

A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF EFL UNIVERSITY LEARNERS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

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Introduction

- ▶ Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) have been the main subject of a large number of researches which have attempted to explore the strategies that language learners and in particular second language learners employ during the process of language learning.
- ▶ The importance of learners' gender, university grades, teachers' gender, and years of experience are the issues which have been studied in relation to second language learning. A number of studies have been done by second language learning linguists and psychologists and they have emphasized the significant role of the LLSs in the process of second language acquisition (Ellis, 1994).
- ▶ Many related studies proposed different definitions of strategies such as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge" (Rubin 1975, p. 43)

Statement of the problem

- ▶ The studies considering the importance of LLSs have mostly examined the application of strategies in second language environment rather than foreign language setting.
- ▶ Thus, this study attempts to examine the employment of LLSs in foreign language environment and the use and awareness of strategies by students.

A QUESTION TRIED TO BE ANSWERED

- ▶ How important do the Kurdish English language learners consider LLSs, and are there any significant differences in terms of learners' responses on the frequency use of LLSs in relation to their gender and university levels?

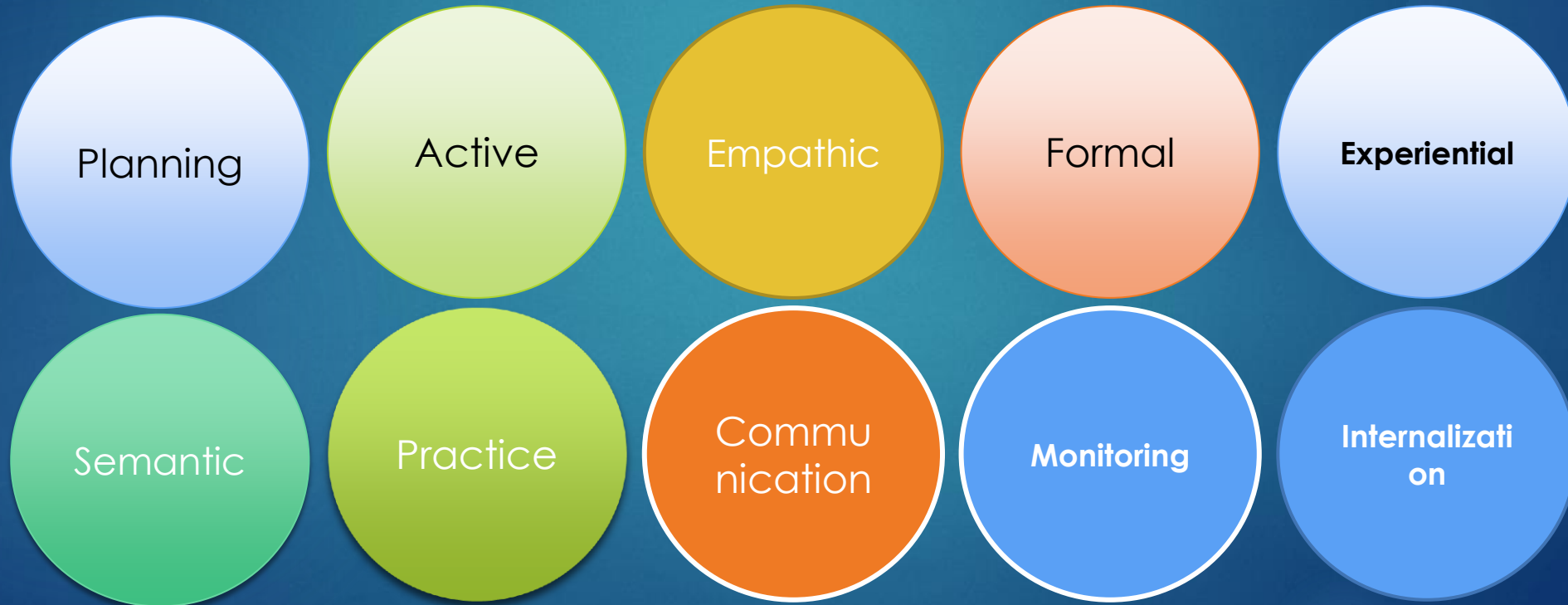
LITERATURE REVIEW

► **Definitions of Language Learning Strategies**

- O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have defined learning strategies as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help learners comprehend, learn, or retain new information” (p. 1).
- Rubin (1987) explained learning strategies as “any set of operations, plans, or routines, used by learners to facilitate the obtaining, retrieval, storage and use of information” (p. 19).
- Macaro (2001) suggested that “an interesting practice-related avenue to pursue is whether what we mean by effort when doing a language task simply means the effective development of a range of strategies in a task” (p. 264).

Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies

- ▶ Old classifications: In the last few decades, different taxonomies of LLSs have been proposed by many researches engaged in the realm of language learning development.
- ▶ **Stern (1975)**



- ▶ **New Classifications:** In recent years, different classifications have been proposed by other scholars among them.
- ▶ According to Dörnyei's model (2005), LLSs are divided into four main strategies which are labeled as:

Cognitive strategies applied for the transformation of language information (e.g., repetition, summarizing, and using images)

Meta-cognitive strategies applied for learning processing (e.g., analyzing, monitoring, evaluating, planning, and organizing)

Social strategies applied for interpersonal behaviors which increase the quantity of practice and communication (e.g., cooperation and interaction with native speakers)

Affective strategies applied for controlling of the affection in language learning process.

