

Use of Language Learning Strategies by Students at Higher Secondary Level in Pakistan

By

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the investigation of the use of language learning strategy by students at higher secondary level in Lahore, Pakistan. Attempt has also been made to find out the similarities and differences in the preferences of strategy use between students from the science, commerce and humanities group. A large scale survey of students from the public and private sector was conducted to determine their preference of language learning strategy. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to measure the effects of the independent variable (academic groups, i.e. science, commerce and humanities) on the three dependent variables (metacognitive, cognitive and social affective) collectively. Results show statistically significant difference between the academic groups on the combined dependent variables. Univariate Analysis of Variance was conducted to measure the associations between each independent and dependent variable. Strategy differences were also found between arts and commerce students. All three groups showed a greater preference for metacognitive strategy use.

Keywords: Language learning strategies, English as foreign language, Language Learning Strategies Inventory (LLSI)

Introduction

Teaching foreign languages has undergone vast changes in the past three decades. There is a distinct shift from focus on teaching methodologies to strategies of language learning. Learners of another language adopt many strategies and techniques to facilitate learning. It is asserted by Liyanage (2004), that language learning strategies occupy a pivotal position in second language learning. Knowledge of the students' preferences of strategy use helps the

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teachers in the understanding of their pupils, and assists them in the process of language learning.

The position of English in the English educational system in Pakistan cannot be undermined. It has a distinction of being the official language, besides being the medium of instruction in elite private schools and cadet colleges (Rahman, 2001). The national curriculum for English language acknowledges the importance of English and thus emphasizes on learning the language since grade one (Ministry of Education, 2006). Since English is a tool for admissions in good colleges and for securing better employment opportunities, it is essential to provide English language learning opportunities to the masses and not restrict it to the privileged class only. Although in the recent past efforts have been made to impart training to teachers in teaching of English, both, in the private and the public sector, yet, it remains insufficient. In most schools the method adopted for English language teaching is the outdated grammar translation approach (Warsi, 2004), while language learning strategies are seldom taken into consideration.

Amongst the many troubles encountered by the Pakistani students, the most highlighted in research are Grammar Translation Method and out dated ways of teaching (Akram & Mahmood, 2007). Other reasons include the imparting English language skills through literature, untrained English language teachers, obsolete books, endorsement of rote learning, dearth of language aids, short period of class in the week, and overcrowded classrooms. All these factors affect the students' grades. Thus, in the given background and perspective, it becomes imperative to identify the students' language learning strategies and design the language syllabus accordingly.

Given the importance of English globally and in Pakistan specifically, research on the use of language learning strategies in Pakistan is not worthy of notice. Keeping in view the role of strategy use in second language learning, this research focuses on investigating the same among the students of higher secondary level in Lahore. The paper highlights the similarities and differences between the science, commerce and arts students in terms of their use of language learning strategy.

The focus of this research is to investigate the use of language learning strategies related to English as a foreign language by the students at higher secondary level in metropolitan Lahore and to examine different academic groups as a learner variable that influences the students' use of English language learning strategies. The emphasis of second/foreign language learning now is more on how teachers and learners achieve their goals, and not on the teaching techniques.

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O'Malley and Chamot (1990) describe language learning strategy as “the particular thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information” (p.1). They elaborate that, “learning strategies are special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information” (O’ Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.1). Language learning strategies are viewed by Scarcella & Oxford (1992, as cited in Oxford, 2003), as, “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques -- such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task -- used by students to enhance their own learning”. Both the authors consider learners’ use of language strategies as conscious, purposely chosen and deliberate approach for facilitating learning.

Learning strategies have comprehensively been defined by O’Malley and Chamot (1990) as:

Focusing on selected aspects of new information, analyzing and monitoring information during acquisition, organizing or elaborating on new information during the encoding process, evaluating the learning when it is completed, or `assuring oneself that the learning will be successful as a way to allay anxiety. (p.43)

According to Oxford (2003), none of the strategies are good or bad, but are effective when they are in accordance with the task for which they are employed. Strategies may be useful as individual techniques, or when used in a combination, and should not be in conflict with the learning style of the individual. According to Oxford (1990, as cited in Oxford 2003, p. 8) fulfilling these conditions “make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.”

Grenfell & Harris (as cited in Chamot, 2005) appropriately elucidate the twofold importance of language learning strategies. On one hand, the study of the use of language learning strategies gives insight into the cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective processes related to learning processes; on the other, they can be taught to struggling language learners, and assist them in language learning.

