification which has also been used in this research.

1: "High Use" (3.5-5.0)

2: "Medium Use" (2.5-3.4)

3: "Low Use" (1.0-2.4)

As the results indicated, male and female Iranian students of English Literature were medium users in all the strategy categories of memory, cognitive, compensation, affective and social. However, as females obtained an average use of 3.83 and males an average of 3.61 for metacognitive strategies, they were high users of this strategy category. Students of first year were high users of cognitive strategies, for they got an average use of 3.50 and high users of meacognitive strategies with an average index of 4.11. Sophomores were high users regarding the use of metacognitive with an average use of 3.91 and that is also the case with juniors for they received an average use of 3.55 which classifies them as high users. For the rest of strategies, these students were average users. For students of different father's level of education, it was found that they were medium users regarding all the strategy categories except metacognitive strategies for which students of

both groups were high users insofar as those students who had educated fathers received an average use of 3.81 and those with non-educated fathers obtained an average use of 3.7.

Summary and Conclusion

There are a host of factors which may influence the use of strategies among students some of which are occupational status, parental educational level, etc. In this study, learner's background was taken into consideration some aspects of which are gender (males vs. females), year of study and father's level of education. Shiraz University students majoring in English literature at the Department of Language and Linguistics were compared regarding their use of direct vs. indirect strategies, and the six strategy inventories of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

It came to light that though females obtained a higher mean in all of the strategy inventories of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. They also received a higher index of the use of direct and indirect strategies. Nevertheless, the differences were not statistically significant. In other words, gender did not have much impacts on students' use of LLSS' categories.

Freshmen used the strategies of compensation, metacognitive, affective and social more than sophomores and juniors. It was manifested by the results that year of study can influence students' use of metacognitive strategies, for students of first year made the most use of this strategy; further post hoc tests all verified this conclusion. Moreover, first year students utilized indirect strategies more than other groups. On the whole, year of study can not only affect students' use of metacognitive strategies but they also have a great impact on their use of indirect strategies.

The students whose fathers were not very educated and had only an education of diploma and below obtained higher means in the strategies of compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies and direct strategies. When the results were compared with those of the students who had educated fathers and whose fathers had a university degree (Bachelor's, Master's or Ph.D), it was found that differences were not statistically significant in case any of the strategies. Therefore, students' use of strategies is not influenced by their father's level of education.

Male and female Iranian students are high users of metacognitive strategies and medium users of memory, cognitive, compensation, affective and social strategies. Freshmen are high users of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and medium users of the rest of strategies. However, sophomores and juniors are medium strategy users regarding all the strategy categories except metacognitive strategies for which they are high users. As far

as father's educational level is concerned, students of both groups (those with educated fathers and those with uneducated fathers were high users of metacognitive strategies, while they used the other strategies at a medium range.

By and large, as becoming endowed with the mettle to make use of effective learning strategies would impel language learners to make the most of the available resources and would potentially guarantee successful language learning, attention to this goal can be of paramount importance to language learning.

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