The Impact of Language Learning Strategy Use on English Performance of Asian College Students

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Abstract: Language learning strategies, which are numerous and complex, are essential tools for language learners to learn. Due to individual differences, many learners are at a loss when understanding and choosing language learning strategies. This paper aims to analyze some common language learning strategies through literature analysis to help language learners understand the impact of language learning strategy use on the English performance of Asian college students. This paper believes that English performance can become better with the aid of appropriate learning strategies. Besides affecting academic performance, some language learning strategies are able to enhance motivation or change attitudes to help learning. Language learners should choose appropriate learning strategies according to their abilities. This paper's findings may help college students in Asia when choosing language learning strategies.

Keywords: Language learning strategies, Individual differences, Learning motivation.

1. Introduction

Second language learning can help students understand the history, culture, and politics of different countries and regions, broadening their knowledge horizons and cultivating global awareness. For most students who use English as a foreign language (EFL), especially in higher education, mastering English skills is particularly important. This is not only about improving language skills but also directly related to the development of their core academic abilities. These abilities include speaking, reading, writing, and reading. Students' awareness of these abilities is the key to success [1]. Oxford pointed out that learning strategies make language learning: " easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations [2]. Since the first studies on language learners were published more than forty years ago, language learning strategy research has gone through several stages. For example, Gu Shimin et al. divided foreign language learning strategy research into four stages: from 1970 to 1980, from 1980 to 1990, from 1990 to the 20th century, and after the 20th century. From 1970 to 1980, some researchers believed that the focus on identifying effective learners was the origination of literature on second language acquisition learning strategies [3]. During this decade, there were many studies on learning strategies, but they lacked systematicity. Compared with previous studies, it was not until 1978 that N. Naiman et al.'s research made significant progress in depth and breadth. From 1980 to 1990, O'Malley learned about perceptual processing in learning strategies and structured learning strategies through Anderson's cognitive model in 1987 [4-5]. How advanced students use strategies is related to their level [6]. In this stage,

Anderson's cognitive model of cognitive psychology influenced most of the research. Moreover, better research methods were proposed [3]. From 1990 to the 20th century, O'Malley et al . divided learning strategies into metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies from 1990 [7]. Oxford divided learning strategies into direct strategies and indirect strategies in 1989. Memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies are usually classified as direct strategies that directly impact language learning. In contrast, metacognitive strategies, emotional strategies, and social strategies are regarded as indirect strategies, which indirectly support the overall process of language learning by regulating learners' thinking, emotions, and social interactions [2]. In this stage, the theory is mainly dominated by the theories of Oxford, O'Malley, and Chamot. From the 20th century to the present, there has been no substantial progress except for the changes in research objects and methods [3]. Since Gu Shimin et al.'s paper was published in 2015, the trend of language learning strategy research after 2015 has not been divided. This article believes that after 2015, with the development of modern technology, related research covers the nature and classification of learning strategies and extends to how to strengthen the application of learning strategies through modern technology. For example, Zhonggen YU et al. believe that In traditional English language learning, students' motivation is not as good as in mobile language learning, and the same is true for learning outcomes. [8]. Nathan Thomas et al. believe that this research stage prioritizes innovative research at the design, method, or analysis level. However, this research stage will not get lost in intelligence and will never forget the teaching significance of the original conception of language learning strategy research [9] For English majors, mastering English requires the help of language learning strategies, while academic achievements should also be focused. Most studies on LLS show that students need LLS to make their learning enjoyable and effective [10]. After reviewing a large amount of relevant literature, this paper uses literature analysis to outline the trend of research on LLS and analyze the impact of language learning strategy use on the English performance of Asian college students. Hoping this paper can be of some help to college students when they are choosing a language learning strategy.

2.   Empirical Research Analysis

2.1.   English Performance With the Aid of Appropriate Learning Strategies

Wulan Agustin et al. interviewed 38 students from the English Department of a university in Indonesia and then did research [1]. The researchers used a Likert scale and questionnaire, including social, metacognitive, emotional, cognitive, compensatory, and memory strategies. In the student social strategy report, the total mean was 3.43. However, the question " When I speak, I let English speakers correct me. " Scored only 3.16, meaning many students lost the opportunity to talk directly with native learners. If oral problems are not corrected in time, errors will accumulate. Similarly, students seeking help from English speakers did not score high. Students should actively seek help and listen to others' advice to correct mistakes.