In second language learning literature, steps taken for progress in the target language learning, and efforts to draw upon and utilize the language being learnt are used synonymously as second language use strategies (Cohen, 1996). The former directly support in achieving the learning goal, whereas the latter indirectly assist learning as the learner draws upon what he already knows. Other variables which have been identified by researchers, related with

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second language learning are learning style, gender, nationality, age, and learner beliefs among others.

Amongst the many factors that influence the use of language learning strategies, students choice of academic specialization and majors has also been explored, and found significant (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989 and Yang, 1999). Wharton (2000), and Lee, (as cited in Hong, 2006) did not find any significant interaction. Academic majors had a significant association among bilingual Korean Chinese students, but not among monolingual Korean group (Hong, 2006). Chang, Liu, and Lee, (2007) found that humanities and social sciences established greater strategy use as compared to learners from the business and management and the science and engineering academic majors. Gu (2002), found academic major to have lesser influence than gender, and had mixed results where “Science students slightly outperformed arts students (though insignificantly) in vocabulary size, but arts students significantly outperformed science students on the general proficiency test,” (p.1).

The learner is not consciously aware of how to apply and use strategies, and needs to be made aware of them, and formally instructed by the teachers (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). There are different approaches and models of language strategy instruction. However it is the general consensus, that these strategies need to be incorporated alongside the regular classroom activities, and need not be taught exclusively (Oxford, 1989). It is asserted by Oxford (1993) that benefits of strategy instruction can be reaped when students’ needs, and beliefs are already known to the instructor, so that instruction can be suited to their requirement and mindsets. Knowledge of different preferences of language strategies across different cultures also lends greater insight in understanding of your own pupils. She also holds the view of integrating language strategy training in regular classroom teaching, and not teaching them explicitly. Knowledge of strategies already preferred by the students, their prior knowledge and proficiency levels, relevance of strategies in accordance with the language. Moreover strategy instruction needs to take into account the existing strategies preferred by the students, their prior knowledge, the appropriateness of strategies in accordance with the language syllabus, and the duration of instruction (O’Malley & Chamot, as cited in Chamot, 2005). Oxford (1994), maintains, “Research should be replicated so more consistent information becomes available within and across groups of learners”.

Method and Procedure

The proposed study was descriptive in nature and the survey method was utilized to collect data about the strategies used for language learning. Language learning strategies are unobservable and therefore are identified through self report procedures. Chamot (2005) observes, "Although self-report is always subject to error, no better way has yet been devised for identifying learners' mental processes and techniques for completing a learning task." Various self report strategies that have been adopted by researchers are retrospective interview, stimulated recall interviews, questionnaires, written diaries and journals and think aloud protocols appropriate with a learning task. Each of these strategies has their own advantages and disadvantages. Research shows that simply relying on observation is not adequate to identify language learning strategies (Chamot, 1990). Studies regarding identification of language learning strategies have mostly been conducted by the administration of questionnaires (Chamot, 2005). Oxford (1996) stresses, "questionnaires are among the most efficient and comprehensive ways to assess frequency of language learning strategy use."

Sample

The target population of the study was students of class XI, and XII i.e. higher secondary classes, from public and private colleges in metropolitan Lahore. The method chosen for selection of the sample was multistage sampling. First, a list of private and public colleges was prepared. Boys and girls colleges were listed in each sector respectively. Since student strength in the public sector colleges is greater, therefore a representative number of boys and girls colleges from each sector were then chosen randomly. Thus three boys and girls colleges each were selected from the public sector. Four boys and girls colleges each were chosen from the private sector. However, three of the private boy's colleges had girls enrolled as well. This way the total number of colleges included in the study became seventeen. A representative sample of students from the three academic majors i.e. arts, commerce and science were then randomly selected from each college. In colleges where there were several sections for the same class, only one section was randomly selected for the administration of the questionnaire.

The participants were all currently enrolled boys and girls from intermediate colleges in the private and public sector. The total number of participants selected in the research comprised of 2409 students. Of these there were 438 boys, and 1130 girls from the public sector

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colleges and 312 boys and 529 girls from the private sector colleges. The subjects were all from Lahore city, and citizens of Pakistan.

Instruments

Two instruments were utilized in this study. These are:

Individual Background Questionnaire (IBQ). The Individual Background Questionnaire (IBQ) has been designed by the researcher adhering to the basic format adopted by Hong, (2006). It elicits information about students' demographic characteristics such as age, gender, medium of instruction, years of learning English and other factors related to English as foreign language learning.

