Abstract

Despite the vast research on Strategy Based Instruction (SBI) and the factors influencing the use of Language Learning Strategies worldwide, little is known about the impact of personality dimensions and facets on the use of strategies. This study tries to answer the question whether personality traits affect the type and frequency of strategies. The differences between males/females as well as EFL/ESL learners in using Language Learning Strategies are also discussed in this dissertation.

In the first chapter, the definitions of the word ‘learning’ based on Pavlov, Ausubel, Rogers and Hymes are presented and compared in different sections. The researcher tries to determine the role of the learner in the learning processes. The theory behind Language Learning Strategies is explained. How personality traits and Language Learning Strategies are related forms another part of the first chapter.

In chapter two, a review of the work done is presented. Research on Language Learning Strategies began with the strategies of the “good language learner” by Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975). From these initial research efforts, numerous researchers have attempted to investigate the role of Language Learning Strategies used by successful language learners in language learning proficiency which are cited in this chapter. Factors like age, gender, learning styles, proficiency level and personality factors have been the subjects of a lot of research which are enumerated in this chapter.

In chapter three hypotheses, population, variables, data collection process, instruments, data analysis tools, objectives of the study and significance of the study are explained. The sample in this research is 150 Iranian EFL learners and the same number of Indian ESL learners who were asked to complete two questionnaires regarding personality factors (NEO.PI.R.) and Language Learning Strategies (SILL). In each group about 75 males and 75 females participated. Through an interview-based placement test, basic level students were selected. The subjects were in the age range of 18 to 25. The collected data were subjected to Cronbach alpha for reliability. After assigning reliability, the researcher used One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to evaluate the normality of distribution of the data. Parson product moment correlation was used to test the relationship between personality dimensions/ facets.
and different categories of strategies. T. test was used to determine the relationship between Language Learning Strategies, gender, and ESL/EFL environments. In chapter three the objectives of the study are also presented. This study aims at investigating the relationship between personality factors and the type of Language Learning Strategies that a learner uses. The second aim is to study the impact of gender on Language Learning Strategies. The third objective of this research is to assess the relationship between ESL/EFL environments and Language Learning Strategies.

In chapter four, two hypotheses are analyzed. The first hypothesis is that ‘there is a relationship between gender and Language Learning Strategies’ and the second hypothesis is that ‘there is a relationship between ESL/EFL environments and use of Language Learning Strategies’. A descriptive analysis of the collected data reveals that gender is a determining factor in using strategies; however, its impact is not empirically significant. Females, with a mean of 3.19, are more frequent users of strategies compared with males with a mean of 3.01. In all the international studies dealing with LLSs – probably the most often tested variable is that of gender and how it affects strategy use. In fact, gender was tested as a second independent variable in a majority of the studies. Some preliminary research suggests the existence of sex differences in strategy use. They suggest that females generally employed more strategies (with a higher frequency) than did males. The results of this study are in line with the findings of all these studies as the descriptive statistics reveal a higher mean score for females in all groups of strategies, but the result of empirical statistics (t. test) shows that this difference is not significant. Therefore, it is difficult to claim that females are significantly better than males in using Language Learning Strategies.

ESL learners are found to be more frequent users of strategies compared with EFL learners. Indian ESL subjects, with a mean of 3.22, have a better performance than Iranian EFL subjects with a mean of 3. Some of the personality traits and facets significantly affect the use and frequency of strategy categories and individual strategies. Some preliminary researchers discovered that second language learners generally employed more strategies (with a higher frequency) than did foreign language learners. The findings of the present study reveal more frequent use of strategies by ESL Indian subjects compared with EFL Iranian subjects in the frequency of using cognitive strategies. Therefore, the findings of this research are in
line with the findings of the studies conducted in this field. The only difference is that in this research ESL/EFL subjects are significantly different in cognitive strategies while the previously mentioned studies have all been made on strategies in general.

In chapter five, personality dimensions and facets are correlated with different groups of strategies. The results of this study are compared with the findings of researchers whose works were cited in chapter two. The results show that Conscientiousness is an effective factor in the use of memory and Meta cognitive strategies. Extraversion is an effective factor in Meta cognitive and social strategies. Neuroticism is an effective factor in the use of memory strategies. Conscientiousness is an effective factor in cognitive and compensation strategies. Extraversion is an effective factor in cognitive strategies.

In chapter six the conclusions of this study are presented. Based on the results and discussions, it can be concluded that females are more frequent users of strategies compared to males. ESL learners are more frequent users of strategies compared with EFL learners. Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Neuroticism are respectively the most effective personality traits on the use of Language Learning Strategies

1. Conscientiousness is in a relationship with four groups of strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation and meta cognitive groups
2. Extraversion is in a relationship with four groups of strategies: cognitive, Meta cognitive, memory and social groups
3. Neuroticism is in a relationship with Memory strategies.

The findings of this research have some educational implications. L2 teachers could benefit by assessing the personality dimensions and facets and the strategy use of their students, because such assessment leads to greater understanding of personality differences and strategies. Teachers also need to evaluate their personality characteristics and strategies, so that they will be aware of their preferences and of possible biases. The more teachers know about their students' personality preferences, the more effectively they can orient their L2 instruction, as well as the strategy teaching that can be interwoven into language instruction, matched to those
personality factors. Without adequate knowledge about their individual students’ personality preferences, teachers cannot systematically provide the needed instructional variety.