In the students' metacognitive strategy report, the total average is 3.66. Although the score for the question "trying to learn English better" reached 3.89, the scores for the two questions "I plan my schedule so that I have enough time to learn English" and "I have clear goals to improve my English skills" were low, which means that not many students have their own learning goals. Few people can plan their schedules to ensure enough time to study. This shows that students need to increase their self-awareness and supervision and set goals and plans.

In the students' emotional strategy report, the overall score was 3.34, which reflects that when students are afraid to use English, they tend to relax, encourage themselves, and confide their inner feelings to others. In the students' cognitive strategy report, the overall score was 3.74. Among them, the question " I watch English TV programs or go to see English movies" scored the highest, which shows that the vast majority of students support the method of learning English through

English-related film and television works. At the same time, many students tend to have conversations in English, which shows that they have the intrinsic motivation to communicate in English to obtain and learn English resources anytime and anywhere. The report shows that students use a variety of methods when learning and using English, such as breaking down the syllables of words, using native language transfer, and communicating with native English speakers. These methods further promote their language learning process. However, the question "Summarize some of the information I heard or read in English" scored low. Students should take notes or make summaries in the learning process to familiarize themselves with new knowledge and deepen their impressions.

In the students' compensation strategy report, the overall score was 3.62. Students agreed to learn new vocabulary through guessing, synonym replacement, and body language. The question " Try to guess what the other person will say in English next" scored the highest among them. Predicting the unknown in advance lays a sure foundation for future exposure to the unknown. Being prepared to deal with the unknown is also essential. In the students' memory strategy report, the overall score was 3.60. The question "Remember a new English word by imagining the possible use of this word in your mind" scored the highest among them. Constructing a scenario in your mind where new vocabulary can be used can undoubtedly deepen students' impression of new vocabulary and enhance their understanding of the usage of new vocabulary.

The researchers also made a table analyzing the correlation between learning strategies and GPA. The data showed a positive correlation between language learning strategy use and English performance. Since each strategy has unique advantages, combining multiple strategies will play a complementary role, thus enabling students to achieve better learning results. By analysing the questionnaire results, this article extracted the results with the highest scores in each type of strategy and deeply analyzed the advantages of these strategies. Students can flexibly use these efficient learning strategies according to their specific circumstances to improve their English learning.

In addition, Urai Salam did a case study of successful language learners' learning styles and strategies [11]. A successful college student selected from 100 students from a four-year education program was interviewed. The research methods were questionnaires and case analyses. In the study, this learner paid attention to two specific learning strategies during her studies, namely cognitive strategies and compensatory strategies. The first is cognitive strategies, which are classified into two levels: practice, receiving, and sending messages. At the practice level, the language learner used five methods, such as the formal practice of sounds and reorganization, which all appeared in Wulan Agustin's questionnaire questions above, such as " I watch English TV shows, or go to see English movies" is consistent with the formal practice of sounds. This practice in this study included watching three YouTube channels daily: engVid, Unreported World, and Broadly. These videos allowed this successful language learner to imitate native English speakers and helped her pronounce words correctly. At the same time, these videos also trained her listening and speaking skills. For example, " having English conversations in English" is consistent with natural practice, which in this study refers to using English in daily life and communicating with friends in English as often as possible. Frequent use of English in daily life is different from stereotyped English practice. Using English in actual conversations helps to better understand and use complex grammatical structures and can more effectively and lastingly remember new vocabulary. Compared with simply memorizing a vocabulary list, frequent use of English can significantly improve speaking and listening fluency, making language learning more natural and effective. In terms of receiving and sending information, this language learner adopted the method of quickly obtaining ideas and using resources to receive and send information. Quickly acquiring ideas mainly involves scanning, skimming, or guessing unfamiliar words in the article through context, significantly reducing the time learners spend reading the article and helps learners understand the

core ideas of the article. Using resources to receive and send information means using resources to find out what you hear or the meaning of reading in the new language [12], which includes consulting existing sources such as dictionaries and grammar books. English learners must formally and systematically understand the meaning and usage of new vocabulary by consulting existing resources. In summary, at the level of cognitive strategies, not only the output of practice is needed, but also the input of new vocabulary through reading skills and existing sources.