The Language Learning Strategies Inventory (LLSI). The instrument used in this study has been taken and slightly modified from the original language learning strategy used by Liyanage (2004). The inventory was initially developed by Chamot et al. (1987). It is divided into five sections: listening in class in the target language (14 items); speaking in class in the target language (9 items); listening and speaking outside of class in the target language (9 items); reading English (16 items), and writing in English (12 items). The inventory used by Liyanage (2004) has a four point rating scale. The total number of items in the questionnaire is 63. These items measure a total of twenty six strategies, in the above given learning contexts. Moreover, these strategies are further classified as metacognitive, cognitive and social affective strategies spanning a total of twenty six strategies. These, as summarized by Liyanage (2004) are:

- Metacognitive strategies: advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, organizational planning, self management, self monitoring, and self evaluation.
- Cognitive strategies: note taking, transfer, contextualization, elaboration, inferencing, summarizing, substituting, resourcing, repetition, grouping, deduction, imagery, auditory representation, rehearsal and translation.
- Social/affective strategies: questioning for clarification, self- reinforcement, cooperation and self-talk.

Of the total sixty three items, twenty items constitute the metacognitive strategies; thirty four items make up the cognitive strategies scale; and nine items in social affective scale.

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Both the questionnaires (the LLSI and the IBQ), were translated into Urdu, to facilitate the students, and to ensure that the participants are able to comprehend the questions. This way any possibilities of misunderstandings were minimized. The results of the reliability analysis yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha level at 0.92.

Data were collected personally by the researcher from the sample in the study. A letter from the supervisor authorized the researcher to gain access to the randomly selected institutions. These institutions were then be approached and requested to cooperate in the process of data collection. The students were assured of the confidentiality of their results and explained the relevance and a brief outline of the study.

Results

In order to determine which language learning strategies do students at higher secondary level in Lahore prefer, strategy use is categorized by high, and medium and low means. The individual strategy use based on their responses on the LLSI is shown in Tables 1 and 2. High means are considered to be 2.8 and above, low means are 1.92 or less, whereas medium means range falls between 1.93 and 2.79. Table 1 presents strategies which fall into the high use range.

Table 1: Strategies Categorized by High Usage ($M \leq 2.8$ or above)

Item	Category	M	Item	Category	M
SLOC1	MCS	3.48	EW12R	MCS	3.04
LC1	MCS	3.39	ER16	CS	3.03
SC11	MCS	3.38	EW3	CS	3.02
LC4	CS	3.36	LC10	SAS	3.02
LC7	CS	3.36	ER7	CS	3.01
EW10	MCS	3.34	SLOC9	MCS	3.01
ER3	CS	3.34	ER5	MCS	3.00
SLOC5	CS	3.33	SC12	CS	2.98
ER9	CS	3.32	EW4	CS	2.97
SC7	CS	3.28	SLOC8	MCS	2.96
SC2	MCS	3.27	SLOC3	SAS	2.96
ER12	CS	3.22	LC2	CS	2.94

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SC1	MCS	3.18	SLOC4	CS	2.94
ER13	CS	3.18	LC3	SAS	2.93
ER15	MCS	3.18	ER8	MCS	2.91
SC6	CS	3.18	EW2	CS	2.91
LC14	CS	3.14	SLOC6	CS	2.90
LC6	CS	3.12	ER14	CS	2.90
EW11	MCS	3.12	SC3	SAS	2.87
SLOC2	CS	3.10	ER11	MCS	2.85
ER10	MCS	3.10	ER6	CS	2.85
LC13	MCS	3.09	EW6	CS	2.84
SC5	SAS	3.08	EW9	CS	2.82
ER1	MCS	3.08	EW7	SAS	2.81
SC4	CS	3.07			

LC= Listening in class, SLOC= speaking and listening outside of class, ER = reading English in class, EW= Writing English in class, MCS = metacognitive strategy, CS = cognitive strategy

Items SLOC 1, LC 1, SC 11, LC 4 and LC 7 are the five most preferred used strategies by students. SLOC 1, a metacognitive strategy item, “I listen, especially for words or phrases that I already know to help me understand what is going on in each conversation”, ranks first. LC 1, a metacognitive strategy, “When I listen, I plan in advance to pay more attention to what the teacher is going to talk about in general than to specific words and details”, ranks as the second most preferred strategy. SC 11, a metacognitive strategy which states, “I try to answer all questions mentally, even when the teacher is addressing someone else”, ranks third. LC 4, a cognitive strategy, “When I hear a new English word, I try to learn the teacher’s pronunciation by copying or imitating it”, ranks at the fourth place. It is observed from Table 1 that LC 7, a cognitive strategy, “When I learn a new word or phrase, I play it back in my mind to remember it”, ranks at the fifth place.