Methodology

▶ Educational Context

- ▶ The data was collected from five different universities, all located in the Erbil province. They are as follows:
- ▶ 1. Salahaddin University – Faculty of Education (SUEF)
- ▶ 2. Salahaddin University – Faculty of Languages (SULF)
- ▶ 3. Koya University – English Language and Literature Department (KU)
- ▶ 4. Cihan University – English Language and Literature Department (JU)
- ▶ 5. Ishik University – English Language Teaching Department (IU)

▶ Participants

▶ The number of male and female students

Male participants	Female participant	Total
221	338	559

▶ The number of students in the five universities in different grades of their programs

First year participants	Second year Participants	Third Year participants	Fourth year participant	Total
149	146	134	130	559

Instruments

- ▶ Griffith's (2007) "English Language Learning Strategy Inventory (ELLSI)" was used.
- ▶ The ELLSI has a high degree of validity and it also includes thirty two items representing cognitive, affective and meta-cognitive LLSs. The questionnaire has related items on a 5-point Likert scale. The learners' version has been designed to elicit language learners' reports on importance of LLSs for their learning process.

Data Analysis Procedure

- ▶ The data gathered by using the ELLSI questionnaires was analyzed by the means of the recent version of SPSS program. In relation to the research question and the significance of the relationship between the LLSs and other independent variables, including gender and university grades, the data was analyzed by T-test, One-Way ANOVA and Post-Hoc test.

FINDINGS

- Kurdish English language learners' views regarding the importance of LLSs.

Most Important Strategies Chosen by Learners

Item		Scale	Findings				
			F	%	N	M	St.d v
25	Listening to native speakers of English	Not Important	19	3.4	559	4.35	0.79
		Least Important	15	2.7			
		Somewhat	54	9.7			
		Important	135	24.2			
		Most Important	336	60.1			
12	Talking to other students in English	Not important	37	6.6	559	4.22	1.00
		Least important	12	2.1			
		Somewhat	66	11.8			
		Important	148	26.5			
		Most important	296	53			
18	Talking to native speakers of English	Not important	31	5.5	559	4.14	1.11
		Least important	24	4.3			
		Somewhat	84	15			
		Important	124	22.2			
		Most important	296	53			

Not Important Strategies Chosen by Learners

Item		Scale	Findings				
			F	%	N	M	St.d v
11	Listening to music while studying	Not important	149	26.7	559	2.71	1.45
		Least important	149	26.7			
		Somewhat	87	15.6			
		Important	69	12.3			
		Most important	104	18.6			
9	Using language learning games	Not important	109	19.5	559	3.15	1.17
		Least important	57	10.2			
		Somewhat	168	30.1			
		Important	150	26.8			
		Most important	75	13.4			
7	Revising regularly	Not important	82	14.7	559	3.38	1.13
		Least important	42	7.5			
		Somewhat	163	29.2			
		Important	173	30.9			
		Most important	99	17.7			
10	Writing letters in English	Not important	83	14.8	559	3.45	1.29
		Least important	62	11.1			
		Somewhat	100	17.9			
		Important	176	31.5			
		Most important	138	24.7			

T-test Results between Genders for Kurdish EFL Learners

Item N.	Item	Mean		F-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Doing homework	Male	3.82	2.34	0.017
		female	4.03		
4	Reading books in English	Male	3.9	.732	0.037
		Female	4.09		
8	Listening to songs in English	Male	3.32	.839	0.020
		Female	3.57		
9	Using language learning games	Male	2.92	.629	0.022
		Female	3.16		
10	Writing letters in English	Male	3.36	.983	0.012
		Female	3.62		
14	Reading newspapers in English	Male	3.92	3.62	0.015
		Female	3.66		

Most Important Strategies Used by the Male and Female EFL Students

Gender	Rank	Item	Mean	SD
Male				
	25 th	Listening to native speakers of English	4.3	.92
	13 th	Using a dictionary	4.2	2.99
	18 th	Talking to native speakers of English	4.1	1.1
Female				
	25 th	Listening to native speakers of English	4.3	.92
	12 th	Talking to other students in English	4.2	1.0
	18 th	Talking to native speakers of English	4.1	1.1

Not Important Strategies Used by Learners' Gender

Gender	Ranks	Items	Mean	SD
Male				
	11 th	Listening to music while studying	2.6	1.4
	7 th	Revising regularly	3.2	1.0
	8 th	listening to songs in English	3.2	1.2
Female				
	11 th	Listening to music while studying	2.7	1.4
	20 th	Controlling schedules so that English study is done	3.2	1.1
	9 th	Using language learning games	3.2	1.1

Summary of the Major Findings

- ▶ The analysis of the related survey data indicated that learners employed the LLSs with high frequency. Furthermore, no statistically significant difference was found between the male and female learners' survey responses. However, the result of the analyzed data revealed that the fourth grade learners used the strategies more frequently than their counterparts from the lower university grades.

Thank you