At the level of compensation strategies, this language learner classified compensation strategies into two categories. One is intelligent guessing, which includes two ways: using language clues and other clues. Using language clues means guessing from useful clues such as suffixes, prefixes, word order, etc. For example, dis as a prefix often means "not" or "opposite," such as agree-disagree, appear-disappear, etc. Using other clues means guessing when facing a new language, usually an unfamiliar word. In this case, learners should guess the word's meaning according to the situation described by the author in the context. At the level of overcoming limitations in speaking and writing, this language learner proposed five strategies: switching to the mother tongue, using gestures, adjusting or approximating information, temporary word creation strategy, and synonyms. The latter four strategies all appeared in the problems reported by the students' compensation strategies above, but switching to the mother tongue was not mentioned. Switching to the mother tongue means that when students face unfamiliar English words, they use their mother tongue to find the word's meaning. This is very important. On this basis, mother tongue transfer can also be used appropriately to play the role of mother tongue transfer in language learning. In summary, the study found that this successful language learner pays attention to certain strategies during his or her studies. Successful language learners know how to succeed through using learning strategies. Language learners should be free to create a learning atmosphere based on their favorite learning styles and learning strategies. Successful language learners should apply at least two different learning styles and learning strategies to support their learning process. This conclusion is still consistent with the conclusion above, that is, students should learn English according to their actual situation and combine one high-scoring learning strategy with other high-scoring learning strategies to achieve better results.

However, this conclusion is inconsistent with the conclusions of some scholars, who believe that the number of strategies is not the key factor that directly determines grades and that the effectiveness and applicability of strategies may be more important. For example, Vann et al. believe that students whose academic performance is not good also apply a lot of strategies. However, they cannot use these strategies reasonably from beginning to end [13]. So, each study has its limitations.

2.2. The Promotion Effect of Indirect Strategies

The use of indirect strategies sometimes cannot directly achieve better academic achievements, but indirect strategies can improve conditions, such as correct attitudes, create a learning atmosphere, and improve English proficiency, to encourage individuals to learn better and thereby achieve better academic achievements. Andrea Magyar et al. provided an empirical study investigating the relationship between English language learning strategies, language performance, and attitudes [12]. The study found that meta-emotions and emotions, as well as meta-social and social category strategies, directly affected students' attitudes toward English, and attitudes directly impacted English language performance, so indirect strategies indirectly helped language learners achieve success. A positive attitude is crucial because it is necessary for forming the right learning motivation and maintaining sufficient learning motivation. If the attitude is negative, students may lose the motivation to continue learning or even become bored, hurting academic performance.

2.3. Individual Differences Affect Strategy Selection

Strategies can be taught, but learners in context are the ultimate authority on strategy selection. A strategy's appropriateness depends on various personal and contextual factors [14]. Everyone should choose different learning strategies during the learning process, depending on their comfort and effectiveness. For example, students who use memory strategies are very confident in their learning activities [15]. It can also be found from the research of Mutiara Ayu et al. that students who tend to use memory strategies tend to have stronger memory and information processing abilities because these students not only enhance the depth of memory through different methods such as repeated recitation and audio-visual connection but also integrate scattered information into a structured form to promote long-term memory. Fun memory methods such as memory flashcards can transform boring learning content into interesting activities and increase learners' interest and motivation. Students who are more motivated will get a higher GPA [16]. The improvement in academic performance will also enhance students' self-confidence, promoting the students' use of more memory strategies. Therefore, a virtuous cycle is formed between using memory strategies and improving academic performance. Students are more able to use memory strategies while improving their grades. Therefore, memory strategies may be more suitable for students who are confident and have strong memory abilities.

3.   Conclusion

This study, through literature analysis, proved that English performance can become better with the aid of appropriate learning strategies. Besides affecting academic performance, some language learning strategies can enhance students' motivation or change attitudes in order to help them learn. Probably due to sample and time limitations, Wulan Agustin et al. found that the more learning strategies students use, the better their academic performance. However, this conclusion is inconsistent with the conclusions of some scholars. This inconsistency has been compared in the previous article. So, each study has its limitations. Due to various factors, the learning strategies suitable for everyone are not the same. But no matter what strategy it is, it cannot effectively help language learning when used alone. On the contrary, combining multiple strategies will effectively help language learning, such as the combination of cognitive strategies and compensatory strategies. Due to time constraints, this article only analyzes the applicability of a small number of learning strategies, and the author hopes that others can supplement and improve them in the future.

At present, the research on language strategies is still deepening. Researchers focus not only on the impact of cultural differences, personality, environment, and other factors on learning strategies but also on the application and training of language strategies. However, since the 20th century, compared with the 19th century, the research on language strategies has not made substantial breakthroughs. The author hopes that in the future, researchers can pay attention to modern technology, such as AI, Chatgpt, etc. Researchers should explore the role of modern technology in language learning and combine it with traditional language learning strategies to form a new one. Then, train it.

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