It is worth noting that most of the strategies fall in the learning context of listening in class, besides one each from speaking in class and speaking and listening outside of class. This indicates the learners’ input deficient environment in these learning contexts and their eagerness to improve this shortcoming. Metacognitive strategies are seen to be most preferred followed by cognitive strategies.

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Table 2 shows strategy uses that fall between the medium ranges for the participants of this study. Metacognitive and cognitive strategy items fall in the higher end of medium range ($1.93 \leq M \leq 2.79$).

Table 2: Strategies Categorized by Medium Usage ($1.93 \leq M \leq 2.79$)

Item	Category	M	Item	Category	M
EW8	CS	2.78	LC9	CS	2.74
ER4	CS	2.77	ER2	SAS	2.72
SC10	MCS	2.75	SC9	CS	2.71
LC11	CS	2.75	LC8	CS	2.66
EW5	CS	2.75	SC8R	MCS	2.49
EW1	SAS	2.74	LC5	CS	2.47
SLOC7	CS	2.74	LC12	CS	2.24

LC= listening in class, SC = speaking in class, SLOC= speaking and listening outside of class, ER = reading English in class, EW= writing English in class, MCS = metacognitive strategy, CS = cognitive strategy, SAS = social affective strategy

Top five strategies which fall in the medium range are item EW8, I use a monolingual (English- English) dictionary or other English reference materials when I write in English; ER4, I take notes when I read, listing the new words or phrases I find in the passage; SC 10, a metacognitive strategy, “I volunteer answers in all class so I can practice using English”; LC11, I try to relate what I’m hearing to my own experiences or to information I already know; and EW5, I write the assignment first in Urdu, and then translate it into English. It is observed that two of the strategies fall in the learning context of writing in class, while there is one each for reading in class, listening in class, and speaking in class.

Among the lower end of medium range, most of the strategies fall in the learning context of speaking and listening in class. Self reinforcement (ER 2) and (EW 1), in which before the completion of a reading and writing task, learners arrange a treat to enjoy in advance is among the least preferred social affective strategies. This is a culturally inappropriate task, as students in this region do not follow such practices. None of the strategy items fall in the low range of strategy use i.e. $M=1.92$ or less.

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Similarities and differences were examined between the science, commerce and arts students at the higher secondary school level in terms of their use of language learning strategy as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs) for Three Academic Majors on the Three Dependent Variables

Ac Grp	MCS		CS		SAS		Overall		ANOVA		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	P	Diff
									(2,2403)		
A	3.16	.41	3.04	.41	2.96	.52	3.07	.39	13.81	.000	A > C > S
S	3.05	.42	2.95	.42	2.82	.53	2.96	.40	11.65	.000	A > C > S
C	3.06	.44	2.95	.43	2.88	.52	2.97	.41	12.97	.000	A > C > S

Note: Ac Grp = academic group, A = arts, S = science, C = commerce, MCS = metacognitive strategy, CS = cognitive strategy, SAS = social affective strategy, Diff = difference Scheffe post hoc $p < 0.05$

To establish associations between the independent and dependent variables, one way between groups Multivariate Analysis Of Variance was performed to investigate language learning strategy use differences between the arts, sciences and commerce groups. Then, Univariate Analysis of Variance was conducted to measure the associations between each independent and dependent variable.

First, Mutivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to measure the effects of the independent variable (academic majors) on the three dependent variables (metacognitive, cognitive and social affective) collectively. Three dependent variables were used: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social affective strategies. The independent variable was the academic groups (arts, science and commerce). Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity with no serious violations noted. There was a statistically significant difference between the academic majors on the combined dependent variables, $F(8, 4800) = 5.41$, $p = .000$; Wilks' Lambda = .98; partial eta squared = .01. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, all three variables reached statistical significance, using a Bonferonni adjusted level of alpha level of .017. The results show that for metacognitive strategies significance was at $F(2, 2403) = 13.81$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .01. The results indicate that for cognitive strategies significance was at $F(2, 2403) = 11.65$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .01, and for

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social affective strategies significance was at $F(2, 2403) = 12.96, p = .000$, partial eta squared = .01.

The inspection of the mean scores for the results of the one way ANOVA indicated that arts group reported highest use of metacognitive strategy ($M = 3.16, SD = .41$), followed by commerce ($M = 3.06, SD = .44$). Moreover, sciences ($M = 2.94, SD = .42$) and commerce ($M = 2.94, SD = .43$) report almost the same level of cognitive strategy use. Higher strategy use in the cognitive category is demonstrated by the arts major ($M = 3.04, SD = .41$). In the social affective strategy use once again the means indicate that arts reported slightly higher use ($M = 2.95, SD = .52$), followed by commerce ($M = 2.87, SD = .52$) and sciences having the lowest means ($M = 2.82, SD = .53$).

As reported in Table 3, arts group demonstrates the greatest use of language learning strategy in all three categories, with a higher preference for metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies are also the most preferred strategies by all three groups. The Scheffé post hoc analysis ($p < 0.05$) reveals that for all three strategy categories, results of arts majors is significant as compared to commerce and science majors.

Discussion of the Results

Among the three categories, metacognitive strategies were highly preferred by both public and private sector students. Other studies in an EFL context, (Aliakbari & Hayatzadah, 2008; Hong, 2006; Riazi & Rahimi, 2005; Shmais, 2003) also report metacognitive strategies are most preferred by the learners. It is seen that students from all three academic groups reported that they listen, especially for words or phrases that they already know, to help them understand what is going on in each conversation. This shows that they rely on selective attention (SLOC 1) to be able to understand what is being said in English. This also reflects the method of teaching in Pakistan where students are not proficient in the language, and have to rely on guessing in order to understand what is being said in English. Moreover they are not used to listening to people or even the teacher talk in English language, since classes are bilingual and explanations and lectures are given in the vernacular language of the students. O' Malley and Chamot (1985) report that selective attention was used more by beginning level ESL participants in the study conducted by them.

The students also report using directed attention (LC 1), in which when they listen, they plan in advance to pay more attention to what the teacher is going to talk about in general, than to specific words and details. This strategy shows their inadequacies and the way they struggle

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to understand the language, by not focusing on distractions. O'Malley and Chamot's study also reports the use of selective attention, organizational planning and self management as the most preferred metacognitive strategies amongst foreign language students (1990, p.127). In the current study, self management (SC 11) is the most preferred strategy by students at higher secondary level, where they try to answer all questions mentally even when the teacher is addressing someone else. Their high preference for the use of this strategy shows how eager the students are to learn and develop their language abilities. The next most preferred strategies among the students were cognitive strategies. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), cognitive strategies are the highly used and preferred strategies with language learners. The strategy highly reported.

The fifth most preferred strategy is auditory representation (LC7). In this strategy when they learn a new word or phrase they play it back in their mind to remember it. As these students come from schools where there is a deficiency of auditory input, they make an extra effort to remember new material and input. It is also a reflection of the rote memorization culture in Pakistan.

A cognitive strategy, repetition (LC4), reported as highly used is, when they hear a new English word they try to learn the teacher's pronunciation by copying or imitating it. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) reported that beginning level of language learners tend to use repetition, translation and transfer among the cognitive strategies more. On the other hand advance level students show a preference for inferencing besides those mentioned earlier. Yang (1999) found that 97% of her EFL students stressed on the importance of correct pronunciation and report trying to imitate native English speakers. According to Oxford (as cited in Hong, 2006), cognitive strategies are preferred by language learners as they allow for "direct and immediate manipulation, or use of input" (p.152). Use of this strategy helps students to learn new words and also learn the correct pronunciation.

Madrid (2000) elaborates that in classes where emphasis is on grammar, foreign language students employ deduction as a strategy. On the other hand, in classes which stress to acquire vocabulary and reading for details, translation is preferred by the learners. Thus teacher's role and teaching methodology are important factors influencing students' choice of language strategy use.

Resourcing (EW8) which entails using a dictionary or resource material falls under medium range use. This shows students are more comfortable looking up words in a dictionary or consulting resource materials. Note taking (ER 4) which involves using listing new words

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they hear, is also a medium use strategy, falling at the higher end for the students. This reflects how zealous and keen students are to improve their language skills. Self management, (SC 10), a metacognitive strategy is also seen in medium use, where students report that they do not volunteer answers in all class so they can practice using English. This demonstrates the students' inhibition in speaking aloud in front of others. Elaboration, LC11, a cognitive strategy, states, "I try to relate what I'm hearing to my own experiences or to information I already know." EW5 is another cognitive strategy, where students write the assignment first in Urdu, and then translate it into English. According to Chamot et al (1987, p. 108), translation involves "using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language." Oxford (1993), asserts the not so successful language learners focus more on repetition and translation.

It is observed that social affective strategies are not preferred much by the students. The reason why Pakistani students show less preference for self reinforcement can be attributed to the learning environment, as, it is not a culturally done thing in Pakistan. In his results it is observed by Hong (2006), that researches indicate that students in ESL context demonstrate more use of social strategies, whereas EFL learners do not show a preference for these.

In discussion of the second research question, highlighting the differences and similarities between the three academic majors, sciences, commerce and arts at the higher secondary level in Lahore, ANOVA tests revealed a statistically significant difference in strategy use for all three academic groups. It is seen that arts group demonstrates greater strategy use, followed by commerce and sciences for both public and private sectors. The results report that public sector arts major demonstrates relatively higher strategy use for all the categories of strategies as compared to the sciences. On the other hand, the sciences from the private sector report greater strategy use than the science from the public sector. Similarly, it is seen that commerce major from the private sector reports higher strategy use than the public sector commerce major.

The results of other EFL researches report Arts/Humanities as academic majors to demonstrate higher strategy use. Oxford and Nyikos (1989), in their study found a significant difference among academic majors, with humanities/social science/education majors demonstrating greater strategy use of resourceful, independent strategies as compared to technical and business majors. Chang, Liu, and Lee (2007) report that humanities and social sciences reveal greater strategy use in contrast to the business and management and the science and engineering academic majors. Wharton (2000) on the contrary did not find any significant difference in strategy use linked with the choice of academic majors. In a study

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conducted by Hong (2006) it is observed that bilinguals with humanities as academic majors demonstrated most strategy usage.

The reason why students from the arts major demonstrate greater strategy use could be that they require more language skills in their careers as compared to the students from the sciences and commerce. Hong (2006) observes that the differences of strategy use among academic majors can be attributed to the role of the target language in their future lives. Moreover, it is possible in the Pakistani context in particular, that arts students require greater language skills in other elective subjects as well. Moreover, arts students do not have other scoring subjects, are not very proficient and therefore require better language abilities to score in their exam and therefore use more strategies.

Conclusion

The results show that on the whole the participants demonstrated high to medium strategy use, and none of the strategies fell in the low range, where mean is 1.92 or less. The students also reported a greater preference for metacognitive strategies which puts them in the category of higher level language learners (O' Malley & Chamot, 1990) which is supported by Oxford (as cited in Hong, 2006, p.179) who asserts that students with "more developed skills may lead to the use of metacognitive and cognitive strategies."

It has been observed that Pakistani students English language proficiency is quite low and even after studying English for so long, they are unable to written even a simple application, and often have problems coping with the demands of reading at the undergraduate level. It has been pointed out by Liyanage (2004) that in colonial countries where English is not the native language, English language teaching is "product oriented, deductive, formal, teacher centered" (p. 218). However, in native English speaking countries, emphasis is more on communicative language teaching. Therefore, students from these countries also demonstrate higher use of social affective skills, something for which our students show less preference.

The results report that arts majors demonstrate the highest use of language learning strategies. However, although these students demonstrate greater strategy use, they need to use strategies related to the task at hand to become better language learners. Prior research reports high use of language learning strategy is also demonstrated by the unsuccessful language learners, but they do not use them in coordination to obtain effective results (Lavine & Oxford, as cited in Oxford, 1992). All three majors show a great potential to be strategic learners and the possibilities of strategic training need to be explored.

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The current study was quantitative in nature, and is an initial attempt to investigate the use of language learning strategies by students at the higher secondary level in Lahore city. Other research, at rural and urban levels needs to be conducted to have a profile of the English as foreign language learners. Moreover, other research methodologies such as experimental designs, interviews, observations and diaries, or longitudinal studies need to be conducted to gain more comprehensive information about the students. Studies on other factors influencing language learning strategies, such as beliefs, motivation, personality, learning styles, and proficiency levels need to be conducted in Pakistan to provide a clear and in depth understanding of the Pakistani EFL learners.

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